

OpenAtlas



in Action

Mapping Data, Connecting Knowledge

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Alexander Watzinger, Bernhard Koschiček-Krombholz, Katharina Wünsche, Olivia Reichl

OpenAtlas

A Database System for the Humanities and Beyond

Alexander Watzinger (Alex)

- Lead developer of [OpenAtlas](#)
- Since 2017 at the [ACDH-CH](#)
- Loves open source and scientific projects



INDIGO workshop 2021

OpenAtlas



- Project site: <https://openatlas.eu>
- Open source, browser based database software
- Acquire, edit and manage research data
- Based on the model of [CIDOC CRM](#)
- Initiated over 10 ago by Stefan Eichert
- Mainly developed at the [ACDH-CH](#) / [ÖAW](#)

Mission Statement

- Open source – open access
- Transparent workflow and communication
- High-quality data integrity and coding standards
- Usability
- Interoperable: CIDOC, API, FAIR principles, ext. references

OpenAtlas Collaborations

- With projects from all fields of the humanities
- Mostly historical, archaeological and prosopographic projects
- A lot of synergies between the projects

The logo for MAMEMS, featuring the word in a stylized blue font with a small triangle above the first 'M'.The logo for 'Approaching Byzantium', with the words stacked vertically and a vertical line of red and white bars to the right.The logo for MEDCON, with 'MED' in black and 'CON' in black, separated by a colorful geometric pattern of red, yellow, and blue lines.The logo for FemCare Vienna, featuring a stylized profile of a woman's head in purple and white, with the text 'FemCare Vienna' to the right.The logo for 'Moving Byzantium', with the text in black and a red arrow pointing to the right.The logo for bITEM, featuring a blue and green geometric pattern to the left of the text 'bITEM'.The logo for 'connec', featuring a network of colored dots connected by lines, with the text 'connec' to the right.The logo for THANADOS, with the word in bold black letters and a small skull icon at the end.The logo for acch, with the letters 'ac' stacked above 'ch' in a stylized font.

Development

- Pure open source technology
- Releases about every month
- Close cooperation with users
- No project branching
- Coding standards, tests

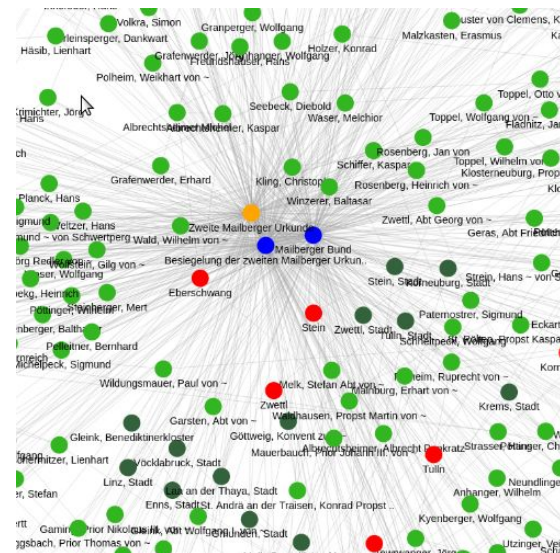


Structured Data - Aim

- Search
- Compare
- Merge
- Research questions

Structured Data - Workflow

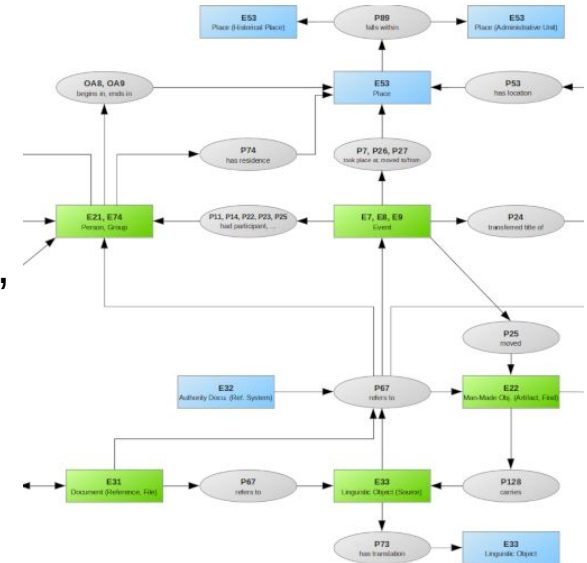
- Identify classes for entities
- Add attributes
- Link entities -> network
- Challenge: Balance between easy data entry and acquiring detailed information



<https://demo.openatlas.eu/overview/network/>

CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model

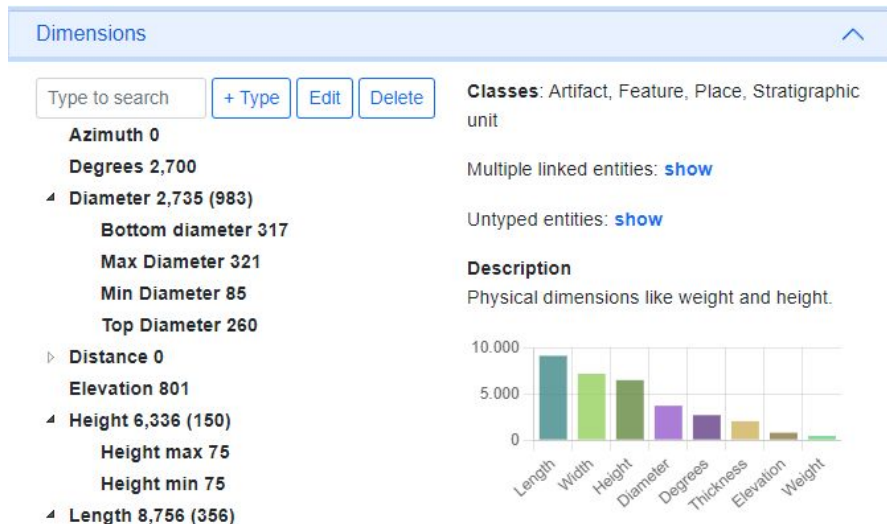
- International standard (ISO)
- From the CIDOC CRM Special Interest Group
- Specifies classes for entities like actor, source, event, place and rules how to link them
- Stored in an object oriented network



<https://demo.openatlas.eu/overview/model>

Features - Data Enrichment

- Standard types
- Custom types
- Value types
- Linked open data
 - Wikidata
 - GeoNames
 - Custom, e.g. Vial, GND

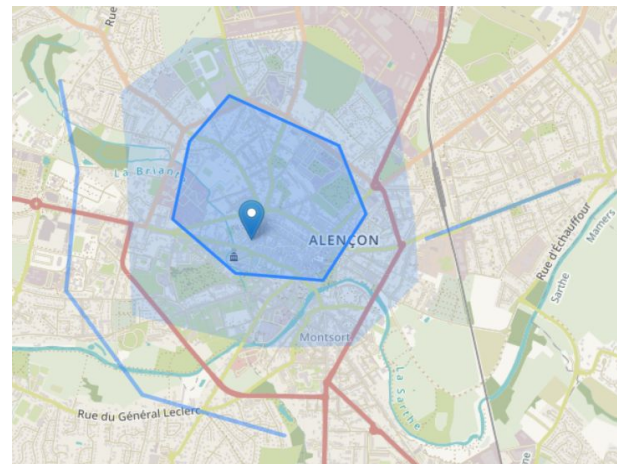


Features - Solutions for Uncertainty

Time

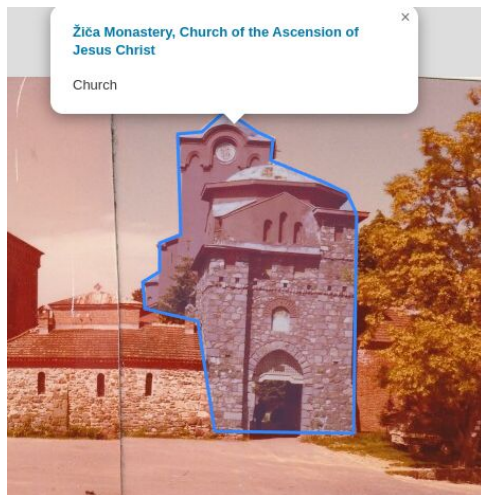
Begin	1011	01	01	comment
	1020	12	31	
End	1425	08	01	destruction
	1425	10	31	

Space



Features - Annotations

Image



Text

Annotate

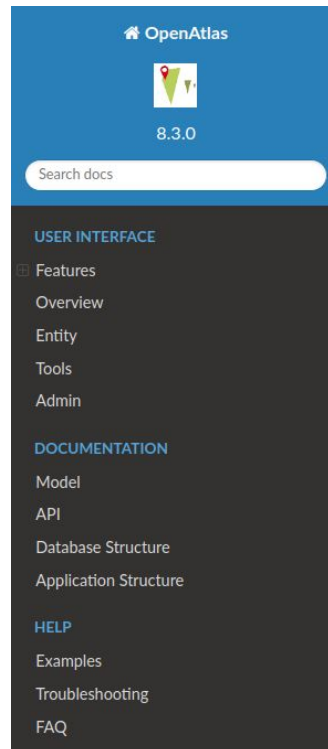
Text **annotation** is the practice and the **result** of adding a note or gloss to a text, which **may include highlights** or underlining, comments, footnotes, tags, and links. Text annotations can include notes written for a reader's private purposes, as well as shared annotations written for the purposes of collaborative writing and editing, commentary, or social reading and sharing. In some fields, text annotation is comparable to metadata insofar as it is added post hoc, and provides information about a text without fundamentally altering that original text.[1] Text annotations are sometimes referred to as marginalia, though some reserve this term specifically for hand-written notes made in the margins of books or manuscripts. Annotations have been found to be useful and help to develop knowledge of English literature.

Annotations

annotation Entity ID: 50625 Comment: An interesting remark and a linked entity.	✎ 🗑
may include highlights Comment: A remark without a linked entity	✎ 🗑
result Entity ID: 132486	✎ 🗑

Features - Documentation

- Project website: openatlas.eu
- Code on [GitHub](#)
- Extensive [User Manual](#)
- Technical [Wiki](#), [installation guide](#)
- [Ticket system](#) and [roadmap](#) for planning
- Public meeting [protocols](#)



Features - and a lot more

- User management
- Archaeological finds with detailed mapping
- Fileupload + IIIF integration
- Data integrity checks
- ... see the [Features](#) page in manual

Data Exchange and Semantic Connectivity in OpenAtlas

Bernhard Koschiček-Krombholz

Bernhard Koschiček-Krombholz

- Studied
 - *Computer Science* at Applied University Technikum Vienna
 - *History* at University of Vienna
- Since 2019 developer at [ACDH-CH](#)
- Responsibilities
 - API
 - Backend development
 - Server administration

Getting data into OpenAtlas

- Manual Entry
- CSV Import
- Custom Scripts

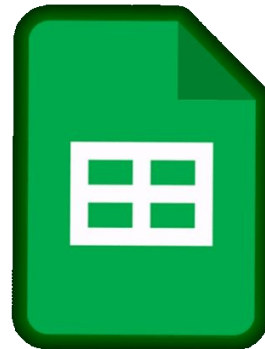




Manual Entry via User Interface

- Primary & intended method
- User-friendly web forms
- Ideal for detailed, individual records & ongoing work
- Ensures data quality using built-in controls

<https://lmu.openatlas.eu/>

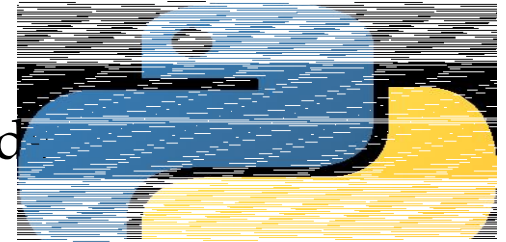


CSV Import via Admin Area

- For importing *bulk*, structured data
- Uses standardized CSV (Comma Separated Values) files
- Requires specific file format/structure
- Check out the [Manual](#)

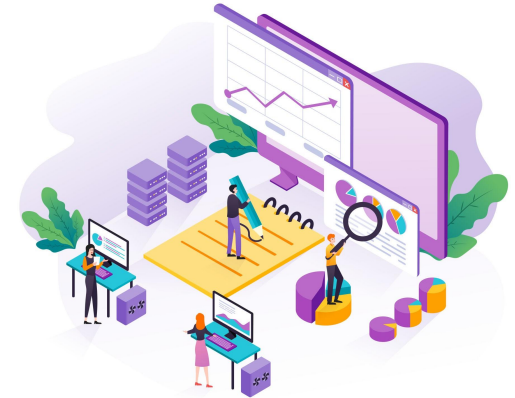
Custom Python Scripts

- Maximum flexibility for complex/custom needs
- Requires:
 - Python programming skills
 - Deep knowledge of OpenAtlas internals (code, database)
- Use with caution; not for typical users



Getting Your Research Data Out

- Analysis, Visualization, Sharing, Integration
- **Methods:**
 - SQL Access (Direct Database - Advanced)
 - CSV Export (Simple Tables)
 - Web API (Flexible & Structured Data)



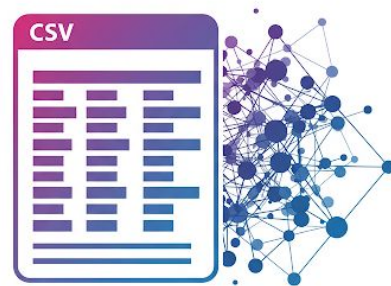
Direct Database Access (SQL)



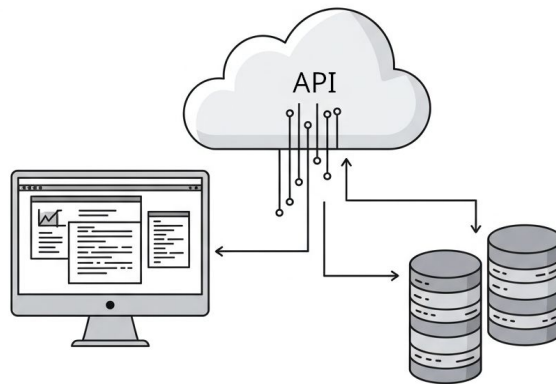
- Most powerful, most complex
- Direct access to the raw PostgreSQL database
- Requires SQL knowledge & database structure understanding
- Use Cases: Backups, development, very complex queries

CSV Export

- Simple text files (Comma Separated Values)
- Direct export from web interface
- Good for simple lists & tables
- Network data (nodes/edges for Gephi)
- **Limitations:**
 - "Flattens" complex relationships
 - Can lose context/metadata



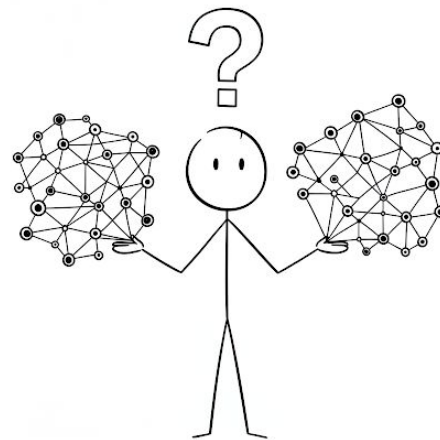
The Web API



- **Flexibility:** Ask for specific data using filters/queries
- **Structure:** Richer formats (like JSON) preserve relationships better
- **Automation:** Allows scripting for analysis/integration
- **Connectivity:** Foundation for linking data across systems

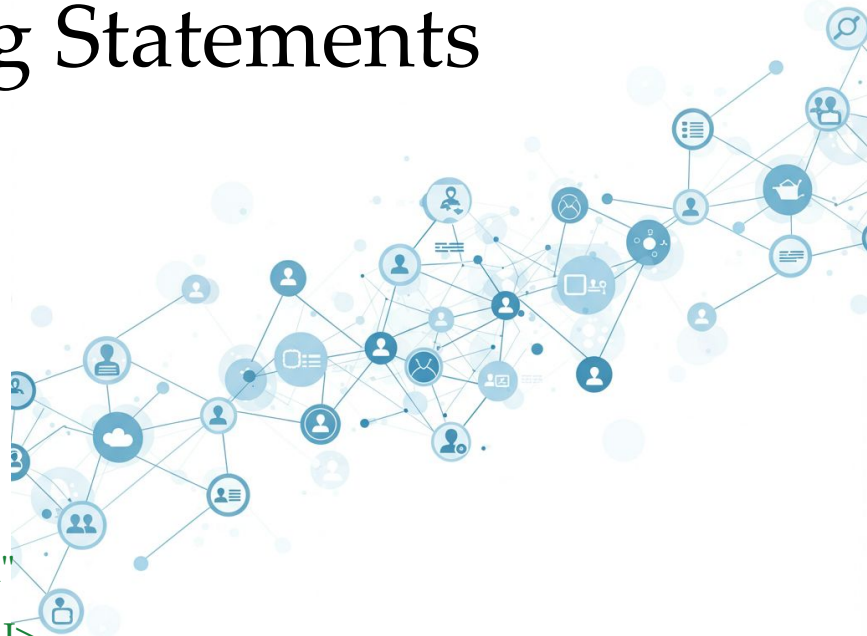
Why Care About "Linked Data"?

- Today's Web
- Semantic Web Vision
- Linked Data Principles:
 - Use **URIs** as unique IDs for things
 - Make these URIs look available online (HTTP)
 - Provide structured data (using **RDF**) when looked up
 - Include **links** (other URIs) to related data



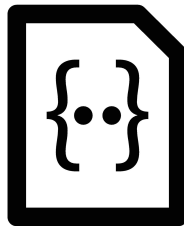
Core Idea: RDF - Making Statements

- **RDF = Resource Description Framework**
- **Data Model:** Simple statements called **Triples**
 - **Subject:** The thing
 - **Predicate:** The property/relationship
 - **Object:** The value or another thing
- **Example:** `<Munich_URI> <population> "1.5 Million"`
- **Example:** `<Munich_URI> <country> <Germany_URI>`
- **Result:** A network ('graph') of connected facts.



Web-Friendly Linked Data: JSON-LD

- **JSON:** Very common format for web data.
- **JSON-LD (JSON for Linking Data):** Puts RDF triples into JSON structure.
- **Uses a @context:** Maps simple JSON keys (like "name") to full URIs (like <http://schema.org/name>).
- **Benefit:** Embeds meaning into familiar JSON; good for APIs & web apps.



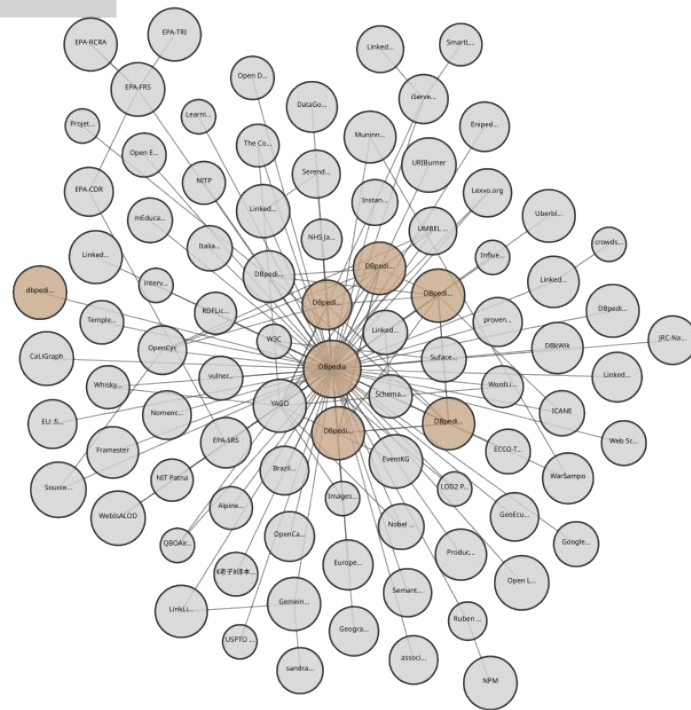
Conceptual Example

```
{
  "@context": {
    "name": "http://schema.org/name",
    "population": "http://example.org/prop/population",
    "country": "http://example.org/prop/country"
  },
  "@id": "http://example.org/entity/Munich", // The Subject URI
  "name": "Munich",
  "population": 1500000, // Literal Object
  "country": { "@id": "http://example.org/entity/Germany" } // Link Object
}
```

Legend

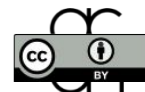
Wikipedia Related

Other



- **LOD** = Linked Data + Open License
- **Open License:**
 - Permits free use
 - reuse
 - distribution
- **Result:**
 - Global, interconnected, accessible Web

The Cross-Domain Linked Open Data Cloud from lod-cloud.net





Why LOD Matters for Digital Humanities

- Easier **Data Integration** (combine diverse sources).
- Enhanced **Discoverability** (follow links to related info).
- Build **Smarter Applications** (software understands relationships).
- Increased **Transparency & Reuse** of research data.

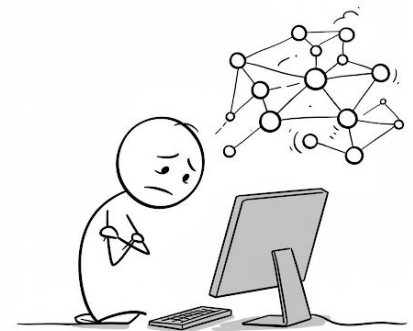


Digital Humanities Key Aggregators/Hubs

- **Europeana:** European cultural heritage
- **Wikidata:** Collaborative knowledge base (like Wikipedia for data)
- **Pelagios Commons:** Linking historical places
- **Getty Vocabularies:** Standard terms/IDs for art, places, names

LOD: It's Powerful, But Not Always Easy

- **Complexity:** Learning curve
- **Data Quality:** Consistency is hard across sources
- **Link Rot:** Links can break over time
- **Tooling & Expertise:** Need specialized tools & skills
- **Sustainability:** Keeping data & URIs maintained long-term



Quelle Ereignis Akteur **Ort** Artefakt Referenz Typ Datei

Suchbegriff



CA

DE

EN

ES

FR



Ort > + Ort

OpenAtlas 8.11.0

Name * Munich

Alias München



Typ ⓘ Ändern

Administrative unit ⓘ

Ändern

Case study * Other ⓘ

Ändern

Historical place ⓘ

Ändern

GeoNames ⓘ 2867714

exact match

Wikidata ⓘ Q1726

exact match

Datum ⓘ Anzeigen

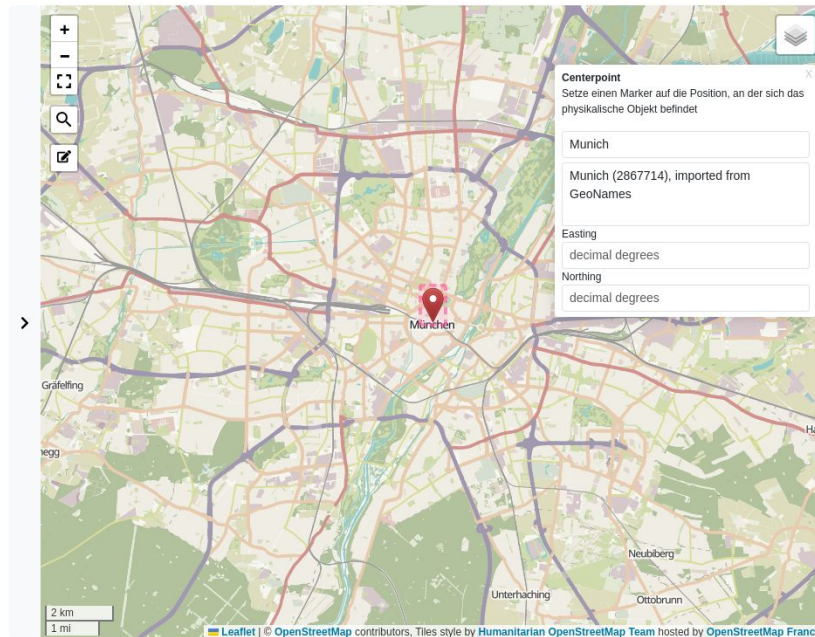
Beschreibung



Anlegen

Anlegen und weiter

Anlegen und weiter mit Feature



<https://lmu.openatlas.eu/insert/place>

Back to APIs: The Practical Connection

Application Programming Interface



Using the OpenAtlas API

- Specific URLs for specific actions
 - `/api/entity/{id}`
 - `/api/latest/`
 - `/api/geometric_entities/`
 - `/api/type_overview/`
 - `/api/chained_events/{id}`
 - `/api/search/place/{term}`
- Documentation: [Manual](#) or [Swagger](#)

The screenshot shows the Swagger UI for the OpenAtlas API. At the top, it says 'Swagger' and 'Supported by SMARTBEAR'. The API is named 'OpenAtlas API' with version '0.4.7e' and 'OAS3'. Below this, there's a description: 'An API that allows user to access data from an OpenAtlas instance.' There are links for 'OpenAtlas - Website', 'Send email to OpenAtlas', 'GPL-2.0', and 'OpenAtlas API Manual'. A 'Servers' section shows a dropdown menu with 'https://lmu.openatlas.eu/api/{basePath} - OpenAtlas Server'. The 'Computed URL' is 'https://lmu.openatlas.eu/api/0.4'. The 'Server variables' section shows a dropdown for 'basePath' with the value '0.4'. Below this, there are three endpoint sections: 'Entity Endpoint' (Information about a single entity. The requested information is provided in Linked Places format, can be accessed.), 'Entity Query Endpoint' (Combines several endpoints in one query.), and 'Entities Endpoint' (Information about multiple entities. The requested information is provided in Linked PLOUD format, can be accessed.). Each endpoint section has a 'GET' button and a URL template.

Swagger
Supported by SMARTBEAR

/openapi.json

OpenAtlas API

0.4.7e OAS3

/openapi.json

An API that allows user to access data from an OpenAtlas instance.

[OpenAtlas - Website](#)
[Send email to OpenAtlas](#)
[GPL-2.0](#)
[OpenAtlas API Manual](#)

Servers

https://lmu.openatlas.eu/api/{basePath} - OpenAtlas Server

Computed URL: https://lmu.openatlas.eu/api/0.4

Server variables

basePath 0.4

Entity Endpoint

Information about a single entity. The requested information is provided in Linked Places format, can be accessed.

GET /entity/{entityId}

Entity Query Endpoint

Combines several endpoints in one query.

GET /query/

Entities Endpoint

Information about multiple entities. The requested information is provided in Linked PLOUD format, can be accessed.

GET /cidoc_class/{cidoc_class}

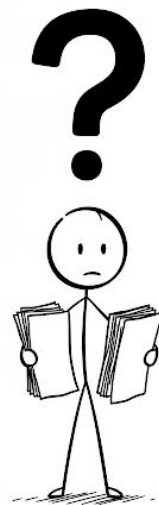


Parameters: Customizing Your Request

- Customize/filter requests
- Common Types:
 - **Path Parameters** `/api/entity/{id}`
 - **Query Parameters** `/api/entity/{id}?format=turtle&limit=30`
- Check [Swagger](#) docs for options per endpoint

Why Use the API in Digital Humanities?

- Bulk Data Extraction
- Network Analysis
- Custom Visualizations
- Integration



API Evolution: Versioning and Planning

- APIs evolve (fixes, features)
- Changes can break dependent tools
- **Semantic Versioning (v1.2.3):** Standard for changes
 - **MAJOR** (v1 -> v2): Breaking changes (code adaptation needed)
 - **MINOR** (v1.1 -> v1.2): New features (backward-compatible)
 - **PATCH** (v1.1.1 -> v1.1.2): Bug fixes (backward-compatible)
- **Key:** Pay attention to API version; breaking changes are usually announced.

Key Takeaways & Where to Explore

- **Getting Data In:**

- Manual
- CSV
- Scripts

- **Getting Data Out:**

- SQL
- CSV
- API



- **APIs enable:**

Bulk extraction, Network Analysis, Custom Visualizations, Integration.

- **Linked Data:**

Provides principles for more meaningful, connected web data (URIs, RDF, Links).

- **Explore:**

Check out [Manual](#) & [Swagger](#)

OpenAtlas Discovery – A Template for Sharing and Visualizing Research Data

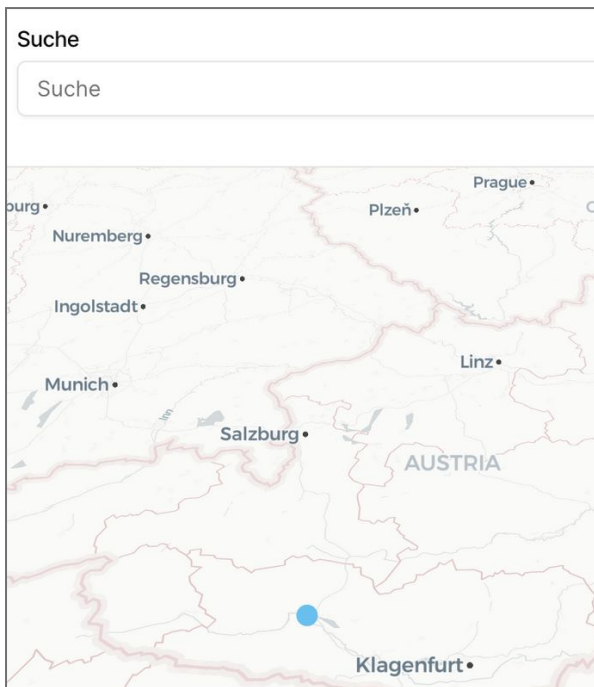
OpenAtlas Discovery

Presentation site for OpenAtlas projects

Demo: <https://frontend-demo-dev.openatlas.eu/>

- Currently under development
- Open source, accessible via [GitHub](#)
- Goal: make project data and results available to a wider audience

2 Parts



Team

Fugiat duis anim mollit sit nulla do dolore dolor eu reprehenderit proident eu tempor est adipisicing cupidatat adipisicing. Eiusmod aliquip magna dolor non sint eu dolor.



Stefan Eichert

Stefan is the the initiator and master mind behind the OpenAtlas project. His main research fields

Features

Accessible

Visual

Configurable

Current Development

- CMS (Content-Management-System)
- Map visualization for movements
- Network visualization for linked data
- Detail views for different categories (persons, places, events)

Writing in EN ▼
Fill in from another locale ▼

FIRST NAME (OPTIONAL)

LAST NAME

TITLE (OPTIONAL)

IMAGE (OPTIONAL)


Choose an image
Insert from URL

SHORT BIOGRAPHY


B I <> ↻ H ↕ ¶ ≡ ≡ +

COLORS

BRAND

 #b8cf5b

GEOJSON FEATURES


 #69c0ef

DEFAULT LOCALE

English ▼

LOGOS


LOGO (LIGHT MODE)



Choose different image
Replace with URL
Remove image

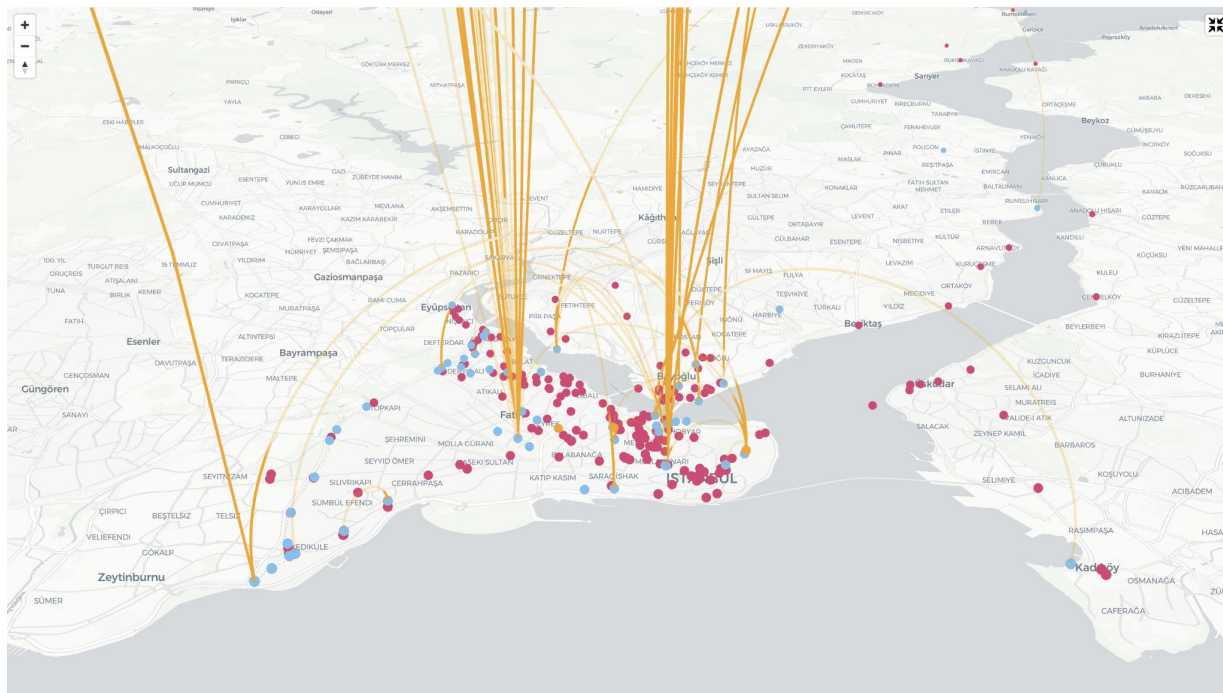
Logo in light mode

LOGO (DARK MODE)



Current Development

- ✓ CMS (Content-Management-System)
 - Map visualization for movements
 - Network visualization for linked data
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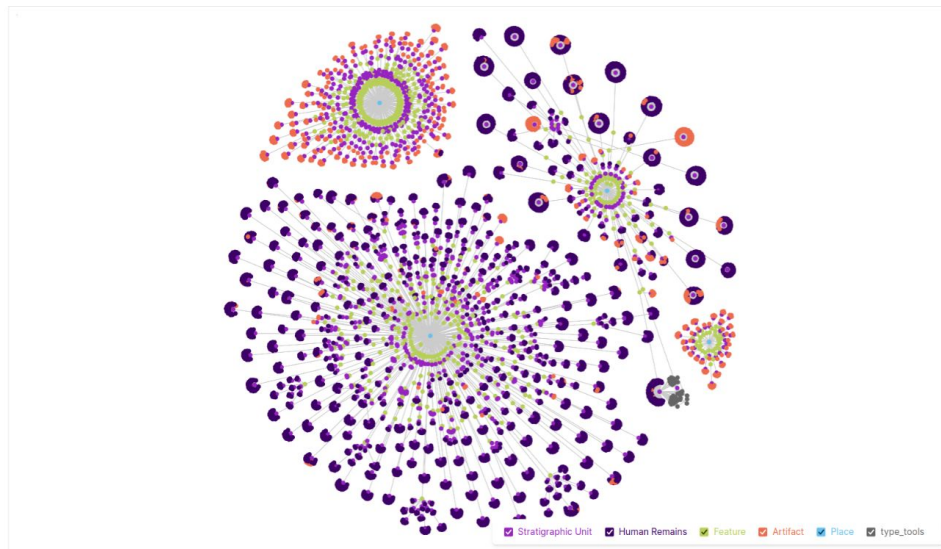
<https://approaching-byzantium.openatlas.eu/>

Current Development

- ✓ CMS (Content-Management-System)
- ✓ Map visualization for movements
 - Network visualization for linked data
 - Detail views for different categories (persons, places, events)



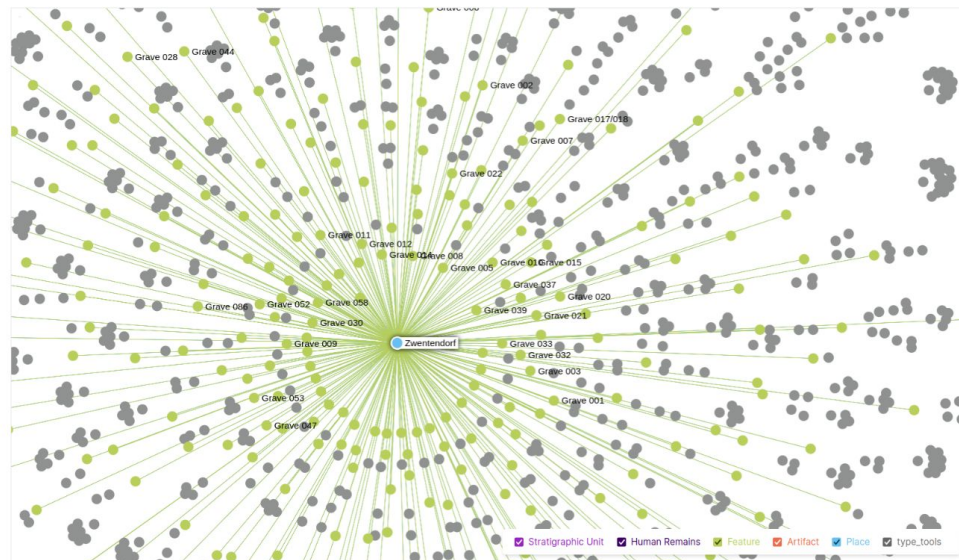
Search





Search

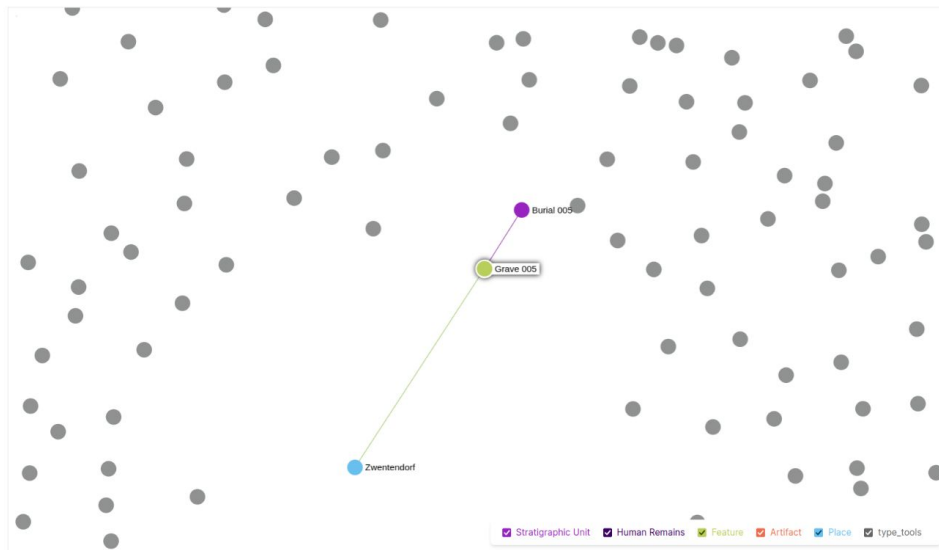
zwentendorf

[Search](#)



Search

Search



Current Development

- ✓ CMS (Content-Management-System)
- ✓ Map visualization for movements
- ✓ Network visualization for linked data
 - Detail views for different categories (persons, places, events)

Feature

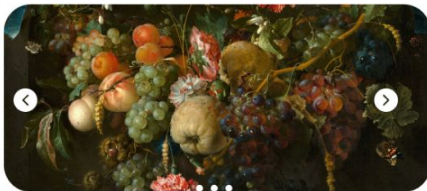
Event

Alias 1, Alias 2, Alias 3

No known calendar dates

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Ut et massa mi. Aliquam in hendrerit urna.

Single Grave Height Length Width Stone Placement Flat Grave



Preceding: EventName

Superceeding: EventName

Parent-event title

Dates

Description: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Ut et massa mi.

Sub-Events

x

Sub-Event 1

Actors

x

Title

Involvement

From - Till

Details

TITLE

Some Property

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Piccottini 1976

STRATIGRAPHIC UNIT

Burial 01/72

Feature

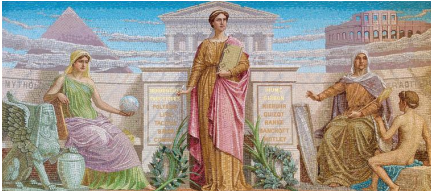
Actor

Alias 1, Alias 2, Alias 3

No known calendar dates

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Ut et massa mi. Aliquam in hendrerit urna.

Single Grave Height Length Width Stone Placement Flat Grave



Important Places

Relations

Title Residency

From - Till

Title Involvement

From - Till

Title Residency

From - Till

Title Involvement

From - Till

Title Residency

From - Till

Title Involvement

From - Till

Title

Details

TITLE

Some Property

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Piccottini 1976

STRATIGRAPHIC UNIT

Burial 01/72

Feature

Group

Alias 1, Alias 2, Alias 3

No known calendar dates

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Ut et massa mi. Aliquam in hendrerit urna.

Single Grave Height Length Width Stone Placement Flat Grave



Important Places

Relations

Title Residency

From - Till

Title Involvement

From - Till

Title Residency

From - Till

Title Involvement

From - Till

Title Residency

From - Till

Title Involvement

From - Till

Members

Title

Involvement

From - Till

Title

Involvement

From - Till

Title

Involvement

From - Till

Live Demo

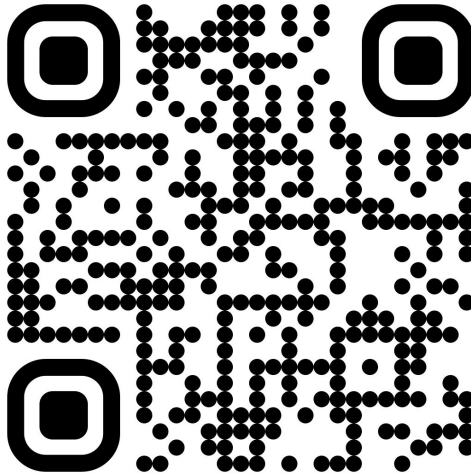
[Startseite](#)[Daten](#)[Karte](#)[Netzwerk](#)[Team](#)[Über das Projekt](#)[DE](#) | [EN](#)

OpenAtlas Discovery

Das ist eine Demo für [OpenAtlas Discovery](#), eine Präsentationsseite für [OpenAtlas](#). Die Demodaten wurden freundlicherweise bereitgestellt von: [THANADOS](#) - Die Anthropologische und Archäologische Datenbank von Sepulturen

[Daten anzeigen](#)[Karte anzeigen](#)

THANADOS (Die Anthropologische und Archäologische Datenbank von Sepulturen) beschäftigt sich mit der digitalen Sammlung und Darstellung frühmittelalterlicher Friedhöfe im heutigen Österreich.



Questionnaire
for tomorrow's
workshop

<https://forms.gle/AAZsVzjmHyEFwTYn6>

Thank you!

