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15 March 2016 @ 1.30 - 3.00 pm
Herder Institute, Gisonenweg 5-7, Marburg.

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Visualizing Empires:

The Rise of Large-Scale Topographic Maps and the Military Survey of the Habsburg Lands

Eighteenth-century-Eurasian empires invested significant resources in obtaining detailed topographic maps of their dominions. This talk explores the results of the "imperial cartographic gaze" through which imperial agents transposed vast and complex domains into manageable, comprehensible maps empowering rulers against external and internal rivals. After a general introduction to Eurasian cartographic projects, I will focus on the Habsburg Monarchy under Maria Theresa (1740-1780) and Joseph II (1765-1790), and the first Military Survey of the Habsburg lands (1763-1787). Vienna's desire to codify, in the form of detailed maps, met a variety of challenges. In Transylvania and the Austrian Netherlands, the limited number of trained mapmakers and the high financial costs slowed down operations. The priorities of provincial authorities influenced the degree of local cooperation with imperial representatives and the ways in which provincial agents breached the security of highly sensitive cartographic material.

** part of the CEU-HI joint workshop on Historical Cartography **

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