Editorial

Ingrid Hartl and Walter Pohl

In this year's summer volume, we open the floor for a lively debate, addressing the question whether the concept of »state« can be used meaningfully in the context of medieval studies. A comprehensive essay on the Roman »state« sets the scene from which the author and six further scholars from different fields of Chinese, Byzantine and European medieval history develop a stimulating discussion. In it, they examine, apply, reject and adapt political concepts and approaches in Antiquity and the Middle Ages and engage in a critical discourse on political theory in historical studies.

With this debate we introduce a new format in Medieval Worlds. Further contributions to this or suggestions for other topics of interest are warmly invited.

Vibrant scholarship is also tangible in our research articles. Thus, manuscript studies are combined with digital humanities, when a state-of-the-art analysis of manuscripts containing German arithmetic treatises not only offers new ideas about the use of such texts in every-day life in the Late Middle Ages but also present an approach to generating a model for handwritten text recognition for this material. English and Chinese sources provide the basis in our second stand-alone article, in which strategies of peace-making around the turn of the 11th century are compared.

The second instalment of our thematic section on *Knowledge Collaboration among Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Muslims in the Abbasid Near East*, with guest editor Nathan P. Gibson, presents case studies which carefully analyse philosophical texts for evidence of contact with an »other« (religion or philosophy). In addition, two papers explore which digital tools and approaches might be gainfully employed to trace lost books on the one hand and on the other to display complex networks without loss of nuances. Rounding off this section, two projects concerned with knowledge collaboration and machine supported analysis report on their work.