ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY IN CROATIA – THE ORIGINS, STATE AND PERSPECTIVES: VIEWS FROM GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

POVIJEST OKOLIŠA U HRVATSKOJ – PODRIJETLO, STANJE I PERSPEKTIVE: POGLEDI IZ GEOGRAFIJE I POVIJESTI

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Summary

Although we can trace the environmental history thought back to the Old-World writers and philosophers, and some environmental history topics have been present in Croatian scientific literature since the 19th century, modern environmental history, embedded in scientific methods and procedures, and particularly as a defined and/or institutionalised (inter)disciplinary field, began to emerge only in the 20th century. The first screening of the research in Croatia, taken fifteen years ago (2010), marked geography and history as two core disciplines in environmental history research in Croatia. As this review focuses on environmental history research in Croatia, the approach is based solely on published research by researchers from institutions in Croatia and within the two core disciplines: geography and history. Although there is undoubtedly valuable environmental historical research on Croatian territory by authors from foreign institutions or by researchers from other disciplines, due to its interdisciplinary nature, these were not taken into consideration. The review will draw attention to the development of environmental history thought, approaches and research in Croatia. Its institutionalisation may be placed at the very beginning of the 21st century, by introducing the university courses of Environmental history (within geography study) and Ecohistory (within history study), foundation of the Society for Croatian Economic History and Ecohistory and its interdisciplinary journal, and by organising conferences at various levels, including the 9th European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) conference in 2017. The review outlines the development paths, main thematic and methodological approaches, and topics of environmental history research through the geography and history lenses since the beginning of the science-based research in Croatia, as well as some perspectives.

Key words: environmental history, Croatia, history, geography, ecohistory
Ključne riječi: povijest okoliša, Hrvatska, povijest, geografija, ekohistorija

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the first systematic overview of environmental history research in Croatia was published in the Croatian edition of D. Hughes' book *What is Environmental History?* [Što je povijest okoliša] (2011). At that time, the field was only beginning to be institutionalised, primarily as a university course at the University of Zagreb. The results of this review, along with a preliminary bibliography covering the period 1990–2010, were published as a separate chapter in the Hughes' book by Fuerst-Bjeliš, Cvitanović & Petrić (Hughes, 2011).

Fig. 1 *Croatian edition of Hughes' book What is Environmental History?*

The bibliography was intended as an initial survey rather than a definitive list. Based on journal reviews and researcher questionnaires, it showed that geography and history were the dominant disciplines, dealing with the environmental history of Croatia, accounting for nearly 90% of the works. Additional contributions came from the wider humanities and social sciences, natural sciences, karstology, and landscape architecture.

The overview also confirmed the strong interdisciplinary character of environmental history, a defining feature of the field that has become even more pronounced over the past decade, with increasing movement towards multidisciplinary collaboration (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2025).

As this review focuses on environmental history research in Croatia, the approach and methodology are based on analysis of published research by researchers from Croatian institutions within the two core disciplines: geography and history. Although there is undoubtedly valuable environmental historical research on Croatian territory by authors from foreign institutions or by researchers from other disciplines, due to its interdisciplinary nature, these were not taken into consideration.

This review therefore does not aim for completeness, but highlights key developments, approaches, and themes in environmental history in Croatia from geographical and historical perspectives, the two disciplines that form the pillars of the interdisciplinary research field of environmental history.

2. EARLY DEALINGS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY TOPICS IN SCIENTIFIC HISTORIOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHY

2.1 Developments in historiography

Any discussion of "environmental history in Croatia" before the 1990s must begin with the following observation: most earlier authors did not develop environmental history as a programmatic field, yet they often produced empirically rich analyses in which environmental constraints, resources, and hazards functioned as causal variables in historical explanation. The following overview therefore treats "proto-environmental" or ecohistorically relevant work as a heuristic category: texts in which climate variability, water and forest regimes, agrarian ecology, epidemics, famine, or infrastructural adaptation are integrated into arguments about social, economic, and political change, rather than appearing merely as descriptive scenery. Equally important, this is an intentionally selective mapping of themes and researchers (not an exhaustive census of all possible candidates), limited to the period from the second half of the nineteenth century to 1995.

Within that frame, the earliest starting point for proto-environmental analysis in Croatian historiography can be placed in the late 1870s, when national synthesis and regional monograph writing began to incorporate environmental conditions into narratives of state formation, settlement, and socio-eco-

nomic development. Tadija Smičiklas's *Poviest hrvatska* (especially the second volume, first issued in 1879) is representative of a genre in which war, politics, and institutions are not separated from material constraints and crisis dynamics (Smičiklas, 1879). In parallel, Radoslav Lopašić's city-and-region monograph about Karlovac belongs to the tradition of "historical topography" that routinely links settlement growth, communications, frontier insecurity, and local economies with rivers, forests, soils, and the management of space (Lopašić, 1879). These works are not environmental history in a disciplinary sense, but they establish a durable historiographical habit: explaining historical change through the interaction of institutions and the material environment.

A second late nineteenth-century strand important for proto-environmental relevance is the documentary and editorial tradition associated with urban history and administrative history. Ivan Krstitelj Tkalčić's *Monumenta historica liberae regiae civitatis Zagrabiae* (begun in 1889) includes substantial editorial apparatus and contextual introductions that, in principle, provide a strating point for the environmental history of an early modern/modern city: water supply, sanitation, hazards, and the material infrastructure of urban governance (Tkalčić, 1889). The ecohistorical value here is typically indirect: the "environment" appears through the archival footprint of regulations, provisioning, and risk management rather than through an explicit ecological framing. This is exactly the kind of material that later environmental historians use, but in the nineteenth-century historiographical paradigm it remained methodologically implicit.

Early twentieth-century Croatian historiography continued to produce ecohistorically relevant layers largely through regional syntheses and historical geography-adjacent writing. Historical geography and landscape-oriented studies also contributed to proto-environmental thinking by foregrounding spatial structures, environmental constraints, and cultural perceptions of landscape (Kozličić 1990; Lučić 1995; Bertoša 1996). Rudolf Horvat's long-term engagement with Slavonia (Horvat, 1936) exemplifies a mode of historical writing where landscapes, rivers, forests, and settlement patterns are not separate topics but recurrent explanatory backdrops for political and economic developments (Horvat, 1936). Emilij Laszowski's wide-ranging work as an editor and historian of regions and towns likewise belongs to this tradition of spatially grounded history; while much of it is not "ecological" in intent, the genre frequently preserves evidence about land use, resource practices, and environmental constraints as part of local and institutional history. A similar proto-environmental orientation is visible in Laszowski's specialised studies on hunting regulations and forest governance, which treat woodland resources as legal, administrative, and fiscal categories embedded in state practice (Laszowski 1900; Laszowski, 1902; Laszowski, 1925). Although not framed ecologically, such works already conceptualized forests as managed socio-natural systems. The interpretive caution remains the same: ecohistorical relevance is present, yet it is embedded within older historiographical aims (state-building narratives, institutional continuity, regional description).

A clearer proto-environmental articulation appears in mid-twentieth-century scholarship that focuses on water, provisioning, and infrastructure. Lukša Beritić's study of the Dubrovnik aqueduct is a paradigmatic case: it treats water as a precondition of urban development and reconstructs the technological and institutional strategies used to secure supply in a karst environment, including cistern systems, wells, and external procurement (Beritić, 1962). Parallel developments in the historiography of forests and resource regimes further strengthened proto-environmental perspectives. Studies on Venetian forest exploitation in Istria (Klen, 1963), communal forest protection in Dalmatian statutes (Jelaska, 1983), and nineteenth-century state forest policy in Dalmatia (Peričić, 1983) examined institutional regulation of natural resources and long-term human intervention in woodland ecosystems. Here the environmental variables (hydrology of karst and scarcity of water) are not ornamental; it is the structural condition with a significant impact on shaping governance, finance, and urban resilience—precisely the type of argument that environmental history later systematizes.

From the late 1970s through the early 1990s, one can identify a cluster of works that come closest to proto-environmental history in a stronger sense because they explicitly analyze crisis, risk, and resource regimes in the areas constituting today's Croatia with strong underpinnings from archival sources.

Miroslav Bertoša's article, written in Italian, focusing on the ecological initiative of a Venetian rector in Istria (1623–1624) is noteworthy because it frames environmental degradation (abandonment of cultivated land, extension of uncultivated surfaces) and administrative responses as a historical problem, not merely as background context (Bertoša, 1979). His later study on the 1817 famine and "mortality crisis" in Istria further connects harvest failure, demographic shocks, and comparative European crisis patterns, demonstrating how local microcosms can be interpreted through broader regimes of pre-industrial vulnerability (Bertoša, 1989). In Dalmatian historiography, Šime Peričić's work on "years of starvation" in Venetian Dalmatia similarly builds an explanatory chain from subsistence stress and provisioning failures to social responses and administrative intervention, making famine a social-ecological phenomenon rather than a purely economic or political episode (Peričić, 1981). His later analysis of nineteenth-century Dalmatian milling foregrounds environmental constraints—especially the scarcity of large flowing water bodies—and links them to technological choices, state involvement in water management, and the energy basis of production (Peričić, 1992). Additional work on famine, scarcity, and environmental stress in Dalmatia and Istria further reinforced this line of analysis by linking subsistence crises, demographic pressure, and ecological constraints (Peričić, 1980; Bertoša, 1990; Božić-Bužančić, 1996).

Studies of fisheries, coastal economies, and maritime resource use demonstrate the importance of long-term interactions between environment, economy, and institutional frameworks in shaping Adriatic landscapes (Županović, 1993).

Taken together, these strands suggest a cautious but defensible thesis about origins: proto-environmental analysis in Croatian historical writing begins not with an institutionalized "environmental history," but with late nineteenth-century synthesis and regional "historical geography" genres (Smičiklas, 1879; Lopašić, 1879), expands through documentary and urban-institutional scholarship that preserves environmental evidence in administrative form (Tkalčić, 1889), and becomes methodologically more explicit in mid-to-late twentieth-century studies of water, famine, and resource regimes (Beritić, 1962; Bertoša, 1979; Peričić, 1981). These works are ecohistorically relevant and often analytically compatible with environmental history, but not programmatic environmental history in the modern sense. That distinction allows a coherent genealogy without imposing anachronistic labels on earlier historiographical practices.

2. 2 Conceptual foundations of environmental-historical thought in geography[1]

Although environmental history is most often regarded as a subdiscipline of history – sometimes even described as part of the "new history" (Roksandić, 2002)—its connections with geography are both natural and longstanding. From its earliest development as a modern scientific discipline, geography has been fundamentally concerned with space, territory (primarily in a physical sense), the environment, and the relationships between nature, humans, and society. While political and social processes long dominated historical scholarship, sensitivity to spatial and environmental dimensions increased significantly within European historiography during the *Annales* period. This shift is particularly evident in the works of Lucien Febvre (1925), Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (1959; 1967), and Fernand Braudel (1949).

Braudel, widely recognised as one of the most influential historians of the twentieth century, was originally trained also as a geographer – a fact less frequently emphasised. In his seminal study of the Mediterranean world (1949), he devoted considerable attention to environmental conditions, placing them at the centre of civilisational development. By stressing the decisive importance of environmental factors, Braudel described his approach as a form of "géographie humaine rétrospective", or, as he preferred, geohistory. This perspective closely corresponds to the principles of historical geography, highlighting the deep conceptual connections between geography and environmental history (Baker, 2003).

[1] The review of geography in environmental-historical research in Croatia is based on the previously published paper by B. Fuerst-Bjeliš in 2025 in *Hrvatski geografski glasnik* (87/2) and has been revised and adapted for this systematic review.

In Croatian scholarship, the roots of environmental history research can be traced to the early decades of the second half of the twentieth century. Long before the field became formally institutionalised, geographers were already examining historical relationships between humans and the environment. This work emerged within a strong tradition of cultural landscape studies that developed under the influence of the German "Landschaft" school, reflecting close intellectual links between Croatian and German geographers (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2025). At the same time, it followed broader trends in French and American geography that evolved in parallel with the *Annales* school during the first half of the twentieth century (Baker, 2003).

Definitions of environmental history offered by key scholars share a common conceptual core. Donald Hughes (2016) defines it as the effort to understand how humans have lived, worked, and thought in relation to nature over time. John McNeill (2003) describes it as the history of interactions between humankind and the natural world, while Marco Armiero frames it as the study of socio-ecological formations in a historical perspective. All these interpretations emphasise the dynamic relationship between society and nature across time. This focus closely parallels the cultural landscape paradigm in geography. Paul Vidal de la Blache (1922) developed the concept of "milieu", shaped by "genre de vie", or "culture", resulting in diverse forms of cultural landscapes. Similarly, Carl Ortwin Sauer (1925), influenced by German geographical thought, conceptualised the cultural landscape as a natural landscape transformed through human activity over time. Both approaches rest on the same fundamental pillars: nature, human agency expressed through culture, and temporal change. These shared foundations clearly demonstrate the strong conceptual links between modern geography and environmental history.

Typical examples of early environmental-historical research in Croatian geography include studies of the genesis and evolution of cultural landscapes published during the 1950s and 1960s. This approach represented the dominant geographical paradigm in the early post-World War II period. Researchers applied chronological methods to reconstruct phases of landscape development and transformation across different regions of Croatia. They relied on available historical and environmental sources, including cadastral records – particularly Franciscan surveys – climatological data, population censuses from the nineteenth century onwards, and field observations. Their primary aim was to identify relationships between environmental conditions, economic activities, and ways of life in shaping cultural landscapes.

Most studies from this period focused on rural landscapes, as urban and peri-urban spatial processes were still in the early stages of development. Notable examples include Ivan Crkvenčić's (1958) study of the rural cultural landscape in the foothills of Mount Ivanščica in Hrvatsko Zagorje; Veljko Rogić's analyses of the genesis and development of cultural landscapes on the littoral (1958) and continental (1956) slopes of Mount Velebit and on the island of Krk (1961); Mladen Friganović's (1961) research on the karst plains of the Krka River region; and Pavao Kurtek's (1966) work on the Podravina region along the Drava River. Similar methodological approaches were also applied in broader regional monographs and historical-geographical studies, often complemented by detailed analyses of population and economic structures.

Over time, essential elements of what is now recognised as environmental history – particularly the interaction between humans and the natural environment as manifested in cultural landscapes – became integrated into geographical education and research at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Science. This integration occurred primarily through the course *Historical Geography*, which established a strong and lasting tradition within Croatian geography. Until the formal institutionalisation of environmental history in the early twenty-first century, historical geography served as the principal framework for environmental-historical research and teaching, especially through the subfield focused on the historical geography of the environment.

A complementary, more natural science-oriented physical-geography approach developed within geomorphology and climatology, reflecting geography's dual disciplinary character. These studies addressed much longer time scales, extending back to the late Pleistocene and early Holocene. Examples include analyses of loess landform development on the Adriatic island of Susak (Bognar, 2002; 2003),

research on glaciation and its traces in the Dinaric Mountains – particularly Velebit (Bognar & Faivre, 2006) and Orjen (Riđanović, 1966) — as well as studies of Quaternary temperature changes in Central Europe (Šegota, 1966) and Holocene sea-level fluctuations (Šegota, 1961; 1973). Investigations of fluvial landform evolution, such as work on the Sava River (Nikolić, 1985), were comparatively less frequent. These long-term studies relied heavily on field research, geomorphological indicators, sediment analysis, mareographic data, and radiocarbon dating techniques. Research on Adriatic sea-level change and palaeogeography continued into the 1980s and 1990s, increasingly integrating geological and archaeological evidence (Šegota & Filipčić, 1991).

After the 1970s and 1980s dominated by quantitative approaches and modelling – particularly in urban and economic geography – the late twentieth century saw a renewed interest in landscape change studies. The broader international development and institutionalisation of environmental history in Europe and the United States stimulated new research into environmental change, land-use and land-cover dynamics, and cultural landscape transformation within Croatian geography. Technological advances further accelerated this shift, especially the growing use of GIS and remote sensing, which enabled new analytical possibilities and improved access to diverse historical and spatial data sources. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, environmental and landscape change have become prominent research themes, particularly among younger generations of Croatian geographers (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2025).

3. ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY IN CROATIAN ACADEMIA AT THE TURN OF THE 21ST CENTURY

3.1 Geography and historiography

3.1.1 Research in historiography

The institutionalisation of environmental history in Croatia at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries did not occur through the sudden formation of a narrowly defined subdiscipline, but rather through the gradual convergence of several research traditions that had long incorporated environmental factors into historical interpretation. This process unfolded within economic and social history, historical geography, borderland studies, agrarian history, and the history of medicine and public health, and only later became explicitly articulated within an ecohistorical framework. Two doctoral dissertations closely related to environmental history have been published, further demonstrating the gradual consolidation of ecohistorical research within Croatian historiography (Jelenić, 2023; Raguž, 2022). The present overview represents a thematic and historiographical selection rather than an exhaustive survey of the field. Studies of early medieval documentary evidence have demonstrated how environmental elements such as water systems, coastal morphology, and settlement ecology were embedded in legal and administrative texts, providing a basis for proto-environmental interpretation (Knezović, 2007; Knezović, 2012; Brgles, 2018).

One of the earliest and most methodologically coherent research clusters concerns forests, resource regimes, and the governance of space. Research into forests in Slavonia, the Military Border, and broader borderland zones gradually shifted from descriptive economic history toward analyses of institutional control, fiscal regimes, and socio-ecological conflicts, thereby anticipating key questions of environmental history. The Triplex Confinium research complex provided an early framework for interpreting forests as border resources and instruments of spatial governance, linking environmental processes to military, demographic, and political structures (Roksandić, 2003; Roksandić et al., 2003). Subsequent syntheses and thematic collections on Slavonian forests further developed this line by examining forestry administration, property regimes, and the transformation of forests into managed economic resources within modern state structures (Župan & Skenderović, 2018; Skenderović, 2022). A complementary regional perspective is provided by long-term studies of Istrian forests, which trace the historical trans-

Fig. 2 *Drago Roksandić's book contains his key contributions to environmental history in Croatia*

formation of woodland use, institutional regulation, and resource pressures from medieval references to modern forestry regimes (Bertoša, 2018). More recent environmental-historical research has also examined deforestation and reforestation dynamics in the coastal Dinaric Karst, highlighting the interaction between military administration, ecological constraints, and resource management (Pavelić, Petrić & Radošević, 2024). These works collectively demonstrate a transition from resource description to the analysis of governance regimes and socio-ecological transformations. Studies of timber trade and forest exploitation within the Triplex Confinium framework further illuminate the economic and institutional dimensions of woodland resources, demonstrating how forest regimes functioned as instruments of fiscal extraction and spatial governance (Štefanec, 2003). Research on deforestation in Venetian Dalmatia has likewise examined long-term human pressure on woodland ecosystems and the interaction between environmental change and economic structures (Vilović, 2018).

Water systems, floods, and hydraulic interventions constitute another central axis of Croatian environmental historiography. Research has increasingly treated rivers not merely as geographic or economic features but as dynamic socio-ecological systems shaped by long-term interactions between environmental processes, institutional frameworks, and social vulnerability. Studies of the Drava, Sava, and other river systems emphasize flood regimes, water management infrastructure, and the historical development of risk management practices, thereby integrating environmental history with the history of public policy and technical governance (Feletar et al., 2011; Obradović, 2024). Historical analyses of flood history and river regulation in the Drava basin have further demonstrated how long-term hydraulic engineering reshaped riverine landscapes and socio-economic structures, linking environmental change with institutional and technological responses (Petrić, Tamás & Lóczy, 2019). Such approaches situate Croatian research within broader European discussions on environmental risk, hydraulic regimes, and the socio-political construction of water landscapes. These hydraulic interventions were closely linked to agrarian modernization and market integration, illustrating how environmental engineering transformed socio-economic structures in the Drava–Sava lowlands (Živaković Kerže, 2013). Recent scholarship has further integrated Croatian evidence into long-term European reconstructions of flood regimes. The Croatian case of the 1965 Danube flood illustrates the interaction between hydrological extremes, infrastructure, and institutional responses at the national level (Pavić, 2021), while large-scale reconstructions

of European flood frequency over the past five centuries situate regional flood dynamics within broader climatic variability (Blöschl et al., 2020). Historical-geographical research has further enriched this field by analysing long-term river transformations and water management practices, including cartographic reconstructions of the Krka River and studies of Sava River regulation and drainage systems in the Slavonian lowlands (Slukan Altić, 2006; Slukan Altić, 2010; Živaković Kerže, 2007; Živaković Kerže, 2013). Medieval water management has also been examined through institutional and estate-based perspectives, highlighting the socio-economic organization of hydraulic resources (Vručina, 2021).

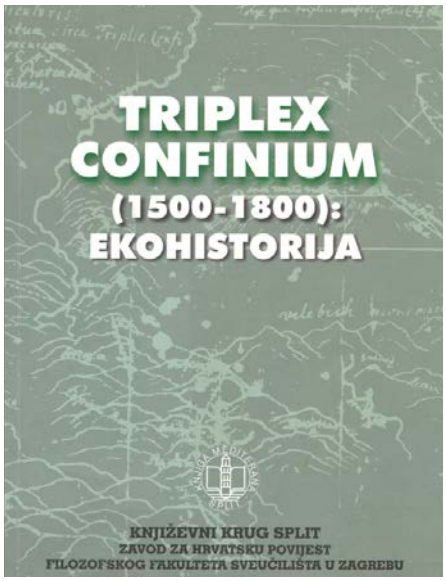

Fig. 3 *Edited volume of papers from the first environmental history conference held in Croatia*

Fig. 4 *Croatian edition of Delort & Walter's book Histoire de l'Environnement européen*

Another important research field concerns borderland environments and the environmental dimensions of militarisation. Within the ecohistorical reading of the early modern frontier, war and constant military readiness are interpreted as processes that reshaped landscapes, demographic patterns, agrarian systems, and forest dynamics. Environmental change is analysed not merely as a consequence of warfare but as part of the spatial logic of frontier regimes, where controlled zones, depopulated areas, and resource management produced long-lasting environmental transformations (Petrić, 2012; Roksandić, 2003). This perspective has contributed significantly to the understanding of the relationship between power, space, and environment in Croatian historiography. A further dimension of frontier environmental governance has been analysed through the ecohistorical interpretation of the sanitary cordon system in the Military Border. Recent research has demonstrated how the sanitary cordon functioned not only as a medical and military institution, but also as a spatial-environmental regime that structured mobility, settlement patterns, land use, and perceptions of ecological risk along the Habsburg–Ottoman frontier (Petrić & Ostojčić, 2024). By conceptualising the cordon as a socio-ecological mechanism of control and environmental regulation, this approach integrates epidemic history with borderland environmental governance. Research on ecological transformations accompanying Ottoman expansion has further demonstrated how warfare, migration, and demographic restructuring reshaped environmental systems in frontier regions such as Lika and Krbava (Šarić, 2003). Later studies expanded this approach by analysing mountain environments and pastoral societies within broader ecohistorical frameworks of environmental adaptation and landscape transformation (Šarić, 2010). Ottoman-source-based studies of the Podravina region and local ecohistorical research on northern Croatian settlements have further expanded borderland environmental analysis by linking administrative records, resource use, and ecological constraints (Moačanin, 2005; Cik, 2016).

Agrarian and demographic-environmental research has likewise played a major role in shaping ecohistorical inquiry. Studies linking food crises, climatic anomalies, and demographic fluctuations provided an early methodological bridge between environmental and social history. Later research

expanded this approach by examining agrarian adaptation, resource constraints, and ecological niches in regions such as the Lower Neretva, karst hinterlands, and island landscapes. These works increasingly conceptualise agriculture as a history of landscape and resource regimes rather than solely of production systems (Jakopčić, 2016). Further research on famine and subsistence crises in karst environments has emphasised adaptive strategies, ecological constraints, and the socio-economic dynamics of environmental stress, particularly in the Lika region (Pavelić, 2022). Research on the ecological-geographical determinants of eighteenth-century colonisation in Slavonia has further highlighted how environmental conditions shaped settlement patterns, agrarian expansion, and demographic restructuring (Sučić 2017; Skenderović 2019).

In Croatian historiography, climate history has largely developed as a problem-oriented field embedded in the study of crises, subsistence disturbances, and demographic shocks rather than as an autonomous subdiscipline. Climatic impulses are most often reconstructed indirectly through their social and economic consequences and through narrative traces preserved in chronicles, marginal notes, and administrative records. Within this framework, the work of Krešimir Kužić is particularly significant because it demonstrates how large-scale climatic anomalies can be traced in regional written evidence and critically interpreted within broader European contexts. His studies on the atmospheric consequences of major volcanic eruptions show how environmental shocks were translated into local agrarian and social disturbances, while also stressing the methodological limits of such indirect reconstructions (Kužić, 2006; Kužić, 2007). In addition, his earlier contribution on the Little Ice Age helped situate Croatian evidence within wider European debates on climatic variability and long-term environmental change (Kužić, 1999). Additional work has expanded the evidentiary base for reconstructing environmental stress through droughts and hydrological anomalies, particularly in medieval Hungary and Croatia, thereby strengthening the integration of climatic and socio-economic history (Kiss & Nikolić, 2015). Together, these works established a methodological model for integrating narrative sources, crisis history, and environmental interpretation, thereby making climate history a recognizable component of Croatian environmental historiography.

Research on disease and environment in Croatian historiography has developed at the intersection of the history of medicine, demographic history, and environmental analysis, particularly through studies of epidemics, sanitary regimes, and landscape-related diseases. This historiographical direction interprets disease within spatial and environmental frameworks, analysing quarantine systems, mobility, and environmental risk as historical processes embedded in institutional and ecological contexts. The works of Dubravka Mlinarić are central to this approach. Her research demonstrates how epidemic risk was shaped by mobility controls, quarantine infrastructures, and administrative responses, linking disease history with environmental and spatial management (Mlinarić & Lazanin, 2021). Her earlier work on malaria in northern Dalmatia further emphasized the role of microecological conditions, perceptions of "unhealthy landscapes," and migration patterns, thus framing disease as a long-term environmental phenomenon rather than an episodic crisis (Mlinarić, 2004). Additional contributions on endemic diseases in border environments reinforced the integration of environmental and medical perspectives within Croatian historiography (Mlinarić, 2010).

Although primarily situated outside strict historical scholarship, research on karst landscapes has provided an important environmental framework for historical interpretation. Studies on settlement, communication routes, and long-term human adaptation in karst environments highlight how geomorphological constraints shaped social and economic patterns over time. In this respect, the edited volume on history in karst regions offers a contextual environmental perspective relevant for ecohistorical synthesis, even when rooted in interdisciplinary approaches (Olujić, 2008).

Coastal and island environments represent another important thematic domain, where research has evolved through the convergence of historical geography, landscape studies, maritime and economic history, and environmental analysis. Research on ancient perceptions of the Adriatic seascape has further contributed to environmental readings of maritime space by analysing how geographical, economic, and cultural interpretations of coastal environments shaped long-term interactions between societies

and the eastern Adriatic (Budić, 2021; Budić, 2022). More recent work has increasingly integrated coastal research into broader ecohistorical and Mediterranean contexts, linking environmental change to tourism, conservation, and spatial planning. Recent scholarship has broadened ecohistorical research on coastal and island environments by linking environmental change with tourism, conservation, and spatial planning, while also examining the relationship between environment, power, and political symbolism in twentieth-century island landscapes such as the Brijuni Islands (Prokić & Petrić, 2024).

A particularly significant recent development is the incorporation of island spaces into analyses of violence, forced labour, and the material infrastructures of repression. The historiography of Goli Otok was long fragmentary, with a marked shift occurring only from the 2000s and 2010s onwards, following broader access to archival sources. In this context, historical research has begun to address the environmental dimensions of Goli Otok, framing it as a rare example of an explicitly articulated environmental history topic related to Croatian island space (Previšić & Prokić 2016).

Urbanisation, industrialisation, and environmental change form a further field of inquiry, though systematic studies of pollution remain comparatively limited. Croatian historiography has often approached environmental consequences of industrialisation through resource regimes, infrastructural development, and landscape transformation rather than through pollution analyses in the narrow sense. Early initiatives aimed at preserving landscape and natural heritage, such as local "beautification societies" in the Lika region, reveal proto-conservationist attitudes and emerging environmental awareness within local communities (Brlić, 2014). Environmental-historical research on electrification and energy development in the Lika region has demonstrated the ambivalent relationship between modernization and ecological degradation in karst landscapes, linking infrastructure, energy policy, and environmental change (Brlić & Šulc, 2023). Recent studies have increasingly addressed environmental consequences of industrialisation and late socialist environmental policy. Comparative research on environmental policy in socialist Yugoslavia has further situated Croatian developments within broader transnational frameworks of socialist environmental governance and ecological regulation (Petrić, 2019). Research on environmental problems in 1980s Croatia highlights the interaction between industrial development, environmental degradation, and institutional responses (Batistić & Petrić, 2022), while case studies such as the rise and decline of the Bakar coking plant illustrate long-term socio-ecological transformations in industrial landscapes (Raguž, 2024). Methodological reflections on sources and approaches for studying environmental history in the socialist period further contribute to the consolidation of modern environmental historiography (Raguž, 2025). This reflects a broader pattern in which environmental history has developed through the analysis of socio-ecological systems rather than through isolated environmental variables.

In historiographical terms, Croatian environmental history has thus emerged as a polycentric and interdisciplinary research constellation. Rather than forming a rigid subdiscipline, it has integrated themes of forests, water systems, borderlands, agrarian adaptation, disease environments, coastal landscapes, and environmental governance into broader historical analysis.

The conceptual dimension of environmental crisis and ecological thought has also been explored within Croatian intellectual and historiographical traditions, particularly through works addressing ecological modernity and environmental thought (Markus, 2004; 2005; 2006; 2010), as well as through the ecohistorical reflections of Drago Roksandić, who emphasized the analytical importance of space, frontier environments and historical human–environment relations in Southeastern Europe (Roksandić, 2018).

The field's development has been shaped by the country's complex geography, long-lasting border regimes, and strong traditions of regional and socio-economic history, which facilitated the early incorporation of environmental perspectives into historical scholarship. At the same time, the existing body of research demonstrates uneven thematic coverage and ongoing methodological challenges, particularly in integrating environmental history with natural-scientific reconstructions and comparative transnational frameworks. Nevertheless, Croatian ecohistorical historiography has produced a substantial and methodologically diverse corpus that highlights the analytical value of environmental perspectives for under-

standing long-term historical change. This overview reflects a selective thematic and historiographical synthesis rather than a comprehensive bibliography of Croatian environmental history.

3.1.2 Geographic dichotomy/duality and its research implications

The renewed interest in environmental and landscape change research within geography during the final decade of the twentieth century was strongly driven by technological advances, particularly the development of GIS and remote sensing, as well as the emergence of new analytical methodologies. In this context, historical GIS approaches began to develop relatively early, in parallel with similar trends in Europe and the United States. These approaches combined the use of historical sources with spatial analysis in a GIS environment. Traditional historical materials – especially graphic sources such as cadastral records and historical maps – required new methods of processing and interpretation to make them suitable for digital spatial analysis and for comparison with more recent datasets from different periods.

Because of geography's dichotomy – encompassing both natural and human dimensions and bridging the natural and social sciences – the scope of environmental-historical research within the discipline is exceptionally broad. It ranges from natural science-oriented topics, typically situated within geomorphology and climatology, to themes rooted in the social sciences and humanities. The latter often focus on the relationship between environmental change and ways of life, as well as on historical perceptions and symbolic meanings of the environment derived from cartographic, archival, or narrative sources.

Two principal analytical approaches can be distinguished. Static cross-sectional studies focus on a specific historical period, aiming to reconstruct past landscapes, environmental conditions, or human–environment relations at a particular moment of time. Examples include studies of nineteenth-century forest cover change (Blaće, 2019), reforestation policies implemented during the Austro-Hungarian period at the turn of the twentieth century (Tekić & Watson, 2021), and critical reassessments of long-standing narratives of Mediterranean environmental degradation in antiquity (Tekić, 2019a). In contrast, dynamic or diachronic analyses examine environmental and landscape changes across two or more time periods, addressing either long-term or short-term processes of transformation. Long-term landscape change studies remain comparatively rare due to several constraints, including limited availability of older sources (compared to the abundance of recent ones), methodological challenges in dating and interpreting historical materials, and difficulties in comparing heterogeneous datasets from different periods. In contrast, natural science-based environmental-historical research typically adopts a long-term perspective, relying on different types of sources and analytical techniques, now further strengthened by technological advances and improved dating methods (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2025).

Recent environmental-historical research in Croatia continues to address both terrestrial and marine environments. Studies of terrestrial environments primarily focus on landscape transformation, land-use and land-cover change (LULC), deforestation and reforestation processes, and the long-term impact of human activity. Early attempts at long-term diachronic analysis, covering nearly three centuries, were conducted in the late twentieth century. These studies compared Venetian cadastral records with more recent cartographic materials and remote sensing data using GIS technologies (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2003; Fuerst-Bjeliš et al. 2011; Fuerst-Bjeliš & Durbešić 2013). This research continued into the twenty-first century through projects at the Departments of Geography at the Universities of Zagreb and Zadar, supported by institutional funding and national research programmes. Long-term diachronic analyses of landscape change, LULC dynamics, reforestation processes, and woodland management have been further developed within these frameworks and through numerous doctoral studies focusing on the central and northern Dalmatian hinterlands, coastal zones, and island areas (e.g. Čuka, 2011; Durbešić, 2012; Blaće, 2015; Tekić, 2019b).

More recently, research interests have expanded to include changes in river channels (Pavlek & Faivre, 2020; Pavlek, Kulej & Bočić, 2022) and transformations of natural beaches over the past two centuries (Mićunović & Faivre, 2022). Methodologically, long-term diachronic studies have established robust procedures for integrating historical cadastral and other archival sources – particularly Franciscan surveys – and nineteenth-century census data with modern aerial photography, orthophoto

maps, and remote sensing imagery within GIS environments (Vrkić & Blaće, 2024). Other types of historical materials, such as topographical artworks, have been used less frequently in reconstructing past landscapes (e.g. Piana, Watkins & Tekić, 2018).

Short-term GIS-based analyses of land use and land cover change are far more common. These typically rely on recent and contemporary remote sensing data and cover only the past few decades. Their rapid growth reflects both technological progress and the increasing availability of high-resolution spatial datasets. Some studies also employ mixed-method approaches that combine GIS analysis with qualitative and quantitative investigations of local perceptions, attitudes, and social responses to landscape change (Cvitanović et al., 2017; Cvitanović & Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2018; Hamzić & Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2021; Šetka et al., 2021).

A more integrative research direction has emerged, linking landscape change with environmental risks and hazards. This approach examines how long-term environmental transformations influence the occurrence and distribution of hazards such as forest fires, particularly in the Dinaric Mediterranean region over the past two centuries (Fuerst-Bjeliš, Cvitanović & Durbešić, 2016; Durbešić & Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2017; Tekić et al., 2024), the occurrence of landslides (Faivre et al., 2013), and vulnerability to sea-level rise (Šimac et al., 2023).

Natural science-based research on marine and coastal palaeoenvironments also remains an important and active field. Studies typically focus on reconstructing sea-level changes, climate variability, and palaeoseismic events. Such research is frequently interdisciplinary, involving collaboration between geographers and specialists in geology, biology, chemistry, and physics. It relies on geomorphological and biological indicators – such as algal rims and speleothems – as well as radiocarbon dating techniques (e.g. Lončar et al., 2017; 2019; Faivre et al., 2019a; 2021; Surić et al., 2018). Some projects (either institutional or national[2]) also address palaeoenvironmental reconstruction of river valleys using a combination of sedimentological, mineralogical, petrological, anthracological, malacological, radiocarbon, and land cover analyses in relation to climatic, vegetation, and hydrological changes (Faivre et al., 2019b). Analyses of tufa (Barešić et al., 2023), sediment cores (Kaniewski et al., 2018), and soils (Ballut & Faivre, 2012) further identified anthropogenic impacts on long-term ecosystem dynamics, carried out within the national Croatian Science Foundation project. Within natural science-based research, wide international collaborations are noteworthy, such as the collaboration of I. Čanjevac with a pan-European consortium to analyse megaflood patterns and predictions using a large hydrological dataset spanning two centuries (Bertola et al., 2023). A multidisciplinary radiographic study of bioarchaeological remains in Croatia, which provided insights into Middle Eneolithic culture (Eppenberger et al., 2020), included N. Buzjak, a physical geographer. Research on periglacial and glacial landforms continues to focus on the Velebit mountain range (Perica et al., 2010), often through interdisciplinary collaboration with geologists (Krklec et al., 2015).

Although most natural science-oriented environmental-historical research spans long timeframes, often covering several millennia of the late Holocene, some studies focus on much more recent processes, including climate change over the past half-century (Filipčić, Orešić & Maradin, 2013) (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2025).

3.1.3 Higher education

The institutionalisation of environmental history in Croatia at the level of higher education began at the turn of the 21st century, with the first formal courses established at the University of Zagreb in 2005 under the higher education (Bologna) framework. At the Faculty of Science, the *Environmental History* course is integrated into the Master's programmes in Geography and Environmental Sciences, covering the field's philosophy, concept, the theoretical background, and the impact of technology and energy consumption on the environment. It has been taught by Borna Fuerst-Bjeliš for more than 20 years, and

[2] Institutional projects are funded by Universities of Zagreb and Zadar, while national projects are funded by the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ).

for some time in collaboration with Marin Cvitanović. Key literature includes the Croatian editions of Hughes' *What is Environmental History?* [Što je povijest okoliša?] (2011) and Simmons' *Global Environmental History* [Globalna povijest okoliša] (2010), which were specifically prepared (translated, redacted and edited) for this course.

Specialised courses such as *Historical GIS* and *Urban Historical Geography* courses were established by Borna Fuerst-Bjeliš at the Master's level in Geography. Until five years ago, B. Fuerst-Bjeliš co-taught *Historical GIS* with Anamarija Durbešić, while Ivan Zupanc took over the *Urban Historical Geography* course. Additionally, the *Climate Change* course was developed as an elective by Anita Filipčić.

At the doctoral level, the *Environmental Studies module* connects cultural landscape development with natural science-based research, including palaeoenvironmental reconstructions, involving a number of physical and social/cultural geographers, each one of them with specific topic and methodologies.

Fig. 5 *Croatian edition of Simmons' book Global Environmental History*

The Master's level Geography programme at the Department of Geography, University of Zadar, includes two courses primarily related to environmental and landscape studies with a past-time component: *Climate and (palaeo)environmental changes*, taught by Nina Lončar Baričević, and *Geographical analysis of the landscape*, taught by Ante Blaće (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2025).

In the meantime, in 2003, environmental history teaching was first introduced at the Department of History of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, by Drago Roksandić and Hrvoje Petrić within the course *History of Central and Southeastern Europe in the Early Modern Period*. The teaching focused on the environmental history of Central and Southeastern Europe and was based on the Croatian translation of the book *History of the European Environment* by Robert Delort and François Walter. During both the winter and summer semesters, within this course Hrvoje Petrić conducted seminar classes entitled *European Rivers in the Early Modern Period*, for which he prepared a reader of texts together with Drago Roksandić and Marko Šarić.

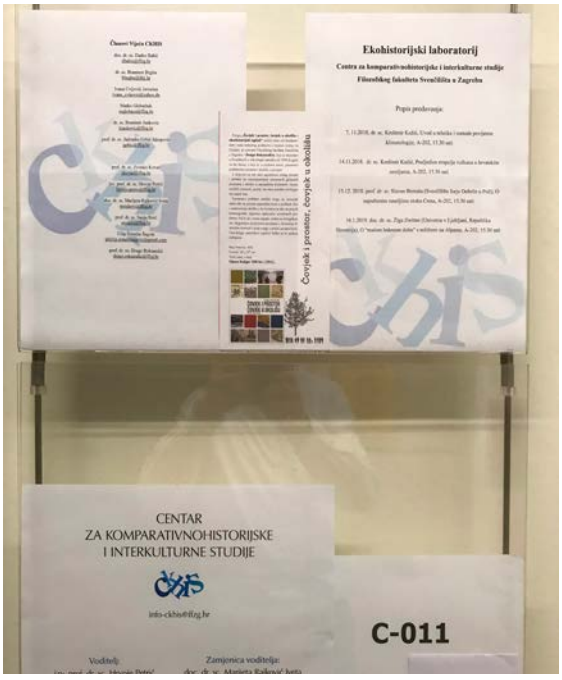

Fig. 6 *The Ecohistory Laboratory at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb has been operating since 2018*

Environmental-historical content was formally introduced into the curriculum in 2004 through two courses. Hrvoje Petrić taught the course *The Croatian Environment of the Early Modern Period in Central and Southeastern European Contexts*, while Boris Olujić taught *The History of Life in the Karst – Humans and the Environment in Prehistory and Antiquity*, as well as actively researching it. *Ecohistory/Environmental History* is a mandatory course

headed by Hrvoje Petrić at the graduate studies level since 2008 (Šimetin Šegvić, 2025). According to the new study program, the graduate study of history includes a module called Ecohistory/Environmental History.

Also, the doctoral students majoring in Early Modern Period at the Zagreb University History studies attend course *Cartography sources of Croatian lands: an Ecohistory approach*, lectured by Dubravka Mlinarić. The doctoral programme in modern and contemporary history offered an elective course on 19th and 20th century ecohistory for some time, lectured by Hrvoje Petrić, but no longer does so.

In addition, in 2018 the Ecohistory Laboratory was established within the Centre for Comparative Historical and Intercultural Studies (today the Centre for Advanced Studies) at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb.

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek temporarily offers a course on the history of the European environment, thematically oriented towards environmental history in a broader European context. At the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, environmental history is not institutionalised under that specific designation, but key elements of the discipline are presented in the course *History of Landscapes of the Ancient Mediterranean*. The course has been taught since 2016 within the graduate programme in history and is led by Robert Matijašić. At the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Split, ecohistory-related teaching has been conducted at the doctoral level through the course *Landscape History*. At the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Rijeka, a historical-environmental perspective is integrated through the course *Population and Environment in Early Modern Croatia*. At the Catholic University of Croatia, the course *Environmental History of Early Modern Croatia* has been offered for a period of time at the graduate level of history studies.

3.1.4 Environmental history publications: journals and books

The *Society for Croatian Economic and Ecohistory* was founded in 2005 at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Zagreb and has been publishing the scientific journal *Ekonomska i ekohistorija* [*Economic and Ecohistory*]. So far, 20 volumes have been released.

Beyond specialised publications, research in environmental history appears in leading Croatian geographical journals, most notably *Hrvatski Geografski glasnik* [*Croatian Geographical Bulletin*] and

Fig. 7 *Annual assembly of the Society for Croatian Economic History and Ecohistory and the presentation of the journal Ekonomska i ekohistorija.*

Geoadria. Other journals publishing environmental history include *Podravina*, a multidisciplinary journal focusing on geographical and historical research in the Drava River region, and *Kartografija i geoinformacije* [*Cartography and Geoinformation*], a discipline-specific journal that occasionally publishes papers at the intersection of cartography and environmental history. This diverse range of publications highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the field within the Croatian academic community.

In addition to journal publications, the availability of Croatian translations of key texts is essential for the university courses in environmental history. For instance, the syllabus of *Environmental History* (Department of Geography) in Zagreb includes core exam readings such as Croatian editions of D. Hughes' *What is Environmental History*? [Što je povijest okoliša?] (2011) and I.G. Simmons' *Global Environmental History 10,000 BC to AD 2000* [Globalna povijest okoliša] (2010), as well as elective reading, including significant works by major authors such as J. Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* [Sva naša oružja] (2007) and *Collapse* [Slom] (2008), alongside S. Pyne's *Fire: A Brief History* [Vatra: sažeta povijest (2010). These translated editions provide Master's level students with foundational resources from globally recognised experts in the field (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2025). The same titles form part of the environmental history curriculum at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, in addition to *History of the European Environment* [Povijest europskog okoliša] (2002) co-written by Swiss Francophone environmental historians Robert Delort and François Walter. The book was originally published as *Histoire de l'environnement européen* (by Presse Universitaire de France, 2001). The book by Andreas Malm *Fossil Capital* [Fosilni kapitalizam] (2018.) is also used in university teaching.

3.1.5 Joint activities: geography and history together

A milestone in international cooperation was the 9th ESEH Conference, held in Zagreb in 2017. Organised by the Universities of Zagreb and Zadar, it was one of the most successful ESEH events, hosting nearly 500 participants from 42 countries. The conference highlighted Croatia's unique role as a 'laboratory for contact environments', where diverse states, religions, and traditions have historically intersected. The conference excelled in diverse themes: 105 sessions explored topics such as frontier zones, landscapes of conflict, and global-local tensions; interdisciplinarity: the event underscored the essential synergy between historical and geographical approaches; future impact: the subsequent Summer School in Zadar further strengthened the international network of young environmental historians.

Ultimately, the ESEH 2017 conference reinforced the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in understanding the complexities of environmental history (Fuerst-Bjeliš 2018).

More intensive cooperation between Croatian environmental historians and colleagues from neighbouring countries, especially Slovenia, developed after the extension of the ESEH *Region Croatia* to the *Region Croatia-Serbia-Slovenia* at the ESEH Ordinary General Meeting in Tallinn (2019), and further to the *Dinaric Region* (in Uppsala, 2025), now including colleagues from Montenegro. Scholars from the region were also actively represented on the ESEH Board, such as Hrvoje Petrić representing the former *Region Croatia* and Žiga Zwiter from Slovenia representing the *Croatia-Serbia-Slovenia region and the Dinaric Region*, while Borna Fuerst-Bjeliš was elected Vice-President of the ESEH for the 2017–19 term.

The regional cooperation began with guest lectures for Master's and doctoral students given by scholars from the Department of Geography and Department of History at the University of

Fig. 8 *Official logo of the 9th ESEH Conference, Zagreb, 2017*

Zagreb, Croatia, and the University of Ljubljana as well as the University of Primorska in Koper, Slovenia (Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2025). One step forward was the edited volume *Environmentalism in Central and Southeastern Europe: Historical Perspectives* that brought together researchers from Central and Southeastern Europe and created a shared platform for dialogue on environmental history across different traditions. By combining comparative perspectives with regionally grounded case studies, the book helped to situate local environmental histories within broader transnational and interdisciplinary debates, thereby strengthening scholarly connections and encouraging further collaborative research in the field (Petrić / Žebec Šilj, 2017). An important step towards realising the idea and intention initiated at the 2017 Zagreb Conference, namely to strengthen the position of Southeast Europe within the European research network, was the organisation of the roundtable *Environmental History in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia: Developments, State and Perspectives* by the Croatia-Serbia-Slovenia Region to bring together environmental historians from the broader region of Southeast Europe. The Roundtable held online in the midst of pandemic conditions in 2021 gathered scholars from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia, and focused on developments, state and perspectives of (interdisciplinary) environmental history research. With the same idea two projects were presented already at the 2017 ESEH Ordinary General Meeting in Zagreb under the Vice-Presidential programme by B. Fuerst-Bjeliš. The projects were intended to gather most researchers from SE Europe around a common research theme, namely the Dinaric Karst region which connects most of the countries.

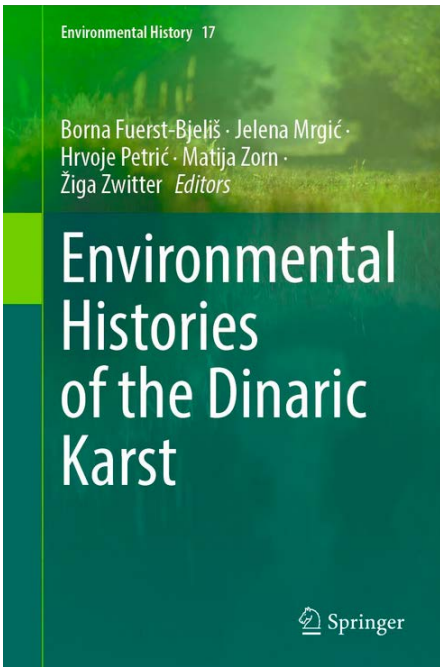

Fig. 9 *Edited volume Environmental Histories of the Dinaric Karst (Springer, Environmental History series), edited by Fuerst-Bjeliš, Mrgić, Petrić, Zorn, and Zwitter.*

One of the projects proposed was an edited monograph on the environmental histories of the Dinaric Karst, with the aim of bringing to light the research carried out in the Region and facilitating networking among scholars. The other project was the establishment of biannual summer schools on the environmental history of the Dinaric Karst for Master's and PhD students, to be held alternately in different countries of the region. Thanks to the establishment of the new enlarged ESEH region and the joint efforts of scientists from the Region, both projects were launched. In 2024, the edited volume *Environmental Histories of the Dinaric Karst* was published in the Environmental History series by Springer, edited by Fuerst-Bjeliš, Mrgić, Petrić, Zorn, and Zwitter. Within the broader trajectory of environmental history in Croatia outlined in this article, the consolidation of research on karst environments represents one of the clearest examples of how regional case studies have fostered wider transnational cooperation and methodological integration. The volume represents a significant milestone in the development of environmental-historical cooperation within the wider Dinaric karst region, as it brings together scholars from several countries working on shared socio-ecological topics of karst landscapes, resources, and environmental change. By integrating historical, geographical, and interdisciplinary approaches, the book situates local and regional case studies within a broader macro-regional framework that encompasses Croatia and neighbouring karst areas, thereby strengthening scholarly exchange and comparative research across the Dinaric space. Its methodological plurality and transnational scope have contributed to consolidating the Dinaric karst as a coherent field of environmental-historical inquiry and as a platform for sustained academic collaboration (Fuerst-Bjeliš, Mrgić, Petrić, Zorn, & Zwitter, 2024).






Figs. 10–16 *Photos from the ESEH conference in Zagreb, 2017 (photo by Ivan Zagoda)*

4. THE CONCLUSION: WHERE WE STAND AND WHAT COMES NEXT?

Environmental history in Croatia has developed as a flexible and integrative framework rather than as a narrowly defined subdiscipline. Its evolution has been shaped by the country's historically complex geography, long-lasting border regimes, and strong traditions of regional, agrarian, and social history, which together facilitated the early incorporation of environmental factors into historical analysis. Although the field remains uneven in terms of thematic coverage and institutional consolidation, it has generated a substantial body of research that demonstrates the explanatory power of an environmental perspective across different periods and regions. At present, Croatian environmental history is best understood as a dynamic research constellation characterised by interdisciplinary openness and methodological plurality. This review focused exclusively on the starting points and approaches of the two disciplines considered the pillars of the interdisciplinary research field of environmental history: geography and history. Each has its own specificities and issues. In the case of geography, its intrinsic dichotomy produces a wide range of topics, bridging the approaches and methodologies of the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. In the case of history, the specificity lies in working with historical sources and long-term temporal perspectives, which enable the analysis of interactions between society and the environment over centuries, but also require the interpretation of often indirect and fragmentary evidence.

The future development of environmental history will depend on deeper engagement with comparative and transnational perspectives, greater attention to industrialisation and pollution, and more systematic dialogue of history/humanities and social sciences with the natural sciences. In this sense, environmental history offers not only a reinterpretation of Croatia's past, but also a promising avenue for addressing broader environmental-historical questions concerning sustainability, resilience, and human–environment relations in Europe and beyond. The Croatian experience demonstrates that environmental history can develop not only from industrial or conservationist concerns, but also from border regimes, agrarian landscapes and long-term socio-environmental entanglements, thereby offering perspectives of broader relevance for European environmental history research. And where do we go? We hope to actively continue and strengthen cooperation and networking within the Region and with the European Research Area, as well as networking between disciplines and opening up disciplinary cores to promote interdisciplinarity in environmental history research. Bringing together different perspectives, approaches, methods, techniques and technologies is essential for environmental history due to its nature, and this is only possible through open collaboration between disciplines.

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SAŽETAK

Iako se ideje o povijesti okoliša mogu pratiti još od starovjekovnih autora i filozofa, a pojedine teme vezane uz povijest okoliša prisutne su u hrvatskoj znanstvenoj literaturi od 19. stoljeća, moderna povijest okoliša, utemeljena na znanstvenim metodama i postupcima, te osobito kao jasno definirano i/ili institucionalizirano (inter)disciplinarno polje, počela se oblikovati tek u 20. stoljeću. Prvi pregled istraživanja u Hrvatskoj, proveden prije petnaest godina (2010.), označio je geografiju i povijest kao dvije temeljne discipline u istraživanjima povijesti okoliša u Hrvatskoj. Budući da se ovaj rad usredotočuje na istraživanja povijesti okoliša u Hrvatskoj, pristup se temelji isključivo na objavljenim radovima istraživača iz institucija u Hrvatskoj i unutar dviju temeljnih disciplina: geografije i povijesti. Iako nesumnjivo postoji vrijedna povijesnookolišna/ekohistorijska literatura o prostoru Hrvatske koju su napisali autori iz inozemnih institucija ili istraživači iz drugih disciplina, zbog njezine interdisciplinarne naravi, ona ovdje nije uzeta u razmatranje. Rad će ukazati na razvoj ideja, pristupa i istraživanja povijesti okoliša u Hrvatskoj. Njezina se institucionalizacija može smjestiti na sam početak 21. stoljeća, uvođenjem sveučilišnih kolegija Povijest okoliša (u okviru studija geografije) i Ekohistorija (u okviru studija povijesti), osnivanjem Društva za hrvatsku ekonomsku povijest i ekohistoriju i njegova interdisciplinarnog časopisa, te organiziranjem znanstvenih skupova na različitim razinama, uključujući 9. konferenciju Europskog društva za povijest okoliša (ESEH) 2017. godine. U članku se, kroz perspektive geografije i povijesti, prikazuju razvojni putovi, glavne tematske i metodološke odrednice te istraživačke teme povijesti okoliša od početaka znanstveno utemeljenih istraživanja u Hrvatskoj, kao i neke buduće perspektive.

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