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The "colchic belt" in Sicily

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to analyze with a critical approach the concept of "Fascia Colchica", in his original definition by Sandro Pignatti, that was strongly affected by confused and incomplete information about the real vegetation of Colchid. First were examined the differences between the forest type known as "laurisilva" and the "Colchic forest", then we focused on the structural, ecological and phytosociological features of Colchic Forest. The central part of the thesis consists of a comparison between this forest type and some Sicilian forest communities that originally were included in the definition of "Fascia Colchica". Moreover a particular plant community, known as hyperatlantic forest, was considered: it has a remarkable affinity with the forest of oak and holly of Madonie Mountains, that is considered the best example of "colchic type" forest in Sicily. Thanks to the observations resulting from this comparison, we propose a redefinition of "Fascia Colchica" with a particular reference to Sicily and in part to the rest of Italy.