

International Workshop organized within the framework of
ERC-2024-CoG 'OttomanCORE'

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the DFG-funded project

'Belgrade and Zemun as a Historical Mobility Space between Two Empires, 1739–1878'
and the Cluster of Excellence 'EurAsian Transformations'
(funded by FWF, grant-DOI: 10.55776/COE8)

Conveners: Grigor Boykov, Florian Riedler, Nenad Stefanov

Recent scholarship has convincingly challenged the long-standing image of the Balkans as an inaccessible and fragmented region. Historical evidence instead reveals a landscape characterized by extensive mobility and dense networks of travel, trade, and communication. Yet our understanding of these networks remains uneven. Fundamental questions persist: Where did major and minor routes run? Who built and maintained them? Who used them, for what purposes, and over what distances? How were journeys organized, and what infrastructures and logistical arrangements made movement possible?

The workshop addresses these questions through an actor-centered approach to the historical geography of the Balkans. Moving beyond infrastructural determinism, it examines connectivity as a social and political phenomenon shaped by the interaction of people, animals, institutions, technologies, and landscapes. Bringing together archaeological, cartographic, textual, and digital spatial evidence, the workshop seeks to reconsider the historical geographies of movement, communication, and exchange across Southeast Europe.

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

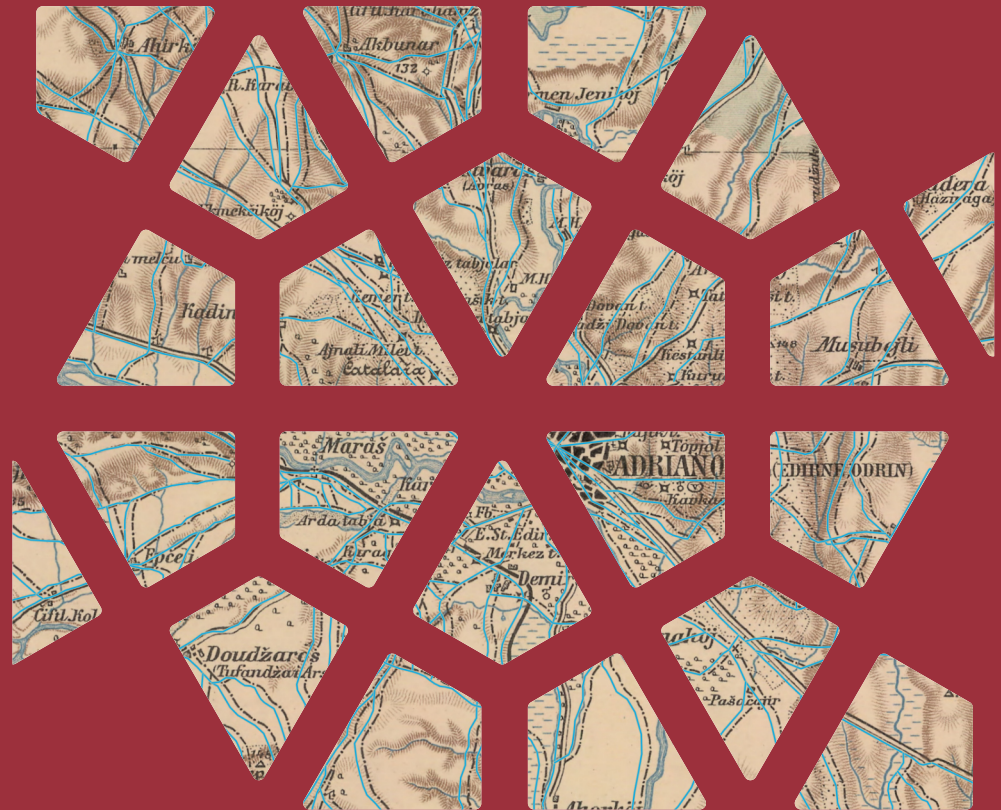
Routes and Communication Networks

Rethinking Connectivity
and Agency in the Historical
Geography of the Balkans

International Workshop

24-25 Sep. 2026 | Thu-Fri

Venue: University of Vienna
Apostelgasse 23, 1030 Vienna
Seminar Room (Ground Floor)



DAY 1	24 September 2026 Thursday
9:00–9:30	Introductory remarks by Grigor Boykov, Florian Riedler, and Nenad Stefanov Session 1: Routes, Landscapes, and Nodes of Connectivity <i>Chair: Florian Riedler University of Leipzig</i>
9:30–10:30	Marian Coman University of Bucharest Naming Roads: The Perception of the Wallachian Road Network in the 16th Century
10:30–11:00	Coffee Break
11:00–12:00	Molly Greene Princeton University Making Sense of Routes in a Mountainous Landscape
12:00–13:00	Grigor Boykov University of Vienna Dervish Convents as Nodes of Communication in the Ottoman Balkans
13:00–14:30	Lunch break Session 2: Moving through Landscapes: Animals, Mobility, and Spatial Methods <i>Chair: Nenad Stefanov University of Leipzig</i>
14:30–15:30	Kata Tóth University of Vienna Crossing the Mountains on All Fours: The Carpathian Transhumance of Pigs and Sheep (Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries)
15:30–16:00	Coffee Break
16:00–17:00	Konstantina Ntassiou Free University of Bozen-Bolzano Mapping Invisible Networks: A Critical GIS Approach to Historical Mobility in Northwestern Greece
17:00–18:00	Ruža Fotiadis Humboldt University Animals as Living Technology: Donkeys and Mules in the Habsburg Adriatic
	Dinner

DAY 2	25 September 2026 Friday
	Session 3: Gateways and Corridors: Connectivity, Control, and Insecurity <i>Chair: Konrad Petrovsky Austrian Academy of Sciences</i>
9:30–10:30	Dino Mujadžević Croatian Institute of History The Gateway of the Ottoman Balkans: Crossings on the River Sava in the 16th and 17th Centuries
10:30–11:00	Coffee Break
11:00–12:00	Nenad Stefanov and Florian Riedler University of Leipzig Roads to Belgrade: Infrastructures of Communication and Transport in the 18th Century
12:00–13:00	Chavdar Kirilov University of Sofia Mapping Insecurity: A Spatial Analysis of Road Banditry in the Ottoman Balkans (15th–19th Centuries)
13:00–14:30	Lunch break
	Session 4: Transforming Connectivity: Roads, Accessibility, and Railways <i>Chair: Grigor Boykov University of Vienna</i>
14:30–15:30	Vincent Thérouin Ghent University Beyond Hans and Bridges: Tracing the Road between “Road Mosques,” Springs, and Ruins in Ottoman Bosnia
15:30–16:00	Coffee Break
16:00–17:00	M. Erdem Kabadayı Koç University From the 3rd Military Mapping Survey to Digital Models: Integrating Multi-Modal Networks to Analyze Balkan Accessibility at the End of the 19th Century
17:00–18:00	Malte Fuhrmann Berlin Forging a Nation of Iron: Railways and Imperial Legacies in Bulgaria, 1878–1908
18:00–18:30	Closing Remarks by Stefan Rohdewald University of Leipzig
	Closing reception