**The Transformation of the Late Roman Empire**

This formative period of early medieval history shaped the political and cultural landscape of western and central Europe for centuries to come. The Western Roman Empire from the 4th to 6th centuries disintegrated into a plurality of new political units ruled by – from the Roman point of view – „barbarian” kings. Gothic, Burgundian, Vandal, Frankish and Lombard kingdoms developed and a Latin western sphere separated from a Greek eastern Mediterranean.

The talk reflects on the reasons of these structural changes and sketches the respective realms of changes and continuities within the transformation process. In order to grasp what “transformation” meant for contemporaries who witnessed it some impressions from primary sources shall be given.