

ISLAMIC ENCOUNTERS

LECTURE SERIES

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Imperial grimoires proliferated across the early modern Persianate world, more than paralleling the grimoire boom in Renaissance Europe. In extreme contrast to their contemporary Latinate cognates, however, decidedly nonimperial in tenor, such occult-scientific manuals could plausibly promise to transform their dread Turko-Mongol warlord patrons into avatars of Alexander the Great, who was well known to have conquered the world precisely by means of occult science. His post-Mongol Persianate heirs could therefore reconquer the world by assiduous use of the same means. This talk will survey the range of strategies whereby Persian grimoire authors sought to persuade Timurid, Ottoman, Aqqyunlu, Safavid, Uzbek, Mughal and lesser dynasts to take up the mantle of specifically Alexandrian *occult philosopher-kingship*, which Roman-Persian-Mongol-Islamic model of imperial universalism endured through the early modern period as a political ideal, down to the equally universalist European colonial rupture—which, irony of ironies, was likewise no less a *witchhunt*.

MAGIC FOR WARLORDS

IMPERIAL OCCULT SCIENCE IN THE EARLY MODERN PERSIAN COSMOPOLIS

MAR
19
2:00 - 3:30 PM

Room 017, MORRICE HALL
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