

Healing Knowledge in Atlantic Africa

In this ambitious analysis of medical encounters in Central and West Africa during the era of the Atlantic slave trade, Kalle Kananoja focuses on African and European perceptions of health, disease and healing. Arguing that the period was characterised by continuous knowledge exchange, he shows that indigenous natural medicine was used by locals and non-Africans alike. The mobility and circulation of healing techniques and materials was an important feature of the early modern Black Atlantic world. African healing specialists not only crossed the Atlantic to the Americas, but also moved within and between African regions to offer their services. At times, patients, Europeans included, travelled relatively long distances in Africa to receive treatment. Highlighting cross-cultural medical exchanges, Kananoja shows that local African knowledge was central to shaping responses to illness, providing a fresh, global perspective on African medicine and vernacular science in the early modern world.

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Healing Knowledge in Atlantic Africa

Medical Encounters, 1500–1850

Kalle Kananoja
University of Oulu



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Figure 0.1 The Atlantic world.
Source: Map by Victor Wilson

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