

## **GEOTOURIST POTENTIAL OF PODHALE AND THE LEVEL OF ITS CURRENT USE**

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### **Keywords:**

- geotourism,
- Podhale Flysch,
- cognitive tourism.

### **Abstract:**

The development of tourism both in terms of qualitative and quantitative causes the appearance of new trends in this service sector. One of them is observed for several years dynamic development of geotourism, which is classified as a type of cognitive tourism. There are more and more publications in this area, which are covering both the entire county and its particular regions. The aim of these works is an attempt to identify the most attractive geotourist positions. Based on literature and own field observations, it has been taken the attempt of geotourist valorisation of Podhale (in part which is build-up with Podhale Flysch) and the level of its use in practise. The results of the research show, that geotourist potential of this area is significant, what is evidenced, for example, by numerous outcrops of rock with visible faults and joints, land surface changed by landslides, the positions of the Quaternary calcareous tufa and thermal pools that exploit excellent geological conditions for economic purposes. Unfortunately, there is a problem of underestimating the geotourist values of this area. The reason for this situation may be the lack of popularization of knowledge about geology of that region. The second reason is probably the situation, that despite the fact that on the background of the whole Poland, Podhale geotourist potential is significant, but that region is surrounded by the regions even more attractive in this respect (Pieniny Mts, Tatra Mts). In this way Podhale geotouristic attractions are simply ignored. It is expressed the hope that the further development of that tourism sector will change that situation.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In connection with development of tourism both in terms quantitative (for example revenue from this sector to the national and regional budgets) and quality (for example the growing focus on cognition and education functions), there are new trends in tourism, which face up expectations of its customers and the organizers as well. A good example of this trend is the development of geotourism, which is defined as “conscious cognition abiotic earth heritage and contemporary elements of nature and those aspects of human activity, which directly is related to using of our planet”[3]. This is relatively new phenomenon in tourism: is enough to say that the first definition of geotourism in the world literature appears in 1995 (in Poland in 2004), and the first Polish textbook in this field has been released by P. Migoń only three years ago.

This does not change the fact, that this segment of services (mostly classified in division of the tourism to cognitive tourism) is dynamically developing in Poland. It is

evidenced by the appearing (since 2004) the academic journal „Geotourism” issued by the AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków, the establishment of first geopark in Poland (Muskau Arch - together with Germany) or the organization of many geotourist conferences (for example in Nowy Targ in 2015).

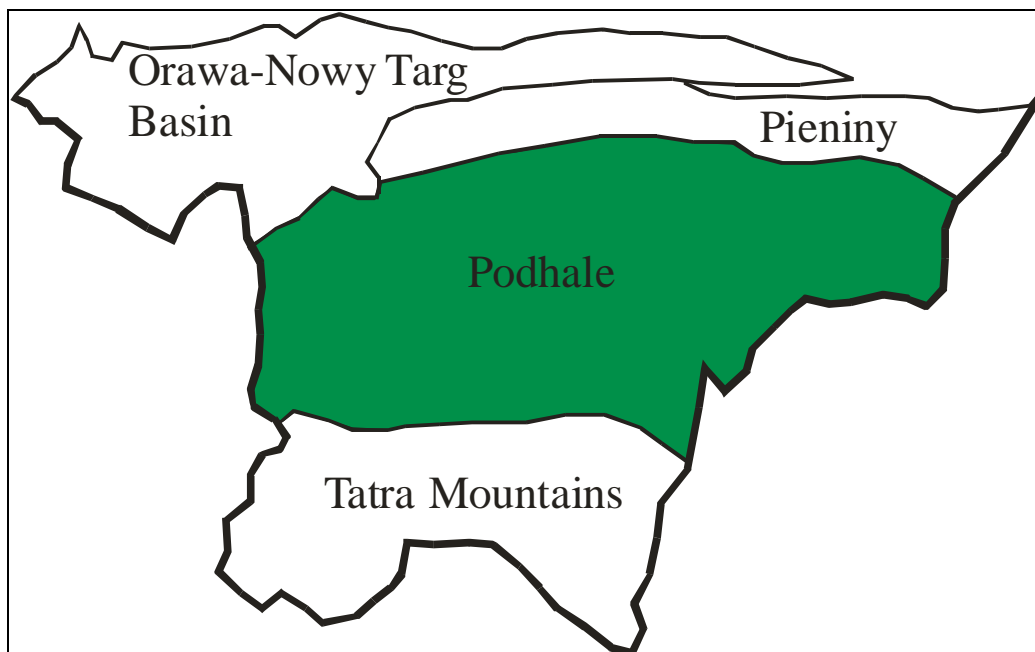
### AIM OF THE WORK, THE MATERIAL AND THE METHODOLOGY

First aim of the paper is paying attention on geotourist potential of Podhale. It was done by analysis of the thematic literature and own field observations. In next part of the paper focuses on the level of use of that potential for practical purposes. By this is meant geosites descriptions in basic elaborations of this subject, that is: „Geodiversity and geotouristic attractions of Małopolskie Voivodeship” (Polish title „Georóżnorodność i atrakcje geoturystyczne województwa małopolskiego”) published by COMPASS [4], „The catalogue of geotourist sites in Poland” [1] (available on the website of the Ministry of the Environment) and in the „The catalogue of geotourist sites in nature reserves and monuments” edited by T. Słomka [5]. On the base of numbers of geosites from Podhale in these publications and the degree of development of geotourist infrastructure in this region, an attempt was made to determine the level of exploitation of the geotourist potential in Podhale for practical purposes.

### AREA OF THE RESEARCH

The area of study covered Podhale region in part which is build-up of the Podhale Flysch (geologically it is an area of Podhale Basin). That region is located in the southern Poland, and is bounded from south by Tatra Mountains, from north by Pieniny and Orava-Nowy Targ Basin and from the east and west by the state border with Slovakia (fig. 1).

**Fig. 1.** Range of Podhale Flysch (green colour) and neighboring regions by Radwanek-Bąk [4]



### GOTOURIST POTENTIAL OF PODHALE

Despite the fact that some argue that Podhale is not too geotourist attractive [3] this region is full of objects that can be successfully used for this purpose (fig. 2). M. Krobicki and J. Golonka [2] among others belong to them sandstone with slump structures, joints (visible in many outcrops of rock) or thin tuffitic intercalations in grey shales (eg. in Małe Ciche

village). Great geotourist potential have also visible in the Białka valley faults (eg. within Bukowińska Grapa), scarps, being the effect of the fault zone created in that valley (scarps are well visible especially on the western slopes of the Czarna Góra Mount) or calcareous tufas. In addition, for this purpose can be developed objects from local watercourses, such as waterfalls in Kacwiński Stream or landforms associated with mass movements, such as talus fans or land surface changed by landslides.

There are also important thermal pools, built among others in Bukowina and Białka Tatrzańska, because they are an excellent example of using favorable geological conditions for economic purposes. So it seems that these geological structures, lanforms and economic objects indicate a comparatively high geotourist potential of Podhale.

**Fig. 2.** Selected geotourist attractions of Podhale: A: good visible joints in the stream valley; B: one of the scarp in the Białka valley on the western slopes of the Czarna Góra mount; C: thin tuffitic intercalations in grey shales (phot. A and C by M. Krobicki and J. Golonka [2], phot. B by D. Heldak)



### **THE LEVEL OF USING GEOTOURIST POTENTIAL OF PODHALE**

As mentioned, the level of using geotourist potential of Podhale determined mainly on the basis of the geosites descriptions from this area in selected studies of this topic.

The first of these publications, i.e. „Geodiversity and geotouristic attractions of Małopolskie Voivodeship” [4] describes a lot, it means 385 geosites of that voivodeship, of which 8 on the Podhale Flysch (Quaternary calcareous tufa in Gliczarów, Danuta Spring in Łapsze Wyżne, waterfall in Kacwiński Stream in Kacwin, landslides on the slopes of Ostysz Mount in Dzianisz, in Zakopane - Kotelnica, Bustryk (near Poronin) and in Bukowina Tatrzańska (by Karpenciny Street) and outcrop of rock in Zakopane-Chłabówka with sphaerosiderites accumulation in the lowers part of Zakopane Beds). This publication does not

include others interesting objects, such as tectonic structures visible in the Podhale Flysch (for example joints or faults).

Unfortunately, in „The catalogue of geotourist sites in Poland” (which include 100 most interesting objects of this type, including 17 from Małopolskie Voivodeship) [1] and in „The catalogue of geotourist sites in nature reserves and monuments” edited by T. Słomka [5], which describes 160 geosites in Poland (38 in Małopolskie Voivodeship), you will not find any geosite of Podhale Flysch. Although these studies are extremely valuable and well-prepared, the lack of objects within the Podhale Flysch seems to be a bit confusing.

In Podhale, geotourist infrastructures (geotourist trail, information boards) are still at the planning stage. This does not change the fact that by using scientific papers (especially mentioned „Geodiversity and geotouristic attractions of Małopolskie Voivodeship”) tourist on his own can, using the attached map and guide there, get to the places which interest him. Unfortunately, it is in the described geosites lack of information boards that have developed the short descriptions contained in the above-mentioned publication.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the fact that geotourism is almost a new trend in tourism, it is developing very rapidly. It is associated with both quantitative and qualitative changes in that service sector.

Geotourist potential of Podhale Flysch on a background of all regions in Poland is very high, what is evidenced by, among others, visible tectonic structures (like joints, faults, scarps connected with fault zones), interesting landforms (landslides, talus fans, waterfalls in watercourses) and thermal pools, which are great example of the use of geological conditions for economic purposes. Some of these geotourist attractions were included in the geotourist elaboration from Małopolskie Voivodeship [4]. Unfortunately, despite the fact that it is a geotourist attractive area in relation to the whole Poland, the presence in the neighborhood even more interesting in this regard Tatra Mts and Pieniny Mts causes, that Podhale, in part build-up from Podhale Flysch is simply ignored in geotourist studies of whole country. In this way the geotourist potential of that region is used in small range. Perhaps this is also related to insufficient dissemination of geological knowledge from that area.

It is hoped that the further development of geotourism and auxiliary sciences will change this situation.

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