

**Why Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368-1398) ordered the translation of Islamicate astronomical books? And why the Mongols did not?  
Translation and Transition**

*Qiao Yang*

(The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science)

In 1382, a decade and half after Zhu Yuanzhang had ascended the throne, he ordered the translation of two or more Islamicate astronomical works into Chinese. The translation was completed within less than a year, under a joint effort of Hanlin Chinese scholars and a group of Muslims astronomers who had previously served in the Yuan (1260-1368) court. This paper first analyzes the ideological and political motivations of the early Ming translation project. Then via the Ming and Yuan comparison it discusses the Yuan case, where abundant astronomical texts and qualified astronomical and language experts were available, but no such translation project had ever taken place. By emphasizing translation as a “political and intellectual instrument of control”, the paper will shed new light on the Yuan-Ming transition and the Mongol legacy to the Ming translation project that lies far beyond the corpus of texts and Muslim experts that Ming inherited.