The Pre-Modern Mediterranean Seminar of USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute invites you to participate in its next seminar

ALEX ROBERTS
USC, DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

ALCHEMY: THEORIES AND CONDEMNATIONS IN BYZANTIUM AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD

APRIL 15, 2-4 PM

ZOOM MEETING

For Zoom link & password, contact C.Fischer-Bovet (fischerb@usc.edu) by April 14.
For general information about the seminar, go to https://dornsife.usc.edu/emsi/pre-modern-mediterranean-2019/

If you want to join the mailing list of the Early Modern Studies Institute, Please email: emsi@usc.edu.


Abstract: What was ‘alchemy’ in the medieval Mediterranean and Middle East? In English, the word may refer to transmutation of metals and the like, but it also connotes fraud, pseudo-science, occultism, quasi-religious mysticism, and so on. This paper addresses alchemical authors’ self-description as philosophers on the one hand, and medieval texts that offer or imply concrete reasons to restrict or criminalize alchemy on the other, showing that these discourses, for and against alchemy, converge in their concern to bring philosophy and other natural sciences to bear on the question of alchemy’s legitimacy.