

The Oxford Symposium of Occult Studies

On the Nature of Grimoires as Scholarship and
of Scholarship as Grimoires

For Scholars of Magick, Daemons, and the Celestial Spheres

At the *Collegium Sancti Johannis Baptistae* in Oxford

That Very Same College where Robert Fludd studied the Two
Worlds of Micro and Macrocosm

19-20 of November 2026

Important Dates

- **Abstract submission deadline:** 3 August 2026
- **Notification of acceptance:** 17 August 2026
- **Conference dates:** 19-20 November 2026

Format

The conference will be held in person. Attendance at the conference is free, though food and accommodations are not provided. We will be hosted at St John's College, Oxford, where there is a café and food options throughout the day of the conference.

Submission & Contact

Please send submissions and inquiries to: grimoire@theology.ox.ac.uk

Submission Guidelines

Please submit:

- A paper title
- An abstract of 250–300 words
- A brief biographical note (100 words maximum)

Proposals for complete panels (3–4 speakers) are also welcome.

“The pluralism of a postcolonial or decolonial philosophy of religion should be “on both ends” of the discipline; that is, both the phenomena and subjects considered and contemplated by the discipline should be diverse, but also the people, perspectives, and methods engaged in this project should come from diverse backgrounds—not only in terms of race, class, gender, geography, etc. but also in terms of ritual practice, training (both academic and otherwise), initiation or membership in tribes, societies, or “religious” traditions.”

—Oludamini Ogunnaike, “Expanding the Menu or Seats at the Table? Grotesque Pluralism in the (Post)Colonial Philosophy of Religion.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 89, no. 2 (2021): 734.

“It was in the context of the colonial encounter that Christendom granted other communities and traditions the name it had only ever given itself—religion—and reincarnated it as “secular.””

—Erica Lagalisie, *Occult Features of Anarchism* (Oakland: PM Press, 2019), 7.

‘Occultism is the metaphysic of dunces.’

—Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (London: Verso, 1951), §151-VI.

The term “**grimoire**,” refers to a genre of magical literature, specifically denoting manuals of magic or sorcery whose etymological roots in the Old French word *grammaire* (grammar) reflect its origin as a repository of specialized knowledge and constitutes a codified manual of occult ritual techniques and illustrations. The grimoire is a culturally and historically situated textual artefact appearing predominantly in the form of the manuscript or printed handbook. These books systematize ritual, symbolic, and operative knowledge within a magical or occult framework. This can be seen especially through spirit lists, prescriptive instructions for the manipulation of supernatural agencies (e.g., spirits of the dead, angels, demons), the production of efficacious objects (e.g., talismans, amulets), guides for various forms of divination and the intentional use of technologies to create new forms of spirituality among many others.

These claims to hidden or occulted knowledge have rendered many scholarly traditions grimoire-like in form and function. However, unlike disciplines like theology where the influence of theistic discursive traditions on scholarship is rendered explicit, the intersubsumption of esotericism, occultism, and magic with the study of such is often *occulted*. So how have scholarly texts functioned as these repositories of magical or occult knowledge?

This conference invites scholars to explore the idea of any form of *scholarly text as grimoire*. We welcome contributions from across disciplines that interrogate any scholarly form that self describes as a grimoire...

Possible topics of occult-and-scholarly intersubsumption include, but are not limited to:

- Alchemy as Chemistry, Chemistry as Alchemy
- Astrology as Medicine, Medicine as Astrology
- Magick as Media, Media as Magick
- Theurgy as Philosophy, Philosophy as Theurgy
- Demonology as Political Science, Political Science as Demonology
- Geomancy as Topography, Topography as Geomancy
- Mnemonica as Calculus, Calculus as Mnemonica
- Egregore as Extended Cognition, Extended Cognition as Egregore
- Hypersigils as Literature, Literature as Hypersigils
- Sorcery as Coding, Coding as Sorcery

We especially encourage interdisciplinary work drawing from fields such as:

- Anthropology
- Area Studies
- Classics
- Cognitive Science of Religion
- Digital Humanities
- Economics
- Film and Media Studies
- Geography
- History
- History of Science
- Literature
- Manuscript Studies

- Medicine
- Philosophy
- Politics
- Religious Studies
- Theology

Symposium Output

We invite our fellow symposiasts to join us as participants for an application of the Delphi method, a research approach for mediating scholarly discussion and generating expert consensus. The purpose of the study will be to make recommendations for the future of occult studies and sister disciplines, grounded in the findings of this symposium. Upon their approval of the research, participants who collaborate throughout the entire Delphi process will be credited as co-authors of the paper. Further details about the method and study will be given upon invitation to the conference.

Accessibility Info

The conference organizers are committed to holding a symposium which meets the needs of its contributors. Meetings spaces, accessible toilets, and the cafe area are all on the ground floor of our meeting area, with no stairs or steps required for access. Most doors are automatic, but a small number aren't; conference organizers and/or the college's Porters will be available to help with most accessibility needs as requested. If there is anything the organizers can provide related to accessibility matters, please let us know.

Conference Organizers

Kachine Moore
University of Glasgow

Scott Ryan Maybell
University of Oxford, St John's College