



**UNIVERSITÄT
ERFURT**

Forschungszentrum
Gotha

Sommerprogramm 2025

Ulrich Groetsch (University of North Alabama, USA)

The Mystery of the Crowing Cock:

Early Modern Scholars and a Biblical Riddle

5. Juni 2025 | 17:15 Uhr | Forschungszentrum Gotha | Schloßberg 2 | Vortragssaal und online

"And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew." (Luke 22:60, KJV)

This passage, central to the Gospels, has inspired countless works of art and adorned church steeples for centuries. But did a cock really crow that night in Jerusalem? Jewish law forbade chickens within the Holy City, yet the evangelists insist on the rooster's call.

For seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Christian Hebraists, this was no trivial puzzle – it was a test of biblical reliability. Scholars like Adriaan Reland (1676–1718) dissected scripture and Jewish law in search of an answer, but their findings proved unsettling. Could the very methods designed to uphold the authority of the Gospels instead reveal their deepest contradictions?

Ulrich Groetsch is Professor of Early Modern History at the University of North Alabama. His first book, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768): Classicist, Hebraist, Enlightenment Radical in Disguise*, was published in 2015. He is currently writing a book on seventeenth-century biblical antiquarianism.