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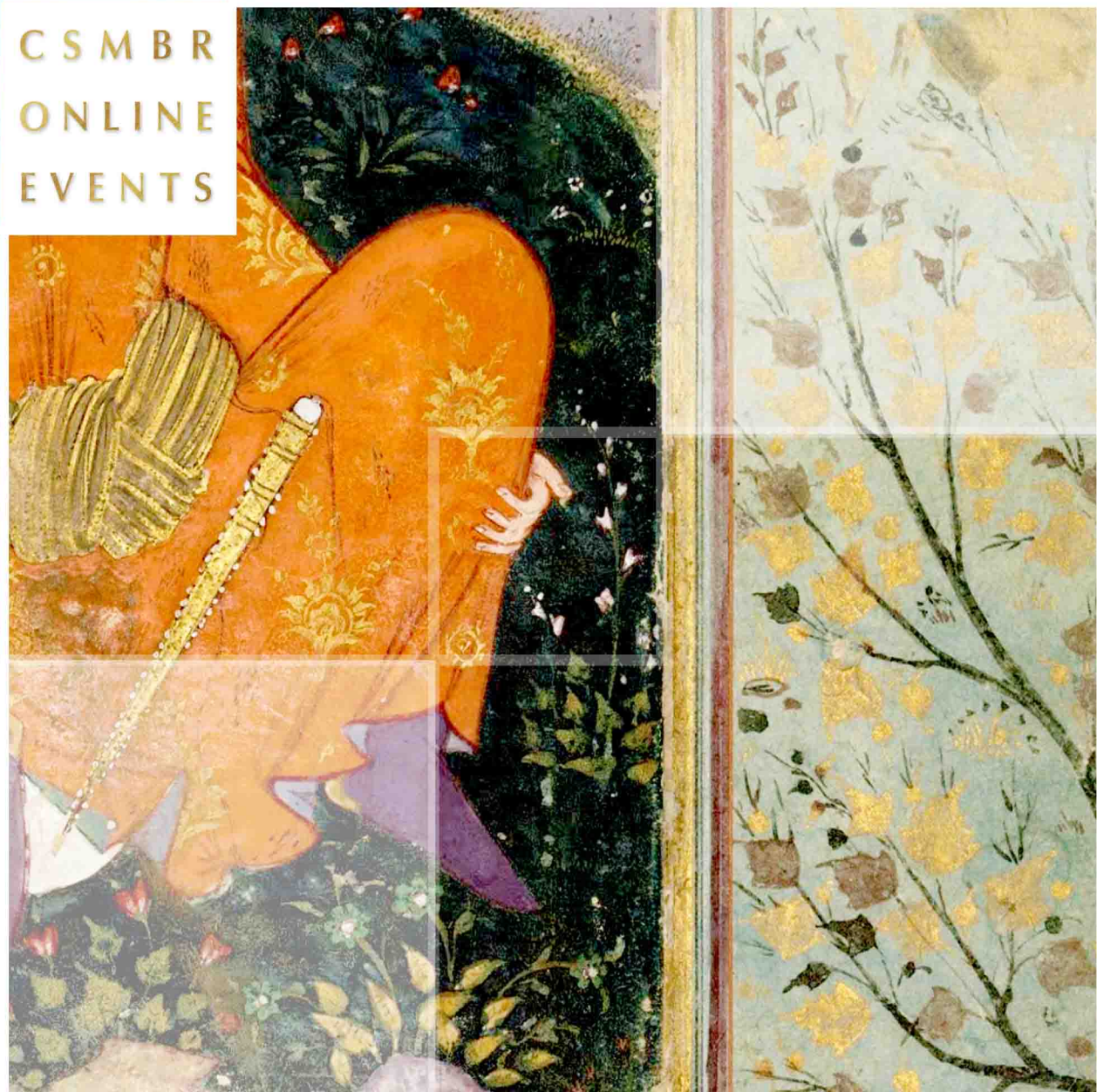


STUDIO FIRMANO
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF
MEDICINE AND THE BODY
IN THE RENAISSANCE



THE COLOUR OF DREAMS

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF ONEIRIC EXPERIENCE IN GREEK, ARABIC, AND LATIN TRADITIONS

MARCO SIGNORI • IMT Lucca

23
JUNE
2026

5.00 PM

CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME

This contribution explores the notion of the colour of dreams as it appears in a selection of medieval Arabic and Latin texts on philosophy and medicine. The subject is at the intersection of psychophysiology, medicine, and the doctrine of the rational soul, as it draws on ancient humoral theory in order to explain an intriguing aspect of dream experience that remains a subject of debate. The idea of a correlation between the colour of oneiric images and the

predominance of one of the four humours appears prominently in Avicenna's (Ibn Sīnā, d. 1037) Canon of Medicine, but also in his philosophical summae, most notably in the Persian Book of Science for 'Alā' al-Dawla, from which it was also picked by the theologian Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) in his *Intentions of the Philosophers*. The source for this connection is a concise yet highly significant doxographic passage

attributed to Galen in its sole extant witness, the Arabic MS Bagdād, Awqāf 9763. The connection between colour and temperament resurfaces in the Latin tradition, as evidenced by Albert the Great and most notably by Boethius of Dacia, who employed the concept within his *scientia somnialis*. By analysing various intermediary channels, the contribution will discuss the possible historical and doctrinal links between these authors, tracing hypothetical lines of transmission from Greek-Arabic medicine to 13th-century Latin philosophy.

The event is free to attend but registration is required. Info at csmbr.fondazionecomel.org