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Alain Demoulin
Editor

Landscapes and Landforms of Belgium and Luxembourg

Springer
Landforms and landscapes vary enormously across the Earth, from high mountains to endless plains. At a smaller scale, nature often surprises us creating shapes which look improbable. Many physical landscapes are so immensely beautiful that they received the highest possible recognition—they hold the status of World Heritage Sites. Apart from often being immensely scenic, landscapes tell stories which not uncommonly can be traced back in time for tens of million years and include unique geological events such as meteorite impacts. In addition, many landscapes owe their appearance and harmony not solely to the natural forces. For centuries, and even millennia, they have been shaped by humans who have modified hillslopes, river courses, and coastlines, and erected structures which often blend with the natural landforms to form inseparable entities.

These landscapes are studied by geomorphology—‘the science of scenery’—a part of Earth Sciences that focuses on landforms, their assemblages, surface and subsurface processes that moulded them in the past and that change them today. To show the importance of geomorphology in understanding the landscape, and to present the beauty and diversity of the geomorphological sceneries across the world, we have launched a book series World Geomorphological Landscapes. It aims to be a scientific library of monographs that present and explain physical landscapes, focusing on both representative and uniquely spectacular examples. Each book will contain details on geomorphology of a particular country or a geographically coherent region. This volume presents the geomorphology of Belgium and Luxembourg—two adjacent European countries which may seem too small, monotonous and inconspicuous to afford a separate volume in the series. The authors show us that this is not the case. Quite to the contrary, we have an opportunity to learn that subdued lowland and upland terrains may have fascinating histories that go millions of years back in time. Belgium and Luxembourg host classic examples of incised ancient plateaus, deep weathering, picturesque sandstone formations, inherited periglacial landforms, spectacular karst and recent faulted escarpments due to intraplate tectonics. There is a lot to read about!

The World Geomorphological Landscapes series is produced under the scientific patronage of the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG)—a society that brings together geomorphologists from all around the world. The IAG was established in 1989 and is an independent scientific association affiliated with the International Geographical Union (IGU) and the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). Among its main aims are to promote geomorphology and to foster dissemination of geomorphological knowledge. I believe that this lavishly illustrated series, which keeps to the scientific rigour, is the most appropriate means to fulfil these aims and to serve the geoscientific community. To this end, my great thanks go to Prof. Alain Demoulin for adding this book to his busy agenda, successfully coordinating the large team of authors, and delivering such an exciting illustrated story to read and admire. I also acknowledge the excellent work of all individual authors who accepted to share their expert knowledge of their countries with the global geomorphological
community. On a more personal note, I was once privileged to visit some geomorphic landscapes of Belgium under the expert guidance of the late Prof. Albert Pissart. He was one of the great supporters of the IAG when the Association matured and would surely be pleased that his country is now so nicely presented within the IAG-endorsed book series.

Wroclaw, Poland                    Piotr Migoń
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