

Faith in returning of the dead is rooted in all cultures. According to the primitive eschatological beliefs, the deceased person could become not only the patron and friend of the living, but also a bad ghost, acting to the detriment of the living. Belief in demonic "living dead" (Defuncti Vivi), were a consequence of the cessation of witch hunts, or in some areas of modern Europe functioned in their place. Belief in witches, the consequence of which were trials and executions of suspects, spread across Europe from west to east. And the belief in the return of the evil dead (German Wiedergänger or Nachzehrer) in the area of central Germany were received from the opposite direction. The executions of individuals accused of malicious activity after death, can survive in the eastern territories of the German-speaking area in place of witch-hunt. Faith in returning, harming the dead, filled a gap, resulting from the cessation of witch trials. The absence of any research on this topic is so surprising about Silesia in comparison with examples from other parts of Europe as it were at the forefront of the frequency and scale of demonic phenomena in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The project would aim, through a source query to capture the scale, role, of demonic phenomena on the modern Silesia.

This project is going to be in a way an addition to all existing researches of European witchcraft processes up to now. In the opinion of the manager the acquired source material and its analysis can help to find an answer to the question, what basically happened after the witches? In what way did the residents of Silesia and Moravia exorcize their own fears? What kind of system did they work out against the returning dead and how did it differ from the system already proven in the case of witches? For what reasons could it come to the marginalisation of an individual? Especially that some people were alienated by the society not until after their death, despite the fact that during the lifetime they enjoyed well-deserved respect of the fellow citizens. Was the fear of the "undead" so big or maybe even bigger than of the witches that over time some individual categories of them have developed, depending on the scale of the harm to the living? Especially that we are dealing here with the belief in the "revived", people who weren't alive anymore, but only returned to a state of an apparent existence, still being dead. Did they become by this fact more dangerous for the contemporary societies? What manifested their harmful activity? And finally how can you "kill" again the person who was actually dead and what kind of rituals accompanied this "execution".