



## ZMO-Kolloquium Summer Term 2014

Thursday, March 27, 2014, 6 pm

### European empires and the Hajj, c. 1850-1950

Lecture by Dr. John Slight

**Venue:**

Zentrum Moderner Orient  
Kirchweg 33

14129 Berlin

As the European powers expanded their territorial control over the Islamic world, their methods of imperial and colonial governance led them to engage with a variety of Islamic religious practices. One of the most important of these was the Hajj. From the mid-nineteenth century to the era of decolonization, hundreds of thousands of Muslim subjects in the European empires travelled to the Hijaz to perform this important religious ritual. This paper will attempt to provide a broad overview of this interaction from c. 1860-1950, drawing on the case studies of the French, Dutch, and Russian empires, with a particular focus on the British empire. Through drawing these diverse examples together, the paper will examine the similarities and vital differences in the nature of these imperial associations with the Hajj, highlighting the diverse nature of how Muslims in Africa and Asia performed the Hajj under colonial rule. While it will examine major themes such as disease, quarantine, and security, it will also survey issues such as destitute pilgrims, slavery/debt bondage, and Muslim employees in these empires' pilgrimage administrations, and how European empires responded to political changes in the Hijaz in relation to the Hajj during this period.

GEFÖRDERT VOM



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**John Slight** is a Research Fellow at St. John's College, University of Cambridge. He studied at Cambridge for his BA, MPhil and PhD, and worked as a Research Consultant on the major exhibition Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam, which opened at the British Museum in 2012 and has since toured in Holland and Qatar. In 2011 he co-founded the Cambridge Middle East History Group. He has published in various journals and his first book, "The British Empire and the Hajj 1865-1956", is forthcoming with Harvard University Press. His current projects include a reconsideration of the 1916-18 Arab Revolt from the perspective of Indian and Egyptian soldiers, and a study of British converts to Islam and the colonial state, 1891-1951.