

State-of-the-art overview of the Löss-Paleolithic of Poland

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In Poland, loess occurs in the southern part of the country in the highlands, on the northern foreland of the Sudetes and the Carpathians. Most of these sediments come from the time of the last glaciation - Vistulian. Thin covers of loess from the penultimate glaciation have been preserved in Upper Silesia. Only a few sites from the middle Paleolithic remain in the loess. Of particular importance are the sequences from Piekary and Kraków-Zwierzyniec in the upper Vistula river basin. The important loess sites from the Upper Paleolithic are Kraków-Spadzista. A layer of solifluction was found here. An important loess site with a long history of research is Góra Puławska, where the Aurignatian camp was recognized a hundred years ago.

The discoveries of the Mikokian knives (*Keilmessergruppen*) workshop in Upper Silesia in Pietraszryn are very important, as well as the other recent discovery of the Szeletian Culture in Lubotyń. They lie in thin, heavily reduced loess.

In the eastern part (Lesser Poland) loess creates several-meter profiles. New discoveries in this zone represent the cultural sequence from the transition from the middle to upper Paleolithic documented for Kraków-Książę Józef street. One of the recently positively verified Upper Paleolithic loess sites is Jaksice on the bank of the Vistula. This overview shows a large grouping of sites in and around Kraków. The evaluation of this phenomenon must be careful. In fact, the area around this city is covered with loess. But some specific factors influenced the concentration of the Middle and Upper Paleolithic settlements, both cave and loess open sites. Not only the presence of loess as a deposit documenting Paleolithic settlements is responsible for this concentration. Other factors include rich deposits of flints, numerous caves and exposed locations on the riverside hills, as well as the activity of a nearby university center, must be taken into consideration.