



International Conference

**OLD AGE AND AGEING:
HISTORIOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL
PERSPECTIVES**

Koper, November 15–16, 2023

PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

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KOPER 2023

International Conference OLD AGE AND AGEING: HISTORIOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES
Programme and Abstracts

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Compassionate and Hostile Ageism over Time: Trends and Challenges

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The subject of the conference (resulting from a research project) is rooted in the conviction of the importance of exploring cultural and social representations of old age, addressing a number of issues, such as – among others – the question of the establishment of social mechanisms, the question of heterogeneity of the experience of old age and the differences in the position of men and women in old age, the question of vulnerability of the elderly in times of crisis, and the hiddenness of ageism in different social and cultural practices. If 19th-century bourgeois society was oblivious to all the social problems associated with ageing, it – like contemporary society – needed the elderly in both the organisation of family and individual life. Furthermore, they have always been prized for their economic power, experience and social networks, as they have for a very long time had an important function in the legal and economic relations of the community as a whole. At the same time, however, society has enveloped the same age group in a bunch of stereotypes linked to the fear of one's own passing, which could affect one's position in society and the community, one's attitudes, one's self-representations, one's life, and in many cases, one's very survival. Stereotypes and cultural practices point to deep-seated collective fears related to one's own passing and powerlessness, which also give rise to ambivalent attitudes towards intergenerational and other forms of solidarity as a primary collective sentiment. It also links to a persistent belief that the sight of a mutilated body can affect the health of the "healthy", to the understanding of the relationship between the hereafter and the beyond, and to the people who are closer to that boundary. Since the late 18th century, the process of ageing has been concealed and disguised by the medicalisation of life, by social isolation and confinement behind the walls of total institutions, by social marginalisation, by ideas of progress and self-responsibility, but also by the creation of images of vigorous old people who actively defy the inexorable mechanisms of biological passing until the last day. These are all themes that will be covered in different ways and from different angles by the contributions at the conference, which aims first and foremost to highlight the plurality and heterogeneity of perceptions and representations related to old age and ageing.

CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies,
Slovenia



ORGANISATION AND PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Dragica ČEČ, Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia
Urška BRATOŽ, Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia
Oskar OPASSI, Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia
Štefan HADALIN, Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia

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This conference has been financially supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS), through the research project *Cultural-historical aspects of senescence: experiences, representations, identities* (J6-2572) and research programme *The Mediterranean and Slovenia* (P6-0272).



PROGRAMME

International Conference

OLD AGE AND AGEING:

HISTORIOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Koper, November 15–16, 2023

Humanistic centre (Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia)

WEDNESDAY, November 15, 2023

9.00-9.30

Registration

9.30-10.00

Conference Opening

10.00–10.15

Jaco Zuijderduijn: *Caregivers, Charity, or Cash? Making Ends Meet during One's Final Years in Premodern Europe*

10.15–10.30

Ludwig Pelzl: *Old and Proud. Early Modern Old Age Welfare and Its Recipients between Frailty, Privilege and Virtue, Germany 1500-1800*

10.30–10.45

Danijela Doblanović Šuran: *Old Men as Necessary Witnesses in Processes of Establishing Borders*

10.45–11.00

Marija Mogorović Crljenko: *Age of Witnesses in the Books of Marriage Dispensations and Marriage Licenses in the Diocese of Poreč in the First Half of the 17th Century*

11.00–11.15

Selina Bentsch: *A Female Perspective on Age and Aging in Enlightened Switzerland. Anna Maria Preiswerk-Iselin's Struggle for Female Education around 1800 as Described in Her Diaries*

11.15–11.30

Dragica Čeč: *The Inevitable Old Age: Urban and Rural Experiences*

11.30–11.45

Filip Draženović: *The Elderly in Early Modern Health Regimens*

12.00–13.00

Lunch break

13.00–13.15

Tilen Glavina: *La vecchiezza et l'Apologia: An Unpublished Treatise on Old Age of the Venetian Drachio Quintio from the Beginning of the 17th Century*

13.15–13.30

Meta Remec: *"Live Long or Live Happily?" Longing for Longevity in the 19th and 20th Century*

13.30–13.45

Urška Bratož: *Old Age and Health: Some Reflections from the Austrian Littoral*

13.45–14.00

Katarina Keber: *Elders in Ljubljana in the 19th Century: An Analysis of the Death Registers from the St. Peter Parish*

14.00–14.15

Robert Devetak: *The Activities of the Gorizia Charity Commission in Supporting the Socially Deprived Elderly Population*

14.15–14.30

Iva Milovan Delić: Longevity Despite the War: Morbidity and Mortality of the Elderly in Pula during the First World War

14.30–15.30

Discussion

THURSDAY, November 16, 2023

09.30–09.45

Ana Cergol Paradiž and Petra Testen Koren: *Ageing Slovenian Domestic Servants in Ljubljana (The Kingdom of the SHS) and Trst/Trieste (The Kingdom of Italy) in the Interwar Period*

09.45–10.00

Gašper Mithans: *Reconversions and the Correlation between Religiosity and Age Cohorts in Interwar Slovenia*

10.00–10.15

Branko Šuštar: *Attitudes Towards Old Age at School and among Teachers in the Second Half of the 19th Century*

10.15–10.30

Dunja Dobaja: *Pension Insurance in Socialist Slovenia*

10.30–10.45

Oskar Opassi: *Age Structure of the Workforce at Delamaris*

10.45–11.15

Coffee break

11.15–11.30

Tomislav Vignjević: *The Painter Ivana Kobilca and Images of Older People in the Second Half of the 19th Century*

11.30–11.45

Dagmar Gramshammer-Hohl: *Politicising Forgetfulness: Representations of Dementia in Recent South Slavic Fiction*

11.45–12.00

Urša Marinšek: *Stories of “Decline” and “Defying Old Age” – Representations of Care Home Residents in Slovenian Literature*

12.00–12.15

Marlena Plavšič: *Wisdom and Well-Being in the Old Age*

12.15–12.30

Otto Gerdina: *Compassionate and Hostile Ageism over Time: Trends and Challenges*

12.30–13.30

Discussion

ABSTRACTS

CAREGIVERS, CHARITY, OR CASH? MAKING ENDS MEET DURING ONE'S FINAL YEARS IN PREMODERN EUROPE

Jaco ZUIJDERDIJN

Lund University, School of Economics and Management

Ageing comes with the challenge of physical and mental decline and threatens livelihood. Men and women who lived beyond fifty are likely to have been unable to perform as well as in their youth. They saw their labour power and ability to live independently decline; the care they required could be provided by a variety of groups and organizations. Horden and Smith (2003, 1) identify a 'locus of care' consisting of the immediate family, the wider community, and charities. Elderly men and women could hope (a combination of) these three were willing and able to provide support. This paper focuses on a fourth, and somewhat overlooked option: to purchase lifelong care. Ageing men and women could turn to a variety of arrangements that allowed them to exchange property for various types of support for the remainder of their lives. Support could be in the form of food and lodging with an individual or family. It could also be arranged by purchasing a corrody to be enjoyed in a religious institution or hospital. And support could come from a fixed monetary income that compensated reduced earnings. These three arrangements involved official contracts in which elderly men and women purchased care with family, members of the wider community, and institutions. These contracts allow historians to investigate ageing individuals' demands for care, and to connect later-life health to demographic and socioeconomic questions. What could be done in the absence of relatives willing and able to act as caregivers? Did gender and class influence the ability to secure a decent old age? And how did opportunities to contract care fluctuate over time? The paper will identify the later Middle Ages as a time when elderly individuals were in a relatively good position to secure their livelihood and speculates how this may have influenced late-medieval ageing and care.

**OLD AND PROUD. EARLY MODERN OLD AGE WELFARE AND
ITS RECIPIENTS BETWEEN FRAILTY, PRIVILEGE AND VIRTUE,
GERMANY 1500-1800**

Ludwig PELZL

European University Institute

My contribution will raise the central problem of the cultural history of old age in early modern Europe. Was theirs a series of changing, sometimes positive and sometimes negative perceptions, cultural representations of old age or was this image inherently ambiguous and highly context-dependent? If the latter is more accurate, how did contrasting images of old age merge and connect in particular circumstances? For this I will provide a case study from early modern Germany (c. 1500-1800): Two small “retirement homes” in the Bavarian city of Nuremberg which not only provided old age support to elderly men, but also produced a century-long series of portraits of these men, which reveal a lot about cultural conventions. Mixing frailty with reputation and hiding ‘broken bodies’, they showcase the complexity of a profound cultural analysis of early modern old age and its context-sensitive elements. Considerations from art and visual history will stand side-by-side with reflections on a particular social milieu from which the elderly stemmed. After all, old age was also a symbolic resource for the urban government (which ran the two institutions), adding a political layer of analysis. My study seeks to show the multiplicity of meanings of old age, but also how only careful context analysis can unlock them. It seeks to enter into dialogue with historic and contemporary studies, tackling the challenge of demographic change in current societies.

OLD MEN AS NECESSARY WITNESSES IN PROCESSES OF ESTABLISHING BORDERS

Danijela DOBLANOVIĆ ŠURAN

Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Faculty of Humanities

And you, prefects, and the entire municipality of Barban, show your rights and documents and the elders who know justice and boundaries between you and Guran and Barban. In the most famous Istrian document regarding border demarcation, known as the “Istrian razvod,” the importance of the elderly in the process of delineating boundaries is emphasized. During a time when written records were rare and oral tradition and agreements were crucial for community functioning, these individuals were respected and indispensable. They often served as witnesses in court, especially when it was necessary to prove something that had occurred long ago, perhaps even before their own birth. However, they had heard about it from their ancestors and passed down the information. Their significance during border demarcation or boundary conflicts, known as “diferencije,” is unquestionable. Before the advent of modern cartography, the sworn testimony of older witnesses regarding the boundaries held the same weight as a written document.

AGE OF WITNESSES IN THE BOOKS OF MARRIAGE DISPENSATIONS AND MARRIAGE LICENSES IN THE DIOCESE OF POREČ IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 17TH CENTURY

Marija MOGOROVIĆ CRLJENKO

Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Faculty of Humanities

Observing the records from the Diocese of Poreč in the first half of the 17th century, we can gain insight into the role and significance of witnesses' ages in the context of marriage dispensations and marriage licenses. These documents reveal that a common hurdle faced by couples seeking marriage was their familial connection, either through blood or through in-laws, which required obtaining a dispensation. In such cases, the presence of older witnesses (typically above sixty years of age) was crucial, as they possessed knowledge of ancestors spanning up to the third or fourth degree of kinship. Alternatively, they might have obtained information about these ancestors from their elders. It is worth noting that both men and women acted as equal witnesses in these instances. Regarding other matters, such as cohabitation between the future spouses, sexual relations, abduction of woman for marriage, or the availability of potential marriage partners of similar social status in the town, the testimony of younger witnesses, both male and female, was deemed acceptable. The recorded ages of witnesses were often explicitly mentioned, either rounded or approximated, although there were cases where the ages were not specifically stated. This indicates that precise age calculation was not a common practice. However, the inclusion of approximate ages hints at the longevity of witnesses, even during the early modern period when average life expectancy was significantly lower compared to today. It also suggests that these individuals remained mentally sharp even in advanced years. It was important for a witness to be considered reliable that they were of sound mind.

A FEMALE PERSPECTIVE ON AGE AND AGING IN ENLIGHTENED SWITZERLAND. ANNA MARIA PREISWERK-ISELIN'S STRUGGLE FOR FEMALE EDUCATION AROUND 1800 AS DESCRIBED IN HER DIARIES

Selina BENTSCH

University of Basel, Department of History

Remaining a useful member of society was one of the top maxims of the elderly in early modern Switzerland and enlightened Europe. This was especially true for elderly women, who were often portrayed as ugly, vain and useless, especially after the climacteric period. Therefore, women had to fight all the more for prestige and recognition in old age. One such possibility of remaining useful to the public was to take on the role of a caring grandmother or matriarch, but some early modern women wanted to be more than that. One such elderly Swiss woman was Anna Maria Preiswerk-Iselin (1758-1840). She came from the educated bourgeoisie of Basel (Switzerland) and left behind an extensive diary, which she wrote for over 40 years. After the death of her husband, Preiswerk-Iselin devoted her time to promoting female education, following in her father's footsteps. To achieve her goal of founding a girl's school, she started a building project at an advanced age of almost 70, in the planning of which she was personally highly involved. The diarist serves as an example for elderly women who aspired to balance their family duties with a more socially active and beneficial lifestyle. But her plan was doomed to failure. The lecture will therefore focus on strategies of ageing women who tried to expand their female agency and to take on a more meaningful role in society. The topic is part of an ongoing dissertation project at the University of Basel titled "A female perspective on age and aging: The diaries of Anna Maria Preiswerk-Iselin (1758-1840) as sources for the perception and coping with old age, illness, pain and death around 1800."

THE INEVITABLE OLD AGE: URBAN AND RURAL EXPERIENCES

Dragica ČEČ

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies

The first historians to address the question of the history of old age were either demographic historians, mainly interested in the relations between generations, or social historians, interested in the history of institutions or poverty – especially social institutions – and in the study of the development of the welfare state. Anthropological and cultural interpretations of depictions of the stages of life have revealed, in particular, the ideology of intergenerational relations, but have not paid the same attention to ageing as a specific period as they did to the other stages of life. On the other hand, there has been a strong emphasis on exploring the fluid social and cultural markers that determine transitions into old age: biological, chronological, and functional. Influenced by the development of gerontology, the medical aspects of ageing in the past and the historical ideas of eternal youth and immortality have received particular attention, but less attention has been paid to the cultural representations of knowledge and experience in old age, also linked to questions of authority, power and (social) status. Under the influence of the cultural turn, however, there has been an increased emphasis on sources that would allow a view from below: how people took advantage of the opportunities offered by power and customs, how they understood their own ageing process and their own lives, intergenerational relations and duties, and the transfer of property.

Historical studies have confirmed that certain biological and physical characteristics of an ageing person have been present for many centuries, somewhere between the ages of 60 and 70, and for some people – due to genetics and the way it works – even a little earlier. All the texts presented here also point out that both 19th century bourgeois society and modern society have needed the elders, both in the organisation of family and individual life, as they have always been desirable for their economic power, experience and social networks, and have as such played an important role in the legal and economic relations of the community as a whole for a very long time. But at the same time, the same age group was enveloped with a whole arsenal of stereotypes, which of course could have an impact on the individual's posi-

tion in society and the community, on relationships, self-representations, on his or her life and, often, on survival. Stereotypes and cultural practices point to deep-seated collective fears, related to one's own transience and powerlessness, which also give rise to ambivalent attitudes towards intergenerational and other forms of solidarity as a primary collective sentiment.

THE ELDERLY IN EARLY MODERN HEALTH REGIMENS

Filip DRAŽENVIĆ
University of Ljubljana

The purpose of the presentation will be to present the perception of old age in the early modern age health regimens, Focusing on the question of how these manuals for preserving or extending life portrayed old age and which actions they recommended. After a brief presentation of the genre itself and its importance, the presentation will continue with the presentation of Gabriel Zerbi's work *Gerontocomia*, which laid the foundation for understanding the problem of old age in the early modern age. This work will offer us a platform for reflection and understanding of some selected modern manuals for preservation of life (Leonardus Lessius, Luigi Cornaro, Thomas Elyot, *The castell of health*, ...), as well as the question of prolonging life, which was closely related.

LA VECCHIEZZA ET L'APOLOGIA: AN UNPUBLISHED TREATISE ON OLD AGE OF THE VENETIAN DRACHIO QUINTIO FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE 17TH CENTURY

Tilen GLAVINA

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies

Baldissera Quintio Drachio was born in Venice in 1532 and entered the service of the *Casa dell'Arsenale* at the age of only fourteen, where he was to spend much of his long life (84 years), and become one of the Serenissima's greatest experts in maritime construction, even though his skills were acquired mainly through practice and a superficial autodidactic culture.

Drachio more than once disapproved of the custom of building galleys according to different designs, as this led to confusion and imperfect ships. He suggested that galleys be standardised according to a single design. However, his attempt to reorganize the Arsenal ended abruptly one night, when he was ambushed and beaten by an unknown group of men. Eventually, Drachio was forced to abandon the Arsenal.

A man who wrote many treatises (his most famous work: *Visione del Drachio*) and whose name appears several times in the *Senato Mar* and in the *Patroni e provveditori all'Arsenal*, but is never accompanied by a qualification. In 1608 he wrote *Apologia*, a defence of his actions and a recollection of his deeds (it included a list of his works of a technical nature, only partially preserved), which was included in an unpublished manuscript, along with the treatise on old age dedicated to Doge Leonardo Donà. By analysing Drachio's treatise on old age, the paper will present an example of contemporary Venetian perception and understanding of aging, along with its cultural and social implications between the 16th and 17th centuries.

“LIVE LONG OR LIVE HAPPILY?” LONGING FOR LONGEVITY IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

Meta REMEC

Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana

In the following contribution, the author will outline the changing attitudes towards old age and ageing in the 19th century, when the focus on the afterlife shifted towards earthly existence and avoidance of suffering. With advancing individualism, each person was increasingly in charge of how they would age and how long they would live. The longing for eternal youth, happiness, and perfection already in this world was undoubtedly associated with the change in the mentality and attitude towards old age, which became the subject of notable medicalisation and pathologisation. From something self-evident, the ageing process transformed into a problem, symptom, and condition that needed to be managed, addressed, and treated. The present contribution will focus on the leading 19th and 20th-century writers and their advice on maintaining health, vitality, and youthful appearance. It will highlight the differences in the perception of ageing between women and men, which were also clearly reflected in the fact that the advice given depended on the gender. It will also present how the advice regarding a healthy and long life combined medicine and morality, ideas about a healthy lifestyle and the importance of moderation in all areas, as well as the obvious belief in new scientific and pseudoscientific methods such as rejuvenation through hormone therapy, blood transfusions, use of radiation, and even testicular transplants, which reflected the increasingly evident desire for eternal youth and which were supposed to prolong human life.

OLD AGE AND HEALTH: SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THE AUSTRIAN LITTORAL

Urška BRATOŽ

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies

When we look at the diverse images of old age and the ambiguous meanings that have been attached to it, these can also be found within discourses on health care and treatment in relation to old age. The examples taken from the Austrian Littoral show that the elderly took different roles as both patients and health care providers. The perception of biological ageing in medical terms has generally been based on the degenerative aspects of ageing, with an emphasis on decrepitude, which has been one of the key medically legitimised causes of death in elders, but also carried social implications. In addition, the decline of the immune system in old age had an impact on the vulnerability of the elderly to epidemic diseases. The latter was also connected to the questions of accessibility and reach of the health system at the time. For the elderly from the lower classes, who were supposedly more likely to use traditional than official medicine, old age was perceived as a period of expected and unavoidable health problems. At the same time, the 19th century was also a time of a relatively optimistic perception of one's ability to influence the ageing process and physical well-being in old age. However, the recommended way of life, with its promotion of values such as moderation, health and well-being, was particularly suited to a certain social class (the bourgeoisie), which also wanted to see ageing without pain, sadness and death, even though society at the time was confronting a number of challenges, connected to economic and medical security of the elderly.

ELDERS IN LJUBLJANA IN THE 19TH CENTURY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE DEATH REGISTERS FROM THE ST. PETER PARISH

Katarina KEBER

*Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts,
Milko Kos Historical Institute*

The paper will present an analysis of the deaths of the elderly in three five-year periods in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the area of the parish of St. Peter in the Šentpeter suburb of Ljubljana. On the basis of data found in sections of the death register, the causes of death in the oldest population of this largest Ljubljana suburb will be discussed. Through the direct causes of death recorded in the death registers, we can to some extent infer the diseases that were prevalent among the elderly population of the Šentpeter suburb.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GORIZIA CHARITY COMMISSION IN SUPPORTING THE SOCIALLY DEPRIVED ELDERLY POPULATION

Robert DEVETAK

*Institute for Ethnic Studies,
University of Nova Gorica, School of Humanities*

In 1820, the Charity Commission (*La Commissione di Beneficenza*) was established in Gorizia. It was one of the most important charitable institutions in Gorizia and Gradisca in the 19th century, bringing together mainly members of the city's elite, church officials and aristocrats. It served as a model for many other charitable initiatives organised in the following decades in the region. The creation of such commissions, which were in the hands of the city authorities, kept lists of the poor and tried to help them with financial support, work or education, was typical throughout Europe at the beginning of the 19th century. The main purpose of the Gorizia Commission was to establish and finance the operation of a poor house (*Casa di ricovero/Casa di beneficenza*) in Gorizia, with over 100 beds, where the poorest people in the city, especially the elderly, were cared for. In addition, it held public charity events and organised the distribution of financial and material aid to the deprived. The paper will focus on the main aspects of the Commission's public activities and on the poorhouse, especially in relation to the care of the elderly socially deprived population of Gorizia, based on data from archival and newspaper sources.

LONGEVITY DESPITE THE WAR: MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY OF THE ELDERLY IN PULA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Iva MILOVAN DELIĆ

Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Faculty of Humanities

The second epidemiological transition, which started as a result of the second industrial revolution, brought a new order in the most common causes of death, thus degenerative diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, hypertension, allergies, anxiety and depression took precedence in that regard, and with minor nuances and additions, that pattern is still relevant today. In this paper, on the example of Pula in the midst of the WWI, on the basis of hospital registers of the Pula Provincial Hospital and the Pula death registers, diseases are listed as the causes of morbidity and mortality of the civilian population. The main scientific aim, is to explore to what extent the mentioned diseases were present among people from the area of Pula over the age of 65 during the WWI, i.e., to what extent these diseases were the causes of morbidity and mortality in the mentioned period. Furthermore, in the same demographic group, the most common causes of morbidity and mortality in that period are analysed. The results of the quantitative analysis are interpreted in the complex local and regional socio-historical and political-historical framework of the WWI, and the results of medical science from the beginning of the century and those of recent origin form an important medical basis for this interpretation.

AGEING SLOVENIAN DOMESTIC SERVANTS IN LJUBLJANA (THE KINGDOM OF THE SHS) AND TRST/TRIESTE (THE KINGDOM OF ITALY) IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Ana CERGOL PARADIŽ

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts

Petra TESTEN KOREN

*Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts,
Institute of Cultural History*

By taking into account census data, contemporary periodicals and archival material, the article addresses the issue of ageing among the (female) servant population in Ljubljana, the newly founded capital of Slovenians in the Kingdom of the SHS, and in Trst/Trieste (the Kingdom of Italy), formerly an important seaport of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in the period between the world wars. Most worked as life-cycle servants, only at a certain time in their lives, before returning to their hometowns in the countryside to start a family. Some also took advantage of the town's marriage market, usually within their own class. Some remained single, a certain proportion of whom returned to their primary families in the countryside, while others stayed in the cities. We will be interested in the legislative constraints and options for different profiles of domestic servants on the issue of ageing, especially those who could not rely on their own or extended family network. What were their prospects in old age? What role did occupational diseases play in their ability to live independently? How many might have ended up in an institution that provided care for the elderly and the helpless? What role, if any, did the newly established national border between Italy and the Kingdom of the SHS, which offered two different legal frameworks, play within the question of ageing?

RECONVERSIONS AND THE CORRELATION BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND AGE COHORTS IN INTERWAR SLOVENIA

Gašper MITHANS

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies

Religiosity is difficult to define and even more difficult to “measure” in modern times, let alone earlier. The theory that religiosity increases with age seems quite plausible, but how to investigate this when we have no basic indicators of religiosity, not even in many ways problematic data on attendance at religious services, and when censuses collected only data on religious affiliation? Generational differences, socio-political and historical contexts that encourage religious change have increased since the Second World War. The gap between the religiosity of younger and older people has become more pronounced worldwide in the last 30-40 years, however, significantly more in the global North, and hence any generalisations need to take into account cultural differences and the specificity of religions. The paper will present some possibilities of researching religiosity in interwar Slovenia and correlations with age cohorts, considering the aforementioned challenges. In the context of research on religious change, the potential impact of person’s age – who, when they decided to return to their original religion (a reconversion), all said that they had realised that Catholicism was the only “true” religion – on religiosity and the social meaning of religions will be evaluated. Over 100 requests for return to the Catholic religion sent to the Ljubljana diocese will be analysed by age, which, despite the non-representative nature of the sample, allows for the identification of a certain trend.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS OLD AGE AT SCHOOL AND AMONG TEACHERS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Branko ŠUŠTAR

Slovenian School Museum

Based on the Slovene pedagogical newspaper sources of the second half of the 19th century (*Šolski prijatelj*, *Učiteljski tovariš*, *Popotnik*) and other sources, this article aims to bring attention to the attitudes towards age among elementary school teaching staff during that period. The schooling process at times thematises the relationship of the student towards parents and their elders, and in doing so touches upon the theme of old age in various ways during the process of educating the youth. The question is, how the theme of old age was integrated into this process and how it contributed to shaping the students' attitudes towards old age. In concrete terms, old age is represented in the teachers and their jubilees, both in their work and private lives, reports on which were present in the pedagogical press. At what age is the teacher regarded as exceptionally persistent in his teaching? Which such instances were being highlighted in the pedagogical press? Among teaching staff, the attitudes towards older teachers are studied, alongside the conception of old age and the societal changes pertaining to care of elderly teachers following the reform of elementary school legislation in 1869/70, and the question of teachers' pensions. Along with the societal networking of teachers, we can in addition follow various societies of retired teaching staff. What constituted the content of their activities? Although school is to a major extent intended for the youth, the youth encounter the theme of old age in the content being taught, just as when interacting with their parents, grand-parents, and no less elderly teachers.

PENSION INSURANCE IN SOCIALIST SLOVENIA

Dunja DOBAJA

Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana

The contribution, based on literature, newspaper and archival sources from Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, presents the development of the legislation that regulated pension insurance from the end of the Second World War until 1991, which marks the end of the socialist period. Normative regulation did not mean the actual regulation of pensions in accordance with the cost of living, which the contribution presents with the results of public discussions during the adoption of drafts of individual laws that regulated pension insurance. In May 1945, the Act on the Implementation of Social Insurance in the territory of Yugoslavia established organizational unity. The only institution of social insurance was the Central Institute of Social Insurance in Belgrade, all other institutions were branches. The contribution also covers the development and organization of pension insurance providers, highlighting in particular the Community of Pension and Disability Insurance of Slovenia, which carried out this task between 1971 and 1992. The focus of the work of the self-governing bodies of the Community of Pension and Disability Insurance in Socialist Republic of Slovenia was to ensure an adequate standard of living for pensioners, but Community surveys showed that they were pensioners with the lowest pensions who barely made it through the month. Community of Pension and Disability Insurance saw the solution in home care for the elderly and planned construction of retirement homes, and above all in a precise analysis of who are the recipients of the lowest pensions.

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE WORKFORCE AT DELAMARIS

Oskar OPASSI

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies

In the first half of the 20th century, the Slovenian coastal area experienced a number of demographic upheavals. At the end of the Second World War, the coastal towns were mostly empty. But economic recovery after the war was based on rapid industrialisation. As tensions over the western border eased following the signing of the London Memorandum in 1954, industrial investment also took off. Newly established or revitalised companies, however, soon had to face the challenge of finding a sufficient number of workers. In my presentation I will outline how the workforce in the fish canning industry was shaped in these circumstances, as it was one of the key industries driving the modernisation and transition from an agrarian to an industrial society for the coastal area. I will focus on the age structure of Delamaris (and its predecessors until 1959) between 1954 and 1974. I will present the age structure at the beginning of socialist reconstruction, when the society was about to make the transition from agrarian to industrial, and the situation two decades later. Shifts in employment trends and the links between the age structure of the workforce and wider economic and social changes in the area will be analysed.

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THE PAINTER IVANA KOBILCA AND IMAGES OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Tomislav VIGNJEVIĆ

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies

Ivana Kobilca (1861-1926) created a series of paintings on the theme of old age, especially in the 1880s. Although this choice of subject was at least partly the result of the instructions of her teacher Alois Erdtelt in Munich, Kobilca produced a whole series of paintings of old age that demonstrate her genuine interest in the subject. The series of busts of elderly women and men is in itself a kind of rounded and very interesting contribution to the depiction of the elderly at this time. Together with some genre images, this group of paintings forms an important view and interpretation of old age in the context of the art of the time.

POLITICISING FORGETFULNESS: REPRESENTATIONS OF DEMENTIA IN RECENT SOUTH SLAVIC FICTION

Dagmar GRAMSHAMMER-HOHL

University of Graz, Department of Slavic Studies

In South Slavic literatures, considerable attention is currently being paid to suppressed and competing memories of war and political violence. An increasing focus on older protagonists, notably on people with dementia, is conspicuous in this context. In literary family narratives, children's and grandchildren's efforts to retrieve memories of the past – their parents' and grandparents' untold secrets – is counteracted by the imminent danger that the older character's memory will fade or that they will die. As Krüger-Fürhoff et al (2021) have demonstrated, in fiction, dementia is not merely addressed in terms of an ahistorical illness, but used to represent traumatic historical events which prove difficult to remember. Literary representations of the disease are thus highly politicised: Dementia is treated not so much as an individual experience, but as a society's forgetfulness about its past. Using examples from recent Croatian and Bulgarian fiction (Jergović, Gospodinov), I will analyse, in this paper, in what ways literary narratives of memory loss tie in with and feed into debates about memory politics in the Southeast European context.

STORIES OF “DECLINE” AND “DEFYING OLD AGE” – REPRESENTATIONS OF CARE HOME RESIDENTS IN SLOVENIAN LITERATURE

Urša MARINŠEK

*University of Graz, Center for Interdisciplinary
Research on Aging and Care*

Taking the notion of cultural aging, we have at least two major cultural narratives of aging: the decline narrative and the age-defying narratives. The decline narrative coincides with many of the aging stereotypes (e.g., frailty, vulnerability, disability, immobility, dependency, and dementia). As aging studies scholars and literary gerontologists have shown, these cultural narratives can be found in many literary works. This paper aims to explore literary representations of old age and ageing in three Slovenian books, all set in care homes. The first one is a novel *Dom dom (Home Home, 2008)* by Tone Partljič, the second one is a collection of short stories *Kavni krog (Coffee Circle, 2021)* by Barbara Hanuš, and the third one, *Umor v domu za ostarele? (Murder in a Care Home?, 2022)*, a crime novel by Vito Komac. Three different books, three different genres, they provide many perspectives on age and aging. The books describe older people in various ways, discuss their worth, and present stereotypical/prevalent cultural narratives of older people. The paper is looking into how these books depict old age and what these cultural representations tell its readers.

WISDOM AND WELL-BEING IN THE OLD AGE

Marlena PLAVŠIĆ

Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Faculty of Humanities

In the last thirty years, research of wisdom has grown especially in the field of aging, personal growth and development. Although decline in health and various psychological processes do happen with the process of aging, they do not happen equally in every person. Also, experience of aging largely differs among people because of the cumulative effect of various life events and experiences. The aim of this research was to explore whether there is relationship between wisdom and some aspects of well-being among people older than 60. The sample comprised 113 people (60 women and 53 men) aged 60 to 89 years. The instruments used in the research included the Self-Assessment Scale of Wisdom (SAWS), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), and two items examining satisfaction with life and health. Wisdom was explored both as a total score achieved on SAWS as well as scores on its five subscales: experience, emotion regulation, reminiscence/reflection, humour and openness. Results revealed some relationships between wisdom and well-being. Wiser people reported less depression, higher self-esteem, and higher satisfaction with life compared to less wise people. Results also showed negative correlation between wisdom and age. When it comes to gender and wisdom, only one difference appeared significant: women scored higher than men in the subscale of reminiscence/reflection. Perhaps fostering wisdom through life could be a good way to enhance well-being in older age.

COMPASSIONATE AND HOSTILE AGEISM OVER TIME: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

Otto GERDINA

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences

Ageism is a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old. Compassionate ageism refers to a form of ageism that occurs when people try to show compassion towards older people, but at the same time use stereotypes and prejudices about old age, for example that older people are less able or less productive than younger people. Hostile ageism, on the other hand, refers to a type of ageism that involves hostility, intolerance or direct discrimination against older people. The first part of the paper will outline how the introduction of health and social services for older people in the first half of the twentieth century was legitimized by the attribution of negative characteristics, such as frailty, dependency, and low social status, to older people. The latter was seen, through the prism of compassionate ageism, not only as fair compensation for work and past merit, but also as a way of dealing with the uncertainty and suffering associated with the last stage of the life course. In the second part, the paper will show how welfare policies intended to aid the older people have been reinterpreted over the last fifty years as an unjustified privilege of a relatively healthy, privileged, selfish and politically powerful group of older people, thus creating a fertile ground for the growth of a hostile ageism.

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