

Gotha Summer School 2022

## **"Court Moors"**

### **Representation and Social Reality of Africans in German Residences 1600–1800**

Organized by the Gotha Research Centre in cooperation with the Research Library and the Foundation Schloss Friedenstein Gotha; funded by the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation

Gotha Research Centre, Schloßberg 2

August 29 to September 2, 2022

At the German courts of the early modern period, there were numerous people with dark skin, mostly Africans, so-called "Court Moors". They often came to Germany as slaves and were transmitted to other places when they were employed as servants at the courts of princes and aristocracy. Mostly they were baptised and given a new name. The courts were interested in them because of their exoticism and rarity – similar to the objects in cabinets of art and curiosities. Therefore, "Court Moors " belonged to the representative practice of the residences.

In recent times, the issue of "Moors" has come to the fore due to the intense debates on colonialism, racism and the slave trade. However, concrete research is still rare. How "racist" was the early modern period? What was life like for the servants in the foreign environment? Was there social integration, were there opportunities for advancement, opportunities for marriage? Was there knowledge transfer between Europe and Africa? The investigation of the fates of these people is only just beginning; it is usually made more difficult by a lack of sources, especially with regard to origin and previous history, often even with regard to their original names. After all, Anne Kuhlmann-Smirnov has compiled almost 400 documented cases in a database. There were also "Hofmohren" in Gotha, as the Fourier books show. In addition, the art collections of Friedenstein Castle show numerous traces that bear witness to the presence of Africans in Germany in the early modern period.

The one-week seminar is aimed at advanced students working on their master's thesis, doctoral and post-doctoral students who work in the broader context of this "Court Moor" topic and want to deepen their interest, as well as employees of museums and similar institutions who deal with the topic. There is the opportunity for joint discussions of texts (e.g. on contemporary theories about skin color in the 17th century and on the postcolonial perspective on the subject)

and representations in art such as paintings and figurative objects, for independent research in the Gotha archives and collections and for listening to lectures (e. g. by Adrian Masters, Trier, Kerstin Volker-Saad, Berlin/Gotha, and Rebekka von Mallinckrodt, Bremen). There will also be guided tours through the extensive holdings of the Research Library and the Foundation Schloss Friedenstein Gotha.

### **Participants receive free accommodation and reimbursement of travel expenses (within certain limits).**

The application consists of a cover letter explaining the motivation for participation, an academic curriculum vitae and a letter of recommendation from an academic teacher. Please also attach the [signed consent to the processing of personal data](#). The deadline for submitting your application – by email only – is **July 15, 2022**. Please summarize your application documents in one PDF file (max. 5 MB) and send it to [forschungszentrum.gotha@uni-erfurt.de](mailto:forschungszentrum.gotha@uni-erfurt.de). For encrypted e-mail communication please read the information on data protection below. The cover letter should state why participation is desired and what benefits are hoped for in current or future scientific work. Applicants will be informed of the selection by July 20, 2022. The number of participants is limited to a maximum of **15**. There is no legal right to participate. We expect participation throughout the Summer School (midday Monday 29 August to Friday evening 2 September 2022).

### **Concept by and under the direction of**

Prof. Dr. Martin Mulsow  
Director of the Gotha Research Centre

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consent may mean that the application can no longer be considered in the current process. Further information on data protection in accordance with Art. 13 EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU-DSGVO) can be found in the information sheet ["Datenschutzhinweise Sommerschule FZG"](#).