

Cycle of Human Ages (c. 1750)

Abstract

The male counterpart to the previous engraving, this image is entitled *Cycle of Human Ages* [*Zirckel des menschlichen Alters*]. The accompanying verse emphasizes the passage from the fire of youth to the ice of old age. It reads:

“Thus life begins, in this alternating course, Even though wit, reason, and courage cease in the end,
Youth’s fire becomes a grown man’s fervor, Until old age’s ice shall act in measured ways eventually.”

Average life expectancy in the eighteenth century was low – in the 30s. This was the result of high infant and child mortality. But people who survived into adulthood had a good chance of living into their 50s and 60s, and beyond. Colored copperplate engraving by Martin Engelbrecht (1684-1756), c. 1750.

Source



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