

Introduction by the President of the ESEH

In this issue of the ESEH Notepad, historian Hrvoje Petrić of Zagreb University gives us a tour d'horizon of the development of environmental history in Croatia from its beginnings in the late 1970s to the vast rise in popularity it has enjoyed over the last few years. Currently about twenty scholars, historians as well as historical geographers, are involved in environmental history research in Croatia. Petrić traces the historiography of this field, describes various research projects and discusses the institutional evolution of environmental history, which is often called ecohistory or *ekohistorija* in Croatia.

In 2011, at the biannual meeting of the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) meeting in Turku, Finland, Hrvoje Petrić was elected the first regional representative of the ESEH in Croatia. Petrić is known to many of us as the editor of a peer-reviewed journal titled *Ekonomska i ekohistorija* that publishes articles not only in Croatian but also in English and German on topics in environmental and economic history. Hrvoje Petrić is currently on the board of the Croatian Historical Society and he is also Chairman of the Croatian Society for Economic and Environmental History.

CHRISTOF MAUCH

Environmental History in Croatian Historiography

Environmental history in Croatia has its origins in historical geography, although historians did not begin to take an interest in environmental topics specifically until the end of the 20th century. The pioneering article of environmental history in Croatia was written by historian Miroslav Bertoša in Italian in 1978¹ and focused primarily on the social and economic history of the Istria Peninsula in the early modern age. While individual historians such as medical historian Mirko Dražen Grmek, economic historians connected with the journal *Acta historico-oeconomica*, and a few contemporary historians connected with the OTIVM society and their journal of the same title have sporadically focused on environmental topics, the institutional beginnings of environmental history can be traced back to the establishment of an international research project, Triplex Confinium, founded in 1996 by Drago Roksandić and Karl Kaser. This was an institutional collaboration between the Institute for Croatian History at Zagreb University, the Abteilung für Südosteuropäische Geschichte at the Universität Graz in Austria and the Institute on Southeastern Europe at the Central European

1. Miroslav Bertoša, 'L'iniziativa ecologica di un rettore veneto dell'Istria negli anni 1623–1624', *Atti del Centro di Ricerche Storiche*, 9 (1978–1979): 489–502.

University Budapest, Hungary. The project focused on the border straddling the Ottoman Empire, the Venetian Republic and the Habsburg Monarchy in the early modern age. Some of the research objectives relate to environmental history, and this has helped scholars develop a more complex and historical understanding of Croatian ecology as a part of Central European and Mediterranean landscapes.²

The project leaders, in collaboration with Zadar University, organized “Ecohistory of the Triplex Confinium (c. 1500–1800),” an international symposium held on 3–7 May 2000. It was the very first symposium of its kind not only in Croatia but in southeastern Europe as a whole. This event represented the formal “founding” of ecohistory/environmental history in Croatian historiography. Most of the symposium papers were published in the proceedings *Triplex Confinium (1500–1800): Ecohistory*.³ The same project collaborated with the Koprivnica Historical Society to organize an international symposium held 13–15 November 2003 which was dedicated to environmental history of the region historically known as Podravina (Drava river basin). Most scientific papers from this symposium were published in 2011 in volumes of conference proceedings titled “Ecohistory of Drava River,” a joint publishing effort by the Triplex Confinium project, the Koprivnica Historical Society, the Meridijani publishing company and the Croatian Economic and Ecohistory Society (editors Dragutin Feletar, Hrvoje Petrić and Drago Roksandić).

The Triplex Confinium project’s activities on environmental history extend to schools and history teachers. In Karlovac, a seminar for history teachers was held on 26–28 August, 2004. Triplex Confinium researchers and Croatia’s Education institute jointly organized a seminar titled “Ecohistory and Local History,” in which they conveyed rich experiences from workshops and field research to a receptive audience. Later, in 2007, new initiatives followed: a new research project – “Triplex Confinium: Croatian River, Multiple Borders” (run by Nataša Štefanec) – was established as an environmental history project; however, due to lack of financing, its focus later shifted to demographic history in the early modern age.⁴

In the meantime, Zagreb University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and its History Department established “Ecohistory,” which had been first taught in 2003 by Drago Roksandić and Hrvoje Petrić, as a regular course/subject in the curriculum. Among the mandatory courses for graduate students is “Environmental History,” led by Hrvoje Petrić. In addition, Boris Olujić, another professor from Zagreb University’s History Department, has been actively

2. Drago Roksandić, ‘The Triplex Confinium. International Research Project: Objectives, Approaches and Methods, Microhistory of the Triplex Confinium’. International Project Conference Papers (Budapest, March 21–22, 1997), Institute on Southeastern Europe, Central European University, Budapest 1988, 7–21.

3. Published in Split and Zagreb in 2003 by Književni krug publisher and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zagreb University, and edited by Drago Roksandić, Ivan Mimica, Nataša Štefanec and Vinka Glunčić-Bužančić.

4. <http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/pov/zavod/demografija/>

researching the environmental history of the karst regions and giving lectures on it for a number of years. The Geography Department of Zagreb University also offers a course in environmental history.

Over time, history and geography students graduating from Zagreb University have added to the research in ecohistory through their graduate, postgraduate and doctoral papers, as well as research papers and new studies by established scholars. Also, the doctoral students studying the early modern age at Zagreb University attend the course “Cartographic sources of Croatian lands: an ecohistory approach,” taught by Dubravka Mlinarić.

In 2005, the Croatian Economic History and Environmental History Society was established in the Zagreb University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, with a primary interest in environmental history.⁵ In 2005 in collaboration with Meridijani publishing, the Triplex Confinium International Research Project and the Croatian National Board for Historic Sciences (its economic history panel), the society launched the first volume of the journal *Economic- and Ecohistory (Ekonomska i ekohistorija)*. The first four volumes were edited by Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević and Hrvoje Petrić; subsequent issues have been edited by Drago Roksandić and Hrvoje Petrić. The first issue was not strictly topical, but most topics were from environmental history. The second was thematically related to diseases, economy and the environment; the third to people and rivers; the fourth to environmental history of forests; the fifth on people and hunting from an ecohistorical perspective; the sixth on environmental history of mountains and hills; the seventh on Drava river ecohistory. Besides publishing the journal, the Society has organized several conferences and symposia on environmental history. The last international conference was held on 1–2 June, 2012, in Koprivnica, themed “Environmental History of the Regional Park Mura-Drava.”

Other initiatives by Croatian historians include the “Dies historiae” conference which investigated the history of waters. It was held on 10 December, 2008, at Zagreb University’s Department of Croatian Studies, and its proceedings were published in 2011. Boris Olujić edited a volume on karst in history. The proceedings of another symposium were published with the title *Settlements and communications in the context of contacts between the Adriatic coast and its hinterland in prehistory and Ancient history* (FF Press, Zagreb 2008). Yet another closely related scientific symposium took place: the 40th *Mogersdorf, an international symposium on the cultural heritage of Slovenia, Austria, Hungary and Croatia*, was held on 6–9 July 2010, in Celje, Slovenia and dedicated to the theme “Humans and the Environment in Pannonia from the 18th to 20th century.” Croatian researchers of environmental history, Mirela Altić and Hrvoje Petrić, contributed their papers alongside researchers from Slovenia, Hungary and Austria. Proceedings from this symposium are expected soon.

5. <https://sites.google.com/site/ekoekohist/>

In addition to the journal *Economic- and Ecohistory* (*Ekonomska i ekohistorija*), there are also other publications that publish articles and papers on environmental history on a regular basis. One particularly worth mentioning is a multidisciplinary journal *Podravina* (established in 2002 in Koprivnica by the Koprivnica Historical Society and Meridijani publishing, with Dragutin Feletar and Hrvoje Petrić as editors). Recently, environmental history-related studies can be found in monographs on microregions (i.e. individual towns, places, municipalities or parishes) of northwestern Croatia, for example Donja Dubrava (2007), Đelekovec (2008), Molve (2010).

A major contribution to the development of environmental history in Croatian historiography was the book titled *European Environment History*, co-written by Swiss Francophone environmental historians Robert Delort and François Walter. The book was originally published as *Histoire de l'environnement européen* (published by Presse Universitaire de France, 2001). The Croatian translation, co-published by Barbat and Croatia's Ministry of Environmental Protection, was published the following year, in 2002, on the initiative of its editor Drago Roksandić. He also wrote an afterword, providing his own views on environmental history, Croatian historiography and emerging new themes of ecohistory. In Croatia, environmental history was also influenced by the author André Blanc and his book *Western Croatia: Studies of Human Geography* (French original *La Croatie occidentale. Etude de géographie humaine*), published by Prosvjeta Zagreb in 2003 and several other translations of foreign books (especially books written by Jared Diamond, Conrad Totman, Stephen Pyne, and Ian G. Simmons). A Croatian translation of an important book, *What is Environmental History?* by J. Donald Hughes, was published in 2011 by Disput publishing. The Croatian edition had an afterword by its editor, Borna Fürst-Bjeliš, co-written with Marin Cvitanović and Hrvoje Petrić: "What is environmental history in Croatia?" with an extensive selection of Croatian bibliography of environmental history publications between 1990 and 2011, listing a total of 187 articles and papers.

Today, we have some twenty historians and historical geographers who are engaged in writing environmental history in some form or another. I will not attempt here to provide a complete list of all aspects in environmental history, nor can I name all names dealing with this matter. Interested readers are referred to the bibliography mentioned previously. However, the majority of the work is related to material history, directed at research into changes in the biological and physical environment, often using approaches similar to economic history. The main researchers dealing with relations between people and the karst environment are Boris Olujić and Ivo Lučić; mountains are focus of researchers like Drago Roksandić, Marko Šarić, Slaven Bertoša, and Marin Knezović. A number of historians research rivers and waters in general: Mira Kolar, Zlata Živaković Kerže, Drago Roksandić, Slaven Bertoša, Dubravka Mlinarić, Marin Knezović, and Hrvoje Petrić, among others.

Other examples include historical geographers Borna Fuerst-Bjeliš, Josip Faričić, Mirela Altić, and Dragutin Feletar. Various historians are studying relations between diseases in the environment using an environmental history approach, including specialists like Dubravka Mlinarić, Tatjana Buklijaš and Gordana Ravančić. Historians researching animals, game, and hunting in an environmental history context are Mira Kolar, Mladen Tomorad and others. Climate change is a specialty of researchers like Krešimir Kužić, Miroslav Bertoša and Hrvoje Petrić; environmental aspects of famine have been studied by Mira Kolar, Miroslav Bertoša, Dubravka Mlinarić, and Viktorija Košak, among others; forest fires and environmental aspects of fire have been researched by Miroslav Bertoša and Hrvoje Petrić. Forest history has always been of great interest to historians. However, their main focus has always been economic history. Ecohistorical elements in forest research appear in the work of Nataša Štefanec, Mira Kolar, Marin Knezović, Miroslav and Slaven Bertoše. Finally, the history of soil has been researched by Dubravka Mlinarić and Hrvoje Petrić.

Cultural/intellectual studies of the environment have mainly focused on environmental perception. A great number of the papers in *Triplex Confinium (1500–1800): Ecohistory* looked at cultural perception of the environment. In the field of history, Zrinka Blažević exhibited a special affinity for this topic. Historians such as Dubravka Mlinarić, Drago Roksandić, Nenad Moačanin, and Miroslav Bertoša have dealt with some aspects of the political history of the environment, focusing on governmental regulation, official political measures regarding the environment and their actual environmental impact.

Several other aspects of environmental history research are worth mentioning also. Tomislav Markus, the only Croatian historian to investigate global environmental history themes, particularly historic aspects of deep ecology, published two books and numerous papers before his untimely death in 2010. Finally, Drago Roksandić, Tomislav Markus and Hrvoje Petrić have written papers on the methodology of environmental history. The vast majority of the research described was written in the last decade, thus making environmental history one of the fastest-growing fields of research in Croatian historiography. Only time will tell whether this trend continues or not.

HRVOJE PETRIĆ

