Editorial

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Two men beneath a pomegranate tree. One, probably Abāqā Khan, the second ruler of the Mongol Ilkhanate, the other, writing, ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī, governor of Baghdad from 1259 CE onwards. The text he is writing is the famous Persian "History of the World Conqueror", the *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*. This illustration serves as the frontispiece in a 1290-luxury copy of this history of conquest, produced shortly after the death of Juwaynī and celebrated today as the earliest, most complete extant copy of the text. Art historians have located its place of origin in Baghdad, which at that time had been under Mongol rule for 32 years, recovering from the first Mongol onslaught of 1258.

This is the key event the authors of our summer volume take their departure from. In detailed case studies they analyse the impact the new regime had on the manuscript culture of Baghdad. For this they focus on a variety of topics, such as individual manuscripts, their composition and circulation, on the development of specific texts and their canonisation, on audition certificates, marginal annotations but also on architecture and practices related to manuscript production. What emerges is a map of Baghdad's cultural and intellectual life in the 13th and 14th centuries, in which its religious, legal, scientific and literary text production becomes visible and some of the people that promoted them are located as actors who contributed to its cultural resilience and continuity.

Our cover picture might then give an impression of how knowledge production continued in Baghdad after the Ilkhanate had taken over control. It combines established forms with Chinese pictorial elements, presenting a new ruling elite, and Persian, instead of Arabic text, in a prized manuscript and thus shows the new political realities with new cultural premises but still vibrant with productivity.

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