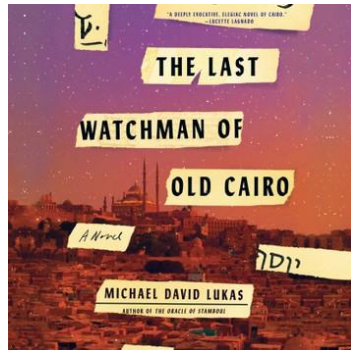


**ICCJ BOOK CAFÉ**  
**JOIN US ON SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2019 at 10:00AM**  
**WHEN WE WILL DISCUSS**  
**“The Last Watchman of Old Cairo, a Novel”**  
**by Michael David Lukas**



**The Book**

Joseph, a literature student at Berkeley, is the son of a Jewish mother and a Muslim father. One day, a mysterious package arrives on his doorstep, pulling him into a mesmerizing adventure to uncover the tangled history that binds the two sides of his family. For generations, the men of the al-Raqb family have served as watchmen of the storied Ibn Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo, built at the site where the infant Moses was taken from the Nile. Joseph learns of his ancestor Ali, a Muslim orphan who nearly a thousand years earlier was entrusted as the first watchman of the synagogue and became enchanted by its legendary—perhaps magical—Ezra Scroll. The story of Joseph’s family is entwined with that of the British twin sisters Agnes and Margaret, who in 1897 depart their hallowed Cambridge halls on a mission to rescue sacred texts that have begun to disappear from the synagogue.

**The Author**

Michael David Lukas has been a Fulbright Scholar in Turkey, a night-shift proofreader in Tel Aviv, a student at the American University of Cairo, and a waiter at the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference in Vermont. Translated into more than a dozen languages, his first novel *The Oracle of Stamboul* was a finalist for the California Book Award, the NCIBA Book of the Year Award, and the Harold U. Ribalow Prize. His second novel, *The Last Watchman of Old Cairo*, won the National Jewish Book Award, the ALA’s Sophie Brody Medal, and was a finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize. A graduate of Brown University and the University of Maryland, he is a recipient of scholarships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Montalvo Arts Center, New York State Summer Writers’ Institute, Squaw Valley Community of Writers, and Elizabeth George Foundation. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Slate*, *National Geographic Traveler*, and *Georgia Review*. He lives in Oakland and teaches at San Francisco State University.



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