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# Another tile in the reconstruction of Mesolithic human occupation in the southern Alps: evidence from Comèlico, upper Piave river system (NE Italy)

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## Résumé

Highland seasonal occupation in the Alps during the Early-to-Middle Holocene is well documented by a rich evidence, although mostly represented by lithic scatters. Human exploration of this mountain range started during the Late Glacial period and developed importantly during the Early Holocene, boosted by the increase of temperatures and favorable climatic and environmental conditions. Probably, it was also enhanced by the general demographic growth and the need to widen the spectrum of resources seasonally available to human groups. The south-central and eastern Alps represent so far, the region with the most dense number of sites. Nonetheless, such evidence is rather inhomogeneous and while some areas appear densely and intensively exploited other are either avoid of evidence or characterized by a less consistent record. Whether this situation mirrors the real occupation of the region by Mesolithic groups or represents a research bias related to the differential preservation of the record and/or the intensity of the investigations remains open for debate. In this paper we would like to discuss this issue by presenting the evidence of the Comèlico area, in the upper Piave valley, located at the present political border between Italy and Austria. Survey investigations carried out between the 1990'ies and 2000's allowed to identify an interesting group of lithic scatters, so far unpublished, at altitudes between 1295 and 2475 m a.s.l. within a territory which was previously completely avoid of any evidence of prehistoric occupation. The methodology applied involved a techno-economic study of the lithic assemblages coupled to a spatial analysis at a territorial scale. Such methodology was aimed at investigating the chronologies of occupations, the settlement choices, and the provenance and itineraries covered by prehistoric human groups.

**Mots-Clés:** Reconstruction of Mesolithic, human occupation, southern Alps, Comèlico, upper Piave river system, Italy

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