

VEGETATION HISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN LATE PLEISTOCENE  
SINCE THE LAST INTERGLACIAL

M. Járαι-Komlódi

Abstract

Main steps of the vegetation history of Hungary has been reconstructed for the period following the last interglacial till the Holocene, based primarily on Hungarian megafossils and palinological evidence, taking into consideration malacological finds as well.

The paper deals with the phase of the last 20.000 years which is scarce in finds and absolute chronological data; however, these scattered pieces of evidence has proved enough for a broad reconstruction as well as comparison with recent flora and vegetation.

We can do this by the help of excellent studies and hypotheses of great Hungarian botanists (Borbás, Rapaics, Soó, Zólyomi) already delineating the formation and development of the Hungarian flora, enriched by several details achieved in course of the palaeontological studies of the past few decades. In respect of the main theses, like the origin of the forested "puszta", the spreading of grasslands from the mountainous regions and the forestation in the Holocene, their statements proved to be correct even today.

During the European glaciation periods, the territory of Hungary was mainly covered by scarce periglacial vegetation of the loessy "puszta", accompanied by forested tundra of low-mountainous, subarctic character.

In the last interglacial, deciduous forests preferring warm climate were spread, while by the end of the interglacial, pine forests ruled the mid-mountain areas.

In one of the early interstadial phases of the Würm period (Brörup?), subarctic grooves of birch mixed with pine were dominant, with different species dominating at different parts of the country. In the lower lying areas, sub-alpine high-chor vegetation was dominant with flowering meadows rich in wormwood on the higher levels void of flood, grassy loess "puszta" lacking arboreal plants with heliophyton steppe vegetation.

In course of the periods of cooling lasting till the end of the Würm, first - by the Middle Würm - subarctic pinewoods and low bushes became dominant with elements of the tundra (*Lycopodium selago*, *Koenigia islandica*). After this, in the extremely dry and cold climate of the Upper Würm, the region became deforested again.

In the stadial phases of the Late Glacial, thin woods of pine and birch were spread with marshes populated by *Sphragnum*; in the oldest Dryas, mainly with cembra pine and larch, later with fir-tree.

In course of the Alleröd period, deciduous trees preferring warm climate (*Ulmus*, *Alia*, *Quercus*) were already mingled in the pine-birch forest of taiga type; this is the starting point of their role in the Holocene forestation process.