



Erratic blocks in NW Poland - geological heritage, conservation and geotourism promotion

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Big glacial erratic blocks, transported between 20 ka and 14 ka BP from Scandinavia are still present in the fields and forest of the north-western part of Poland. They present mainly magmatic and metamorphic petrographic types. Among them the most important are indicator erratics, which point to a distinct source region in Sweden, Finland or within the Baltic Sea. The largest boulders, sometimes shrouded in legend, have been protected for ages as natural monuments. Others still wait for such an attention.

The largest erratic block in Poland ("Trigław") is located in a small town Tychowo (53°55'42"N 16°15'29"E) in the Middle Pomerania. It is a gneiss with no features pointing to a distinct Scandinavian provenance. Its measurements are: height 7,8 m (3,8 m above surface), length 13,7 m, width 9,3 m, volume around 520 m³, weight 1430 tons.

The biggest sedimentary boulder, sandstone ("Mszczonowski Głaz"), is located in a Zawada village (51°54'51,1"N 20°27'16,5"E) in the centre of Poland (beyond the scope of the presentation). Its measurements are: height 3 m, length 12 m, width 3 m, volume around 57 m³, weight 160 tons.

The presentation shows the biggest and most interesting Scandinavian boulders blocks from north-western part of Poland, their geological heritage and role, that they play in a local geotourism promotion.

Apart from their location in situ, the boulders are also available ex situ, i.e. in erratic gardens. These collections of rocks accompany seats of local nature museums or national parks offices. Also other usage of erratics (stony buildings and road/pavements, fences), known for ages, will be presented.

Erratic blocks are favorite destinations for tourists who follow geotouristic trails. The most valuable for a geotourism are these geosites, which are equipped in a board informing about the genesis and geologic value of an erratic. The simpler and more intelligible language, the bigger didactic and touristic value of a geosite.