

## **Conversion between Christian denominations in the German successor kingdoms from the 5th to the 7th century**

Between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century societies in the kingdoms that have been established in the post-Roman West, have been almost completely Christianized, but their Christianity was far from uniform. The overwhelming majority of the Catholic Romans was ruled by a relatively small group of German Arians. The boundaries between these two denominations were not impenetrable – in the period of their coexistence, individuals and groups have been changing their ecclesiastical affiliations. And exactly these conversions are the main subject of my project. The research on the conversion will allow to better understand and describe the factors that were stimulating the religious changes in the late antique West.

Until now the scholars have been usually interested in conversion in the context of expansion of the great universal religions in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages. The internal diversity of Christianity was scrutinized only from the perspective of the history of the doctrine. As a result, we know very little about the social consequences of the Christian plurality. How did look the everyday contacts of the Catholics and Arians? Were there attempts to regulate and control them? How did these two denominations recognize their otherness? What were the causes of the conflicts? I am convinced that researching the cases of conversions we can get answers to those general problems. But I will address also many more particular issues, which have not been described in length. What can we say about the conversion of the clergy? What kind of rites accompanied the ecclesiastical transition? What was happening with the places of cult and sacred objects after the conversion?

The accomplishment of the objectives outlined above will be based on the extensive work of gathering the evidence. In normative sources, both ecclesiastical and secular, I will seek the regulations of mutual relations between the Arian and Catholic Church, traces of the different strategies of proselytism and the methods of controlling the process of conversion. I will compare this evidence with the specific cases of conversion that I will search in the narrative sources and in letters. Moreover, the relevant information will be provided by inscriptions (e.g. the reconsecrations of the heretical churches), papyri (e.g. the Ravenna papyri where plenty of information about the Gothic Arian communities in Ostrogothic Italy can be find), and by liturgical sources (e.g. the liturgical books, where the description of conversion rituals have been preserved).