

The Ottoman Balkans were one of the most vibrant spaces of multilingual exchange in the early modern Eastern Mediterranean. Situated at the crossroads of Ottoman, Islamicate, and Western European cultural spheres, the region became a place where languages, texts, and scholarly traditions met, interacted, and were continually reshaped. Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish formed the core of this learned world, yet in the Balkans they were frequently joined by regional languages, Slavic and non-Slavic alike, giving rise to rich and complex practices of translation and cultural mediation. Despite growing scholarly interest in multilingualism, translation, and knowledge circulation in the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman Balkans have not yet received sustained attention as a distinct

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space of intellectual and literary production. Yet cities such as Sarajevo, among many other centres of cultural activity, offer ample evidence of textual transmission, manuscript copying, translation, and local engagements with canonical Arabic and Persian works. The region thus opens an important perspective on how multilingual practices took shape not only within imperial frameworks, but also in local settings marked by mobility, contact, and exchange. This international

workshop places the Ottoman Balkans at the heart of the discussion. Bringing together studies on translation between the *elsine-i selase* and the regional languages of the Balkans from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, it seeks to connect broader conceptual models with local practices. Particular attention will be given to manuscripts, early printed works, and paratextual evidence, as well as to the translators, scribes, patrons, institutions, and networks that enabled these processes. Co-organised by the University of Münster and the University of Sarajevo, and hosted at the Gazi Husrev Beg Library in Sarajevo, the workshop offers a fitting setting to explore the multilingual heritage of the Ottoman Balkans and to reassess its place in the history of translation, scholarship, and cultural transfer.

### Organisers

**Prof. Dr. Philip Bockholt**  
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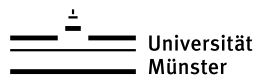
**Prof. Dr. Munir Drkić**  
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### Venue

**Gazi Husrev Beg Library**  
Gazi Husrev Begova 46  
71000 Sarajevo

Please register in advance at:  
[translapt@uni-muenster.de](mailto:translapt@uni-muenster.de)

### Sponsors



Municipality of Ilidža



**The Ottoman Balkans as a Space for Multilingualism: Actors, Practices, and Sites of Translation**

2-4 June 2026  
**Gazi Husrev Beg Library Sarajevo**

**Programme**

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## Tuesday, 2 June

09:30

### Welcoming Address & Introduction

**Dženan Handžić** (Director of Gazi Husrev Beg Library, Sarajevo)

**Munir Drkić** (Sarajevo)

**Philip Bockholt** (Münster)

10:00 | Chair: Philip Bockholt

### Panel 1: The Multilingual Legacy of Ottoman Bosnia

**Munir Drkić** (Sarajevo): Persian Learning in Ottoman Bosnia: A Multilingual Legacy

**Ludwig Paul** (Hamburg): The Linguistic Ecology of Ottoman Bosnia

Coffee break

11:30 | Chair: Kristof D'hulster

### Panel 2: The Role of Translation in Shaping One's Heritage

**Merisa Đido** (Sarajevo): From Ottoman Bosnia to the Contemporary Era: Transformations in the Translation and Interpretation of Sa'dī's *Gulistān*

**Gianfranco Bria** (Rome), **Abdulla Rexhepi** (Pristina): Between Persianate Heritage and Albanian Vernacular: Dalip Frashëri's *Kopshti i të mirëvet* as a Site of Translation and Piety

12:30 Lunch

14:00 | Chair: Hicham Bouhadi

### Panel 3: Sites and Institutions of Multilingualism

**Andrew Peacock** (St Andrews): Multilingual Literary Culture in Late Ottoman Shkodër

**Stevan Kordić** (Belgrade): Translating Rebellion: Intercepted Serbian Letters and the Multilingual Order in the Ottoman Sanjak of Smederevo

**Eric Dursteler** (Provo): Military Multilingualism in the Seventeenth-Century Balkans

Coffee break

16:00 | Chair: Ludwig Paul

### Panel 4: The Potential of Dictionaries as Historical Sources

**Ahmed Zildžić** (Sarajevo): *Tuḥfe-i Şāhidī* in late Ottoman Sarajevo

**Edita Drakovac** (Sarajevo): Üsküfī's Dictionary *Potur Şahidija* as a Site of Linguistic Translation and Vernacularisation in the Ottoman Balkans

Coffee break

17:30 | Chair: Muhammed Sofu

### Panel 5: Romance-Slavic Language Contact in Ottoman Bosnia

**Ana Lalić** (Sarajevo): The *Litterae Missionarum* as Evidence of Bosnian Literacy and Language Contact in the Italian Language in the Seventeenth Century: Lexical Characteristics

19:30 Dinner

## Wednesday, 3 June

09:00 | Chair: Ahmet Aytepe

### Panel 6: Multilingual Manuscript Collections and Practices

**Kadir Turgut** (Istanbul): Language Preferences and Scribal Practices of Balkan Copyists: Evidence from Manuscripts in Turkish Libraries

**Josh Mugler** (Collegeville): What Is Persian about the Persianate? Manuscripts from Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina

Coffee break

10:30 | Chair: Tobias Sick

### Panel 7: Becoming Multilingual: Educational Sources and Practices

**Numan Sabit Karali** (Istanbul): *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* in the Ottoman Balkans: Readers, Practices, and Multilingual Interactions in the Manuscripts of a Widely Circulated Work

**Velida Mataradžija** (Sarajevo): *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim fi Ṭariq al-Ta'allum* as Evidence of Multilingualism

Coffee break

12:00 | Chair: Munir Drkić

### Panel 8: Poetry and Imitation Across Linguistic and Geographic Borders

**Benedek Péri** (Budapest): Translation, Imitation or Something Else? Yenipazarlı Vāli and His *Ḥüsn ü Dil*

**Denita Haverić** (Sarajevo): *Bulbulistān* by Fevzi Mostāri: A Persian Literary Imitation and a Source of Local Cultural History

13:00 Lunch

14:30 | Chair: Velida Mataradžija

### Panel 9: Vernacularisation in the Ottoman Balkans

**Abdulla Rexhepi** (Pristina): Hurufist Texts Written in Albanian with Arabic Script

**Saadet Demiroğlu** (Istanbul): Rethinking *Aljamiado*: Language, Community, and Religious Authority in Ottoman Bosnia

Coffee break

16:00 | Chair: Andrew Peacock

### Panel 10: Scholarly Traditions of Arabic in the Ottoman Balkans

**Amra Mulović** (Sarajevo): Arabic Study in Ottoman Bosnia: The Works of Muṣṭafā Ejubović known as Shaykh Yuyo

Coffee break

17:30 | Philip Bockholt/Munir Drkić

### Panel 11: Concluding Remarks & New Initiative

**Ludwig Paul** (Hamburg): New Initiative on the History of Iranian Studies in the Balkans and Neighbouring Regions

19:00 Dinner

## Thursday, 4 June

09:00 Tour programme

For more information on the speakers, please see the abstracts & bios brochure.