

This workshop is organized within the framework of the
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Conveners: Grigor Boykov and Mariya Kiprovskia

What constitutes governance in an imperial context, and how might it be analyzed beyond the prism of centralized state power? Broadly understood as the exercise of control over resources, territory, and population, governance entails the infrastructural capacities to accumulate, regulate, communicate and redistribute. Yet, in the Ottoman case, much like in other imperial contexts, this capacity has often been associated almost exclusively with the centralizing authority of the imperial household and its bureaucratic apparatus.

The workshop will revisit Ottoman governance as a dynamic and negotiated field of interaction among diverse actors – imperial, regional, and local – whose overlapping interests and spheres of influence shaped the empire's capacity to rule. By emphasizing spatial and social foundations of authority, we aim to explore how regional elites, intermediaries, and communities contributed to the making of imperial order. A further aim is to refine the analytical vocabulary through which these processes are described.

We would like to inform you that photos will be taken during the event. These photos will be used for documentation and presentation purposes.

Ottoman Core

Conceptual, Spatial, and
Actor-Centered Perspectives
on Ottoman Governance

Kick-off Workshop

2-3 July 2026 | Thu-Fri

Venue: University of Vienna

Lecture Hall

Department for East European History (IOG)

Spitalgasse 2, Hof 3, Eingang 3.2 (Campus)



DAY 1	2 July 2026 Thursday
9:30–10:00	Welcoming remarks by Grigor Boykov and Mariya Kiprovska
10:00–13:00	Panel 1: Defining the Ottoman Core <i>Chair: Mariya Kiprovska University of Vienna</i> Grigor Boykov University of Vienna Defining the Ottoman Core: What, Where, and Why? Efe Erünal Koç University Breaking the <i>Tahrir</i> Code: Methods, Challenges, and Prospects of Handwritten Text Recognition Models for Ottoman Tax Registers Chavdar Kirilov University of Sofia One Database to Rule Them All? The Philosophy of a Holistic Approach to Historical, Archaeological, and Cartographic Data
12:30–13:00	<i>Panel Discussion with comments by Oliver Jens Schmitt University of Vienna</i>
13:00–14:30	Lunch break
14:30–18:30	Panel 2: Households, Decision-Making, and Governance <i>Chair: H. Erdem Çıpa University of Michigan</i> Mariya Kiprovska University of Vienna Peripheral Outliers or Regional Stakeholders: Household Networks at Work in Ottoman Provincial Governance Coffee break İsmail Emre Pamuk Istanbul University Between (In)formal and (Im)personal: <i>Divân-ı Hümayûn</i> , Decision-Making, and Governance in the Ottoman Empire (1453–1579) Günhan Börekçi İbn Haldun University Mapping the Power and Household Networks of the Premodern Ottoman Elite: Towards a ‘Big Picture,’ Albeit Slowly
18:00–18:30	<i>Panel Discussion with comments by Cemal Kafadar Harvard University</i>
19:00	Dinner

DAY 2	3 July 2026 Friday
10:00–12:30	Panel 3: Revisiting the Devshirme System <i>Chair: Claudia Römer University of Vienna</i> Baki Tezcan University of California, Davis How the Periphery Comes to the Center: The Practice of Devshirme and Ottoman Governance Muhsin Soyudoğan Gaziantep University Rethinking <i>Devşirme</i> : The Ottoman <i>Timar</i> System as a Secondary Devşirme Institution
12:00–12:30	<i>Panel Discussion with comments by Tijana Krstić Central European University</i>
12:30–14:00	Lunch break
14:00–18:00	Panel 4: Provincial Elites and the Structure of Ottoman Governance <i>Chair: Grigor Boykov University of Vienna</i> Elias Kolovos National Hellenic Research Foundation Ottoman Veterans in the Provincial Administration: The Case of Salonica as a Pension Sancak (<i>ber vech-i tekaüd</i>) during the Fifteenth Century Coffee break Phokion Kotzageorgis Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Landed Estates of the House of Evrenos: Preliminary Findings Emir O. Filipović University of Sarajevo Household as Empire: The Ishaković Family of Skopje and the Spatial Foundations of Ottoman Rule
17:30–18:00	<i>Panel Discussion with comments by Amy Singer Brandeis University</i>
18:00–18:30	Concluding Remarks and Final Discussion led by Grigor Boykov and Mariya Kiprovska
18:30	Closing reception