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## THE BEGINNINGS OF SLOVENE GERMANIC PHILOLOGY: THE FIRST PROFESSORS AND THE SOCIAL PROFILE OF THE FIRST STUDENTS FROM THE LITTORAL

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### ABSTRACT

*This article seeks to shed light on the beginnings of Germanic philology in the Slovene lands, concentrating both on the leading figure of Dr Jakob Kelemina (1882–1957), who established Germanic philology in the Slovene academic space and dominated it for many years, and on the profile of his students from the Slovene, Italian, and Croatian littoral. The findings, which are based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of archive sources, lecture lists and student records, and on Bourdieu's classification of education opportunities by economic and cultural capital, show that students from the coastal regions made up 17% of the 916 students of both sexes who attended lectures on Germanic philology up until the end of the Second World War; of these, 54% were women. The students' social origin was found to have had considerable influence on their decision to take up such studies, as the large majority came from the middle and upper strata of the population.*

**Keywords:** Germanic philology, Jakob Kelemina, student profile, students from the Littoral, history of Germanic philology 1919–1945, cultural capital

## GLI INIZI DELLA GERMANISTICA IN SLOVENIA: I PRIMI PROFESSORI E LA STRUTTURA SOCIALE DEI PRIMI STUDENTI DEL LITORALE

### SINTESI

*Lo scopo del presente contributo è di far luce sugli inizi degli studi di germanistica nel territorio sloveno, con particolare attenzione sia al pluriennale direttore di dipartimento, il prof. Jakob Kelemina (1882–1957), il quale ha introdotto la filologia tedesca nel mondo accademico sloveno, sia alla struttura degli studenti e delle studentesse provenienti dalle regioni litoranee slovena, italiana e croata. I risultati del contributo, basato sull'analisi quantitativa e qualitativa di fonti d'archivio, liste di corsi e documenti personali, nonché sulla classificazione di Bourdieu delle opportunità educative in base al capitale economico e culturale, mostrano che tra i 916 studenti iscritti ai corsi di filologia tedesca fino alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale, la quota di quelli provenienti dal Litorale è del 17%, e tra di essi il 54% sono donne. È emerso inoltre che la decisione riguardo agli studi è soggetta soprattutto all'influsso del contesto sociale dei futuri studenti, poiché la maggior parte proviene dalle classi medie e alte della popolazione, soprattutto da ambienti con un alto capitale culturale.*

**Parole chiave:** studi di germanistica, Jakob Kelemina, struttura degli studenti, studenti del Litorale, storia della germanistica 1919–1945, capitale culturale

## INTRODUCTION

Providing a detailed study of the first phase of development of Germanic philology as a scientific discipline in the Slovene lands, this article first situates the Ljubljana Germanists in their broader European context, with particular attention to Germanic philology in Graz, which produced Dr Jakob Kelemina (1882–1957), the leading Germanist in the Slovene lands.<sup>1</sup> The first part of the article is devoted to Kelemina: as the holder of the chair and for years the only faculty member, he laid the foundations for the development of Germanic philology and left his mark on the entire field, from its establishment to the Second World War. The second part concentrates on the profile of the students of Germanic philology in Ljubljana. The empirical research focuses on students from the Littoral (Slovene: Primorska),<sup>2</sup> Istria, Dalmatia, and the Montenegrin Littoral. Here we explore the share of such students in the total, the gender ratio, their social origins and (self-declared) nationality. We employed a quantitative research method, utilizing student records obtained from the university archives. Specifically, we focused on students who indicated Littoral as their birthplace and pursued German studies as either their main, subsidiary, or elective subject. Subsequently, the collected data underwent qualitative evaluation and analysis, drawing upon the theses of Bourdieu & Passeron (1979), that the chances of accessing higher education can be viewed as the outcome of a selection process characterized by varying levels of stringency, depending on the student's social origin. In our study, the social origin of the students, as far as this can be deduced from the father's profession, proved to be of significant importance, albeit not to the same extent as observed in France. Finally, we trace the career paths of some students of interest from this area.

The beginnings of institutionalized Germanic philology in the Slovene lands coincide with the 1919 establishment of the University of Ljubljana. As was customary for modern institutions of higher education at the time, it started with five faculties: Law, Medicine, Theology, Engineering, and Arts. The latter was initially composed of three chairs:

of mathematics, Slavic philology, and Slovene language. In the following months, the founding chairs were joined by others, including the chair in Germanic philology (Smolej, 2019, 89). Slovenes thus set up Germanic philology a little more than a 100 years after it became established as a science in Germany (Sparnaay, 1948, 19)<sup>3</sup> and 17 years after Germanist chairs started to appear in the larger cities of the Habsburg Monarchy: first in Vienna, Prague, and Krakow, and in 1851 also at the University of Graz (Kramberger & Samide, 2021, 161–162). On the one hand, these were to meet the national and political interests of the multi-national state; on the other, to meet the need for adequate teachers in secondary education (Michler & Schmidt-Dengler, 2003, 193–228), which was a concern all over Europe at the time. After the great reform of secondary schools and universities based on Wilhelm von Humboldt's model – in Germany at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the Habsburg Monarchy in 1848/49 – the need arose for qualified teachers of German in the reformed secondary school for humanities (the *Gymnasium*), and at the beginning this was not at all an easy task. In the first phase of the development of Germanic philology, the phase of consolidation, many European universities, faced with a lack of academically trained scholars of German, filled university chairs with assistant professors (*Privatdozenten*) or with scholars from other academic fields: for example, on the initiative of Count Leo Thun-Hohenstein (1811–1888), the minister of education and religion, Germanic philology in Vienna came in 1850 to be headed by the philosopher, self-taught Germanist and Viennese court librarian Theodor Georg von Karajan (1810–1873) (Samide, 2019, 131–132). The first real Germanist scholars, Karl Tomaschek (1828–1878) and Wilhelm Scherer (1841–1886), would only obtain their chairs in Germanic philology in 1868, and only from then on can we talk about “the first generation of professional Germanists” (Michler & Schmidt-Dengler, 2003, 199). In this regard, Germanic philology at the University of Graz had a privileged position, even though it counted as one of the less important universities in the German-speaking area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Leitner, 1973, 3) and

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2 In this context, it is important to note that since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the lands along the north-eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea and their immediate hinterland, Gorizia with Gradisca, Istria, and Trieste, have been referred to by various names. The most common names used include Primorje (Littoral in English, Küstenland in German, Litorale in Italian), Austrian Primorje, or Primorska. However, it should be noted that these names do not indicate a unified territory in terms of administration, ethnicity, or historical context (Marušič, 1995, 343). Following the First World War, during the period covered by this study, the term Primorska was employed by the Slovene public “to denote locations in Italy, including those that were annexed to Italy from the former Carniola Region such as Idrija, the upper Vipava Valley, parts of the Karst, the Pivka region, and the Bistrica region. It is important to mention that Istria was not encompassed within this designation” (Marušič, 1995, 346).

3 The first professorship in German language and literature (1810) went to Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen (1780–1856) at the then recently established University of Berlin.

was also geographically remote from the centres of German intellectual life (Müller-Kampel), since academically trained Germanists had taught there from its inception in 1851. At the start of the summer semester on 17 April 1851, and again on minister Thun-Hohenstein's initiative, the university of the Styrian capital officially hired the Silesian medievalist Karl Weinhold (1823–1901) (Leitner, 1973, 8–12). In Weinhold, the University of Graz undoubtedly gained "the most important scholar of the German language and literature at Austrian universities of that era" (Höflechner, 2006, 277). He held the chair in Germanic philology until 1861, when he accepted an invitation from the University of Kiel. His seat was taken by the Germanist Karl Tomaschek, who not only devoted himself to Old German philology like his predecessor, but made sure that the curriculum also included recent literary history in equal measure (Höflechner, 2006, 277; Leitner, 1973, 26–28, 35). After Tomaschek was called to Vienna in 1868, he was succeeded by Richard Heinzel (1838–1905), who again brought Old German philology to the fore, and then returned to Vienna in 1873. In Graz, the discipline first flowered under the Germanist and medievalist Anton Emanuel Schönbach (1848–1911), who hailed from northern Czechia and is considered the true father of the chair in Germanic philology at the University of Graz (Müller-Kampel). Schönbach, who would hold the chair in Old German until he died, was a well-versed lecturer in many fields who demanded much of his students. With his rhetorical abilities and lively lectures, however, he also knew how to excite their enthusiasm for science and motivate them for their own scientific production. Apart from being a talented speaker, he was also an excellent organizer and the author of quite a few important contributions to the field (cf. Leitner, 1973, 53–67, 233–234). In 1886, he was joined in Graz by Bernhard Seuffert (1853–1938), who taught modern German language and literature and made a name for himself as an expert on the Enlightenment writer Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), and his work as an editor is still

highly regarded (Höflechner, 2006, 279). During the harmonious 25-year collaboration and vigorous interaction of these two leading Germanists, Graz gained a position in Germanic philology on the European level. Indeed, under Seuffert's leadership the chair in modern German philology became the centre of modern German literature for the entire Habsburg Monarchy (Leitner, 1973, 234).

From the Graz school of Germanists also sprung the first – and long the only – professor of Germanic philology in Ljubljana, Dr Jakob Kelemina. The two Germanists discussed above left their mark not only on Kelemina's studies, but also on his further academic career and life.

#### GERMANIC PHILOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

##### Jakob Kelemina: education and academic career

Jakob Kelemina, born 19 July 1882 in humble Slovene provincial surroundings, in the small village of Vinski Vrh near Ormož, came from a poor winegrower's home (Križaj, 2008, 10). As we can see from the archival materials, from 1889 to 1894 he attended the four-year primary school at Sv. Miklavž near Ormož;<sup>4</sup> in 1895 he enrolled at the Imperial & Royal (I&R) Maribor State Secondary School (*Gymnasium*), where he attended the first five years and first encountered German.<sup>5</sup> After a one-year hiatus (1900/01), he continued his education at the I&R First Ljubljana Secondary School (sixth grade).<sup>6</sup> Hoping to support himself more easily by tutoring in Pula, which was then the main harbour of the Austro-Hungarian navy, he spent his last two school years at the I&R State Secondary School there, and graduated with distinction (*mit Auszeichnung*) on 8 July 1904.<sup>7</sup> It is clear from Kelemina's preserved report cards that he had considerable difficulty with German at the beginning of his schooling.<sup>8</sup> His decision to pursue the study of Germanic philology, at a time of peak national differentiation in the Habsburg Monarchy, was thus hardly an obvious one.<sup>9</sup>

4 Private archive of Doris Križaj, school report card.

5 SI-PAM 739, TE 230, Maribor Classical Secondary School, registration form 1895/96. The authors thank Jure Maček for his kind and professional help with locating the materials.

6 Private archive of Doris Križaj, secondary-school report card; UAG, DA, 671, *Doktoratsakt* Jakob Kelemina, Vita.

7 Private archive of Doris Križaj, *matura* exam report card, Pula, July 8, 1904.

8 The reason no doubt lies in the fact that he came from the Slovene peasant countryside and was therefore ill-placed to compete with his urban schoolmates, who spoke German at home as well. Most years, therefore, he only received a "satisfactory" (*befriedigend*) grade in German; in eighth grade and later at the *matura* exam, his knowledge of German language and literature earned him a "praiseworthy" (*lobenswert*), but he never got the highest grade for excellence in this subject, *vorzüglich* (private archive of Doris Križaj, secondary-school report card).

9 As related by his daughter Doris Križaj, he first wished to study chemistry, but soon realized that this study was reserved for students from wealthy families, as the students had to buy all the equipment themselves. Kelemina, who made his living mostly by tutoring, could not afford to do so (Križaj, 2008, 10). The financial situation of families naturally played a significant role in the decision to pursue university studies. Urška Bratož (2022) explores the available social transfer options in Istria and Trieste during the Habsburg era.



Zahl *7*

## Maturitäts-Zeugnis.

*Kelemina Jakob,*

geboren am *19. Juli* 18 *82* zu *Weinberg*

in *Heiermark* katholischer Religion, hat die Gymnasialstudien

*h. g. bis 1. bis 5. Klasse von K. K. H. Gymn. in Marburg, dann außerordentliches*

*Bruderschaftsring (1900/1) bis 6. Klasse von K. K. H. Gymn. in Leibach, bis 7. und 8. Klasse*

*von K. K. H. Gymnasien in Pola, in 9 Jahren*

beendet und sich der Maturitätsprüfung vor der unterzeichneten **Prüfungs-**

**Kommission** zum *ausgezeichneten* unterzogen.

Auf Grund dieser Prüfung wird ihm nachstehendes Zeugnis ausgestellt:

Sittliches Betragen: *lobenswürdig*

Leistungen in den einzelnen Prüfungsgegenständen:

Religionslehre:	<i>ausgezeichnet</i>
Lateinische Sprache:	<i>Mit Befriedigung der mündlichen Prüfung: lobenswürdig</i>
Griechische Sprache:	<i>lobenswürdig</i>

Form. 38, für Gymnasien. — Preis 6 h.      Wien K. K. Schulbücher-Verlag — Buchdruckerei Karl Gotschek.

Figure 1: Jakob Kelemina's matura report card, Pula, 8 July 1904 (private archive of Doris Križaj).

Jakob Kelemina enrolled at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Charles and Francis in Graz on 8 October 1904 and devoted himself to the study of languages. The lists of lectures and seminars he attended in the course of his studies,<sup>10</sup> as recorded in his sign-up forms, testify to his curiosity and devotion to literature. Central throughout his eight semesters were the seminars and lectures on Old German and German literature that he attended under professors Anton Emanuel Schönbach and Bernhard Seuffert. His interests also extended to other fields, and he registered for individual lectures and seminars in philosophy, pedagogy, and classical and English philology. He followed lectures on historical English grammar and English literature, another field to which he devoted part of his academic career, by the noted Viennese-born scholar of English, Karl Luick (1865–1935), who also held the chair in English philology.

Kelemina's dissertation, titled *Zur Quelle von Eilharts Tristrant*, which was written under Schönbach's supervision and dealt with the sources of Eilhart's *Tristrant*, was assessed by Seuffert as well as by his supervisor. In their assessments, which seen through today's eyes were surprisingly critical, they concluded that the dissertation was not fit to publish, although it contained some good conclusions. This enabled Kelemina to take his *Rigorosum* doctoral exam (Kramberger & Samide, 2021, 184–186). He thus became a Doctor of Philosophy on 1 May 1909 at the Faculty of Arts, University of Graz. On 28 January 1911 he went on to pass the state (teacher) exam with German as his main subject and classical philology as a side subject, which allowed him to teach these two subjects in secondary schools with German and Slovene as the languages of instruction, with the restriction that he could only teach German in those schools where the language of instruction was not exclusively German.<sup>11</sup> This kind of provision was probably one of the reasons – though certainly not the only one – why so few Slovenes decided to study German. It is not surprising, then, that the nationally conscious Jakob Kelemina was directed to a school on the periphery: on July 3, 1911, he was appointed assistant teacher at the general secondary school in Novo Mesto (Jahresbericht, 1912), where he taught German, Latin, and an introduction to philosophy. Kelemina advanced rapidly and became a so-called

proper teacher on 1 September 1912; only two years later, in 1914, he was appointed *Professor* (here meaning secondary-school teacher; Jahresbericht, 1915). In the summer semester of 1915, he was conscripted to the Austrian army, where he did clerical work, but already the next academic year saw him return to the school. The fact that he was officially transferred to the First State Secondary School in Ljubljana on 1 September 1919 was an indication of his rising career. Then, on 29 January 1920, Kelemina was appointed assistant professor (*docent*) in Germanic philology at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana.<sup>12</sup>

### The main orientations and development of Germanic philology

The appointment of Dr Jakob Kelemina to the chair of Germanic philology was not a surprising move. There were in fact only three Slovenes in 1919 who could boast a doctorate in Germanic philology, and since nationality was such an important factor at the time, the only theoretically available candidates beside Kelemina were Matija Murko (1861–1952), who had completed his German and Slavic studies at the Faculty of Arts in Vienna in 1886, and Janko Bezjak (1862–1935), who had obtained his doctorate in 1888 at the Faculty of Arts of Charles and Francis University in Graz.<sup>13</sup> In 1919, Janko Bezjak was a commissary in the Education Department of the Provincial Administration in Ljubljana and a senior school supervisor (Žižić, 2013), whereas Murko – although his extensive dissertation had dealt intensively with Old German (Samide, 2019, 139)<sup>14</sup> – had already established himself as a Slavist of international repute. While he too had been one of the candidates for the literary-studies chair in Slavic philology in Ljubljana in 1919 (Pogačnik, 1994, 356), he preferred to stay out of the competitive domestic scene and instead accepted an invitation from Charles University in Prague, where he became one of the founders of the chair in South Slavic languages and literatures.

Kelemina devoted himself to his task with great zeal and commitment.<sup>15</sup> His rapid career rise – he was ap-

10 UAG, Phil. Nat., 1811–SS 1967, Sign up forms of Faculty of Arts, Jakob Kelemina, winter semester 1904/05 – summer semester 1908.

11 UAW, Lehramtsprüfungsakte: Jakob Kelemina.

12 UAL IV, 86/1149, personal folder: Jakob Kelemina.

13 Beside Murko, Bezjak, and Kelemina, Viennese German philology in 1903 also produced another doctor, the later noted scholar of dialects, historical linguistics and onomastics Primus Lessiak (1878–1937); though his parents were of Slovene descent and Slovenes recognize him as an important fellow national from Carinthia (Jakopin, 1992, 148), he consistently indicated German as his mother tongue on his registration forms each semester (UAW, Phil. Nat. 177, 906, Sign-up forms of Faculty of Arts, Primus Lessiak, winter semester 1898/99); in addition, he clearly accepted the so-called Windisch theory (Kramberger & Samide, 2022, 46–47), making him quite unacceptable at the University of Ljubljana.

14 The title of the dissertation, which was highly praised by his supervisor Richard Heinzel, a respected Viennese professor of ancient German language and literature, was *Das Adam-Glossar. Bruchstücke eines Beitrages zur Kenntnis der altdeutschen Glossographie* [The Adam glossary: fragments of a contribution to knowledge of Old German glossography].

15 "He was an exceptionally hard-working and neat person. I remember him spending whole days at work at his desk, which was always kept tidy" (Križaj, 2008, 9).



pointed associate professor on 14 August 1923 and full professor on 2 August 1928 – testifies to his academic ambitions and dedication to research and teaching.

Kelemina's teaching of Germanic philology started in the second part of the 1919/20 winter semester, probably immediately following his habilitation as assistant professor. As was typical for recently established Germanic philology chairs, in Ljubljana the first years and decades were focused primarily on the Old German language and literature. In the 1919/20 summer semester, German historical grammar made up a full five hours a week, but in the following years Kelemina limited himself to three hours a week, covering each chapter (e.g. verbs, morphology, syntax) separately. In this first phase (as well as a few decades later) both Germanists and students of other subjects who audited lectures in Germanic philology – particularly Slavists and students of comparative literature<sup>16</sup> – attended all the lectures together, so the material was never repeated. This does not mean that the Germanists learned too little, since they had to demonstrate their knowledge in wide-ranging graduation exams that covered all German historical grammar, German language, phonetics, and literature, and translation too played an important role.<sup>17</sup>

During the first decade, Germanic philology as a rule offered seven contact hours a week.<sup>18</sup> Beside historical grammar, Kelemina very soon began to include other topics and materials. In choosing the topics for his lectures and seminars, he followed three basic guidelines: beside offering a solid foundation in historical grammar, he and his students would go over various periods and authors from the entire history of German literature, including relatively modern ones, as well as several chapters of literary theory, partly in order to prepare them for the profession of a secondary-school German teacher. The importance he placed on this task is also clear from the graduation records, where the tasks for the final written exam as

well as oral examination often involved topics from 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature, especially from German Weimar Classicism. At the same time, however, Kelemina also adhered to Wilhelm von Humboldt's principle that university professors should bring their research work into their teaching. His monograph on the study of literature (*Literarna veda*), which appeared in 1927, is a product both of his reflections on literary studies, which he intensively developed and published piecemeal in *Ljubljanski zvon* and *Dom in svet*,<sup>19</sup> and of the lectures and seminars he held in Germanic philology in Ljubljana. He held his first seminar on a topic from literary studies – the theory of the novel – in the 1921/22 winter semester; a year later, in the 1922/23 summer semester, he held a seminar on the study of literature, which he developed in the 1925/26 summer semester with a lecture and seminar titled "Introduction to the Study of Literature".<sup>20</sup>

Although the students knew German very well during the first years of Kelemina's employment, thanks to their Austro-Hungarian high-school education, this would change over time. In the following decades, therefore, practical language teachers who taught the students modern German played an important role. These were Henrik Baerent, Franz Hille, and Oton Drüner. Apart from German philology in the narrow sense, English was also slowly developing. In the 1922/23 winter semester, Kelemina offered his first lectures on English philology, under the title "Introduction to Anglo-Saxon", followed by literary seminars in which the students read old English texts, especially *Beowulf* (WS 1922/23).<sup>21</sup> The first teaching hours in English had in fact started a year earlier, when the English language teacher Fanny Copeland (1872–1970) started teaching at the Faculty of Arts;<sup>22</sup> she played a very important role not only by teaching English, but also as the long-time driving force behind the *Društvo za proučevanje angleškega jezika* (Society

16 The system of studies – the categorization of different studies, i.e. the grouping of the sciences, the possibilities for combining different courses of study, and the classification of the various disciplines into main discipline A, discipline B and auxiliary subjects – changed several times during the first quarter-century of the University of Ljubljana, so it is sometimes hard to determine which subjects within German philology could be audited by – or were even required for – students of other scientific disciplines, but it is a fact that Kelemina's lectures were always open to more than one study programme. Although a chair in general literature and literary theory had already been envisaged when the university was founded, comparative literature became a separate course of study only in 1930; until then, lectures on comparative literature had taken place within the framework of Slavic philology (as they partly continue to do), and had been held by Jakob Kelemina as well as by the Slavists France Kidrič in Ivan Prijatelj (Dolinar, 2013, 273; Šlibar, 2020, 15–27).

17 Red za državni diplomski izpit na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani (1920). Ljubljana, University of Ljubljana.

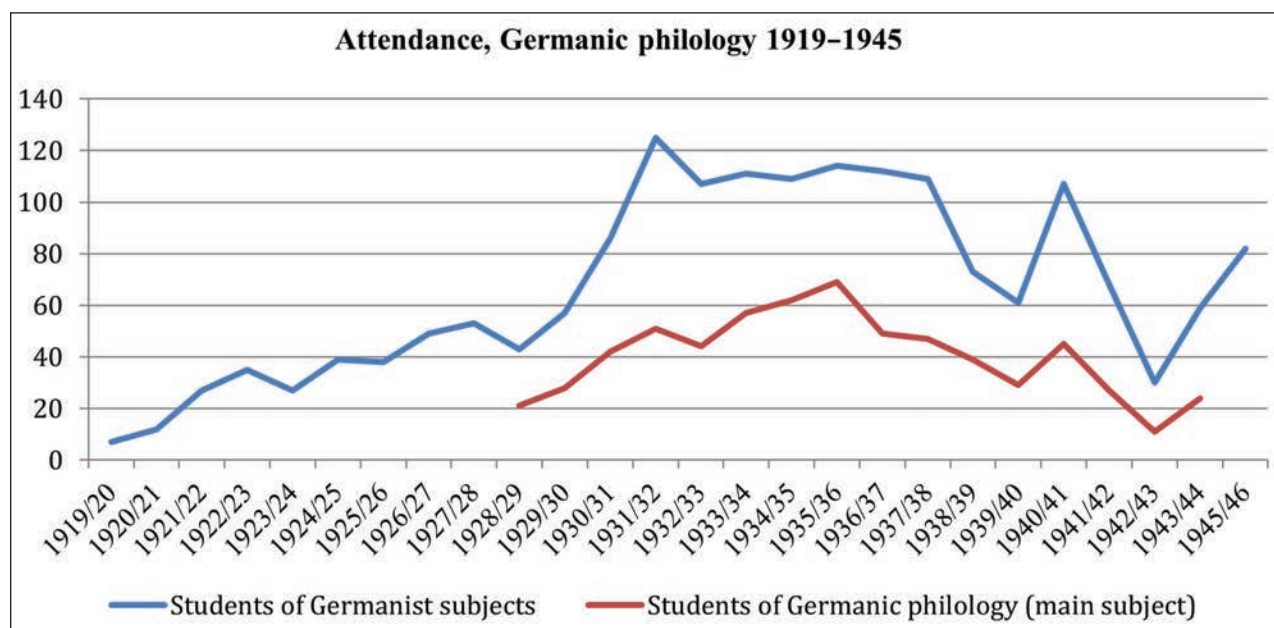
18 The exceptions are the 1921/22 summer semester, when professor Kelemina had nine hours of lectures, and the 1925/26 winter semester, when he only had five hours.

19 A complete bibliography of Kelemina's works was published by Bezljaj in a contribution celebrating Kelemina on his 70th anniversary (Bezljaj, 1954).

20 Cf. Seznam predavanj na univerzi Kraljevine Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev v Ljubljani (List of lectures at the university of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Ljubljana). Ljubljana, University of Ljubljana, for each semester.

21 Jakob Kelemina dedicated himself to English literature not only in his lectures but also in his publishing endeavours. One of his notable areas of expertise was Shakespeare (Jurak, 2007).

22 Fanny Susannah Copeland-Barkworth, born in Ireland in 1872, was a highly educated cosmopolitan, translator, musician, linguist, writer, alpinist, and for twenty years, a teacher of English language and literature at the University of Ljubljana. On her life and work, cf. Mikša & Vehar, 2013; Batagelj, 2007, 125–128.



**Chart 1: The number of students of Germanic philology (main subject) and all persons attending Germanist subjects (main, subsidiary and elective subject C) in the winter semesters 1919–1945.**

for Study of the English Language, est. 1922), and as an indefatigable translator and cultural mediator (about the role of cultural mediators in cultural diplomacy cf. Udovič et al., 2023). Beside her mother tongue, Copeland had excellent knowledge of Slovene, Serbo-Croat, German, and Italian, and also communicated in French, Russian, Bulgarian, Norwegian, and Danish. In 1941 she was “forcibly dismissed from work by the Italian occupiers” and placed “in confinement”.<sup>23</sup>

#### THE FIRST STUDENTS

In the first semester, the 1919/20 winter semester, which only started on 3 December 1919 with an introductory lecture by the linguist Dr Fran Ramovš (1890–1952) and lasted until April 1920, six male students and one female student signed up for Kelemina’s lectures on the historical grammar of the German language. Anyone who had passed their secondary-school *matura* exam could enrol at the university, and the first year also saw the enrolment of many students who had previously studied at other universities. This was also the case for the Germanists: six of them had already completed their first semesters of study in Vienna, Graz, Zagreb or Belgrade, and only one completed the entire course of study in Ljubljana. It was the faculty council that decided on the recognition of their previously completed requirements.<sup>24</sup>

#### Enrolment figures

In the 1920 summer semester, the number of Germanic philology students grew from the initial seven to 10, and the next year to 12. Despite our systematic review of all personal records, the inadequate, inconsistent, and even arbitrary recording of the main discipline and the wide freedom of choice make it practically impossible to determine how many students actually signed up for Germanic philology as their main subject. It is only after the amended examination rules (*Izpitni predpisi*) in 1928, which drew up a stricter plan for the organization of studies, that the information in the student records becomes more reliable and tangible. These figures still cannot be taken at face value, since some students did not record their field of study or failed to record it properly; moreover, it would be unfair to distinguish strictly between the main and subsidiary subject, since the number of hours spent attending one or the other was often quite similar. The only truly exact information, therefore, comes from the so-called inscriptions, i.e. the professors’ signatures, which the students collected in their personal records and which clearly show who attended a particular subject in a given semester. The figures in the following chart, which include all the records in the winter semesters from 1919 to 1945, are informative in this regard.

<sup>23</sup> Certificate of employment for Fanny S. Copeland dated 24th May 1954 (UAL IV, 6/92, personal folder: Fanny S. Copeland).

<sup>24</sup> Guide to inscription in the University of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Ljubljana. In: Seznam predavanj na univerzi kraljevstva Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev v Ljubljani za letni semester 1920 (1920). Ljubljana, University of Ljubljana.

In the 1922/23 winter semester, more than 30 students signed up for Germanist subjects.<sup>25</sup> With minor fluctuations, their number kept growing until the mid-1930s. At the beginning of the 1930s we see a pronounced jump in the numbers auditing seminars, lectures, and exercises in Germanist subjects as a subsidiary or elective subject C (usually alongside Romance or Slavic philology, pedagogics, and philosophy; on the organization of the lectures cf. Šlibar, 2020, 19–28), after Jakob Kelemina was joined by Henrik Baerent, a contract teacher of modern German. This talented Russian of German descent had studied in St Petersburg for four semesters, and then continued his Germanist studies in Ljubljana, graduating in 1926 and obtaining Yugoslav citizenship in 1928. Employed by the University of Ljubljana, he held exercises in German grammar and translation (German–Slovene and Slovene–German) and in German style and composition. At the beginning of the 1941/42 winter semester, he suddenly quit and joined the *Deutsche Wehrmacht*, after which all trace of him is lost (Maslo, 2021, 39–40). With his arrival, the number of students signed up for Germanist subjects grew from 57 in 1929/30 to 86 in 1930/31, and as many as 125 in 1930/31. The 1930s can therefore rightly be called “the golden age of Germanic philology” (Šlibar, 2020, 28). Towards the end of the 1930s attendance declined, and in 1939/49 the Germanist subjects were audited only by 61 students; only 29 students chose Germanic philology, or German, as their main subject. The reason for the astounding 75% leap to 107 participants in 1940/41 is unclear: some may have wanted to finish their studies as soon as possible, but it may also be a sign of stronger German national tendencies. On 3 May 1941, in accordance with the agreement between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the whole Province of Ljubljana was annexed by Italy. Hence it is not surprising that enrolment in Germanic philology

dwindled: in the 1942/43 winter semester, only 30 students continued to attend Germanist subjects, which is nearly equivalent to the number of students two years after the start of university studies.<sup>26</sup> After Italy capitulated, in November 1943, on the order of General Rupnik, the head of the provincial administration, the university abolished the lectures entirely and only continued to carry out exams and doctoral exams<sup>27</sup>, hence there is no data for those two years. After the liberation, the university resumed activities and in the 1945/46 winter semester Kelemina held his last lecture on historical grammar, attended mainly by a large number of English students, a subject undergoing intensive growth at the time. As Kelemina was also an English scholar and never neglected this field in research or teaching (Kramberger & Samide, 2022, 39–40, 50–51), he was able to shift his entire teaching to English subjects over time. From 1946 to 1950 there was thus not a single subject taught in German at the Faculty of Arts.<sup>28</sup>

### Students from the coastal regions

Students from the coastal regions make up a marginal share of the present-day German students,<sup>29</sup> and German as a foreign language is also less widespread in schools in the Gorizia, Coastal–Karst, and Littoral–Inner Carniola region than other foreign languages, particularly Italian and Spanish. It is only in the last ten years that the role of German has grown in these regions, partly due to various initiatives that promote multi-linguality and draw on memories of Austro-Hungarian times.<sup>30</sup> As there were three important high schools with humanities or classics programmes and German as the language of instruction in the Littoral–Istrian area under the Habsburg Monarchy, in Trieste, Gorica, and Pula,<sup>31</sup> it is certainly a very relevant question how many pupils from this area went on to the University of Ljubljana to advance their knowledge of German language and literature.

25 UAL I, 235, personal records for winter semester 1922/23.

26 UAL I, 234 and UAL I, 269, personal records for winter semester 1921/22 and winter semester 1942/43.

27 UAL IV, 217, Regulation on the Abolition of Lectures at the University of Ljubljana, 1943.

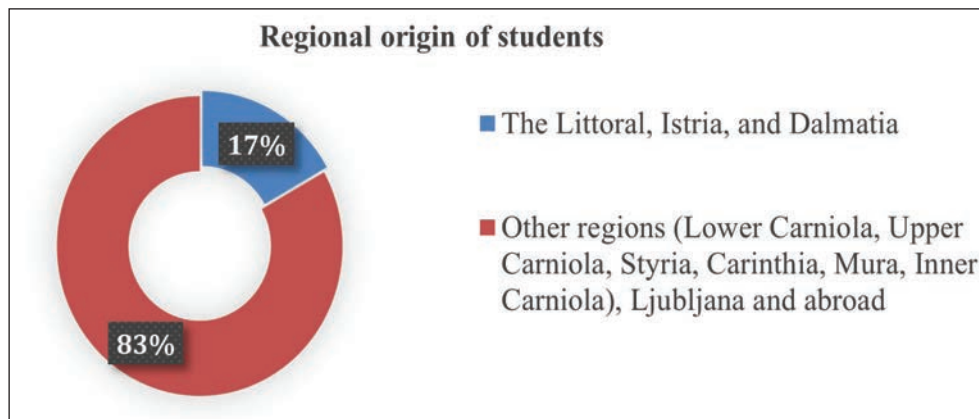
28 After the war, it was understandably challenging to reestablish German studies as a scientific discipline focusing on the German language and literature. There was a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly after 1957 when Jakob Kelemina passed away. Therefore, it proved to be particularly valuable that both German states, both the FRG and the GDR, sent a lecturer to Ljubljana. The lecturers made a significant contribution to the development of German studies in Ljubljana and served as a paradigmatic example of the importance of the relations between Germany and Slovenia throughout the decades leading up to Slovenia's independence. For more information on German-Slovenian relations, see the article by Boštjan Udovič (2022).

29 In the past five academic years (from 2018/19 to 2022/23) 241 students have enrolled in German Studies at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana; of these, only 22 come from the Littoral (a little over 9%). The gender ratio among all students from the coastal region was 16 female and six male students, with female students thus accounting for nearly 73% of the total (VIS FF UL).

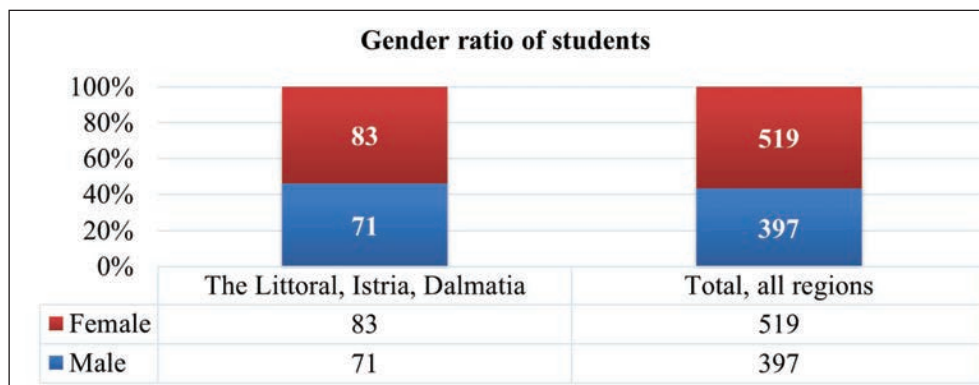
30 Here we may mention, for example, the activities of the Kulturhaus Görz Society, whose promotion of a multi-cultural and multi-lingual town (Gorizia, Görz, Gorica, Gurize) is also bringing German to the fore again (<https://www.kulturhaus-go.it/>). A comprehensive overview of association's activities in this region during the Habsburg Monarchy is given by Branko Marušič (1999).

31 Additionally, Koper had the renowned I&R Upper Secondary School, where Italian became the language of instruction in all subjects in 1868, whereas German and Slovene were only obligatory for pupils of German and Slovene nationality. The state secondary school in Gorica introduced a parallel class with Slovene as the language of instruction in 1910, and in 1913/14 the school was officially divided in three: Slovene, German, and Italian. However, it ceased activities due to the First World War.





**Chart 2: Regional origin of students signed up for Germanist subjects, 1919–1945.**



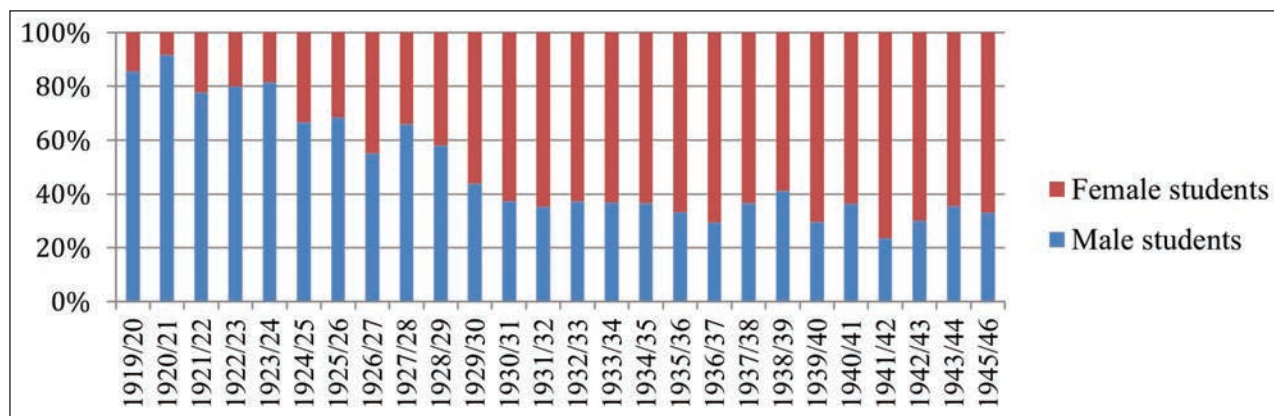
**Chart 3: Share of male and female students enrolled in Germanist subjects, 1919–1945.**

Out of the 916 students who signed up for at least one Germanist subject in the 1919–1945 period, 154 came from the Littoral, Istria, Dalmatia, and the Montenegrin Littoral, making up nearly 17% of the total.

The fact that nearly half of these students came from Trieste, Gorica and their surroundings is not surprising: After the dissolution of Austria–Hungary and the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920, many Slovenes left Trieste due to the political conditions, forced Italianization, and rise of Fascism. It was thus probably a natural choice for them to opt for the University of Ljubljana. It should be mentioned that a University of Trieste was established in 1924, but it started out with only two faculties, Law and Economics, and the faculty of Philology and Philosophy was established only in 1943. That nearly all these students were Slovenes is clear not only from their Slovene-sounding names, but also from their national self-identification, for everyone declared their own nationality in their student records, and except for two female students (whose names were unambiguously Italian), they all declared themselves Slovenes or Yugoslavs.

The gender ratio among students from the coastal regions is similar to the full picture: out of a total of 154 students there were 83 female and 71 male students, or 54% women. Looking at the full population, in the university's first 25 years lectures in Germanic philology were attended by 519 female students and 397 males, or 57% women.

The preponderance of women may at first glance seem surprising, considering that we are exploring the first quarter-century of the university's activities, so let us explain two points. First, we should stress that the gender ratio was highly unbalanced during the first years, mainly due to the fact that in Austro-Hungarian times it was very difficult for women to attend secondary school or complete their *matura* school-leaving exam, which was a precondition for going to university. The first female *matura* graduate in the Slovene lands was the Trieste-born Medea Norsa (1877–1952), who took the exam in 1900 at the Koper Upper Secondary School. It was only after 1910 – and still subject to restrictions – that girls could begin to attend the general secondary and technical secondary schools (*gimnazije, realke*) in



**Chart 4:** Gender ratio among students auditing Germanist subjects, 1919–1945 (for all regions).

full (for more on the education of women in the Slovene lands cf. Demšar, 2021). As shown in Chart 4, until 1925 the share of female students of Germanist subjects ranged between 10 and 20%, and then began to grow continuously. In the first decade, then, women made up between a third and at most half of the student total, while after 1930 they formed the majority, and up to the end of the Second World War they made up about two thirds of all those studying.

Second, already in the 1960s empirical studies of the French education system (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979) found that gender did not play the decisive role in access to university education, but social origin did. There was merciless selection throughout the education system, and among the most underprivileged classes – industrial workers with no financial or cultural capital – one could even speak of elimination, they asserted (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, 2). They calculated that the son of a senior executive was 80 times more likely to go to university than a farm worker's son, 40 times more than the son of an industrial worker, and still twice more than the son of a lower-rank executive. In the 1960s, on this account, children of the most underprivileged classes still had only a symbolic chance that their parents might send them to university, and only 5% went. The share of children from certain segments of the middle class (clerical workers, proprietors, artisans, and shopkeepers) that went to university was 10–15%, while nearly 60% of children of senior executives did so, and nearly 80% of children of parents in artistic, intellectual, and liberal professions entered university studies. The difference reflected not only the traditional division into social classes (upper, middle and lower class), but also divisions within the upper stratum itself: those endowed with financial capital rated lower in this regard than those with cultural capital, i.e., the intellectuals. Decisive factors in the decision to go

to university included their childhood environment; the social bonds, including those outside the family, that they naturally formed; and the social practices characteristic of everyday life in a given milieu (theatre-going, cultural events, newspaper-reading, flexibility, etc.). Working-class children had to scrape together all their cultural capital themselves, and were thus subtly underprivileged compared with the children of intellectuals, who showed their knowledge with a certain off-hand ease as a matter of course (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, 12). That is why, of all the differentiating factors, “social origin is doubtless the one whose influence bears most strongly on the student world, more strongly, at any rate, than sex or age [...]” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, 8).

We have taken the data for our study from the personal records in which students in the 1930s started entering their father's profession, and in part we have also relied on the biographies of some of the more prominent students. We find that we can draw similar, if less radical conclusions for Germanist students as well. We should note that our findings are merely indicative, since the period under study is relatively short (10 years) because the recording of the father's profession started only in the 1933/34 winter semester, and the number of students processed in this way (77) makes up less than 10% of all students of Germanic philology in the interwar period and cannot be considered representative. It is also often hard to determine from the recorded professions what status a person enjoyed or what social class they could be placed in (for example, a “merchant” could be a businessman, a wholesaler, or just a small shopkeeper). However, we do find that the father's profession was listed as farm worker or farmer only four times out of 77, and in two of these cases we may conclude that they were large landowners. The largest share of profes-

**Table 1: Social origin of students from Littoral, Istria, and Dalmatia.**

Field	Men	Women	Total
Farm workers and farmers	4	0	4
Crafts and industry	3	1	4
Railways	5	8	13
Trade	3	3	6
Public administration, finance, banking, clerical workers	4	13	17
Military, police, customs	4	9	13
Mail and telegram services	1	1	2
Law	0	3	3
Healthcare (pharmacist)	0	1	1
Education	4	9	13
Culture and media (editor)	0	1	1
The profession of the father not given	77		

sions (about 50%) was made up of so-called “lower managerial” positions (primary teachers, public servants, clerical workers, lower-rank executives); a large share (about 20%) was also made up of the professions that Bourdieu and Passeron classed as possessing the most cultural capital, i.e., senior executives or professionals (supervisors, administrators, school administrators, university professors, liberal professions, and lawyers). Some 25% were industrial workers and lower ranked clerical workers (railway conductors, ticket collectors, guards, etc.), and 5% were farmers or farm workers. Based on these figures, we find that the childhood social environment played a large role for students from the Littoral, too, as most of the students came from the upper strata of society. Still, a relatively high 25% share was also made up of members of the lower middle class, whom the French research accorded considerably lower chances of entering academia. The reasons why the difference is less pronounced than in France can probably be found in the narrower stratification of Slovene society in the interwar period: since the first university in the Slovene lands was established only in 1919, the parents of students from this period would have had significantly less access to education than later generations. The picture we get of the students’ social origin based on their fathers’ fields of work is quite telling, as seen in the following table.

Since we have data on the father’s profession only for the decade 1933–1943, the considerably

larger share of women (63%) is notable. This only confirms the well-known thesis that women opted primarily for the humanities and men for natural sciences and engineering, clearly reflecting the influence of the traditional model of the division of labour (and the distribution of “gifts”, “ability”) between the genders (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, 6). We also find that male students were significantly more likely to be the sons of fathers from the categories “farmers, crafts and industry”, whereas female students were to a much greater extent the daughters of fathers from the categories “public administration and education”. We may thus conclude that the female students from the Littoral stood a better chance that their families would support their decision to study German at the university when the fathers also came from an educational background. On the other hand, this finding confirms the thesis that “females are more often consigned to the Arts or Science faculties, which train them for a career in teaching” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, 6). Many female Germanist graduates did indeed find employment in education, most successfully Ada or Adela Žgur (1909–1992), though she did not come from a teacher’s family. She was born in Komen in the family of a non-commissioned officer in the gendarmes, went to the classical secondary school in Kranj, and studied Germanic philology in Ljubljana from 1928 to 1932. She graduated in German and English on 30 June 1932 and went on to teach in several secondary schools, and during the war she



also worked as a translator during the preparations for the Paris Peace Conference. She thus kept using her foreign-language competences very actively, and for a while (from 1949 to 1950) she was also inspector for foreign languages at the Ministry of Education. In the autumn of 1950, she took a position as practical German teacher at the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, where she would impart practical knowledge of German to the students as the only teacher for nearly a decade (Stanonik, 2013). She published several textbooks for both English and German, compiled a selection of modern German literary texts together with the Idria-born **Melita Počkar** (1909–1984),<sup>32</sup> and remains appreciated by today's German students for her *Nemška slovnica* or *Deutsche Grammatik* (German grammar), which has been reprinted many times since it first appeared in 1958. Five years after Ada Žgur, another Germanist graduate from the Littoral was **Valter Braz** (1914–1988), who worked as a practical German teacher at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. Braz was born in Trieste, went to technical secondary school in Celje and then enrolled in the study of German language and literature in Ljubljana (Krevs Birk, 2013). Until his appointment at the Faculty of Arts in 1961, he worked as a secondary-school teacher and headmaster, so it is not surprising that he is best known for his very successful secondary-school German textbooks. Among the university professors, the most eminent was the literary theorist, comparativist, critic, essayist, and editor **Anton Ocvirk** (1907–1980), who was born in Gorica and studied Slavic philology and comparative literature, and who also attended Kelemina's lectures on German historical grammar in 1928/29 and 1929/30 (Jan, 2013). Among the well-known students from the Littoral who attended lectures in Germanic philology we should also mention **Ferdo Delak** (1905–1968), who made a name for himself in theatre and film, but was also a translator and publicist (Šlibar, 2020, 46); **Branka Jurca** (1914–1999), a popular author of books for children and young adults; **Silvira Tomasini** (1913–1942) from Trieste, who graduated in 1938 and is considered a national heroine: active in social and cultural work, she organized women in the national liberation struggle (Šlibar, 2020, 47); and the poet, thinker and publicist **Srečko Kosovel** (1904–1926), who attended Kelemina's lectures in the 1925/26 summer semester. Despite studying Slavic and Romance philology and attending only one of Kelemina's lectures, German held great significance for Kosovel and served various purposes,

including as a language of mediation. As noted by Vanda Srebotnjak in her study (2021, 166), he even read Benedetto Croce in German.

## CONCLUSION

The period from the establishment of the University of Ljubljana in 1919 to the Second World War was the pioneering phase in the development of Slovene Germanic philology. In content, structure, and main activities, it was entirely in line with Germanic philology in Europe at the time. Jakob Kelemina, who was the first to head the Department of German Studies and for a long time its only academic member of staff, also put it on the European map by cleaving to Humboldt's principle of bringing scientific research together with university teaching. Humboldt, as we know, not only discovered the formula for the modern research and teaching university, but has also remained an uncontested authority in matters concerning the ideal relationship between the university and the state: academic production in his view goes far better if the state does not meddle with it, but only ensures adequate working conditions in academic institutions. Pierre Bourdieu, on whom we have relied several times in this article, took a similar view 150 years later; in *Homo academicus* he explains why resistance is not only legitimate but necessary when academic autonomy faces pressure from industry, trade, or politics: "As *authorities*, whose position in social space depends principally on the possession of cultural capital, a subordinate form of capital, university professors are situated rather on the side of the subordinate pole of the field of power and are clearly opposed in this respect to the managers of industry and business" (Bourdieu, 1988, 36). Jakob Kelemina was no exception in this regard. Although he clearly sided with the national liberation movement during the Second World War, he always remained faithful to his autonomous, sovereign academic stance, and for this reason – as the long-time president of the English club in Ljubljana – he was imprisoned just after the war (Mole, 1970, 506). At the same time, he was always aware of the social responsibility that came with the professorship, and did not lock himself in the ivory tower of a university professor focusing on his narrow scientific field of Old German language and literature, but rather acted as a *homo academicus* in the true sense of the term: he engaged in the most varied cultural-historical, literary, ethnographic, etymological,

32 Melita Počkar (born Pirc) completed her studies in German language and literature and Old German, comparative literature with literary theory, and the history of South Slavic literature and Slovene language at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana in 1933. From 1958 on (until her retirement in 1978), she was employed by the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures of the Faculty of Arts first as a practical language teacher and later as instructor in German (Šlibar, 2020, 57).

and linguistic questions, published scientific and professional articles in numerous journals, was a prolific translator, and was socially engaged. How different and how socially appreciated the role of university professors once was can also be seen from the Prešeren Prize Kelemina was awarded in 1954 for his life's work in literary studies.

Much the same went for the students as for the professors: going to university was not at all an obvious choice in the 1920s and 1930s, and these decisions were not only connected with intellectual abilities, but depended on a range of other factors. As we have shown, based on Bourdieu's classification of education opportunities by economic and cultural capital, and on empirical studies of data on the students in the first generation of Slovene Germanists, one of the main factors was the social origin of the potential students: children

from environments rich in cultural capital had, and probably still have, far better chances of entering academia than those from families with a low level of such capital. This study has shown that there were far more students enrolling in Germanic philology from the whole area of the Littoral, Istria, and Dalmatia than today. Predominantly, they were the children of public servants, teachers, lawyers, and other professions that can be classed as possessing a high level of cultural capital. There can be no doubt that German had considerably more of a presence in this area – in part due to its historical role, of course – than it has today. Moreover, numerous students who either enrolled in the study of German language and literature or only attended individual lectures in the field of Germanic philology went on to leave their mark on Slovene society.

## ZAČETKI SLOVENSKE GERMANISTIKE: PRVI PROFESORJI IN DRUŽBENA STRUKTURA PRVIH ŠTUDENTOV S PRIMORSKE

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### POVZETEK

*Prispevek osvetljuje začetke germanistike na Slovenskem, ki sovpadajo z ustanovitvijo Univerze v Ljubljani, in se pri tem osredinja zlasti na strukturo študentov in študentk s slovenskega, italijanskega in hrvaškega primorja. Germanistika na ljubljanski Filozofski fakulteti, katere dolgoletni predstojnik je bil prof. dr. Jakob Kelemina (1882–1957), se je kot ena od ustanovnih ved hitro uveljavila in pridobivala na ugledu: do konca druge svetovne vojne je predavanja na germanski filologiji obiskovalo skupno 916 študentov in študentk. S kvantitativno in kvalitativno analizo arhivskih virov, seznamov predavanj in osebnih izkazov ter na podlagi Bourdieujeve klasifikacije izobraževalnih možnosti glede na ekonomski in kulturni kapital prispevek ugotavlja, kolikšen delež zavzemajo študentje z mediteranskega območja, kakšno je razmerje med spoloma, kakšna je korelacija med družbeno-socialnim okoljem, iz katerega izvirajo, ter izbiri študija, kako se nacionalno (samo)opredeljujejo in kako je izbira študijskih vsebin vplivala na njihovo karierno pot: med njimi najdemo tako univerzitetne profesorje kot uveljavljene pisatelje, prevajalce, kulturne delavce, umetnike, pravnike, publiciste in številne druge, ki so pomembno sooblikovali slovensko družbo. Izsledki kažejo, da predstavljajo študentje s Primorske 17-odstotni delež vseh študentov, od tega je 54 odstotkov žensk, kar je primerljivo s povprečjem za celotno populacijo. Ob tem se je tudi izkazalo, da družbeno-socialno okolje pomembno vpliva na odločitev za študij, saj večina študentov izhaja iz srednjega in višjega sloja prebivalstva, ki je izobraževanju bolj naklonjeno.*

**Ključne besede:** študij germanistike, Jakob Kelemina, struktura študentov, primorski študentje, zgodovina germanistike 1919–1945, kulturni kapital



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