



“NEL MEZZO DEL CAMMIN DI NOSTRA VITA, ...”: THE LONGEVITY DYNAMICS THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES

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The Roman jurist Ulpianus was a forerunner in the quantitative analysis of the human mortality: his contribution can be dated back to 220 A.D. Nevertheless, a rigorous scientific approach to the mortality analysis had not been defined before John Graunt published his seminal contribution in 1662. Edmond Halley, the famous astronomer, constructed a life table which constitutes a landmark in demography and actuarial science; his paper dates back to 1693. However, the problem of summarizing in a number the human lifetime also appears in the incipit of

Dante's *Divina Commedia* (“nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita ...”, which can be translated as “Midway in our life's journey ...”). Although the first scientifically reliable studies on the human lifetime can be traced back to end of the Seventeenth century, the awareness of mortality trend, that is, of the mortality dynamics, will only appear two centuries later. Since then, analyzing mortality dynamics is a hot topic in statistics and demography, with significant applications in the actuarial, medical and social fields.