

UDK 398 (497.4)

Izvorni naučni rad

**TO LIVE AND DIE THE ŽIRI WAY:
A Micro-historical Study of Customs related to Life Milestones in the Žiri
region in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century**

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Abstract: Birth, marriage, and death represent the milestones in the life of an individual, around which many customs and traditions have been shaped over the centuries. The article presents a micro-historical study of said customs in Žiri region in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. It is based on various sources: archival documents, oral sources, prayer books, central registers, photographs, etc., which in unison give us a plastic presentation of how the people of Žiri celebrated birth and marriage, and mourned death.

Keywords: Žiri, micro history, customs, marriage, funeral, christening

Apstrakt: Rođenje, brak i smrt predstavljaju prekretnice u životu pojedinca oko kojih su se oblikovali mnogi običaji i tradicije u pojedinim zemljama. U članku je predstavljena mikropovijesna studija navedenih običaja u regiji Žiri u 19. i prvoj polovici 20. stoljeća. Rad se temelji na različitim izvorima: arhivskim dokumentima, usmenim izvorima, molitvenicima, matičnim knjigama, fotografijama, itd., koji nam pružaju plastičnu prezentaciju kako ljudi u Žiri regiji slave rođenje, ženidbu i oplakuju smrt.

Ključne riječi: Žiri, mikro-historija, običaji, vjenčanje, sprovod, krštenje

Introduction

Humans is increasingly trying to – if not understand – at least control the world around them. Although they are often (too) successful doing that their existence is still unconditionally dictated by the law of transience. The feeling that is stirred by it in the consciousness of the majority of the human-kind, is pithily summarized by the Slovenian writer and playwright Ivan Cankar in his

work *New Life*: “Love hastily, think hastily live hastily! If the tilbury stops just for one moment, if the wind fall silent for just one moment – death is nigh!”¹ The anxiety, therefore, is aroused by the fact that life is actually a journey from the starting station, i.e. birth, that always, despite all efforts, stops at the terminus (depending on the perception), i.e. death. As a consequence, transience has been creating milestones in the lives of individuals since the dawn of humanity. These watershed moments draw so much attention within the series of ordinary day-to-day events that over centuries, many customs have been shaped around them. There are no universal rules for them, of course. They are influenced by a number of factors: location, politics, culture, religion, history, etc. Thus, the research of life’s crucial events on a smaller scale such as Slovenia reveals many special features that belong to a specific local community, in addition to the common characteristics. Consequently, such a topic may prove impossible to manage, which, however, does not mean that it cannot be explored. One of the answers to this methodological predicament is offered by micro-history, which is, according to István M. Szijártó “the intensive historical investigation of a relatively well-defined smaller object, or a single event”.² Be that as it may, it is not merely a study of an insignificant, marginal case, since, according to Kisantal Tamás, it shines a light on so-called major historical questions: “The second fundamental characteristic of micro-history is its use of synecdoche, its examinations of the ‘ocean in the drop’ as historians study seemingly unimportant phenomena try to answer ‘great historical questions.’”³ Consequently, the presentation of customs at birth, marriage, and death in the Žiri region in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, which is the subject of this article, outlines certain characteristics of the Slovenian way of celebration. With its special features, it emphasizes its diversity and at the same time shows how the great historical events affected the population. Such a research question, which is in fact very complex in its smallness, dictates an interdisciplinary approach. That is why I decided to approach the research question not only from the historical but also from the ethnological, sociological, and anthropological aspect. The multi-perspective has been enabled by a wide range of resources. Various types of sources were included in the research: archival documents, oral sources,

¹ Cankar, I. 2018.

² Szijártó, István M. and Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon. 2013. 4.

³ Kisantal, T. 2015. 513.

prayer books, central registers, photographs, etc., which in unison give us a plastic presentation of how the people of Žiri celebrated birth and marriage, and mourned death.

Žiri in the 19th and 20th century

Žiri, the home town of lacemaking and shoemaking, is situated in the Žiri Basin at the junction of three Slovenian regions: Inner Carniola, Slovene Littoral, and Upper Carniola. From Žiri, which is 45 kilometres away from Ljubljana, one can go in different directions: towards Logatec (27 km), Vrhnika (24 km), Idrija (12 km), and Škofja Loka (28 km). Nowadays, the Municipality of Žiri, which was established in 1994, covers 49 square kilometres of area, and has a population of 4871.⁴ That puts it on the 134th place among 212 Slovene municipalities in terms of area, and on the 103rd place in terms of population.⁵

Cold statistical data give an impression that it's a rather dull and inconspicuous town, but a glance at its history reveals clues that are interesting within the framework of the research. The town saw seven different countries during the discussed period. Until 1918, Žiri was part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, while it belonged to the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs after its disintegration, from October 29 to December 1, 1918. Then, until the beginning of the Second World War, it was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, also known as Yugoslavia.⁶ The Second World War pushed Žiri into the hands of the Italian occupiers, who stayed there for only a few days, as the town came under German control, who established a stiff occupational regime of forced assimilation.⁷ In the post-war years, the era of socialism began in this area as well, according to which, industrial facilities were developed, for example Alpina (footwear) Kladivar (technical elements), Etiketa, etc.⁸ After the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the independence, Žiri became a town belonging to the Republic of Slovenia. Another interesting fact

⁴ Data portal SI-SAT. <https://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/Saveshow.asp> (accessed on: 30. 10. 2018).

⁵ Statistical Office of Slovenia. <https://www.stat.si/obcine/sl/2016/Municip/Index/208> (accessed on: 30. 10. 2018).

⁶ Nečak, D. and Repe B. 2005.

⁷ Repe, B. 2015.

⁸ Vehar, M. 2014.

is that Žiri was a border town for many decades. By signing the Rapallo Treaty in 1920, Žiri found itself on the border between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of SHS, which ran in the immediate vicinity of the town.⁹ People had to adapt to the limitations and the advantages the border brought, for example the possibility of earning money by smuggling. The border remained an issue during the occupation when it was fortified with barbed wire and minefields. After the occupiers divided the territory, Žiri became a place near the tripoint between the Kingdom of Italy, its occupied territory of the Ljubljana Province, and the German Occupation Zone, to which the town belonged. A wind of change was brought by the end of the Second World War and the Restoration of the Primorska Region to Yugoslavia: Žiri was never a border town again.

To understand the customs related to birth, marriage, and death, better, one must know basic information about the population, economy, religion, culture, etc., during the target period. The best representation of Žiri during the both wars is offered by the Lexicon of Drava Banovina. The municipality of Žiri covered two different parts: the flat area that was often flooded. Due to annual floods, some of the areas in the middle of the basin were unpopulated, while the inhabitants settled on the edges of the basin. This area was located at the altitude of 480 m. There was a hilly area two hundred meters higher (600-900 m), which was not populated by villages, but rather by hamlets and secluded farms. The town of Žiri was the most populated (615) with larger settlements of Dobračeva (538), Žirovski Vrh (387), Stara vas (347) and Nova vas (345). Other settlements had less than 200 inhabitants. The main traffic route was the Banovina road Škofja Loka - Žiri - Logatec. There was a bus connection to Škofja Loka as well. The inhabitants made a living by agriculture and trade: "Lowland settlements mostly live on trade (shoemaking and carpentry), while the highland settlements make a living by agriculture and forestry. Side income was offered by the lacemaking".¹⁰ Lowland areas had better equipped and more spacious homes, which also served the needs of tourism: "Some towns, especially Žiri, became known as beautiful, peaceful and cheap resorts with nice excursion points".¹¹

⁹ More about the Treaty of Rapallo in: Mikša, P. and Zorn, M. 2018. 605-614.

¹⁰ Zveza za tujski promet za Slovenijo. Krajevni leksikon dravske banovine: krajevni repertorij z uradnimi, topografskimi, zemljepisnimi, zgodovinskimi, kulturnimi, gospodarskimi in tujskoprometnimi podatki vseh krajev dravske banovin. Ljubljana: Uprava Krajevnega leksikona dravske banovine, 1937, 407.

¹¹ Ibidem.

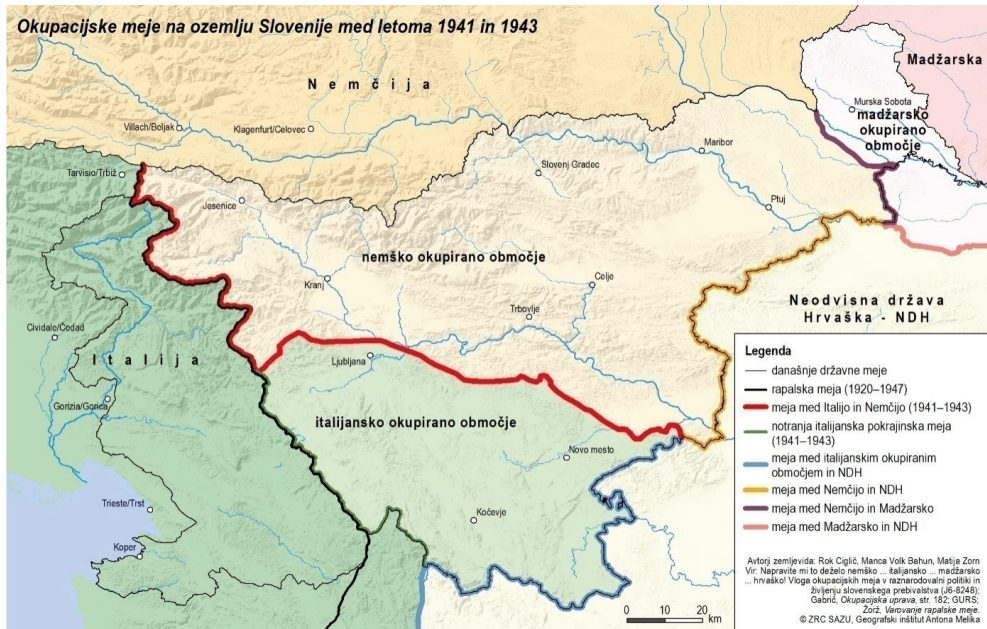


Image 1: The map of occupational borders on the Slovene territory between 1941 and 1943. Žiri is marked with a blue rectangle¹²

In the largest settlement – Žiri – there was a parish church of St. Martin (the majority of the population was Roman Catholic with a few exceptions, for example Russian emigrants who came to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). Since 1817, there was also a school that had 11 divisions when the Lexicon was compiled. The pupils could continue their education at the advanced trade school and the advanced home economics school. There was also a lacemaking school in the town. The townspeople could participate in various societies: The Sokol movement of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the firefighter society, the Red Cross, The club of Yugoslav sisters, the Adriatic Guard branch, the shooting club, the branch of the Slovenian Alpine Association, or the Catholic educational society.¹³

¹² The map was created within the project of Make this country German ... Italian ... Hungarian ... Croatian! The role of the occupational borders in the politics of forced assimilation and the life of the Slovene population, led by dr. Božo Repe, and prepared by Rok Ciglič, Manca Volk Bahun and Matija Zorn at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, The Geographical Institute of Anton Melik.

¹³ Ibidem, 408.



Image 2: Map of settlements that comprised the Municipality of Žiri during both wars.¹⁴

Birth and the confirmation to the Christian community

In such environment, the life path of the inhabitants of Žiri began in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Birth is still considered the first important milestone in the life of the individual – and the nation itself, since according to nationalism, the larger the population, the stronger the state / nation / community.¹⁵ Birth is therefore an important event, and as a consequence, a great number of customs evolved around it. The rate at which the inhabitants of Žiri had a reason to celebrate, is shown on the graph below. The number of births in the Žiri region varied over time. In the period before the First World War, more than 100 children were born every year. The war, however, made the birth rate decline, even though Žiri was not directly on the front line. In 1916, for example, 54 children were born. After the First World War ended, birth rate increased (140 children born in 1920), while the trend turned around at the beginning of the 1930s, and it did not exceed 100 births per year again.¹⁶ Central registers reveal other demographical data

¹⁴ Savnik, R. 1968, additional maps.

¹⁵ More on this: Gail, S. and Gail K. 2000; Mosse, George L. 2000; Giddens, A. 2000.

¹⁶ Žiri Parish Archive, Baptism records of the Žiri Parish 1900-1940; 1940-1964; 1964-2001.

as well. During the period in question, children were born to parents in their twenties, thirties, or forties. There were exceptions, of course, and they attracted attention among the fellow villagers. Between 1930 and 1950, the oldest father was 67 years old at the time of childbirth, while the youngest was 17. The oldest childbearing mother was 49, while the youngest was 16.¹⁷



Image 3: Postcard of Žiri, taken by Štefan Mlakar in 1927. The hill in the background was on the Italian side of the Rapallo border.¹⁸

For the majority of the population, the standard of living and a large number of children (and ultimately the attitude towards the child as a human being)¹⁹ did not allow them to be as extravagant for the birth of each child as they could be at weddings or funerals.²⁰ But they still celebrated it. In addition to other family members, an important role was played by fellow villagers, namely the neighbours.²¹ The family chose four neighbours (or families)²² according to their material status, not only their proximity. Since the tradition was carried

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Žirovske razglednice. <http://muzej-ziri.si/fotogalerija/zirovske-razglednice/> (accessed on 30. 11. 2018).

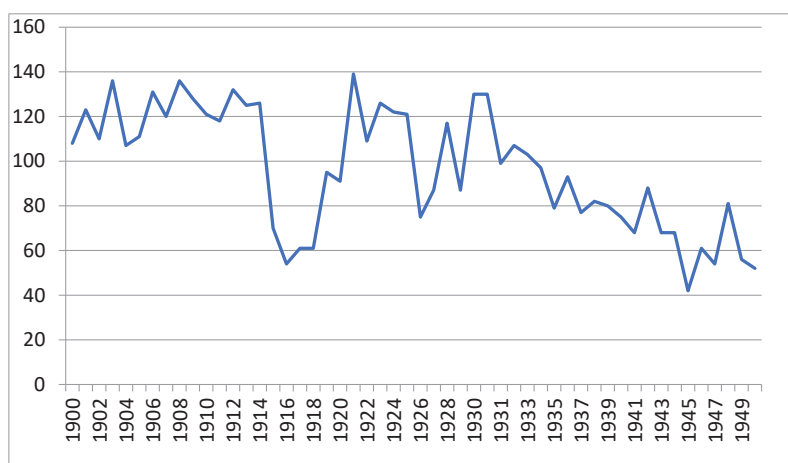
¹⁹ More on this: Puhar, A. 2004.

²⁰ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931).

²¹ Ibidem.

²² Rajko Vehar (b. 1941)

out for several generations, some of the families had permanent roles. The human was accompanied from the beginning to the end. The third and the fourth neighbour were in charge of the latter, providing the deceased with a grave and a coffin. The first two neighbours were in charge of more pleasant things, namely the christening.²³ They were the child's godparents and had to make sure that the child was confirmed to the Christian community within three days. Not doing that was an act of desecration in Žiri, earning the child a moniker of a pagan or a Jew.²⁴ The two neighbours were part of a well-oiled mechanism of marking the birth of a human, together with the priest, parents, and the midwife.



Graph 1: The number of children born in the parish of Žiri between 1900 and 1950.²⁵

One of the elements of this custom was giving gifts when the child was born. Thus, the first and the second neighbour visited the mother and brought her a loaf of bread (made from milk and butter) as a gift. If it was not a firstborn, they also had to bring smaller loaves for other children. It was up to their generosity whether that was a one-time gift or not. If the family was extremely poor, the neighbour cooked a chicken soup²⁶ for the mother. Such care was to be repaid according to the tradition, so the parents prepared “a loaf of white

²³ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ Ibidem.

bread and a litre of wine”²⁷ for the neighbours or godparents. When gifting and congratulations were over, the newborn had to be baptised. The child was prepared for the ritual by the midwife, who swathed the newborn tightly immediately after the birth - to prevent the child from having crooked legs,²⁸ according to the sources. Sometimes, the midwife attended the baptism as well, but it could be carried out by the godparents themselves.²⁹ She was an important source of information when registering a child. According to the law of 1870 and 1881, the childbirth had to be reported by the midwife and the child's legal father. Midwives and obstetricians were obliged to give the manager of the registry office all information on the mother's name and her marriage. They had to be accurate, since the registrars had the right to verify the midwife's diploma, if she was not familiar, or they found their statements suspicious. Midwives could even lose their license if their information proved false.³⁰

Before that, they had to agree on the child's name. They were not particularly ingenious in that regard in the first half of the 20th century. A review of central registers revealed that they followed the calendar and the names of saints. An oral source thus reports that a mother decided that her child should be named after the saint that is celebrated on the day of his birth: “Mom said: ‘When it happens, that's it.’ And that's how a boy in Zavratac was baptized as Rajmund”.³¹ Nevertheless, a certain selection remained, namely the established and common names. Therefore, between 1930 and 1950, the most popular girl name was Marija (31%). The second most popular name was Frančiška, given to 8% of newborns. For boys, Janez and Franc were dominant.³² When the name was chosen, and there was a desire to enable the child to be confirmed to the Christian congregation, they went to the church. Usually, the closest or the parish one was chosen, depending on where the parish priest or chaplains were. Finding an active church during the interwar period was in principle not a problem, while during the Second World War, there was no priest in the

²⁷ Bokal, M. 2010. 234.

²⁸ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 156.

²⁹ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931), Štefka Dolenec (b. 1939).

³⁰ Umek, E. and Janez K. 1972.

³¹ Rajko Vehar (b. 1941).

³² In: Vehar, M. 2014. Prilog: imena novorojencev v obdobju 1930-1950.

Žiri parish at all. That means people had to carry their children to parishes kilometres away.³³ Such a journey was a perilous one for a baby only several hours or days old, especially during the cold months. Interviewees reported about fatalities when one of the godparents slipped or a child got hypothermia due to the cold temperatures in the church.³⁴

What did the rite of baptism look like? It was not deemed important enough to be photographed during the period in question, so the main sources are mostly oral and the ritual descriptions in prayer books, which were usually passed on from generation to generation. One of them was the prayer book *Nebeška hrana*, written by Franc Kosar,³⁵ which had a gold trimming and costed 1 Gulden and 35 Krone.³⁶ Chapter 3 includes devotions for various occasions and needs, as well as the course of the rituals. According to the instructions from the prayer book, the ritual of baptism was held into places. First, in front of the church gate, when the priest asked the godparent about the child's name, and what he wanted. The godparent replied on behalf of the child that he wants to accept the holy faith. In addition to prayer and commandments, acts of symbolic significance were included as well: a breath in the face (repelling the evil spirit), putting salt in the mouth (wisdom).³⁷ Then, the second part of the ritual followed, and it took place in the church, next to the baptismal font. In the latter case, it was important to touch the child with saliva near the mouth and ears (thus protecting them against deafness). When the godparent vowed to renounce the devil, the priest anointed the child with chrism. After the request to be baptized, the child's head was washed thrice with water in the shape of a cross. Then, the child was put on a baptismal gown (white cloth), while the godparent held a baptismal candle.³⁸ It is clear that the procedure was not quick, which raises the question of how the ritual was done in case the child was born so weak that they only had a few hours left. Since such circumstances were not uncommon, the prayer book also

³³ Štefka Dolenec (b.).

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Sket, J. 1892.

³⁶ Koledar Družbe sv. Mohorja za navadno leto 1891, cover.

³⁷ Salt and saliva did not remain part of baptism. A prayer book from 1962 does not mention them anymore. The white cloth, candle and water remained, however. V občestvu združenj: Molitvenik za občestvo in zasebno rabo. Ljubljana: Zadruga katoliških duhovnikov FLRJ, 1962, 152-158.

³⁸ Kosar, F. 1877. 258-264.

envisaged an emergency rite. In principle, it was done in a similar way, but it could be performed by anyone. Despite the haste in which the ritual normally took place, certain conditions had to be considered, nonetheless. The rite had to be carried out entirely by one person; water had to reach the child's skin and wet hair was not enough; if holy water was not available, ordinary drinking water could be used.³⁹

After the official part of the ritual, a feast was in order, either at the mother's home, or as some godparents decided, at an inn, which were aplenty near churches in the Žiri region. One of the interviewees explained that excessive drinking was not deemed inappropriate in such events: "They mostly drank to be inebriated. It was a thing of honour".⁴⁰ The person who became a godparent, assumed an important role. They became the second guardian of the child, and in the event the parents passed away, they took the child under their roof, sometimes as servants.⁴¹

While birth of a child was generally considered a happy occasion, it had a bitter aftertaste in the case of unwed mothers. An illegitimate child or adultery were some of the worst kinds of shame that could befall a family. An 18th century record in the Chronicle of Ledina describes the conduct of a priest from Idrija⁴² with an unwed mother: "In one of her hands, he put a bundle of rods, and a skull in the other. He said a prayer in front of the altar, while she had to stand under the pulpit, holding the rods as he took the skull into the sacristy".⁴³ Such behaviour was too strict even for that period, which is evident in that priest's early retirement. Sources that deal with Žiri do not mention such conduct, but public denigration of unwed mothers was nonetheless something completely common in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.⁴⁴ Certain

³⁹ Ibidem, 258-264.

⁴⁰ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931) That is the way baptism happened in the Žiri region from the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century. Later, customs changed slightly. Children were born in hospitals and baptism was postponed. It wasn't a rule for godparents to be neighbours, either. Bokal, Jaz sem višje kot Marija, 48.

⁴¹ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

⁴² The town of Idrija is 14 kilometres away from Žiri and is mostly known for its mercury mine, which was operative from the last decade of the 15th century to 1977.

⁴³ Jelenec, J. 2009. 312.

⁴⁴ More on this: Leskošek, V. 2002.

leading individuals took part in it, and the whole community followed. The community resented unwed mothers because the entire parish had to atone for the birth of an illegitimate child: "The parish is to fast once or twice a week, it was announced from the pulpit on Sunday, in order to prevent God's retribution for the sin that happened in this parish: hail, plague, and famine".⁴⁵ Until 1840, a public penance in front of the church was in practice: "There was a kind of a wooden device, called 'busstand' for 'busiders',⁴⁶ similar to rakes used to tan flax. They put the hands in it and it was so tightly pressed and half-bent that they could not do anything".⁴⁷ The penalties were mitigated at the beginning of the 20th century, mainly corporal punishment.⁴⁸ The social rejection remained, however, and there was an attempt after the Second World War to alleviate it through legal equalization of legitimate and illegitimate children.⁴⁹

What about the unwed fathers? The collected material makes it clear such concept did not exist in the collective consciousness. Often, they did not maintain any special contact with their children, which is illustrated by the oral tradition of the first meeting between an illegitimate child and their father. Anton Kavčič told his illegitimate son Jakob Podobnik when he met him for the first time: "So you're that fella!"⁵⁰ To make amends, he took of his collarless military shirt and handed it to him: "I cannot give you anything else. Make sure you're as clever as I was!"⁵¹ Such a perception of paternity is not a unique phenomenon, but a universal reality that was rooted deeply in the society – even in the second half of the 20th century, when both healthcare and social services primarily concerned themselves with responsible motherhood, while the concept of responsible paternity was grasped much later.⁵²

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ A term for the wooden device used by the locals, likely with German origins.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, 167.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, 313.

⁴⁹ Tomšič, V. 1959. 18.

⁵⁰ Naglič, M. 2014. 44.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² During the period of socialism, an underaged mother was considered problematic, and was asked to move out of the school environment, while the teacher's manual (Šilih, G. 1955.) does not mention underaged fathers.

Marriage

Long established traditions have been passed on from generation to generation in the context of customs and symbolism associated with marriage, as well.⁵³ In the 19th century and even in the beginning of the 20th century, marriage was still, to a certain extent, an economic union between two families, which provided better conditions for survival. Although general marriage freedom was already in force in the first decade of the 20th century, lower classes, field hands, day labourers, and assistants still had troubles. Until 1919, they still needed parental approval if they wanted to marry.⁵⁴ Tenants and crofters were allowed to marry, while at some point, field hands and maidservants were forbidden to marry. Such restrictions were put in place to curb the increase of the poorer population living on community handouts.⁵⁵ Parents had to give permission if an under aged child was to be married.⁵⁶ More than age itself, the rule was that the oldest child in the family was the first to marry,⁵⁷ which was not always obeyed. A mother in the Žiri region offered her older daughter to the suitor of the younger one, despite the fact that the latter was already pregnant. In order to avoid an even greater societal stigmatization, the family accepted that the younger daughter will be married off before the older one.⁵⁸ Therefore, social norms played an important role in the choice of a partner, in addition to legal stipulations. In this respect, the youth was mainly guided by their parents who were motivated by the wealth they could acquire through marriage.⁵⁹ The influence of parents remained strong during the period in question. Still preserved nowadays, there's a story of a farmer who was so successful in marrying off his children that he was invited to other households and asked for advice on the wedding of other children.⁶⁰ Some mothers contacted priest Josip Vidmar for advice as well. One of them was

⁵³ More on symbolism related to marriage in: Accati, L. 2001.

⁵⁴ Rogelj Škafar, B. (ed.) 2000. 19.

⁵⁵ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 111.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, 163.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, 163.

⁵⁸ Krajnik, M. 2006. 66.

⁵⁹ Rogelj Škafar, B. (ed.) 2000. 21.

⁶⁰ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 163.

the troubled Kavčev mother who saw the opportunity in the marriage of her daughter to the son of Petron, the innkeeper: “The inn, the farm, the wealth. Look, dear Francka, she will manage the inn, she is the right person to do that. She is smart and tidy just like Petron’s, and she’s frugal. They will be a perfect couple. That’s important for the inn. She attracts guests. She already learned how to be a great cook”.⁶¹ The mother made sure the couple met. When the young Petron came around and brought sausages to be dried, she showed him the picture of her daughter. That was all it took for them to start hanging out. The mother, however, did not see emotions in their relationship, but above all, the material goods owned by the Petron family. “(...) such a farm full of livestock and horses, a hayrack with sixteen windows, a one-storey house. I think they have six or five rooms, we haven’t checked yet. There’s a big kitchen downstairs, a separate storage room, two woodsheds, (...)”.⁶²

The youth was not only coupled by their parents. They met during various farm chores, religious rites and fairs in Žiri.⁶³ There were five every year.⁶⁴ Merchants tried to get customers by mentioning wedding, too: “Micka, how fair you are, yet a bit dirty. I’ll give you some soap, so you can wash and become a pretty bride. Only ten Kreuzers. I’ll give you some paper, so you can write love letters. If you make a mistake, which humans do, use an eraser; take a thread and a needle to sew the pants; the mirror to check yourself, the boy will be very happy; and a scented soap, so you can smell like a violet; and a wedding ring, I can provide everything. All you have to pick is a boy”.⁶⁵ In addition to fairs, balls were a great opportunity to catch someone. They were considered a devil’s work by the priests; the priest in Nova Oselica mostly emphasized the noise that disturbed the holy mass.⁶⁶ In the Žiri region, a priest believed that the devil catches souls by throwing a hat under the ceiling during the dancing.⁶⁷ Even though such gatherings offered an opportunity for different

⁶¹ Pečnik, I. et. al. 2012. 31.

⁶² Ibidem, 31.

⁶³ Rogelj Škafar, B. (ed) 2000. 29-34.

⁶⁴ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 60.

⁶⁵ Pečnik, I. et. al. 2012. 43.

⁶⁶ Krajnik, M. 2006. 47-48.

⁶⁷ Jelenec, J. 2009. 131.

sorts of contacts to the youth, not everyone was able to find a future partner in their home towns. For that reason, some men went further and looked for wives in other places, mostly in Poljane, Vrh Svetih Treh Kraljev, and in Rovte, while others even went to Tolminsko.⁶⁸ Less often, men searched for a wife in Idrija, which was relatively close to Žiri, because of a more bourgeois lifestyle, which was alien and unattainable to the men of Žiri.⁶⁹ Unlike men, the girls were more passive in finding a partner. At the beginning of the 20th century, they did not have much influence over choosing a future husband. In 1869, it was down to playing cards: "There were a lot of boys circling around me, but nobody actually proposed. Nothing serious, just flirting. One day, when all their heads were numb from alcohol, a brawl erupted. The issue was to whom I belonged and four of them claimed their right to me. They bickered for a while and decided to gamble. The widower Tomaž Štremfelj got me".⁷⁰ They also resorted to superstition. It was believed that "(...) a girl should sweep the barn three times on the holy night when the bells peal, and carry the rubbish away. When she does that the third time, she shall meet a boy that shall become her husband. If she doesn't meet anyone, she should not expect a marriage the following year".⁷¹ If a girl was unsuccessful for several years, she could become a target of public ridicule. A custom of dragging a plank was popular in Poljanska valley, which occurred on Ash Wednesday, and it involved ridiculing single women: "The boys removed the door and yoked the girls in them. They had to walk through the village like that".⁷² The custom was also present in the Žiri region, and it was softened by the 20th century. Instead of the girls dragging the plank, it was done by the boys dressed as women.⁷³

When the boys chose a girl, they showed their affection in different ways. The most typical was visiting girls at night, i.e. *vasovanje* (serenading), which was often accompanied by singing. It was also a way to control suitors from other villages. With some girls, wooers were welcome, with some they were not.

⁶⁸ For the people of Žiri, the Tolminska region started in the region of Cerkno, which was covered by the lands of Tolmin gentry.

⁶⁹ Naglič, M. 2014. 23.

⁷⁰ Krajnik, M. 2006. 43-44.

⁷¹ Rogelj Škafar, B. (ed.). 2000. 25.

⁷² Ibidem, 21.

⁷³ Ibidem.

In 1903, it came to pass that the daughter of Kucler's master was resented by the suitors for rejecting them to the extent that they drew a devil on the front of the house with soot, which was still visible after a couple of attempts of bleaching: "I collected a pot full of soot from a chimney, a few cow dungs, and some patina. When we approached Kucel, everyone was sound asleep. We dragged a long ladder from a hayrack and put it on the front of the white house. I went to work and in less than half an hour, a giant devil with a tail and pitchfork out of manure was painted on the wall. (...) The people who went to the first mass the following morning could not figure out why Kucler would adorn his house in such an original way. Some people believed it would be more appropriate if he had Saint Florian painted".⁷⁴ The devil was painted by Franjo Kopač (1885-1941), who later became an academic painter.⁷⁵

Increasingly frequent socializing or a heightening interest of parents led to a proposal of marriage, which usually took place on Saint Stephen's Day, on December 26. An uncle or a neighbour of the groom inquired about the opinion of the girls' parents on the possibility of marriage. If the bride's parents were satisfied with the offer, they were visited by the groom himself, who was accompanied by a so-called suitor (father, uncle, village "expert" on wooing, marriage brokers, godfather).⁷⁶ Their main objective was to make the best possible deal, so the suitor presented himself as a buyer, a hunter, or a traveller.⁷⁷ Usually, the people of Žiri were direct in wooing. The man usually said: "I'm here if you want me".⁷⁸ If the girl agreed, she said: "Sure, I want you".⁷⁹ Often, the most excited about the wedding were the bride's parents, while the bride herself was more reserved: "Why not? For such a deal? Father Ivan and I, immediately, while Francka took her time. You know, some pondering is to be done, some pouting, so she doesn't appear to be offering herself".⁸⁰ It did occur sometimes, however, that the groom and his entourage were not

⁷⁴ Naglič, M. 2014. 27.

⁷⁵ Ibidem.

⁷⁶ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 168.

⁷⁷ Rogelj Škafar, B. (ed.). 2000. 38.

⁷⁸ Naglič, M. 2014.19.

⁷⁹ Ibidem.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, 32.

impressed by the offer after they had a word with the girl's parents. They could withdraw from the negotiations by putting some money for the feast under the tablecloth.⁸¹

Those suitors who were satisfied wanted to record the agreement about the dowry, the trousseau, and other expenditures that related to such an event, in the marriage contract or the marriage letter, which was carried to Logatec to be verified.⁸² When the agreements were confirmed, wedding preparations could begin. The future husband had to deposit the bride. If the wedding was cancelled, it was the bride's duty to pay the rejected groom a double deposit.⁸³ Much more work was to be done by brides in families that had to determine the dowry and prepare the trousseau. The concern for the girl's dowry is nicely expressed by Kavčeva mother: "How are we going to put the dowry together? She'll have to have something. There's so much wealth there, it would seem awkward for us not having nothing".⁸⁴ In addition to dowry, brides brought the trousseau into the marriage, which they started preparing at age ten, and was an important part of the wedding arrangement. It consisted of furniture and various furnishings such as bedding and dishes.⁸⁵ In the period in question, furniture was mostly ordered at craftsmen who worked in Žiri,⁸⁶ while the girls themselves had to prove their manual skills by preparing the trousseau. The trousseau of the interwar period included various laundry, mostly white; while colour and silk linen could be bought as well.⁸⁷ It was necessary for the girls to prepare the curtains, bedding, and kitchen and table laundry, which was supposed to have national patterns embroidered.⁸⁸ From 1929, brides could help themselves preparing the trousseau with a book *Oprema za neveste*, written by Milka Martelanc.⁸⁹ Wealthier women of Žiri could buy

⁸¹ Jelenec, J. 2009. 167.

⁸² Miklavčič, M. 2014. 172.

⁸³ Križnar, I. 2013. 422.

⁸⁴ Pečnik, I. et. al. 2012. 31.

⁸⁵ Krajnik, M. 2006. 77.

⁸⁶ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 168.

⁸⁷ Martelanc, M. 1929. 16.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, 27, 55.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, 3.

glassware, kitchenware, pearls, linens, in larger towns, such as Ljubljana. They saved the time they would otherwise spend preparing the trousseau.⁹⁰ Before the trousseau could be taken to a new home, they had to wash and iron the laundry.⁹¹ Since trousseau required a lot of work and money, wedding meant a lot of expenses for the bride's family. The situation may have been complicated further if the groom decided to cancel the wedding. If the groom cancelled the arrangement right before the marriage, his new bride had to pay his family all expenses pertaining the wedding preparations.⁹²

A dress had to be prepared for the wedding as well. Black bridal dresses prevailed in Žiri in the period before the First World War, and even after it, both for men and women. Fashion during the interwar period dictated a special dress for women, which was not suitable for other occasions. They were long white wedding gowns which were later painted, with a veil and a garland. Less wealthy women ordered suits and dresses that could be worn more often, while the veil remained. Sometimes they wore a hat. If the bride was already a mother or pregnant, she forwent the white garland, but she was allowed to put flowers in her hair.⁹³ During and after the Second World War, dresses and suits prevailed. Dresses were tailored, sometimes made by relatives. In addition to a bespoke suit or dress, the brides also bought a hat, shoes, and a handbag with a matching shade. Some did their wedding shopping in Ljubljana.⁹⁴ When asked about her dress, Julijana Kavčič said: "When I got married in 1920, I didn't even have my own dress. I bought it from my sister Mica. A beautiful, black dress! They had some fabric, but it was so bad it would be disposable".⁹⁵ When a more beautiful lingerie was available, the brides awaited their grooms on the wedding night in coloured apparel bought in the Kingdom of Italy.⁹⁶ In addition to the clothes, the brides had to provide a bouquet of flowers. Some had waxed

⁹⁰ *Domoljub*, 18. 2. 1935. 94.

⁹¹ Demšar, M. 2007. 17.

⁹² Miklavčič, M. 2014. 164

⁹³ Žagar, J. 1994. 69.

⁹⁴ Krajnik, M. 2006. 77.

⁹⁵ Stanonik, M. 2008. 33-35.

⁹⁶ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 40.

flowers, while sometimes a bride would wear a bouquet of fresh flowers in the middle of winter.⁹⁷ Boutonnieres were worn by wedding guests and they revealed their marital status. Those turned down disclosed that the person is already married.⁹⁸ And what about hairstyles and makeup? According to testimonies, women did not occupy themselves with makeup in the interwar period. They did, however, braid their hair or arrange them with hair clamps, and used sweetened water for solidification.⁹⁹ In the Twenties, short hairstyles appeared, formed by curling. In the Thirties, longer hair was fashionable again, while men used various hair pomades. Trimmed eyebrows were also in vogue; not too thick or too hairy.¹⁰⁰



Image 4: In the photo from the beginning of the 20th century, it is evident that black wedding dresses were popular and were useful for other events.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Krajnik, M. 2006. 77.

⁹⁸ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 172.

⁹⁹ Ibidem, 168.

¹⁰⁰ Žagar, J. 1994. 128-130.

¹⁰¹ Private archive of Marta Kavčič.



Image 5: Great historical shifts also brought changes in the field of clothing culture. During the war, the choice of clothing was influenced by its practicality and affordability. The bride in the photo, who was married in October 1941, also followed that.¹⁵⁴



Image 6: In the interwar period, brides also decided for white dresses and veils. Such dresses were intended solely for weddings. They had to be painted for other types of events.¹⁵⁵

Certainly, wedding preparations were not purely of material nature. Religious formalities had to be arranged as well. The wedding was approved by the priest who tested the couple's knowledge of catechism, which usually occurred on Monday mornings. The interviewee, born in 1928, recalls that the evaluations took place in the inn opposite the church.¹⁰⁴ The priest also had to find a date of the wedding and the banns. The time of the wedding was determined according to the church calendar and farm chores. The majority of weddings took place

¹⁰² Private archive of Rajko Vehar.

¹⁰³ Private archive of Marta Klemenčič.

¹⁰⁴ Stana Oblak (b. 1943), Kristina Pivk (b. 1928).

in the period between the end of the autumn labour and Shrovetide. Eating meat and dancing were forbidden during Lent, which put some restrictions on the wedding.¹⁰⁵ Banns were agreed upon based on the chosen wedding date. Three banns had to take place prior to the wedding, but in emergencies – for example, if a child was to be born – it could be arranged that one announcement counted as three.¹⁰⁶ One announcement in lieu of three was also a choice for widowers, who wanted to get a new mother for their children as soon as possible.¹⁰⁷ The banns were read at Sunday masses in which the bride stood out with her appearance. She wore a silk kerchief that was given to her by the groom.¹⁰⁸ The third formality that needed to be arranged, was the invitation to the wedding. The bride was supposed to invite guests by herself, but others could do it if they were good speakers. The guests already gave gifts when the invitations started, while they brought different goods to the house prior to the wedding. When the bride visited fellow villagers, it was considered her farewell from being single, and it concluded on the day before the wedding; one of the interviewees called that evening the ‘garland eve’. The bride had to go to bed at midnight, while the musicians visited the groom’s home where the celebration continued.¹⁰⁹

Before the wedding, trousseau had to be transported to the bride’s new home. This event also took place following the tradition. A rooster, which symbolized fertility,¹¹⁰ was included in the trousseau. The interviewee, born in 1939, remarked that the rooster was supposed to wake up the bride as well.¹¹¹ The coachmen, who came to collect the trousseau, took things that did not belong to the trousseau from the bride’s home (animals, dishes, tools, clocks) and boasted with them through the village.¹¹² In the 19th century, this event occurred a few days before the wedding, while at the turn of the century, the trousseau was collected with

¹⁰⁵ Rogelj Škafar, B. (ed.) 2000. 35.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem, 38.

¹⁰⁷ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 48.

¹⁰⁸ Bokal, M. 2010. 237.

¹⁰⁹ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

¹¹⁰ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 172.

¹¹¹ Štefka Dolenec (b. 1939).

¹¹² Križnar, Delnice, 423.

decorated carts on the day of the wedding.¹¹³ The groom and other boys took part in it; the description of the event is preserved in the parish chronicle of Josip Vidmar. The boys yoked three carts and adorned them with colourful ribbons. One of the boys placed the accordion and was followed by running children, while the adults watched them along the way. When they arrived at the bride's home, all the windows and doors were shut, and all the residents moved inside the house; the only one outside was an older man who was preparing firewood in the woodshed. He replied to all their inquiries as if he was deaf: "He doesn't understand what a bride is. He reportedly doesn't even know what a woman is. They have to explain everything to him".¹¹⁴ When the boys managed to get across to him why they were there, the old man addressed the bride's family on their behalf. The family sent an older and unkempt lady with torn clothes first. Then they sent him a younger woman with a child in her arms. When they refused to show the real bride, a scuffle ensued, and the chief¹¹⁵ of the parade, who also led the wedding,¹¹⁶ ordered the boys to break in and find the bride, hiding with a bridesmaid. The groom's companions took the trousseau to his home, while the groom himself took the bride to the wedding ceremony.¹¹⁷



Image 7: The photographer also caught the wedding guests who set out to get the bride.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Pečnik, I. 2014. 42-43.

¹¹⁴ Pečnik, I. et.al. 2012. 35.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹¹⁶ Miklavčič, M. 2014.170.

¹¹⁷ Pečnik, I. et.al. 2012. 35.

¹¹⁸ Private archive of Štefka Dolenec.

Wedding guests also gathered at the bride's home. When she emerged from the house, she knelt, and her mother signed the cross on her. Then they sat on carts, if the family could afford them. The last cart was reserved for the bride and the groom, while the penultimate cart was for the parents and the chief – the godfather who led the events.¹¹⁹ The procession to the church was quite, and the musician was the only one that could express joy. The bride had to cry, while the groom was supposed to console her. Certain superstitions were connected to the journey to the church; it was a bad sign if they met an older woman, barking dogs, and a black cat.¹²⁰ It was fortunate if the bride first met a young man. They were obliged to give a piece of bread and wine to every passer-by, while the first even got some money.¹²¹ To ensure as much happiness for the newlyweds as possible, the chief tried to avoid superstition, so he asked one of the young men to be the first one to cross the bride's path.¹²² All of this was made easier by "šranga", a wedding roadblock, which evolved from previous trials that made sure the groom bought the bride from her home.¹²³ Unmarried boys and servants¹²⁴ from the bride's village demanded payment for all the efforts they put in protecting the purity of the bride. They used the compensation to buy drinks, and gave a portion of it to the bride.¹²⁵ After 1940, they started putting roadblocks between the bride's home and the church.¹²⁶ First, they did that to the girls that were married off to other villages, but soon it became a tradition for all girls.¹²⁷ The interviewee, born in 1941, was asked by the bride's mother to build a "šranga": "I put up a plank and took an iron, and ironed my pants".¹²⁸

¹¹⁹ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 170.

¹²⁰ Pečnik, I. 2014. 44.

¹²¹ Bokal, M. 2010. 237.

¹²² Pečnik, I. et.al. 2012. 36.

¹²³ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 170.

¹²⁴ Krašovec, J. 1999. 53.

¹²⁵ Ibidem, 54.

¹²⁶ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 168.

¹²⁷ Ibidem, 144.

¹²⁸ Rajko Vehar (b. 1941).

The wedding was announced by the musician, who played in front of the church, while the wedding guests arrived slowly. The bride was allowed to come after everyone was there, for it was said that “she can come when the wedding guests arrive at the church. The guests may inspect the bride from behind, and when she leaves the church, they may see her from the front”.¹²⁹ The passers-by showed their interest in the event in different ways; men generally showed more interest in horse-drawn carriages; they were interested in the age of horses and their teeth; according to tradition, they had to refuse drinks offered by the chief for a long time; women were apparently more interested in the newlyweds and the guests.¹³⁰ The ritual in the church followed the prescriptions in the prayer book from the second half of the 19th century. First, the priest blessed the ring, and the couple. He wrapped their hands in a stole while the prayers began. Praying was suggested for later as well, and women should be the ones praying.¹³¹ The faithfulness of the bride was underlined during the ceremony. She had to pray at side altars after the wedding, as staying inside the church for a long time demonstrated her deep faith. The groom waited for her at the church door and she emerged on his right side. Handshakes and congratulations followed.¹³² “The duty of the groom and the chief was to invite the priest to the wedding festivities”.¹³³ The holy matrimony or wedding was usually attended by the chaplain, who typically prepared a speech; or by the sexton.¹³⁴

The church wedding usually took place in the bride's parish, or it could even take place at her home. When the couple arrived at the groom's home, they were welcomed by a feast. The wedding described by Pečnik concluded at the groom's house where a so-called wedding feast took place. Symbolically, the bride became part of the groom's family when she was carried over the house threshold. The banquet was followed by a dance opened by a groomsman and a bridesmaid. The musicians started with slower rhythms as the couple was followed by older dancers; then, the music became livelier, when the

¹²⁹ Pečnik, I. et.al. 2012. 36.

¹³⁰ Ibidem.

¹³¹ Kosar, F. 1877. 270.

¹³² Pečnik, I. et.al. 2012. 36-37.

¹³³ Ibidem, 37.

¹³⁴ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 169.

younger ones decided to participate.¹³⁵ The sounds that accompanied such events are evident on old photos. In Žiri, double basses, accordions, trumpets, violins, and guitars were played at weddings. The musicians were paid with a “povštertanc” where money was put in a hat.¹³⁶ “Stealing the bride” is one of the special traditions. At around midnight, the bride was taken away, which often resulted in quarrels and altercations.¹³⁷ When the bride was returned, she and the groom were to dance. They weren’t allowed to dance before, and their dance was announced by the chief.¹³⁸ Additional conflicts were also caused by property-related episodes. Problems arose if the wedding letter was lost, since an argument about the dowry ensued.¹³⁹ After the wedding, the newlyweds left for their new home. They went on foot, with carts, later with cars. In 1940, for example, the bride and the groom bid farewell from the guests at midnight, and drove a car to their home in Dobračevo.¹⁴⁰



Image 8: Wedding in 1936: most visible on the photograph are the instruments.¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ Ibidem, 172.

¹³⁶ Demšar, M. 2017. 18.

¹³⁷ Ibidem, 172.

¹³⁸ Pečnik, I. et.al. 2012. 38.

¹³⁹ Ibidem, 172.

¹⁴⁰ Demšar, M. 2017. 18.

¹⁴¹ Private archive of Štefka Dolenec.

There were also uninvited guests, called “šeškarji”, who received cider and bread in the hall; they prepared skits for the wedding guests - they dressed as a camel, a beggar, a peddler, an agent, a dentist. If they were not happy with the feast, they told that to the master. Two stories about insulted “šeškarji” are preserved in Žiri region. In the first one, boys angry about the master’s stinginess mowed his lawn.¹⁴² The second one is the continuation of the story about the Kucler’s girl who didn’t respond to suitors’ singing. At her wedding (somewhere between 1903 and 1910), a group associated with Franjo Kopač, decided to ruin the wedding party by moving a latrine on the roof: “Using a long wooden pole and a chair, we lifted that shed from Mother Earth, to which it was attached with four stakes. (...) Combining our forces, we put it on the ridge of the roof the same way it stood on the ground. We pulled a lath through the loophole and tied a red skirt, which was previously drying in the hayrack, on it. The tower with a flag was thus complete”.¹⁴³ One of the wedding guests fell into a manure pit while searching for the latrine. “The old Kucler borrowed him his leather trousers, but his appetite was nonetheless ruined”.¹⁴⁴ They noticed the tower on the roof at dawn. It was the master’s son task to get it back down, where it belonged. That, however, did not happen, as it fell from the roof and shattered.¹⁴⁵

The wedding food depended on the wealth of the family.¹⁴⁶ The tables were festively decorated with flowers and the drinks (wine) were ready. The guests sat down and prayed Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be. Only then could the selected girls bring soup with homemade noodles, followed by roasted potatoes, salad, and two kinds of meat. Bread was readily available in baskets. At the beginning of the 20th century, rolled dumplings were obligatory at weddings, and they were either prepared at home or at one of the inns in Žiri. Various pastries were brought to the table after the meal: potica (walnut, poppy, or rosacea), flancats, bobs or biscuits. Dinner was not the only meal at the wedding. After midnight, another meal took place, when the servant girls brought new plates and cutlery. They mostly served calf or pork roast with a mixed salad, consisting of string beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, and red beets. Around four or

¹⁴² Miklavčič, M. 2014.169.

¹⁴³ Naglič, M. 2014. 28.

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁶ Miklavčič, M. 2014. 173.

five o'clock, they served the third meal, which consisted of a goulash or "ajmoht", made from chicken meat. Pastries were also available throughout the meals, and various fruit compote (dry bristles, plums, cherries, pears) was served, and fresh fruit if the wedding took place in summer. Later, they also served coffee, a cake, or a fruit cup. Wedding menus changed a bit after the Second World War. At the beginning of the celebration, an aperitif was served, usually home-made spirit. In the desire to be more modern, people also bought liqueurs.¹⁴⁷



Image 9: Wedding in 1934: a cook with her pots takes a picture with the wedding guests, while one of the guests in the back holds a piece of pastry.¹⁴⁸



Image 10: Wedding in 1928: some wedding guests hold glasses of wine in their hands.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Stanonik, M. 1995/6. 120-121.

¹⁴⁸ Private archive of Štefka Dolenec.

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem.

Festivities with such menus were also a reason to celebrate for children, even if they were usually not invited. They did, however, receive some of the “šeškalica”. The interviewee, born in 1928, recalls that there was a wedding in Skale in 1937. They went to “šeškanje” in the afternoon, and when the wedding guests left, her grandmother brought potica and biscuits, and said: “Here, take some, since you’re indigent”. Šeškalca was also pastry brought by the wedding guests for the family,¹⁵⁰ and it had to be served even if the wedding took place elsewhere. Wealthier people could afford a wedding at the Sokol Hall, and have their food brought from the local inn Bahač. Such a feast wasn’t costly only to the newlyweds, but also for the wedding guests. The interviewee, born in 1933, recalls that his parents had to pay 200 Dinars at a wedding, since it was a tradition that the guests contribute to the wedding. Whatever was left could be eaten the following day, or was divided among the guests in the evening.¹⁵¹

After the Second World War, it became more and more frequent that weddings did not take place at home, but in inns – both as a large-scale feast or simply a wedding lunch for the family. Some weddings were more modest: “Aunt Ivana was married in the spring of 1940 and it was a quiet affair. There was no real wedding celebration. The groom, the bride, the best man, and the maid of honour. Anžon yoked his buggy and we drove to Žiri. I was her bridesmaid. We had lunch at Bahač after the wedding, and that was it.”¹⁵² There was an increase in civil marriages after the Second World War. The interviewees, born in the Thirties, decided for a civil wedding only. They had dinner at an inn, where they had a musician, and the best man and the maid of honour were the only company they had. After the wedding, they drove to the groom’s home with a Topolino, while his mother prepared a better lunch: dry soup, dry meat, and sour potatoes.¹⁵³ Weddings with multiple couples were also something special. In 1939, the newly-ordained priest married two couples at the Plesek homestead, and one groom and one bride were his siblings.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Karner, B. 2010. 49.

¹⁵¹ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

¹⁵² Krajnik, M. 2006. 76.

¹⁵³ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

¹⁵⁴ Štefka Dolenc (b. 1939)

What about honeymoon trips? One can read in the daily Slovenian press about what happened after the wedding. In 1858, Janez Bleiweis described one of such marriages, which he had the opportunity to observe during his visit in Žiri: “In the evening, we sat down in the garden and chatted about numerous domestic issues. All of a sudden, the musicians in the nearby inn started playing – some hillbilly was getting married. We were curious: does anyone know, where they are travelling after the wedding? ‘They are going home, back to the boonies, about two hours from here, when everyone is tired of dancing and drinking.’ – they answered. The rural part hasn’t heard about the funny new habit of Ljubljana bourgeois – I thought – when the newlyweds go on a long trip right after they get hitched; – people say they go “looking for pepper”. True or not, it is most definitely funny. It used to be that a young bride jumped right into the business of the household and had hundreds of chores to attend to; now both of them run away as fast as they can, and they could not care less about their home”.¹⁵⁵ Honeymoon trips became popular much later in Žiri, and only the wealthier could afford them.



Image 11: Wedding photograph of a groom and a bride with their wedding guests in the 1970s. Behind them, there's a car, which remained an important element of transporting the newlyweds, even after the Second World War.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Bleiweis, J. 1987. 14.

¹⁵⁶ Private archive of Kristina Pivk.

Funerals

If the first two life milestones, in principle, brought joy, since they symbolized the beginning of something new, the last stop in human life is linked to mourning. As with birth and marriage, certain data can be extracted from central registers. After examining the mortuary books, we established that between 1925 and 1940, 40 to 70 people died annually in Žiri. There were many children among them. On average 12.7 children less than one year old died each year. In addition to the youngest, 15 infants died per year.¹⁵⁷ The reason for that can be ascribed to the current living conditions, healthcare, etc. The Second World War had the most prominent impact on the demographic structure, when mortality increased, especially of men. The first year of the war mostly took children, where 20% of all deaths were of those less than one year old. In the following years, mortality increased significantly in age groups of 11-20 years, 21-30 years, and 41-50 years, as these groups were the most active in warfare.¹⁵⁸ In the first two years of the war, the average age at death for men was 41 to 42 years. In 1943, it decreased by ten years, and in 1945, for an extra year. During this period, the lowest average age at death for men in Žiri was 29 years. After the war, the situation improved. In 1960, the lowest average age at death rose to 55 years, which is 10 years more than in 1941. The situation improved in 1956 for another ten years (62). By the last years of the period in question, it fluctuated between 50 and 60, and between 1959 and 1960, it rose over 70 years.¹⁵⁹

People who died during the period in question, found their eternal rest in two cemeteries, namely at the cemetery by the old parish church, and at the new cemetery in Dobračeva. The first one caused headaches because of the swampy ground. Due to the rule that the grave had to be two meters deep and dug well before the funeral, water often accumulated in it, which meant they had to submerge the coffin first, and then bury it, or they had to remove the water from the grave. Due to moisture, bodies decomposed at

¹⁵⁷ Kokalj, M. 1997. 24.

¹⁵⁸ Vehar, M. 2014. 17.

¹⁵⁹ Arhiv župnije Žiri, Mrliška knjiga župnije Žiri 1941-2007.

a slower pace, so coffins were often covered with soil with dug-up bones.¹⁶⁰ The described problems and lack of space encouraged the powers that be to transfer the cemetery to Dobračeva.¹⁶¹ On October 19, 1890, the new cemetery was consecrated, and three days after, used for the very first time. In the following years, a morgue was built, where autopsies took place. As early as 1897, the new cemetery needed additional land, as it became too small.¹⁶² The reason is also that the graves were initially single with family graves emerging later along the upper edge of the cemetery. The place by the church was intended for the burial of children. Beggars and suicides were supposed to be buried separately, namely in the place where the chapel of rest is located today.¹⁶³ In the period in question, people rarely visited the cemetery; they usually did it on All Saints' Day (November 1), when they also slightly tidied up the graves. The graves were not taken care of during the year. The burial mound was usually surrounded by a wooden frame, which quickly disintegrated, while the graves were overgrown by grass, used by the sexton to feed his cattle. Tombstones were rare as people preferred iron crosses.¹⁶⁴ That changed after the Second World War, as many young people were buried there, and their families visited their graves more often, and maintained them more regularly. A family grave was introduced with funeral habits changing slowly as well. The data show that funeral customs began to change more prominently in the 1980s. The main changes occurred in 1979 with the cemetery's expansion. The morgue was demolished, and the chapel of rest was finally completed in 1983. The popular period of funeral processions that hindered the traffic stopped.¹⁶⁵ In 1982, the first urn burial took place in Žiri.¹⁶⁶

Numerous traditional elements can be found in the funerals through the 19th century up until the 1980s. Customs began even before a person died

¹⁶⁰ Zajec, A. 2010. 87.

¹⁶¹ Ibidem, 108.

¹⁶² Ibidem, 94-95.

¹⁶³ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

¹⁶⁴ Zajec, A. 2010. 100.

¹⁶⁵ The processions were described in detail by Marija Gantar, gl. Gantar, M. 2013.

¹⁶⁶ Zajec, A. 2010. 108.

when the dying received the last rites in accordance with the Catholic faith. That a priest visited someone for that reason was not kept secret as he was accompanied by the tolling bells. Other parishioners could welcome the Holy Host as they were kneeling, blessed by the priest.¹⁶⁷ The family prepared for the priest's arrival while they waited for him. Around 1877, the house had to be tidied up before the last rites and a table with a white cloth had to be prepared. A crucifix and two wax candles were put there. One vessel held holy water with a branch, and the other held ordinary water. Seven pieces of yarn, salt and bread were put on the plate. If the dying one received both the confession and the Holy Communion, a cup had to be filled with wine.¹⁶⁸ They burned all of it, including the wine, if the dying was not able to drink it. Confession took place in a different room, where they had to pray the rosary until the priest called them back ringing a bell.¹⁶⁹ According to the prayer book, last rites were quite long, although the notes explained that in the case of emergency, only one body part may be anointed.¹⁷⁰ A candle was then lit next to the dying person and the crucifix was put in their hands, or it was placed in such a way the dying person could look at it, while the others prayed.¹⁷¹ Some people chose to prepare for their final hour on their own. For them, prince bishop Jak. Peregrin Pavlič published prayer books called *Gospod, teci mi pomagat!* The third part includes so-called laments which are to be read to the dying person right before death.¹⁷²

Some people refused last rites, which happened in the family of Anton Trpin, former sexton in Ledina. His wife was dying during labour and she refused the last communion: "Women around her are persuading her, in vain. She holds her teeth together even tighter. The priest gave her last rites and took the intact host with him. When the priest left, she

¹⁶⁷ Bokal, M. 2010. 238-239.

¹⁶⁸ Last rites did not change much through time. According to the prayer book from 1970, six flakes of cotton were on the table, without bread and wine. Oražem, J. et.al. 1970. 121.

¹⁶⁹ Kosar, F. 1877. 358.

¹⁷⁰ Ibidem, 361.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem, 376.

¹⁷² Pavlič, J. 1891.

consumed something, and died soon after that”.¹⁷³ Sometimes the family refused to call a priest due to bad blood. To prevent such situations, public punishment was threatened.¹⁷⁴ But making amends with God was not the only business that had to be attended to by the dying person. Worldly affairs had to be taken care of as well, mainly those related to property. A last testament had to be written, and determined what kind of funeral is to be held. Neža Jezeršca, for instance, demanded in the contract, that her son Andrej Debelak must provide for a dignified funeral of both parents; the anniversary of death must be celebrated; and 25 holy masses must be performed for each deceased.¹⁷⁵

Then, the time of waiting for death came. When the person died, the family had to notify others – a sign that indicated that there was a corpse in the house, was lighting a candle on the window.¹⁷⁶ All clocks were stopped, and all mirrors were covered.¹⁷⁷ Then, the neighbours were notified, and after them, the sexton, who initiated the funeral toll: “The funeral toll has a different start and a sombre melody. It starts with the strike of the large bell, followed by the rest. The toll ends in the same order. It tolls for three consecutive five-minute parts, in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. Only two bells were used when tolling for poor children, since it was cheaper”.¹⁷⁸ Death was also announced by the knell which had short strikes.¹⁷⁹ When tolling was ordered, a lantern was issued in the parish, which they used to light a candle that burned until the end of the funeral.¹⁸⁰ The preparation of the corpse on the bier followed, which was usually done by the neighbours. The rural part kept the custom of dressing the corpse in a wedding dress even in the interwar period; in Žiri after it as well. The custom was abandoned in the urban areas and the deceased were not even

¹⁷³ Jelenec, J. 2009. 377.

¹⁷⁴ Ibidem, 313.

¹⁷⁵ Krajnik, M. 2006. 23.

¹⁷⁶ Štefka Dolenec (b.).

¹⁷⁷ Žagar, J. 1994.70.

¹⁷⁸ Košir, T. et.al., 2013. 82.

¹⁷⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁸⁰ Žagar, J. 1994. 70.

dressed in their Sunday best, as someone already inherited it.¹⁸¹ Children and unwed women were dressed in white clothes and had wreaths laid on their heads.¹⁸² The pose of the deceased was then rearranged. Their hands were tied up with a tape while a crucifix was put between them. The jaw had to be fixed with a tape sometimes in order to keep the mouth closed. A prayer book was placed in their hands as well, and the deceased took it to the grave. If the wish had been expressed, other objects were added, for instance a hat.¹⁸³ The deceased was put on the bier in an open casket, which had to be provided by the third neighbour according to the custom. Black coffins were intended for married people, while unwed people had white coffins, regardless of age. Caskets were adorned with various stickers and angels. Most of the coffins were wooden, although galvanized ones were used if the corpse was transported from elsewhere.¹⁸⁴ Curtains, a cross, and candlesticks for the bier were available at the mortuary, if the family did not own them. However, not all adhered to the principle that things should be returned clean and undamaged. The interviewee recalls that they looked for curtains elsewhere as the cemetery ones were dirty.¹⁸⁵ The bier was decorated with home-made wreaths, while the ribbons with inscriptions were available for purchase. Pot plants proved useful for decorating the bier and they were usually provided by the neighbours. They had to be discarded, however, as they absorbed the smell. The stench was a significant downside of the deceased waiting at home for the funeral for 48 hours.¹⁸⁶ In order to alleviate it, pots with water and iron, usually chains, were put under the bier.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹ Ibidem, 70.

¹⁸² Karner, B. 2010. 48.

¹⁸³ Štefka Dolenec (b. 1939).

¹⁸⁴ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931).

¹⁸⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁸⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁸⁷ Štefka Dolenec (b. 1939).



Image 12: Bier of a child that died a few years after the Second World War. The bier was decorated with white flowers, while the child was dressed in white cloth.¹⁸⁸



Image 13: Funeral of an unwed woman after the Second World War. She was surrounded by pot plants, while she was dressed in white clothes.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Private archive of Rajko Vehar.

¹⁸⁹ Private archive of Marta Klemenčič.



Image 14: Funeral of a married woman after the Second World War. Unlike the deceased above, she was dressed in black clothes and had a coloured kerchief put on her head.¹⁹⁰

When the deceased was ready, the farewell could begin, namely the sprinkling of the dead with holy water. People usually did that the first day, while they attended the funeral the second. The neighbours served spirit to the mourners and such visits took place in the morning and in the afternoon. According to the tradition the deceased was never to be left alone, so the family arranged for someone to pray next to them at all times. The wake was entrusted to a pious woman, who, in exchange for food, prayed next to the deceased, took care for the lantern, and carried it in the procession to the grave.¹⁹¹ The neighbours joined her for the wake which is evident in the 1877 prayer book: “In many places it is customary for neighbours not only to sprinkle the deceased with holy water and pray for them during the day, but also to spend the night with them. The practice is beautiful, and it is regrettable that behaviour is not always serving God’s honour nor is it helping the deceased. It is known: one cannot pray the entirety of the night; so accept, dear souls, the world beyond. Divide the night between prayer, holy scripture, and pious conversations”.¹⁹² In 1926, the Svetle’s twins were making fun of the deceased when they acted out the blood-letting, which scandalized the mourners: “The very next day, a pig was in fact slaughtered next to the dying man. It was the right time, the moon was

¹⁹⁰ Private archive of Marta Klemenčič.

¹⁹¹ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

¹⁹² Kosar, F. 1877. 405.

favourable, while it was too cold outside for such things. Not long after the swine, the old master died as well. The twins were ridiculing him when he was being put on the bier”.¹⁹³ Other kinds of incidents occurred that were not the result of mockery. Since people sprinkled the deceased with holy water in their homes and some houses were more secluded, people wondered whether the terminally ill had already died. Sometimes they were mistaken: “Present’s grandmother decided to sprinkle the deceased with holy water, even if she had to walk. When she arrived, she realized the lady is still alive”.¹⁹⁴



*Image 15: Funeral from the second half of the 20th century where certain traditional elements are still evident. The coffin is being carried from the house and a mourner on the right holds a candle in his hand.*¹⁹⁵

After 48 hours of waiting and after a 1.7-metre grave had been dug, which was taken care of by the fourth neighbour,¹⁹⁶ the deceased was ready for the final journey. People began gathering in front of their house and expressed their grief and respect by dressing in black. Men could wear a black ribbon in lieu of a black dress, while children were not obliged to wear black at all. It was also believed that people should not overdress or wear too much makeup at funerals.¹⁹⁷ Before going to the cemetery, the mourners usually feasted. After

¹⁹³ Naglič, M. 2014. 71.

¹⁹⁴ Bokal, M. 2010. 270.

¹⁹⁵ Private archive of Rajko Vehar.

¹⁹⁶ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

¹⁹⁷ Žagar, J. 1994. 70.

the meal, the family said their farewell, and watched as the coffin was nailed shut before it was taken outside. The rule was to carry the deceased outside feet-first in order to prevent them from coming back.¹⁹⁸ The casket was laid on a hearse, while a funeral procession formed. The children walked before, and the family and neighbours behind the hearse, where the lady who kept vigil next to the deceased sat with the lantern. The cortège carried wreaths, which were put on the hearse in later years.¹⁹⁹ The mourners received a candle, which was then left on the grave. People could join the procession on the road, since it was not necessary for them to come to the house of the deceased when the funeral started.²⁰⁰ Because some places were quite remote, it sometimes happened that one of the mourners had to use the toilet: “When the cortège reached Luka in Brekovice, he could not hold it in any longer. Holding the crucifix, he ran behind the house and did what he had to do, and ran back to the head of the procession.”²⁰¹



Image 16: Funeral processions modernized slowly. The photograph depicts funeral in the 1970s. Even in the era of socialism, people used a horse-drawn carriage. Next to the coachman, there's a woman who kept vigil and took care of the lantern.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Stana Oblak (b. 1943), Kristina Pivk (b. 1929)

¹⁹⁹ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

²⁰⁰ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

²⁰¹ Naglič, M. 2014. 56.

²⁰² Private archive of Andrej Oblak.

Difficult weather conditions, and the state of the roads and the means of transport of that time, made many of the funeral processions quite difficult: "In the winter, the road is gone or frozen, so many corpses had to wait for the roads to thaw so they could be buried in sacred soil".²⁰³ There is also a record about the burials during the outbreaks of epidemics: "Under the Goropeke, there is a deep and dark ravine called Under the grave. When cholera was raging through our town, the only one left alive was Žakelj's maid, and she carried dead to be buried there. A similar humanitarian work was done on the neighbouring hill of Breznica, done by Loštrak's field hand, who was also the only one left".²⁰⁴ A similar place is the Dead Valley above the quarry near Pesek, where inhabitants of Vrsnik who died of the plague were reportedly buried in snow, before they could be transported to the cemetery in the spring.²⁰⁵ If someone wanted to bury the deceased in winter anyway, they had to be resourceful. They built a train from branches in Žirovski vrh and put a casket on it in order to drag it down to the valley.²⁰⁶ The interviewee recalls that he was almost buried by an avalanche when we went to Dobračeva to collect the cross. The municipality rejected their request to bury the deceased in snow, so they nailed the coffin to a sledge and dragged it to Žiri. There was so much snow it almost covered the door of the Katernik inn. The casket fell and rolled in front of the inn's door.²⁰⁷

Cemeteries were reserved for Catholics for some time, meaning the funerals were held in accordance with the rules of the Roman Catholic Church.²⁰⁸ In the Twenties, the first non-Catholic²⁰⁹ was buried, namely a Russian emigrant. A record in the parish chronicle revealed that the said Russian attended a Sokol fete before committing suicide. After he was rejected by a girl, he broke a bottle of wine and was consequently thrown out of the inn by Bahač, and slapped by the members of Sokol. The parish priest Pečnik wrote that the

²⁰³ Krajnik, M. 2006. 19.

²⁰⁴ Stanonik, M. 2005. 133.

²⁰⁵ Štefka Dolenc (b. 1939).

²⁰⁶ Andrej Oblak (b. 1931), Kati Oblak (b. 1931)

²⁰⁷ Rajko Vehar (b. 1941).

²⁰⁸ Jelenec, J. 2009. 313.

²⁰⁹ Naglič, M. 2014. 87.

man had shot himself in the head and heart with a rifle he had acquired at the financial guardhouse. His corpse was brought to the morgue at four in the morning, and the funeral was held by a priest of the Orthodox Church from Ljubljana. The innkeeper attempted to make amends by ordering a lavish tombstone, which was removed after the rent stopped being paid.²¹⁰ The first civil funeral, without the priest, was held in Žiri in 1910, and was reported by the newspapers *Slovenski dom* and *Domoljub*. Trohov Simon (Kavčič) expressed a wish: "When I die, I want my funeral to have music, priest or no priest".²¹¹ As he lay on the bier, they put a crucifix in his hands the first day, while he was buried without religious ceremonies as he did not care for holy mass or confession. That same year, an assistant of a blacksmith was also buried in a civil funeral.²¹² The reason for that was somewhere else, though. The priest refused to hold the funeral because the family did not issue a confession certificate of the deceased. The family even had troubles with consequent services for the deceased as the priest of Ledina also refused their request on the grounds that the deceased was buried in a civil funeral.²¹³ A bit different – but still in accordance with church regulations – was a funeral of children, where merry psalms were sung. Small children were buried in silence with only the family attending the funeral. The small coffin was carried by the father, or by children (dressed in confirmation suits), or it could be carried by a buggy.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Ibidem, 87.

²¹¹ Ibidem, 114.

²¹² Ibidem, 114-116.

²¹³ Ibidem, 117.

²¹⁴ Andrej Oblak (b. 1930).



Image 17: A photograph of a funeral from the second half of the 20th century. The mourners are saying farewell from the deceased by throwing soil on the coffin.²¹⁵

People held certain superstitions that are still alive today. When their sons had been enlisted in the First World War, both parents died within two months from each other. People said that a woman came looking for her husband: “Tomaž and Micika came when he called them, kneeling by the bed, as he told them: What an odd red light all of a sudden! Look, how red the clouds are, how everything is reddened by the mighty dawn, everything is glowing, everything is glowing, glowing! The doctor said he had a stroke. Naturally, Micka called him.”²¹⁶ There was also a saying: “Those who fall on Christmas Eve while going to the Midnight Mass shall die that year.”²¹⁷ Around the year 1800, a man dressed in white sheet haunted women who passed the cemetery. He grew a hunchback and people started saying: “Leave the dead alone!”²¹⁸ There is also a story in Nova vas about a sexton who saw headless corpses draped in white sheets returning to their graves when he was ringing the morning bells: “Had he turned, they would have torn him to tiny pieces.”²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Private archive of Rajko Vehar.

²¹⁶ Krajnik, M. 2006. 32.

²¹⁷ Jelenec, J. 2009. 140.

²¹⁸ Ibidem, 328.

²¹⁹ Stanonik, M. 2005. 86.

In Lučine, people believed that the dead tend to come back and disturb those who knew them when they were alive.²²⁰ Different events were also deemed omens about impending demise. An owl is considered a bird of death in Žiri and the surrounding area, while its hoots do not bring good tidings to a house where a sick person is lying. A superstition was already circulating in the seventies of the 19th century in Žiri: "If an owl hoots around the house, one of the inhabitants shall die soon; teasing an owl is a perilous affair, for it goes straight for your head and if you strike it, more owls appear and pester you even more".²²¹ The howling of the hounds was also an omen of death, as was an apparition of white doves or crying of the crows, a notion of which came from the Cerknjo region.²²² In Nova vas, in the middle of the eighties of the 19th century, the following superstition was recorded: "If you wished to find out who will be taken from a certain house to the graveyard the following year, all you needed to do was circle the house backwards and look inside the middle window: you would see the one who would end up on a bier. Nobody was brave enough to try, though, as they were afraid to see themselves".²²³ There were also superstitions about the deceased saying goodbye to this world, visiting the living, or seeing their death in various events. They often heard knocking, which was normally related to the moment the deceased drew their final breath. The deceased were also seen in the light that, for instance, moved in front of them: "When we were in the middle of the road, I saw a light on the hill that accompanied us almost to the house in which the neighbour's mother lay. I was crying scared. My mother told me the neighbour's mother came across".²²⁴ Such events were called "memories". The dead were seen or heard later, when they were long gone. It was a belief, however, that in such instances, a holy mass was in order.²²⁵ The Chronicle of Ledina also tells the story of the owner of the Brezničan's inn, whom the parish priest repeatedly warned about drinking. On his way home, he stopped at the cemetery and fell into a freshly dug grave. When he dragged himself out of the hole, he

²²⁰ Ibidem, 86.

²²¹ Ibidem, 108.

²²² Štefka Dolenec (b. 1939).

²²³ Stanonik, M. 2005. 113.

²²⁴ Bokal, M. 2010. 53.

²²⁵ Ibidem, 56.

accidentally picked up a bone instead of the pipe, which became apparent only in the following morning. But, as the chronicler wrote, even that did not discourage him from drinking.²²⁶

Conclusion

The described customs roughly outline the celebration and marking of the life milestones in the Žiri region. In certain aspects, the habits are the same or similar to those that apply to the entire Slovenian territory, while in some parts, they diverge from them. We can say that the people of Žiri knew the customs that were especially common to the rural areas, while some novelties, which first appeared in the urban areas, took some time (if even) to reach the Žiri region. That traces of traditionalism are still present in celebrating birth, marriage, and death, is also evident in post-war photographs, which outline the contents of this article. Most of them show elements that were present in ceremonies of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. When reviewing resources, one can formulate a conclusion that only extraordinary historical events were able to interrupt and reshape the centuries-old patterns. One of them was, for instance, the Second World War, when the deceased were buried without priests, or people crossed the occupation border illegally in order to marry; and also after the war, when the authorities tried to introduce new values to the society (for example, gender equality). Discussing the traditions in such timeframes, or their transformations, omissions, and preservation, cannot merely be the final thought, but a call to a more detailed and systematic analysis. Such inquiry would hold up a mirror to the society that declares itself as modern, and does not recognize its own integration into the past; it would find an answer to the question of what the origin of tradition is in its struggle for survival.

²²⁶ Jelenec, *Ledinska kronika*, 132.

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Sažetak

ŽIVJETI I UMIRATI U REGIJI ŽIRI

Mikro-povijesna studija običaja vezanih uz životne prekretnice u regiji Žiri u 19. i prvoj polovici 20. stoljeća

Opisani običaji grubo ocrtavaju slavljenje i obilježavanje životnih prekretnica u regiji Žiri. U određenim su aspektima navike jednake ili slične onima koje se primjenjuju na cijeloj teritoriji Slovenije, dok se u nekim dijelovima od njih razlikuju. Možemo reći da su ljudi u regiji Žiri poznavali običaje koji su bili posebno zajednički za ruralna područja, dok je nekim novinama, koje su se prvo pojavljivale u urbanim sredinama, trebalo čak neko vrijeme da dođu do regije Žiri. Da su tragovi tradicionalizma još uvijek prisutni u obilježavanju rođenja, vjenčanja i smrti, vidljivo je i na poslijeratnim fotografijama koje ocrtavaju sadržaj ovog članka. Većina njih prikazuje elemente koji su bili prisutni u ceremonijama 19. i prve polovice 20. stoljeća. Kada se pregledaju resursi, može se formulirati zaključak da su samo izvanredni povijesni događaji bili u stanju prekinuti i preoblikovati stoljetne procese. Jedan od njih, na primjer, Drugi svjetski rat, kada su pokojnici sahranjivani bez svećenika ili su ljudi ilegalno prelazili okupacionu granicu kako bi se vjenčali; a također i nakon rata, kada su vlasti pokušavale uvesti nove vrijednosti u društvo (na primjer, rodnu ravnopravnost). Rasprava o tradicijama u takvim vremenskim okvirima ili njihovim preobražajima, izostavljanju i očuvanju, ne može biti konačno mišljenje, već poziva na detaljnu i sustavnu analizu. Takvo istraživanje zrcalilo bi društvo koje se deklarira kao moderno, a ne prepoznaje vlastitu integraciju u prošlost, i pronaći odgovor na pitanje koji su korijeni tradicije u njenoj borbi za opstanak.