

Early Modern
Witch Trials in
the Habsburg Monarchy
(16th–18th Centuries)

CONTRA SAGAS

Early Modern Witch Trials in the Habsburg Monarchy

(16th – 18th Centuries)

(Zagreb, 13th – 14th October 2026)

We are pleased to announce the first international conference dedicated to witch persecutions and trials from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century in the territories of the former Habsburg Monarchy. The conference will be held in Zagreb (Croatia) from 13 to 14 October 2026.

The conference is organized by the Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb in partnership with several Croatian and international institutions (including the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research; the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb; the Croatian Institute of History, the Croatian State Archives; the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts; the University of Szeged, Hungary and others).

We would like to invite scholars from a wide range of humanities and social-science disciplines (history, ethnology and cultural anthropology, folklore studies, philology, sociology, psychology, law, women's and gender studies, and others) to participate.

Witch trials in the Habsburg Monarchy represent a complex and insufficiently integrated field of research, situated at the intersection of legal history, religious change, gender regimes, social control, and vernacular belief systems. While individual regions and cases have been extensively studied, **comparative, transregional, and interdisciplinary approaches** remain relatively fragmented.

This conference aims to provide a **critical, interdisciplinary forum** for examining early modern witch persecutions across Habsburg territories, fostering dialogue between different methodological traditions and regional research contexts. Emphasis will be placed on **new perspectives, comparative frameworks, and recent theoretical and archival developments**.

We invite proposals addressing witch trials and persecutions in the Habsburg Monarchy from the 16th to the 18th century, including but not limited to:

- Regional and comparative perspectives within Habsburg territories
- Gender, sexuality, and the construction of deviance
- The body of the witch
- Social, economic, and political contexts of witch persecutions
- Religious discourses, demonology, and confessional conflicts
- Popular beliefs, folklore, and vernacular knowledge
- Ethnicity, marginality, and social exclusion
- Violence, coercion, confession
- Material culture, space, and the geography of witch trials
- Methodological and theoretical innovations in witchcraft studies
- Digital humanities and new archival approaches

The conference proceedings will be published in a peer-reviewed edited volume following the event, with publication planned for 2027.

The registration fee will include:

Conference materials

Coffee breaks

Conference dinner (on the final evening of the conference)

A guided tour in English on the history of witchcraft trials in central Zagreb

Please submit abstracts to contra.sagas@fhs.unizg.hr.

Deadline for submission of abstracts: **April 15th** 2026.

Notification of acceptance: **April 22nd** 2026.

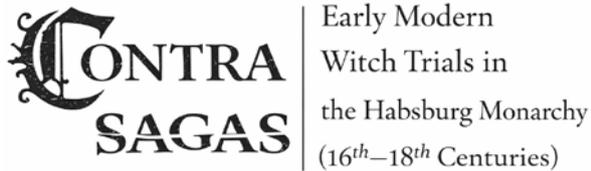
The programme and further information will be announced by 1 June 2026 on the conference website: www.starapovijest.eu/en

How to write abstract:

Abstracts should not exceed 250 words.

Abstracts should be written in Times New Roman, 12 pt, 1.5 line spacing, justified.

Title (1st row), name and affiliation (2nd row) – both centered.



Please include 5–10 keywords below the abstract.

Conference fee:

Registration by 15th May 2026:

regular fee 50€

student fee: 25€

Late registration by 15th July 2026:

regular fee 75€

student fee 35€

Organization Committee

Deniver Vukelić (Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb), Chair of the Organising Committee

Mladen Tomorad (Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Darko Vitek (Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Zvezdana Sikirić Assouline (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Nataša Polgar (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research)

Petar Bujas (Kulturni informativni centar, Zagreb)

Scientific Committee

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Mladen Tomorad (Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Darko Vitek (Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

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Mirjam Mencej (Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana)

Brandl Gergely (University of Szeged, Szent-Györgyi Albert Medical School, Department for Medical Communication and Translation Studies, Latin Terminology and History of Medicine Group / Hungarian Research Network-University of Szeged-Eötvös Loránd University, Research Group for Classical Studies)