

THE UPLANDS

The Uplands of South Poland include the areas of very differentiated geological structure originating from Paleozoic and Mesozoic, forming nowadays exposed rocky ridges, or heavily eroded low mountains (up to ca. 600 m a.s.l.). The pre-Quaternary relief is filled in parts with a thick loess cover forming plateaus dissected by deep and steep gorges. During the Vistulian the uplands were subject to the activities of periglacial climate.

Belonging to two different geomorphic provinces — the eastern uplands to the Black-Sea Province, and the western uplands to the Silesian-Cracovian Province — the uplands are linked, from the geobotanical point of view, by some important common features. The most significant are the northern and north-eastern distribution limits of *Fagus sylvatica*, *Abies alba*, *Picea abies*, and partly also *Larix europea*, running along their northern margins. The relatively high altitudes occurring in individual parts of uplands enable many mountain plants to contribute to the vegetation of these areas. The exceptional in its character is the vegetation of the Holy Cross Mountains, with its altitudinal zonation, and rich fir, fir-beech and larch forests. The most characteristic plant communities common for uplands in general, are thermophilous shrub communities (e.g. *Corylo-Peucedanum cervariae*), and various xerothermic grasslands of steppe-like type belonging mostly to *Festuco-Brometea* class.

According to the subdivision assumed for the IGCP-158 B Project, the uplands include 5 regions:

1. P-h — the Silesia — Cracow Upland — the area of very differentiated landscapes, with exposed ridges of Jurassic limestone rocks and numerous gorges, occupied by wide variety of plant communities, often contrasting in character.
2. P-i — the Miechów Upland — the loess areas mostly, in places on gypsum bedrock, including the Nida Basin and the lowering of Staszów district with frequent and active karst phenomena.
3. P-j — the Holy Cross Mountains, mentioned above.
4. P-l — covering the Lublin Upland — this upland s. str. of mostly loess landscape, the ridge of low hills up to ca. 400 m a.s. l. called Roztocze Mts., and a small most western part of Western Wolhynia, with the richest steppe-like vegetation, belonging from the geobotanical point of view to the Pontic-Pannonian Province.
5. P-p — the Northern Marginal Uplands, of intermediate character between uplands and lowlands with the moraine landscape originating from the Warthe-stage preserved in many places, influenced to some extent by the atlantic climate in their western part; the marginal zone of beech, spruce and fir distribution.

Only two of those 5 regions are represented in this volume, what is partly connected with the scarcity of suitable sites, especially in the loess areas. The Lublin and Miechów Uplands are still the white spots on the map of paleoecologic studies.

The complementary sites in the Staszów karst region (P-29, Szczepanek 1970) and in the middle Prosna valley (P-13, Tobolski 1966) need dating and re-investigation.

REFERENCES

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