

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SLOVENE RESEARCH ON THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTS AND FOREST LANDSCAPES IN THE AREA OF MODERN-DAY SLOVENIA AND THEIR MANAGEMENT IN FOREST SCIENCE PUBLICATIONS

PREGLED SLOVENSКИH ISTRAŽIVANJA O POVIJESNOM RAZVOJU ŠUMA I ŠUMSKIH KRAJOLIKA NA PODRUČJU DANAŠNJE SLOVENIJE TE NJIHOVOM UPRAVLJANJU U PUBLIKACIJAMA IZ PODRUČJA ŠUMARSKE ZNANOSTI

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Summary

*The present paper provides insight into the historical research in Slovenian forest science and practice. All issues of the most well-known Slovenian forest journal, *Gozdarski vestnik*, monographs, and selected books were analysed regarding their contents and classified into six categories: legislation; general forest management and socio-economic conditions; silviculture and forest management; natural, cultural, technical heritage and wood use; organization of forestry; and miscellanea. The largest volume of contributions belonged to the description of forest management and socio-economic conditions, silviculture and forest management, and the organisation of forestry. Although incomplete, legislation also deserves significant attention as a selection of relevant forest ordinances, once valid in the territories of what is now Slovenia, were translated to Slovene.*

Key words: Slovenia, history, management, forest, forestry, *Gozdarski vestnik*

Ključne riječi: Slovenija, povijest, upravljanje, šuma, šumarstvo, *Gozdarski vestnik*

BACKGROUNDS

Throughout history, forestlands have contributed to making human life easier or even possible. At first, they served as shelters and food sources; considerably later, they offered places to establish permanent settlements, and finally, they provided a variety of commodities, including hunt/game, wood, cattle bedding, protection from natural hazards, and many others (Granda, 1985; Mihelič, 1985; Smole, 1985; Umek, 1985; Birks & Tinner, 2016). These commodities are presently termed ‘forest functions’ and ‘forest ecosystem services’ (Anko, 1995; Haines-Young & Potschin-Young, 2018). Despite the awareness that a great portion of past processes and events linked with forestlands cannot be uncovered due to the mists of time, the history of forests and forestry has been investigated by many practitioners and researchers. The main driver of these efforts is a better understanding of the environmental, social, and economic history and a broadening knowledge of past processes in the forestlands in order to manage them better in the future (Peterken, 1996; Muigg & Tegel, 2021). The significance of this field also has been recognised by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). IUFRO’s Unit 9.03.00 and its seven subunits conduct this type of research (IUFRO, 2023).

Slovenian research in this field has a short history and is fragmented. The situation can be more easily understood by taking into account the fact that early forestry, operating in the area of modern-day Slovenia, lacked native forest engineers and researchers and that the first professional forestry journal, named *Gozdarski vestnik* (hereafter GV; Eng.: Slovenian Journal of Forestry), only began to be published in 1938. Before that, the only journal that irregularly published diverse forestry themes in the Slovene language were *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (Eng.: Agricultural and Artisan News, published between 1843 and 1902; Šivic, 1953; Perko, 2013).

Early contributions addressing the history of forests and forestry appeared in GV after WWII. Since then, historical themes have been published more often and can be found either in the specific Forest History section or others. To the present day, the contributions have mostly dealt with the forest, forestry, and hunting regulation, forest management practices, notable foresters, and forestland and woodland development. Apart from scarce articles dealing with forest ecology (e.g., water and nutrient cycling), little attention has been paid to environmental issues. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the publishing house of Gozdarska založba (Eng.: Forestry Press), which publishes GV, also publishes books with forest history topics.

Only in the mid-1980s did forest and forestry history research become more vibrant. In 1985, the first multidisciplinary conference, whose outcome was the proceedings named 'Pomen zgodovinske perspektive v gozdarstvu' (Eng.: The Significance of Historical Perspective in forestry), containing 27 contributions (Anko, 1985), was organised. The conference also announced the launch of a new historical series, 'Viri za zgodovino gozda in gozdarstva' (hereafter VZGG; Eng.: Sources for the history of forests and forestry) that publishes the Slovenian translations of old original forest documents, such as forest ordinances, forest management plans, and similar volumes.

This paper aims to present a brief overview of the contributions that addressed the history of forests and forestry, present the most relevant themes, and provide suggestions for future work.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The working approach was based on a review of widely known sources of forest and forestry history, specifically the volumes of GV, VZGG, and selected books, published by Gozdarska založba or others (**Table 1**). For the purpose of this paper, the contributions dealing with the period prior to 1941 were considered to be historic. Consequently, all the contributions of the GV with suitable content and published between 1938 and 1940 were automatically included in this study. The rest of them underwent the following methodological procedure:

- Creation of a preliminary rather subjective classification of addressed themes. This classification aided in selecting the contributions on the basis of the similarity of their titles with the main classification themes.
- Subjective assessment of the suitability of every contribution based on reading its abstract or some of its paragraphs. In addition to the content suitability, other features, such as the paper structure, level of detail, length, and literature cited, were considered.
- Correction of the preliminary classification key along with the review. The final classification key encompassed six major groups (themes) and 23 subgroups (**Table 2**). The themes were compared with the forest classification system.
- Final classification of the contributions.

Notably, selecting the contributions and classifying them was not methodologically perfect. Firstly, determining which contribution was historic and which was not was highly subjective. Secondly, many of the contributions covered more than one theme. Finally, to avoid duplication, they were subjectively classified by considering their main emphasis.

Table 1: *More important features of used sources*

	Source type	Publishing operations	Frequency
1	Gozdarski vestnik (GV)	Continuously between 1938–1940, temporarily ceased between 1941–1945, and continuously from 1946 onward.	Monthly
2	Viri za zgodovino gozda in gozdarstva (VZGG)	From 1985 onward	Occasional
3	Gozdarska založba	From 2002 onward	Occasional
4	University, others		Occasional

Table 2: *Classification of contributions*

	Group	Subgroup
1	Legislation	11 Description of a specific act
		12 Description of legislation and policy
2	General forest management and socio-economic conditions	21 Dealing with the territory of SLO
		22 Dealing with the region or larger area within Slovenia
		23 Dealing with the forests of landlords and large landowners or specific forest districts
		31 Forest plans, management concepts
3	Silviculture, forest management	32 Forest restoration/afforestation, forest harvesting
		33 Forest restoration in Karst
		34 Disturbances in forests
		35 Management of non-wood commodities and services
		36 Water and forest
		41 Natural heritage
4	Natural, cultural, technical heritage and wood use	42 Technical heritage
		43 Knowledge about forests (books)
		44 Industrial wood use
		45 Instructions, good practices, recommendations
		51 Forestry
5	Organisation of forestry	52 Education (schools)
		53 Associations, forest workers
		54 Business companies
		55 Notable foresters, engineers
		56 Administration
6	Miscellanea	60 Unclassified

RESULTS

From 1938 to 2021, the three source types listed in Table 1 brought to light 174 historic contributions; 159 of them were either scientific/professional papers, short papers, pieces of information or just selected documents, and 15 of them were monographs and books, respectively. The majority of the monographs were Slovene translations of the forest ordinances.

Among the themes, the ‘general description of forest management’ (Group 2) was addressed most frequently (**Figure 1**). The second and third were ‘the organisation of forestry’ (Group 5) and ‘silviculture and forest management’ (Group 3). The remaining three groups (i.e., legislation; natural, cultural and technical heritage; and miscellanea) represented less than a third of all publications (altogether 54). Moreover, the contributions differed significantly in their scientific/professional quality (especially if analysed using present-day criteria).

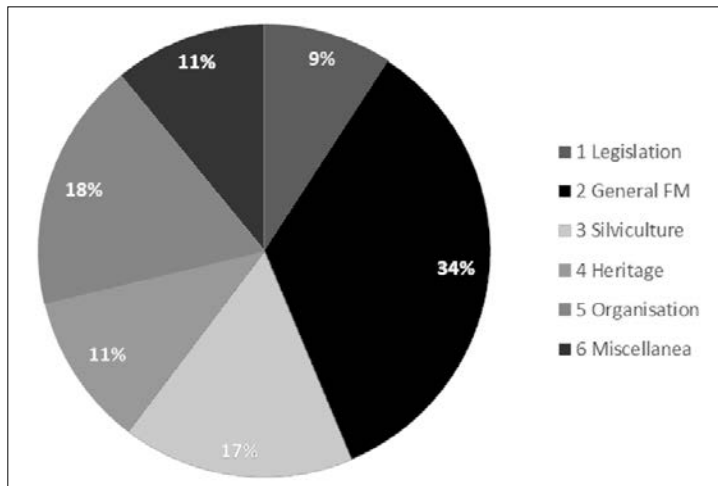


Figure 1: No. of contributions dealing with forest management (see Table 2 for detailed group names)

As regards the frequency of occurrence, nearly all of the themes were occurring throughout the analysed period without any significant pattern. However, an exception was detected for legislation (Group 1, around 1983) and was due to intense translating of the original forest ordinances.

The most notable volumes of legislation (No. 1) undoubtedly represented the translations of six forest ordinances that had been once valid in parts of the territory of modern-day Slovenia and wider (Table 3). Apart from the legislation point of view, most of these ordinances not only brought the

regulations about the rights, duties, responsibilities, and management regimes (e.g., restrictions, permissions) but also much information on forest ecology, good management practices, afforestation, and suitable harvesting approaches. In other words, because forest management manuals for forest practitioners were extremely scarce at that time, the ordinances were the only source of knowledge on forests and forestry.

Unlike the monographs, the contents of the papers of this group were heterogeneous, providing insights into the forest acts in the territory of Trieste, largely in Habsburg times (from 1382 on, in this publication until 1550) (Prebevšek, 1991), different statutory acts, and feudal rent-rolls (Urbare) in selected seigneuries.

The group of general forest management and socio-economic conditions (No. 2) was the largest by volume. Its first subgroup encompassed papers on the state and forest management in the state forests. These papers provided insight for the first time into the development of state forestlands (area, growing stock, conditions, afforestation, sawmills) between the two world wars and on the management concepts used (Anonymus, 1938; Šivic, 1938; Šušteršič, 1939). The next group of papers, referring to different periods, enabled a better understanding of forest regulation in the Republic of Venice (Kiauta, 1957) and the regions of Habsburg Istria (Šavelj, 1957), Austrian Littoral (Mikuletič, 1957), Lower Carniolia (Valenčič, 1965, 1966), Inner Carniolia (Dolgan, 1966), and lower Styria (Orožen, 1969). Quite detailed descriptions of general forest conditions were provided for the forest of Trnovski gozd (Mikuletič, 1953a; Mikuletič, 1953b), Idrija (Mikuletič, 1957; Lampe, 2007), Celje (Orožen, 1969), Bohor (Jenko, 1958), and Snežnik (Kindler, 1955). From the environmental point of view, the paper on the evolution of the

Table 3: Basic data of forest ordinances

Title	Year	Translator / Editor
The Ortenburg forest ordinance of 1406	1985	Janko, A. / Anko, B.
The Theresian forest ordinance for Carniola of 1771	1985	Smole, M./ Anko, B.
Styrian interim forest ordinance of 1539	1987	Smole, M./ Anko, B.
Bamberg forest ordinances of 1584 for the Kanal valley and the surroundings of Bleiberg	1987	Mihelič, D. / Anko, B.
Forest ordinance for Lower Austria 1813	1989	Smole, M. / Anko, B.
Forest ordinance for Istria, Friuli, and the Karst 1541	1989	Janko, A. / Anko, B.
Forest ordinance for Illyrian provinces 1810	1989	Smole, M. / Anko, B.

riparian forest strips along the Ljubljanica River between the town of Vrhnika and the city of Ljubljana was especially interesting. According to the navigation ordinances, the woodlands and forest strips were purposely established by planting to protect boats from strong winds (Golia, 1950). Quite numerous contributions brought much pertinent information about particular forest complexes, such as Pokljuka (Budkovič, 2018¹), Jelovica (Valant, 2018), the region of Idrija (Mikuletič, 1957; Lampe, 2007), Predmeja (Papež, 2007), Kolovec (Kočar, 1993) and the urban forests of Udin boršt (Jurhar, 1971) near the city of Kranj, Tivoli in Ljubljana (Šivic, 1956), Panovec near Nova Gorica (Mikuletič, 1989), and Pečovnik at Celje (Orožen, 1980).

Of considerable importance for silviculture and forest management (group No. 3) were considered the monographs on the management planning in the forest of Trnovski gozd (Perko et al., 2014) and in the large forest estate of Kočevje (Bončina 2002). While the former plan was designed by the forestry pioneers Franz Flameck and Johann Karl Lesseck, the latter was created by Leopold Hufnagl. He, along with his contemporaries Adolphe Gurnaud, Henry Edouard Biolley (Biolley & Favre, 1980) and some others, contributed to the development and application of the control method, which has been since then used in sustainable forest management. Forest restoration and afforestation were also important themes. Numerous papers provided pertinent information on the successful afforestation of the Karst region, the suitability of forest tree species, and applied afforestation techniques (Beltram, 1948; Perko, 2018). A thorough overview of the problems in the Karst and the efforts made to its afforestation was provided by Perko (2016).

Group No. 4 encompassed the contributions of different sorts of heritage (natural, technical, cultural). The technological and cultural heritage deserves the most attention. The papers enlightened the development of the charcoal industry, water-driven sawmills, cable cranes, and ironworks and described different sorts of wood used in specific areas (Juvan, 1972a; Sgerm, 1986; Prah, 2009; Cimperšek, 2014). They also provided information about some investors and their families (e.g., the Zois and the Ruard family) that came to the then Carniolian province to run forest and forestry businesses (Juvan, 1972 b, c).

The group of forest organisations (No. 5) included papers about famous foresters, forest school establishments, forest associations, and different organisations. A good overview of the notable foresters that had worked in the territory of modern-day Slovenia and contributed significantly to its forest science and practice was provided by Šivic between 1960 and 1963 in many short articles (e.g., Šivic, 1960). Among the famous foresters, the work of Joseph Ressel deserves the greatest attention; it was well presented and contained many details (Murko, 1953; Avčín, 1957; Sevnik, 1957). However, from today's perspective, Ressel undoubtedly did not get sufficient credit for his accomplishments while still alive. Also meaningful were the papers dealing with the school establishment and participation of foresters in forest associations. One of the papers, for instance, informs a reader that foresters from Slovenia in 1852 participated in the Forest Society of the Austrian Alpine Provinces, which united the foresters from Carniolia, Carinthia, Salzburg, Tyrol, Styria, and Gradisca. The tasks of the society were much similar to today's and were about forest law enforcement, sustainable forest development, and other important forestry issues (Jurhar, 1984).

Group No. 6 collected papers with miscellaneous topics that were difficult to allocate to any group.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A rather brief overview of the historical documents and themes published within the last 85 years shows that significant efforts were made by many to provide insights into the past events and processes linked to forestlands and forestry. However, notwithstanding the accomplishments, it seems that the

¹ Publications dealing with forest history have not been published only by forestry science, as clearly demonstrated by the following example: Smolej, 1984, for instance, deals with forests on Pokljuka in a history journal. More on forest history in Slovenian history publications see in the next volume of *Economic- and Ecohistory*.

work in the field slowed down some time ago and that it presently develops unsystematically. To improve the current conditions, the following steps would perhaps be meaningful:

The history of forestlands and forestry is full of processes and events that deserve research attention. Judging what is historically important and what is not is unproductive, and finances are limited; a closer collaboration of historians and foresters is needed. Perhaps the first task should be to exchange opinions about the previous forestry accomplishments and to make a joint list of future tasks. From the forest science point of view, much closer collaboration would be needed in the transliteration and translation of old documents, as well as in presenting the findings about forest and forestry history in the context of economic, social, and political history, as these contexts are needed to understand historical sources fully.

- The history of forest and forestry is currently underfinanced or not financed at all. Within the last ten or twenty years, only a few research projects that partially touched the historical aspects were financed in Slovenia. Worth mentioning is the fact that many historical contributions brought to light in the previous decade were prepared voluntarily.
- Next to searching for documents, more efforts should be expended on comparative legislation studies that help better understand the evolution of sustainable forest management over time.
- The evolution of forest complexes in present-day Slovenia remains largely unknown. New interdisciplinary partnerships for uncovering the history of forest complexes, and engaging forest science, palynology, and history, for instance, are needed and should be intensified.
- An overview of forest history research by historians in Slovenia will be provided in the general overview of environmental history developments in Slovenia in the next volume of *Economic- and Ecohistory*.

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