Floristic and Phytogeographic Aspects of Campania

Abstract

The vegetation of Campania can be divided into four belts from the sea level to the top of Appennines.

In the first belt or « Mediterranean belt » there are the pioneer communities of the coast which are of two kind : one can be found on the sandy shores while another colonizes the rocky coasts and the maritime cliffs. These kinds of vegetation, especially the first one, is at present quite completely vanished from Campanian coasts. The Mediterranean belt is characterized, up to 400-500 m of altitude, by evergreen sclerophyllous plant communities known as « maquis » or « macchia mediterranea ». The evergreen oak (*Quercus ilex* L.), myrtle (*Myrtus communis* L.), wild olive (*Olea europea* L. var. *sylvestris* Brot.) and many other shrubs are the more represented plants in this vegetation type. These communities are today less diffused than in past times because of the heavy anthropization of this area.

From 400-500 to about 800-1.000 m of altitude the so called « Sannitic belt » can be recognized. In this belt the vegetation is mainly represented by a mixed deciduous forest. The main tree species are *Ostrya carpinifolia* Scop., *Quercus pubescens* Willd., *Acer neapolitanum* Ten., *Fraxinus ornus* L., etc. Such a vegetation can be found on all the Campanian mountains. In this belt, where the forest has been exploited, the vegetation is represented by secondary herbaceous communities mainly composed by Gramineae and Leguminosae.

From about 1.000 to 1.700 m of altitude the vegetation is a beech forest which has been heavily exploited for timber and is often in bad conditions.

Above 1.700 m of altitude, on restricted areas on the top of the highest mountains, the vegetation belongs to the « belt of the high mediterranean mountains » which is characterized by herbaceous communities often poorly developed and affected by summer aridity.

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