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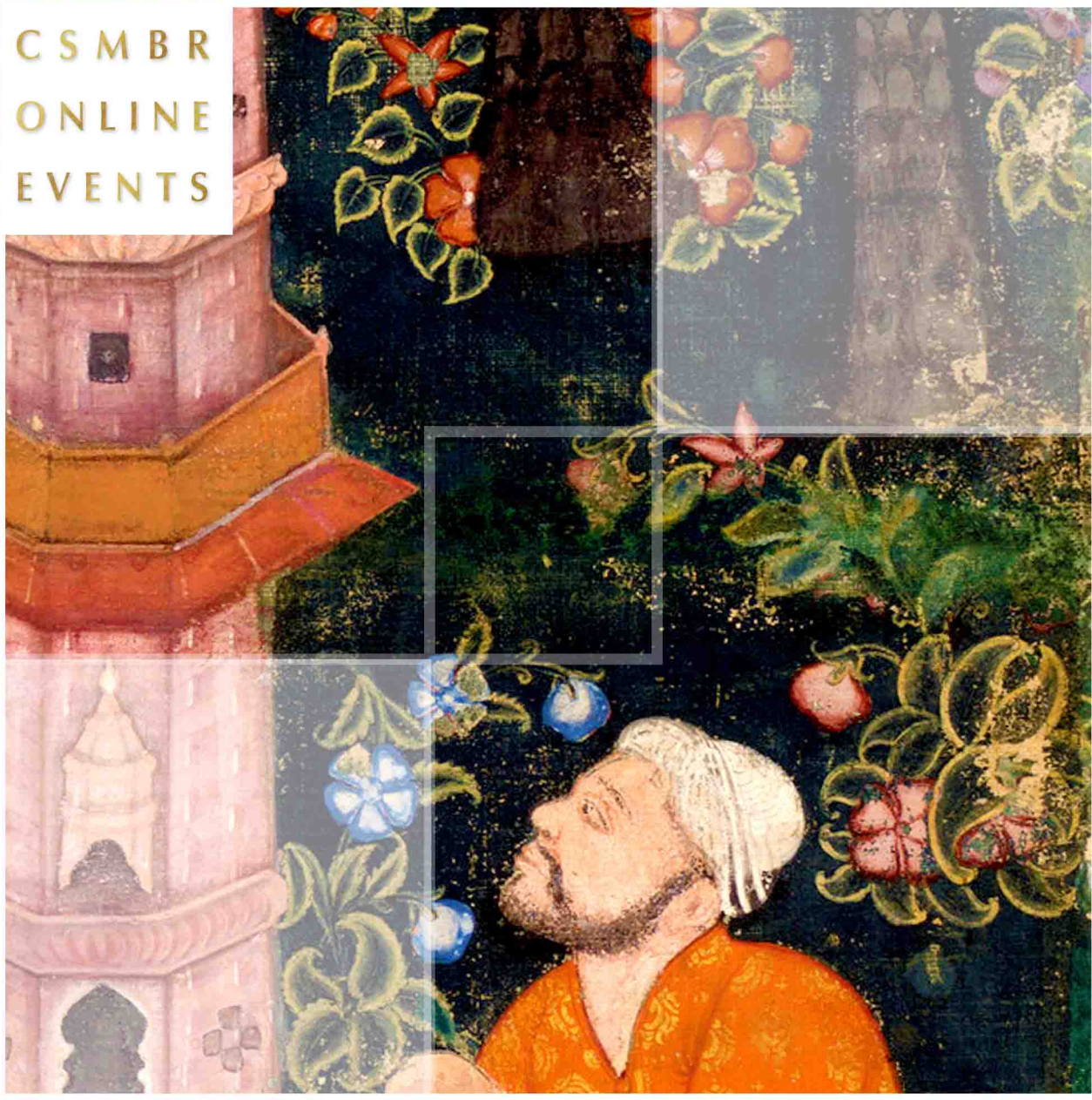
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PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

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EVENTS



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

EUROPEAN ENCOUNTERS WITH OTTOMAN FLORA

PLANTS, MEDICINES, AND TRAVEL IN THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN WORLD

HALIL TEKINER • Erciyes University

9 FEBRUARY 2027

5.00 PM

CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME

When the German physician Leonhard Rauwolf visited Aleppo in the 1570s, he described a drink almost as black as ink: coffee. He recorded how it was consumed and which ailments it was believed to relieve. A few years later, the Italian physician Prospero Alpini would encounter the coffee tree in Ali Bey's garden in Cairo. At a time when the writings of Dioscorides and Galen still commanded considerable authority in European medicine, some physicians set out to find in nature the plants they knew from ancient texts. Drawing on the accounts of Europeans who travelled through Ottoman lands and the eastern Mediterranean in the sixteenth century, this talk will explore mastic production on Chios, the introduction of tulips to Europe, the pollination of date palms in Egypt and the reputed healing properties of the sealed earth of Lemnos. The travel diary of the apothcary Reinhold Lubenau also offers fascinating details about the origins, prices and trade of medicinal substances sold in Istanbul. These travels left behind a rich scientific legacy with manuscripts and records of plants now preserved in Vienna and in Leiden. The Florentine Filippo Argenti's linguistic records of 1533 preserve terms such as *macun* (electuary), *merhem* (ointment) and *yakı* (medicated plaster), then in use in Istanbul. These sources help us understand the extent to which medical traditions, commerce and everyday life in the Ottoman world shaped botanical knowledge in Renaissance Europe.

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