



**UNIVERSITÄT
ERFURT**

Forschungszentrum
Gotha

Winterprogramm 2024/25

Brendan Röder (München)

Medical Missions in East Africa (ca. 1600–1800)

In Kooperation mit dem Historischen Institut der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena.

30. Januar 2025 | 17:15 Uhr | Forschungszentrum Gotha | Schloßberg 2 | Vortragssaal und online

The talk examines the role of medicine in transcultural encounters in Northeast Africa (mainly Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt) around 1700. Many European travelers to this region practiced medicine and surgery, even though most were not university-trained professionals but Christian missionaries. However, research on medicine and missionaries in Africa has so far largely focused on the 19th and 20th centuries. The focus on an earlier period raises important questions about how European and non-European actors conceived of different types of bodies and healing practices before the advent of 'modern' ideas of race and colonial power asymmetries. Drawing on travel accounts and missionary letters, as well as previously unstudied letters written by Ethiopians, I will argue that ideas and practices of medicine and health played a crucial role in physical and religious mobility and will outline potential future research directions in this field.

Brendan Röder is a Research Associate for Early Modern History and Principal Investigator of the research project "The Hidden, suspicious, changeable sex. Shame and vigilance in the Early Modern Period" in the Collaborative Research Centre "Cultures of Vigilance" at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich since 2023. His research focuses on the history of the body, medicine and gender, the history of religion, sensory history and urban history. In his first book *Der Körper des Priesters. Gebrechen im Katholizismus der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt/New York 2021) he traces concepts and practices related to so-called bodily defects in the early modern Catholic clergy. He is currently working on several projects including a project on medical missions in East Africa from 1500-1800, which aims to reconstruct the medical encounters between Europeans and the African population before the advent of 19th century medical missions and colonial and tropical medicine.

Abb.: Deß Weitberühmten Guilhelmi Fabricii Hildani ... Wund-Artzney, Frankfurt: Beyer, 1652, S. 195; Afrika ganz in 1 Blatt, Justus Perthes, 1737. Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Sammlung Perthes. Public Domain Mark 1.0.