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## Preface

*...It is holy truth that for advances in agriculture it is not enough to have a diligent hand only, but knowledge and tuition... because soil as the source of all reaches is a mass of minerals which did not know by itself to adapt to all the needs of mankind. Soil needs a wise guidance... so that all efforts bear fruits and benefit...*

*From Preface of "Zemljoznanstvo" by Mijo Kišpatić 1877*

From its start in the second half of the nineteenth century, soil science in Croatia has a long tradition. Because it began within the framework of agriculture and forestry, for a long time the focus of research was on soil fertility as the dominant soil property due to its function in the production of organic matter, including food, feed, fiber, timber and (more recently) biofuel, in forest and agroecosystems.

In Croatia the forestry profession is dominated by the so-called "Zagreb forest school", among the first of its kind in Europe, studying "non-productive"—so-called "public good"—functions of forest and the influence of the silvi-ecosystem on other spheres—atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere, or terrestrial and semiterrestrial ecosystems. The development of an integrated holistic approach to sustainable development and spectacular advances in soil science and soil chemistry, particularly in regard to analytical methods and laboratory equipment for soil survey, made possible critical evaluation of the very complex impact of soil as well as other components of the agroecosystem on other ecosystems and the environment, especially the biosphere. This integrated holistic approach undoubtedly claims that soil management should be equal in importance to life management. With this knowledge in mind, the radical reform of European higher education known as the "Bologna process" has resulted in a changing of traditional names of large and prominent European universities of agricultural and forest science in Vienna, Prague and other European centers into "Universities (Studies) of Life Sciences". What a pity, as these terms, when translated into the Croatian language, give an inappropriate name.

Croatian soils have been explored, presented in soil maps, and described in regional monographs, but a single monograph on Croatian soil has not been published until now. Therefore, after becoming an independent state, there was a logical need to present Croatia's soil resources, with adequate attention being paid to multifunctionality and "non-productive functions" of soil, which are of particular economic, social, and environmental importance. This monograph should perform this role and encourage the production of an optimal sustainable land (soil) management system for all agroecological conditions in Croatia.

Croatia is unique in that of all the states of Europe it is the first whose soil monograph will be published in a foreign language—in English. As this book will be published shortly before Croatia joins the European Union, its important role is to inform the professional public of this national Croatian resource. As with any other book only time will tell to what extent that intention will succeed. In this regard, any remarks on the text from readers of this monograph are welcome.

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