

# At the Centre of the World? A Spatial Approach to the Hajj Pilgrimage

Colloquium organized by BGSMCS, IAAW and ZMO

Thursday, 27 October 2016, 6 pm  
ZMO, Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin

## TRANSPORT & GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

Chaired by **Prof Dr Ulrike Freitag** (ZMO)

### Planes, Prayers and Practicalities: Transport and the Transformations in the Pilgrims' Journey to Mecca

Lecture by **Prof Dr Baz Lecocq** (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

West African Pilgrims to Mecca witnessed a triple transport revolution in the mid-twentieth century as first steam ships and then motorcars and aeroplanes became available to perform the Hajj. For a few decades governments and private companies used all three of these means of transport to bring pilgrims to Mecca. This transport revolution forced both individual Muslims and their governments, as well as the transport companies involved in the Pilgrimage market, to think about the journey itself, its costs, who could perform it and how, how often, in what ways and on how to bring this journey in accordance with the prescriptions of Islam. This paper will look at these issues, asking questions on the impact of the transport revolution on the devotion and religious practice of West African Muslims.

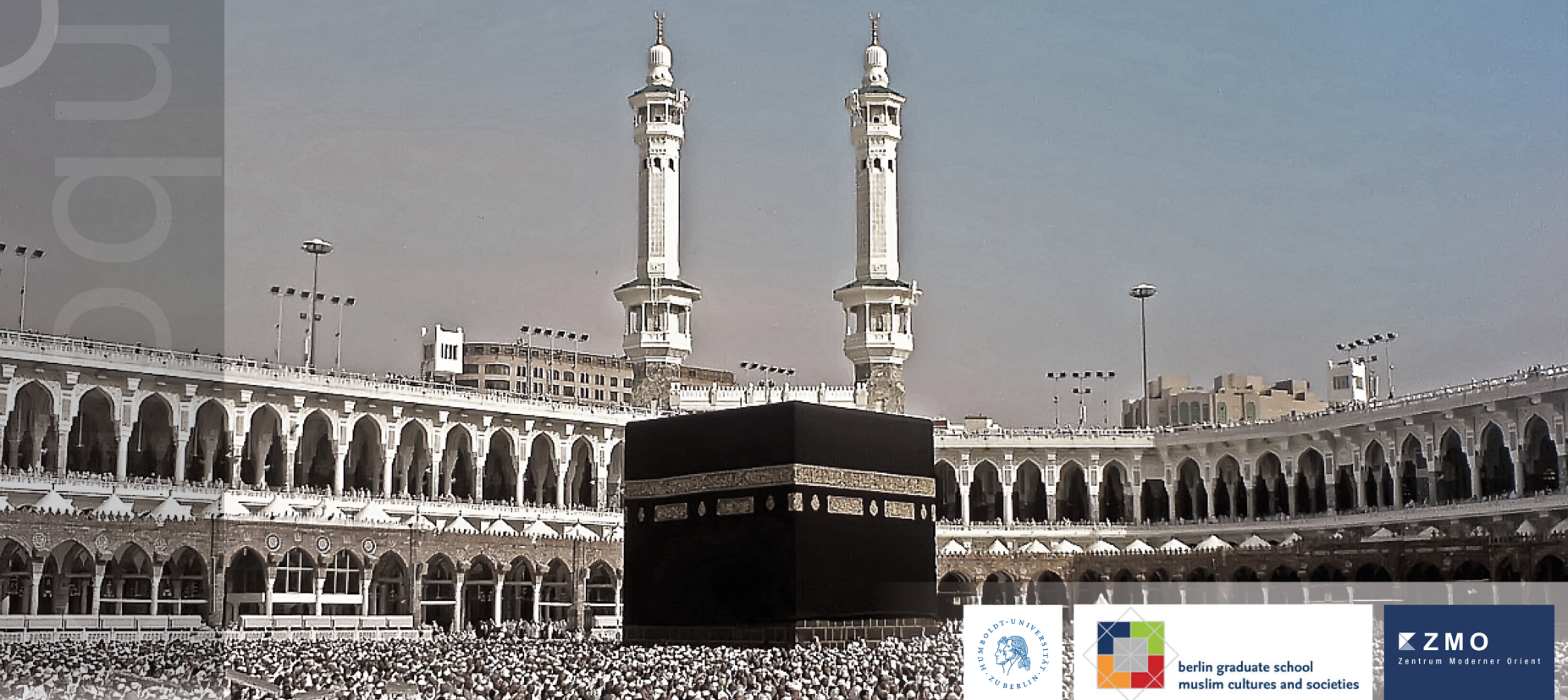
**Baz Lecocq** is Professor of African History at the Humboldt University of Berlin's Institute of Asian and African Studies (IAAW) since 2014. He was professor of African History at Ghent University between 2007 and 2014 (where he still holds a guest professorship). He is a specialist of the contemporary history and politics of the Central Sahara and Sahel. He has published and lectured extensively on a variety of social and political topics as they play out in this area: nationalism, ethnicity, race and racism, (post)slavery, modernity, decolonization, globalization, and the Hajj.

### Remembering Devotion: Oral History and the Pilgrimage to Mecca from Southeast Asia

Lecture by **Prof Dr Eric Tagliacozzo** (Cornell University)

What do pilgrims remember about their Hajj? What aspects of this incredible journey, which used to take months in a passage by sea, but now takes hours in a voyage by air, are worth remembering, and what is forgotten? How do Southeast Asians organize their experiences in their memories, what is sifted as crucial to a Muslim life well-lived, and what is incidental? Are material circumstances remembered as vividly as spiritual obligations, and what do various pilgrims' memories have in common? Perhaps most importantly, how do Southeast Asian Muslims explain the Hajj to others and to themselves in the act of narrating experience?

**Eric Tagliacozzo** is Professor of History at Cornell. He is the author of a history of smuggling in Southeast Asia (Yale, 2005) and a monograph on the pilgrimage to Mecca from that region (Oxford, 2013). He is also the editor of books on the global Hajj (Cambridge, 2016); on trans-nationalism in Asia through time-periods (Harvard, 2015), and through place (Harvard, 2015); on Burmese subalternity (Oxford, 2014); on the field of Indonesian Studies (Cornell, 2014), and on Indonesian sources (Duke, 2009); on Chinese trade to Southeast Asia (Duke, 2011), and Southeast Asian contacts to the Middle East (Stanford, 2009); and on the relationship between History and Anthropology (Stanford, 2009).



Background image photographed by Muhammad Hanif Karim

