

# Columbus the Muslim

Roundtable with Alan Mikhail and Ulrike Freitag

June 24, 2019  
3 - 6 pm

Berlin Graduate School  
Muslim Cultures  
and Societies  
Altensteinstraße 48  
14195 Berlin

**Christopher Columbus** lived the vast majority of his life in a Mediterranean world in which the Ottoman and Mamluk Empires dominated the eastern part of the sea and were in constant economic, political, and confrontational interaction with the Christian states of Europe. This talk considers **the importance of Islam in shaping Columbus's life and voyages**. In doing so, it thinks critically about the role of Islam in the Spanish decision to send him across the ocean and in the early history of the Spanish

Caribbean. It furthermore uses this Muslim history of Columbus to suggest ways of analyzing early modern periodization and the place of Islam in the making of the modern world.

**Alan Mikhail** is professor and chair of history at Yale University. He is a historian of the early modern Muslim world, the Ottoman Empire, and Egypt.

**Ulrike Freitag** is the director of Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient and professor for Islamic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin.

