

The Program in the History of Science & Medicine  
and  
STEM & Health Equity Advocates  
presents

# TAYLOR MOORE, UC SANTA BARBARA



## *Down to the Bone: Dissecting Blackness in Khedival Egypt*

The Qasr el-Ainy Hospital and Medical School, one of the oldest and most influential medical institutions in the Middle East, played a pivotal role in the development of modern Egypt. Scholars have argued that the institution's groundbreaking curriculum in dissection and autopsy created the foundation for influential legal and medical reforms in the nineteenth century—ultimately giving way to the biopolitical technologies of the modern Egyptian state. Yet, if dissection and autopsy played a pivotal role in Egyptian modernity, whose lives and whose bodies subsidized this work? This talk reveals that development of modern medical practice in Khedival Egypt, and the practice of dissection and autopsy, relied on the (mis)use of living and dead enslaved Africans since the Medical School's inception in 1837. Bringing historiographies of race and slavery to bear on the social and institutional histories of the medicine in Egypt, I put forth two interconnected arguments: First, the development of modern medical practice in Egypt was built on the labor and bodies of Black Africans, many of whom were enslaved. Second, Qasr el-Ainy Medical School and Hospital instrumentalized the dead bodies and skeletal remains of Black Africans to produce a particularly global race science in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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