

**Wittgenstein-Prize Project**  
**“Mobility, Microstructures and Personal Agency in Byzantium”**

## Forum Moving Byzantium VII

The Wittgenstein Project Team invites you to our seventh group discussion meeting. “Forum Moving Byzantium VII” will take place on Thursday 28.9.2017, from 18:00 to 19:30, at the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies (University of Vienna, Postgasse 7, 1010 Vienna, Staircase 1, Third Floor, Seminarraum).

We will discuss the topic “**Evolution of Large-Scale Societies**” The presenter will be **Prof. Dr. Peter Turchin**, University of Connecticut. After a brief introduction in English, a group discussion will follow.

Peter Turchin (<http://peterturchin.com/>) is professor at the University of Connecticut in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology as well as in the Department of Anthropology and in the Department of Mathematics and External Faculty member of the Complexity Science Hub Vienna. Starting with his monograph “*Historical Dynamics: Why States Rise and Fall*” (2003), he has initiated various attempts to combine historical research with mathematical modelling, calling this new approach “*Cliodynamics*”. This is also the name of the open-access E-Journal he established in 2010, dedicated to “Quantitative History and Cultural Evolution” ([http://escholarship.org/uc/irows\\_cliodynamics](http://escholarship.org/uc/irows_cliodynamics)). His most recent publications include “*Ultrasociety: How 10,000 Years of War Made Humans the Greatest Cooperators on Earth*” (2016, <http://peterturchin.com/ultrasociety/>) and “*Ages of Discord. A Structural-Demographic Analysis of American History*” (2016, <http://peterturchin.com/ages-of-discord/>).

The Forum Moving Byzantium VII will provide the unique opportunity to discuss with Prof. Turchin his (much debated) approach to historical research and social dynamics, with a focus on the evolution of large-scale societies and the formation of large empires, including Byzantium. We will ask a series of questions, such as:

- How did human societies evolve from small groups, integrated by face-to-face cooperation, to huge anonymous societies of today, typically organized as states?
- What were the forces that kept together huge pre-industrial states such as Byzantium and neighbouring empires?
- Why is there so much variation in the ability of different human populations to construct viable states?

These are the preparatory readings (to be read in sequence):

- 1) Peter Turchin et al., War, Space, and the Evolution of Old World Complex Societies. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110 (41) (2013) 16384–16389. doi:10.1073/pnas.1308825110
- 2) Peter Turchin, A Theory for Formation of Large Empires. *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009) 191–217. doi:10.1017/S174002280900312X
- 3) Peter Turchin, *Ultrasociety: How 10,000 Years of War Made Humans the Greatest Cooperators on Earth*. Chaplin, Connecticut 2016, 1-44 & 181-233 (Chapters 1, 2, 9, 10)

If you are interested in **attending the event**, please contact Ms. Paraskevi Sykopetritou (Project Coordinator) in order to receive **further information and the relevant reading material**: [paraskevi.sykopetritou@univie.ac.at](mailto:paraskevi.sykopetritou@univie.ac.at) / [s.sykopetritou@gmail.com](mailto:s.sykopetritou@gmail.com)

For further information and updates on future events you may also consult our website: <http://rapp.univie.ac.at/>

We hope that you can join our Forum for fruitful discussions!