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Mondeval de Sora: a high altitude Mesolithic campsite in the Italian Dolomites*

ABSTRACT

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Mondeval de Sora is a Mesolithic site located at 2100 metres above sea level in the Italian Dolomites. In this paper the geology and geomorphology of the area and the chronology and stratigraphy of the archaeological site are described. Particular attention is paid to the Castelnovian burial, and to the pollen studies carried out on it. There then follows a discussion of the nature of the prehistoric adaptation at this high altitude campsite and its role within a general settlement model for the Mesolithic in northern Italy. It is hypothesised that Mondeval de Sora may have been a summer meeting campsite where exchanges of various sorts took place.

Parole chiave: Mesolitico, Dolomiti, sepoltura.

Key words: Mesolithic, Dolomites, burial.

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Introduction

The site of Mondeval de Sora (S. Vito di Cadore - Belluno) was discovered in 1985 by Sig. Vittorino Cazzetta of the Associazione Culturale «Amici del Museo» of Selva di Cadore. Subsequent fieldwalking in the area revealed the presence of 15 sites in the valley between Col Duro and Forcella Giau, thirteen of which consist of only a few lithics found in places where the turf was missing. To date only site VF1 has been the object of systematic research, which began with an exploratory season in 1986 (GUERRESCHI, 1990).

The site is located under the overhang of a large erratic mass on a terrace at 2100 metres above sea level. The oldest occupation revealed by the excavations is Mesolithic in date (Sauvetterian, 7th millenium BP). There then followed another phase of habitation during the Castelnovian (6th millenium BP), to which period a burial is attributed. After a hiatus the site was reoccupied during the Copper Age, and after yet another hiatus there is a habitation dating to the Mediaeval period.

Detailed pollen studies have enabled us to reconstruct the vegetation in the area during the Mesolithic period, while the analysis of the faunal remains has given us an insight into the season of occupation of the site. The non-local provenance of the lithic raw materials used by the Mesolithic occupants of the site permits the movements of these groups in the mountain zone to be postulated, and consequently the role of Mondeval de Sora within a general settlement model for the north Italian Mesolithic can be reconstructed.

Geology and Geomorphology

The terrace of Mondeval de Sora, which lies at 2100 metres above sea level, is delimited to the north and east by the rock walls of Monte Formin, Spiz de Mondeval and Becco di Mezzodi, and to the south-east by the steep slopes of Corvo Alto. Towards the west it proceeds in the form of a wide valley in the direction of Forcella Giau Pass, while towards the south it steps down onto the valley of the Rio Cordon, an affluent of the Torrente Fiorentina. It is connected with the Valle del Boite across the Forcella Ambrizzola and Forcella Rossa.

The geological situation of the area, which profoundly influences its geomorphological aspect, is characterised by the outcrop of a sedimentary series which dates to the Middle-Upper Triassic. The following principal formations can be distinguished.

- basin deposits, constituted by alternating «pseudoflyschoids» of black tufaceous sandstones and shales, sometimes occurring with conglomerates (Wengen Group, Upper Ladinian) or with intercalations of carbonatic and marly strata in the upper part (San Cassiano Formation, Lower Carnian);
- carbonatic platform sediments (Dolomia Cassiana, Lower Carnian);
- marly limestones, marls and shales belonging to the Raibl Group, with a typical red or yellow colouring (Upper Carnian);
- densely stratified dolomites (Dolomia Principale, Norian).

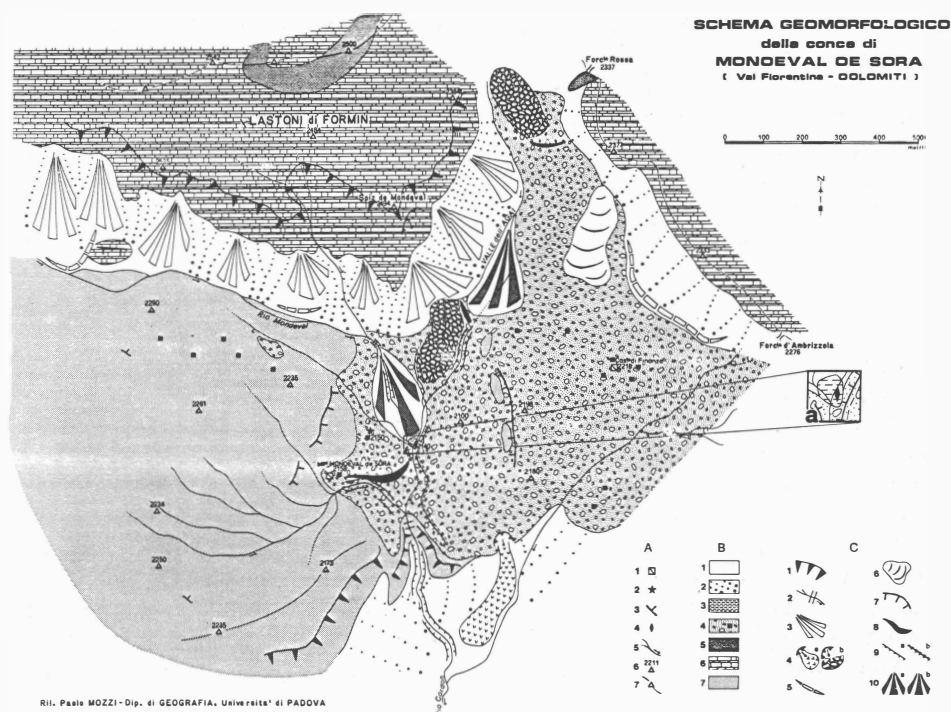


Fig. 1 - Geomorphology of the area.

KEY: A) 1. Building; 2. Archaeological site; 3. Direction and immersion of the strata; 4. Stratigraphic section; 5. Hydrographic network; 6. Altitudes; 7. Watersheds. B) Surface deposits and substrate rocks: 1. Alluvial deposits; 2. Gravitational deposits; 3. Lacustrine deposits; 4. Moraine deposits and concentrations of erratic masses (■); 5. Marly limestones; 6. Dolomitic rocks (Dolomia Cassiana, Lower Carnian, Dolomia Principale, Norian); 7. Tufaceous sandstones with conglomeratic and marly intercalations (Gruppo di Wengen, Upper Norian; Formazione di S.Cassiano, Lower Carnian). C) Morphological elements: 1. Edge of the escarpment influenced by the structure; 2. Valley step; 3. Detrital cone of prevalently gravitational origin; 4. Accumulation of landslide by flow (a) and fall (b) with detachment niche; 5. Detrital levee of the snowfield; 6. Rock glacier; 7. Edge of the escarpment of structural origin with evidence of glacial erosion; 8. Moraine bar; 9. Steep bank of torrential erosion, (a) active and (b) not active.

These rock formations are relatively unfolded and all emerge towards the north-east, thus forming a monoclinial structure which is disturbed only by two fracture systems oriented NNW-SSE and NW-SE.

Mondeval de Sora lies on the stratigraphic limit between the basin deposits and the Dolomia Cassiana: the former constitute the entire relief of the Corvo Alto, while the latter outcrops to form the steep southern walls of the Lastoni di Formin which thus assumes a typical «cuesta» form. The NNW-SSE fracture system appears to be responsible for the orientation of the Torrente Cordon valley and the bottom of the Mondeval valley, crossed by a Rio of the same name, where site VF1 is located.

This morphostructural situation was quite intensively affected by the action of glaciers which covered the entire dolomitic area during the Würm leaving only the highest

peaks uncovered. In this period, Mondeval de Sora was situated at the confluence of the glacier which descended from the Valle del Agal (Forcella Rossa) and that which occupied the cirque of Corvo Alto and the valley of the Forcella Giau. At the latter locality the glacier had a prevalently erosive action, as is demonstrated by the presence of «montonate rocks» and the scarcity of moraine deposits (which occur for the most part in the form of erratic masses), while in the Mondeval valley itself and in the above lying plateau of «Casotto della Finanza» the rocky substrate is covered by a moraine of about 10 metres in thickness.

The large erratic mass under whose overhang site VF1 is situated lies at the north-western margin of the valley, at the foot of the steep slope of tufaceous rock which abruptly interrupts the Forcella Giau valley. Its dolomitic nature, analogous to that of a large part of the moraine cover, indicates that it originated from the rock wall of the Lastoni di Formin.

The moraine deposits, which in some places assume the typical arched «bar» form, created a barrier at circa 2140 metres above sea level slightly above the step which joins Mondeval de Sora with the Cordon valley, and seem to have impeded the flow of water towards the valley for a certain period of time. This is documented by the presence of a series of clayey-silty lacustrine deposits containing sandy lenses, which outcrop towards the mountain side of the hypothetical sill of the lake on the left of the Rio Mondeval. This pack of sediments is a couple of metres thick and is truncated at the top by an erosional surface and then covered by alluvial material. In particular two channels with fine-grained tufaceous breccia are recognizable, covered by the still active alluvial fan of the Rio Mondeval which is prevalently constituted by dolomite. In the eastern most part of the series, which extends interruptedly for a dozen metres, the alluvial fan directly overlies the lacustrine deposits.

The presence of some dolomitic blocks in the clay at the base of the lacustrine series, which have been interpreted as «drop stones» left by «icebergs» coming from the front of the glacier, indicate that originally this lake was of a proglacial type. The lake would then have continued to exist in a periglacial type environment, receiving sedimentary transport from the various torrents. This material was prevalently carbonatic or silicoclastic, according to the nature of the rocks outcropping in the respective basins. The presence of circa one metre of red clay in the lacustrine series seems to be due to

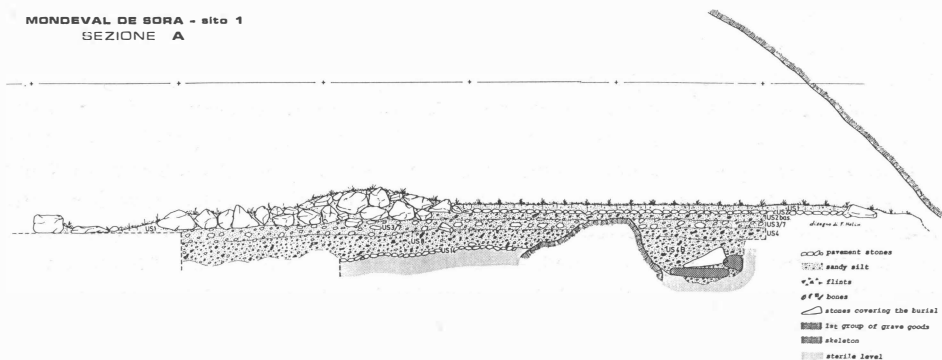


Fig. 2 - Transversal section.

the erosion and redeposition of clayey textured rocks belonging to the Raibl Group which outcrop abundantly in the Valle de l'Agal, even if it seems probable that there had been a transport of fine material from the colluviation of the surrounding moraines. In the meantime the sill was gradually lowered due to the erosive action carried out by the effluent, which finally caused the opening of the barrier. Presently the erosion has reached the rocky substrate, having cut the moraine cover for about 10 metres.

The analysis of the petrographic and pollen composition of samples taken from the lacustrine series is still in progress. From the preliminary results of these analyses the following observations can be made:

- the percentage of carbonatic clasts in the sand seems to increase from the bottom towards the top;
- carbonized pollen is present which, occurring as it does in a high altitude Alpine environment, could be indicative of anthropogenic activity. This creates some problems of correlation with the Late Glacial and early Postglacial age suggested by the sedimentological data presented above, since the practice of intensive burning is generally thought to have started only in the Neolithic, even though in the British Isles some analogous cases have been documented whereby high percentages of charcoal have been found in lacustrine sediments associated with Mesolithic occupations. However, a real contemporaneity between the period of the existence of the lake at Mondeval and the utilization of this area by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers has still to be proven, given the current lack of valid chronological indicators.

Stratigraphy and Chronology

The complex stratigraphic sequence revealed at Mondeval de Sora indicates that the site was occupied, with various lacunae, from the Mesolithic to the historic period. To the first phase of occupation, datable to the Sauveterrian, is attributed a pavement (US 14) which seems to form part of a shelter protected by the overhang of the boulder, and the anthropogenic level which covers it (US 8). The pavement occupies the southern part of the rockshelter and has been uncovered over an area measuring circa 6 m², although not all of its limits have yet been identified. For the most part it is constituted by slabs of tufa averaging 4 cm in length, which were lain down directly onto an archaeologically sterile soil to form a subhorizontal level over an apparently polylobate but irregular area. Flakes of dolomite were also found associated with the pavement, and have been interpreted as originating from a rockfall.

Directly above this structure there is a dark brown-black «soil» of a silty-clay composition (US 8) which is very rich in charcoal, with an abundance of small flakes of degraded and very friable dolomite in the upper part. This level is interpreted as evidence of an intense phase of occupation which was of a seasonal or maybe more long-term character. The top of a level containing dense concentrations of bone (US 31), which are prevalently split long bones, and with a matrix similar to US 8 was identified along the external limits of the pavement (US 14). Further excavations are needed to confirm the preliminary interpretation that this represents a dump outside the paved area. The chronological-cultural attribution of these levels to the Sauveterrian period is based on the typology of the associated lithic industry.

The site was next occupied during the Castelnovian period. As a result of levelling and erosion which took place at a later date, only a series of pits remains (US 5 and US 11), as well as some accumulations of charcoal at the top of US 8 (US 15 and US 16). The largest of these pits contained a burial and was filled with a silty-sandy sediment (US 4B) for which a series of radiocarbon dates was obtained from charcoal samples: 8380 ± 70 BP (R-1937); 7330 ± 59 BP (R-1939); 5875 ± 60 BP (R-1941); and 4160 ± 55 BP (R-1936).

A second pit (US 11), which has been attributed to the Castelnovian on the basis of the lithic industry and is interpreted as a hearth, has a subelliptical form and is oriented NW-SE. It presents two different levels of thickness, of 5 cm (NW side) and 30 cm (SE side) respectively. The upper part of its fill (US 20) is of a silty-clay composition, and is characterized by the presence of blocks of dolomite arranged in a subcircular fashion around burnt fragments of wood. In the lower part of its fill the concentrations of charcoal increase notably, while grains of cooked earth were found on the bottom of the pit. A second hearth (US 13), which was found next to US 11, has an ellipsoidal form and is oriented N-S, with blocks of dolomite which appear to have been placed there intentionally (US 22). The date of this second hearth is still uncertain, due to the scarcity of the lithic industry.

After the Castelnovian period there was a hiatus in the occupation of the site lasting for about a thousand years until the Copper Age. To this period is attributed an areally differentiated level (US 7) pertinent to a phase of occupation. Towards the internal part of the shelter this level is characterised by the presence of subcircular groups of blocks of degraded limestone and by concentrations of charcoal, among which the presence of a still intact hearth (US 3) was clearly recognizable. Along the limits of the maximum projection of the overhang, there is an arched arrangement of degraded dolomite with small localized concentrations of charcoal which may correspond to the remains of the post-holes of a structure. For US 3 the following radiocarbon dates were obtained from charcoal samples: 3160 ± 40 BP (R-1938) and 3010 ± 45 BP (R-1940).

Among the structures of Copper Age date there is also a deep pit (US 12) of elliptical form, oriented N-S, with two steps on the short side which give the aspect of a cylindrical chamber inside a larger pit. This is probably an oven, as fictile fragments were found inside it. The pit was filled with a silty-sandy sediment (US 21) which is extremely rich in charcoal, especially on the two steps. Finally two different levels of dolomitic blocks showing clear traces of heat were found, one in the upper part of the fill which presumably acted as a cover stone, and the second one lying directly on the bottom of the pit.

During the historic period the inhabitants of the site partially truncated the prehistoric levels by cutting into them, presumably in order to flatten the ground surface and increase the size of their habitation area. Attributed to the Mediaeval period is a tabular pavement surrounded by a dry stone wall (US 2). The pavement is subrectangular in form and is constituted by blocks of breccia and slabs of tufa, alongside a smaller percentage of small blocks of dolomite. The wall, on the other hand, was constructed with material of larger dimensions among which blocks of dolomite are predominant. Associated with this structure were lithics, as well as Mediaeval and modern pottery, bones and iron.

MONDEVAL DE SORA - sito 1

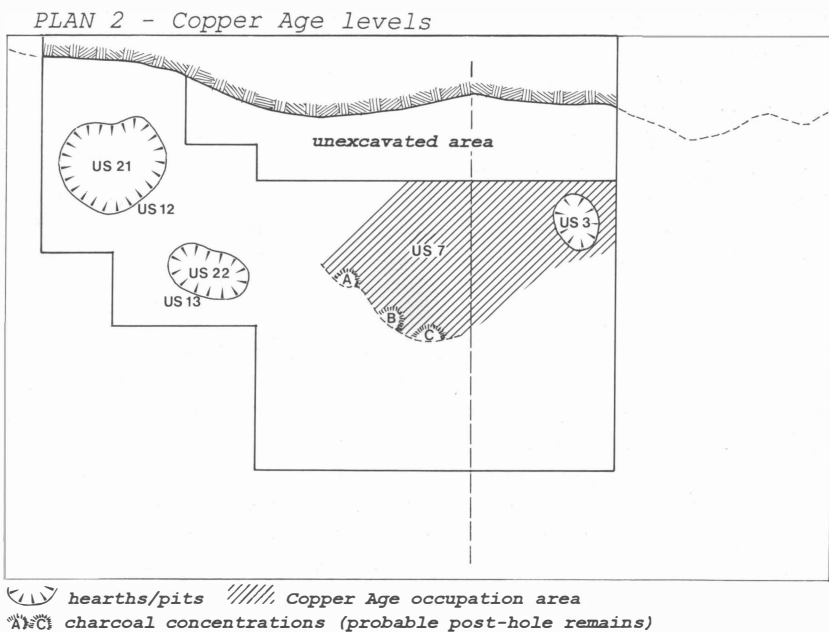
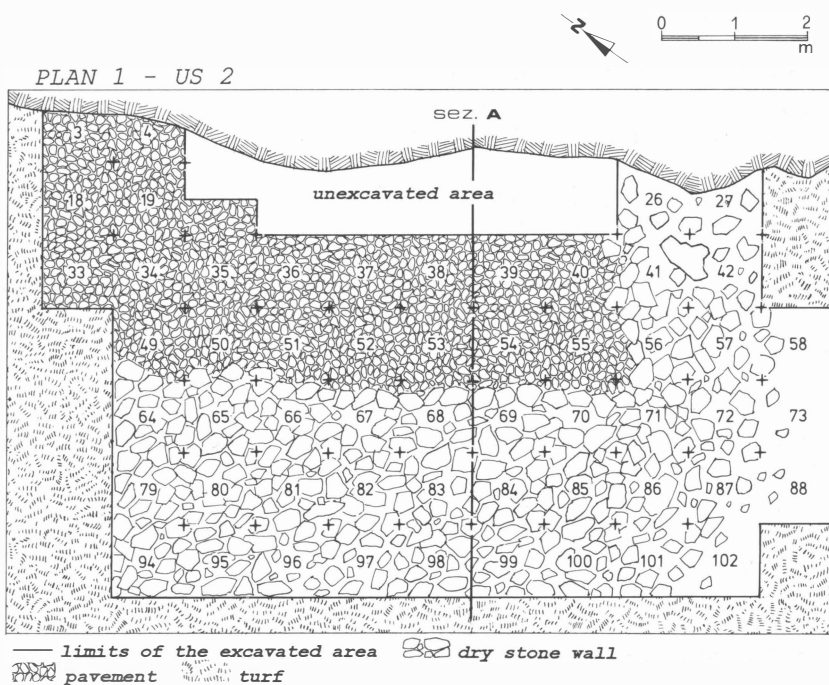


Fig. 3 - Plan 1: US 2; Plan 2: Copper Age levels.

MONDEVAL DE SORA - sito 1

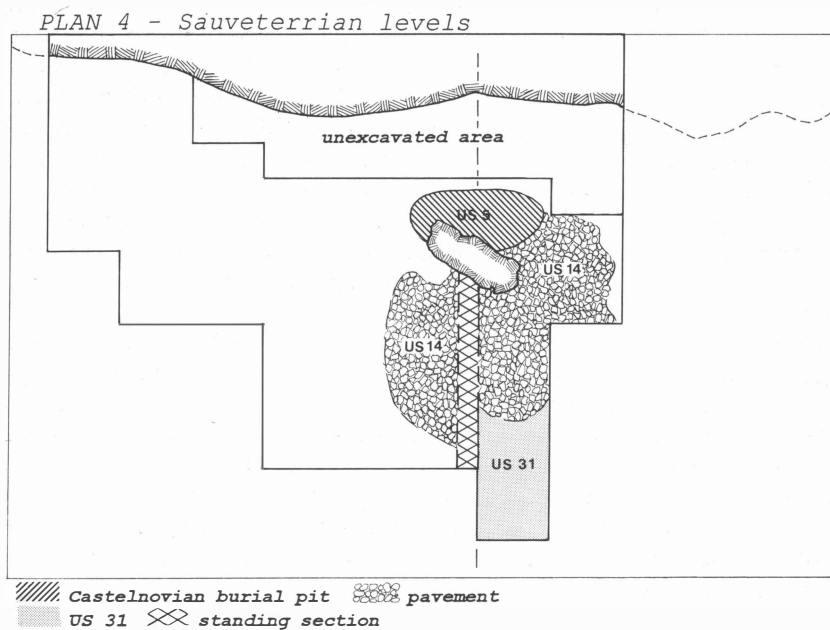
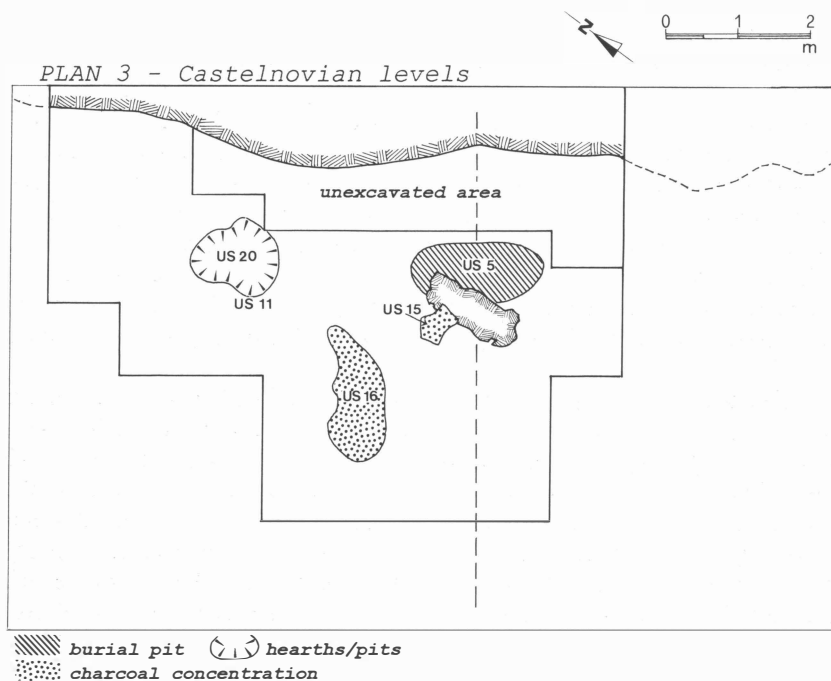


Fig. 4 - Plan 3: Castelnovian levels; Plan 4: Sauveterrian levels.

The Burial

The burial, which was found in 1987 and is currently on display at the Museo della Val Fiorentina at Selva di Cadore, appertains to the Castelnovian period (GERHARDINGER & GUERRESCHI, 1987). The skeleton is incredibly well preserved, lacking only the most fragile components of the facial part and some distal bones of the left foot. It is of a robust male, 167 cm tall and about 40 years of age. He had a head which was long but of average width and height, and a large and low face with a narrow pyramidal opening and low rectangular orbitals. The individual suffered from a poliostotic dysplasia (Rosy-Cajal disease) which belongs to a group of illnesses classified as pagetoid. This dysplasia has a slow evolution, and is nearly always casual and occurs in old age. The cephalic morphology and the high value of the transversal craniofacial index of this individual demonstrates the probable persistence of Cro-Magnon types in the Dolomites until circa 7000 years ago.

The skeleton lay in a supine position. The lower part of the body, from the pelvis downwards, was covered with stones which seem to have been intentionally selected on the basis of their lithology: only material of volcanic origin (Wengen strata) and calcareous marls (San Cassiano Formation) were chosen, even though an abundance of dolomite was locally available (Dürrestein Formation). The limbs were arranged in the normal position apart from the left hand which was placed vertically against the body with the fingers slightly bent, as if it had been clutching something at the time of the burial.

On the right side of the skeleton at the level of the hand there was a small patch of red ochre. On the left side, at the height of the forearm and the hand, three groups of artifacts were found. The first of these is composed of 33 objects, 21 of which are flint artifacts consisting of nine bladelet cores or pre-cores made on pebbles (n. 4), nodules (n. 2), and not determinable (n. 3); four denticulate blades cfr. Montbani; one marginal blade-scraper and one long endscraper, both of small dimensions; two unretouched bladelets; and four unretouched flakes, two of which can be refitted onto two of the cores. Apart from the lithic artifacts there are nine bone and antler artifacts: these consist of four deer antlers of which three show clear and different traces of use; a point made from a large bone diaphysis; a point made from deer antler with four longitudinal grooves; a harpoon with alternate tangs made from scraped deer antler; a large articular fragment of a deer left scapula which shows traces of use wear on the inside of the glenoid cavity; and a dorsal deer vertebra with use wear traces in the vertebral foramen. Finally there are three pieces of dolomite of different dimensions which have been substantially altered.

Lower down, at the height of the left hand, the other two groups of grave goods were found. These are very similar to one another, both being characterised by agglomerates of earth mixed with substances of organic origin (which will be described later) and other material. The first of these is composed of three elements: an earthy agglomerate (M35), a flint blade, and an exhausted core. The second one is composed of 11 elements: an earthy agglomerate (M42); a boar tusk with clear traces of use wear; four unretouched blades and bladelets; one broken blade; an obliquely truncated blade; a blade and a flake totally covered with the substance of the agglomerate; and a core which shows signs of having been used as a percussor.

Apart from these objects which were arranged along the sides of the skeleton, a blade made from yellow flint was placed above each shoulder and another below the

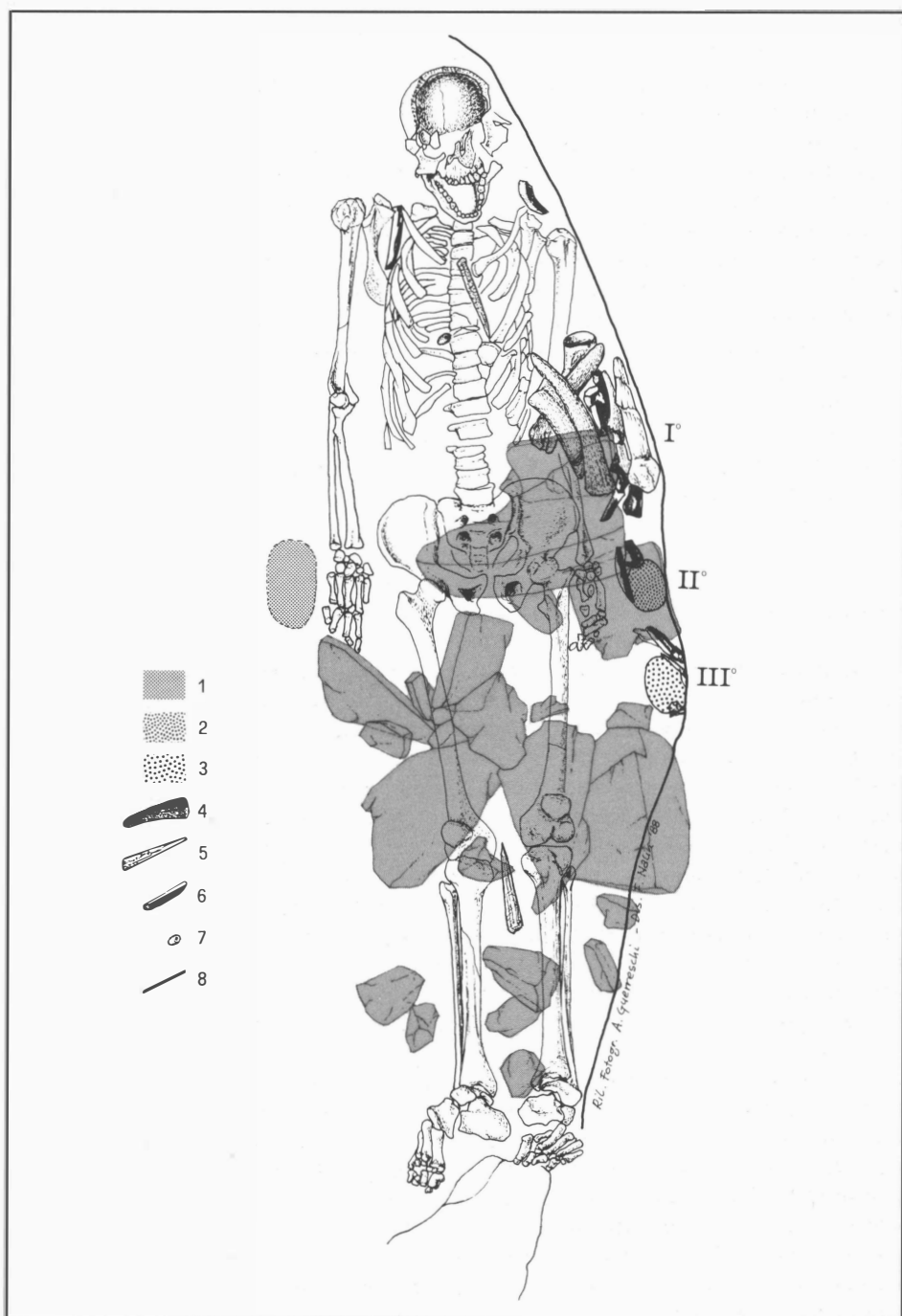


Fig. 5 - Diagram of the Castelnuovian burial: 1. Patch of ochre; 2. Resin; 3. Propolis; 4. Antler tools; 5. Bone tools; 6. Flints; 7. Perforated teeth; 8. Limits of the burial pit.

skull, and some pierced atrophic deer canines were placed under the left scapula and on the sternum. Finally, there are two bone points, one on the sternum and the other between the knees; the former is made from an elk telemetacarpal while the latter is made from a proximal deer metatarsal. There is a notable difference between the blades from the group of 33 artifacts and those found in the other two groups and on the shoulders and under the head. The former are of much smaller dimensions, with only one example as long as 75 mm, and they are not very regular in shape; indeed, one of them is a rejuvenation blade. The other blades are mainly larger than 100 mm in length and document a more refined flaking technique. It is also interesting to note that among the lithics found outside of the burial context no blades of such large dimensions have been found.

We believe that the material lying along the sides of the body may have originally been placed in containers (bags) and that it represents the personal equipment of the man; that the atrophic deer canines formed part of his clothing; and that the objects found on top of the body represent the remains of a funeral rite where the bone points served to close a skin burial shroud. According to this hypothesis, the flint blades placed above the shoulders and under the head are therefore the only «prestigious» objects that were buried with the individual.

Pollen studies

Given its exceptional importance, the burial provided the starting point for the study of the pollen at Mondeval de Sora. Particular attention was paid to two of the elements of the grave goods which accompanied the burial: the two black spherical agglomerates called M35 and M42. Macroscopic observation and touch suggested that they had a resinous component, but it was not possible to establish their true nature without more detailed investigations. A 10 gram sample was thus taken from each of them, and these were finely crumbled in a mortar and desegregated, first with benzol and then with absolute ethanol. This was followed by treatment in sodium carbonate in a hot bain-marie in order to eliminate at least part of the large quantity of charcoal that was present. During their time in the burial pit, the two agglomerates had incorporated some of the earth used for filling the pit, and this sediment was rich in hearth ashes which it had been impossible to remove before the desegregation of the samples. During the microscopic determination of the pollen samples it was however possible to separate the oxidised pollen granules, which are typical of the earth from a hearth, from those which were not oxidised. Among the latter, pollen of an undersized and morphologically abnormal pine was present, which is a common characteristic of resinous substances and therefore confirmed the existence in both samples of a resinous fraction which it had been possible to observe macroscopically only in M35. The results of the pollen analysis allow the following observations to be made:

- there is a quantitative but not a qualitative difference between the taxa present;
- there is a higher frequency of arboreal pollen in M35 with respect to M42, and in particular a higher presence of *Picea*, *Alnus*, *Corylus* and *Tilia*;
- the herbaceous elements are dominant in M42, and in both of the samples these are represented almost exclusively by pollen types of entomophilous transport while *Gramineae* are in fact scarce. In M42 the Compositae are particularly abundant (58%).

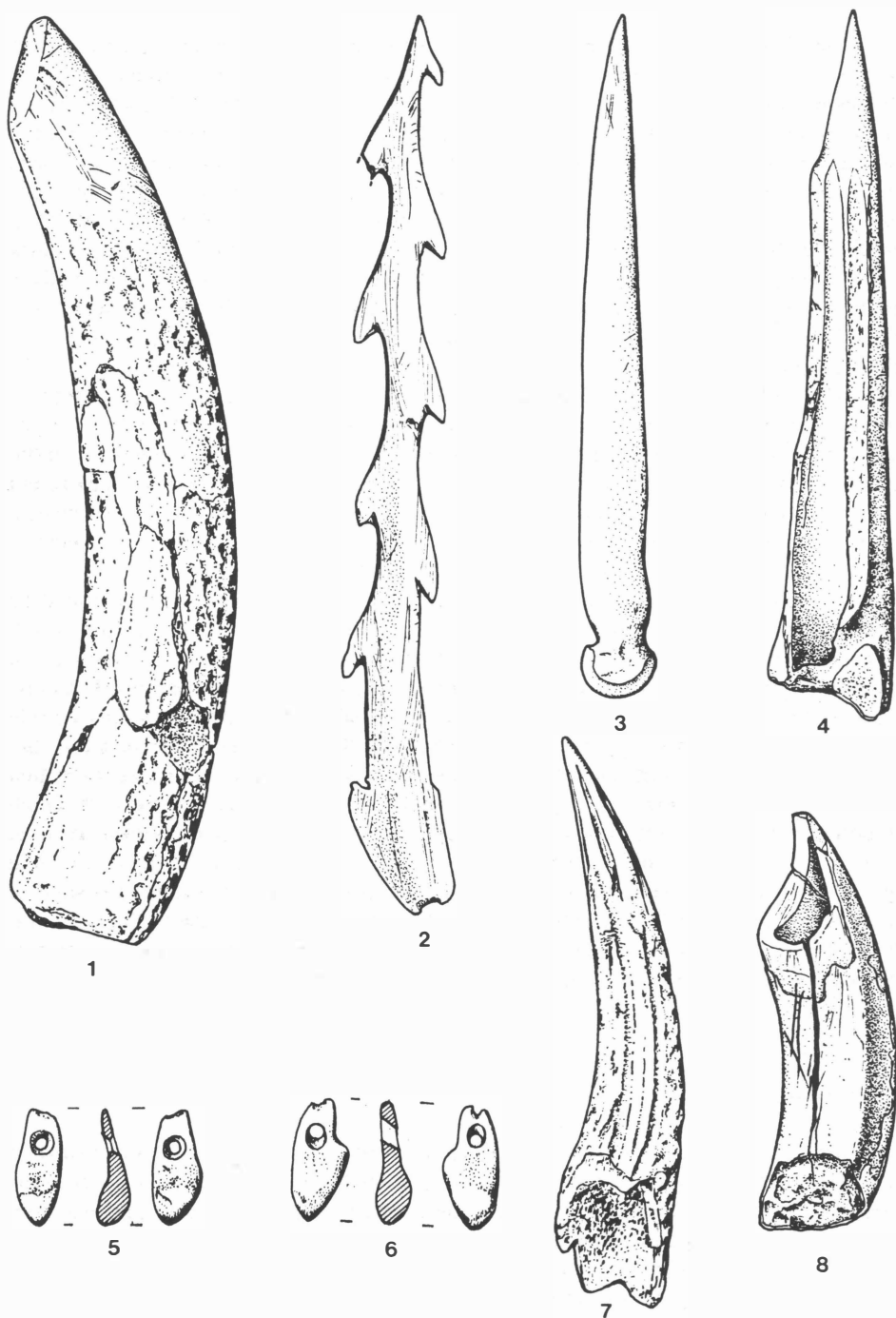


Fig. 6 - Elements of the grave goods: 1, 2 and 7. Antler tools from the 1st group; 8. Worked wild boar tooth from the 3rd group; 3 and 4. Bone points found on the sternum (3) and between the knees (4); 5 and 6. Atrophic perforated red deer canines (2/3 natural size; drawing by Giacometti).

The difference between the two pollen spectra suggests that a difference exists in the composition of the two agglomerates, a fact that had already been hinted at during the disintegration of the samples in the laboratory; M35 was harder and more compact, and thus needed a much longer time in order to react to the solvents. Higher percentages of arboreal pollen, and in particular of *Picea*, indicate that the resinous fraction is more abundant in M35 than in M42. M42 was found to be made of propolis, a substance produced by bees and constituted by resin, wax, volatile substances and pollen, while M35 contains only a small amount of propolis to which resin, collected directly from pines (*Pinus sylvestris-mugo*) and spruce (*Picea*), had been added. The presence of propolis is confirmed by the results of chemical analyses, carried out at the ITABC Research Centre of the C.N.R. in Rome, which recognized the presence of wax and rosin (Dr. Francaviglia, pers. comm).

Although one could make endless hypotheses with regard to their significance, it seems safe to assume that the two agglomerates would have had a different use, especially when one considers that they appertain to two separate groups of elements in the grave goods. This is not the first time that blocks of resinous material have been found in a burial context; a lump of material very similar to M42 but of smaller dimensions constituted one of the grave elements of the Epigravettian (12,000 BP) burial found at Riparo Villabruna in the Feltre Dolomites (CATTANI, 1991; 1992).

The study of the pollen from the soil which filled the burial pit has provided us with a picture of the vegetational makeup of the environment at the time of the burial. This pollen spectrum, which is very rich in herbs (91.5%), indicates an Alpine prairie in which *Compositae liguliflorae* were dominant (see also CATTANI, this volume). The presence of water related species such as *Menyanthes* and *Caltha*, as well as *Cyperaceae* and *Alnus*, lends further support to the hypothesis of the former existence of a lake basin. The silty-clayey sediments deposited by this lake were also subjected to pollen analyses, in the hope that they would furnish us with a continuous sequence with which to define more clearly the climatic-vegetational cycle of the site of Mondeval de Sora. However, this proved not to be possible since the sedimentary series contains large quantities of charcoal and pollen which are unidentifiable and in an advanced state of oxidization; this indicates the existence of vast fires and thus poses the problem of pollution of the lacustrine sediments by recent transport; consequently, nothing more precise can be said for the time being about the vegetation cover during the Mesolithic.

Discussion

Although the study of the faunal remains from Mondeval de Sora is still in progress, preliminary results show that both ibex (*Capra ibex*) and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) are present. Furthermore, some specimens are newborn which indicates that the site was occupied during the summer months. Indeed, the location and altitude of the site are such that occupation during the winter months, when there was thick snow, would have been impossible. The archaeological record of the Alpine region demonstrates that during the Final Epigravettian groups of hunters migrated into the mountain zone in the summer reaching altitudes above the tree-line (between 1000 and 1600 metres), while in the early Holocene the altitudes reached were as high as 2000 metres

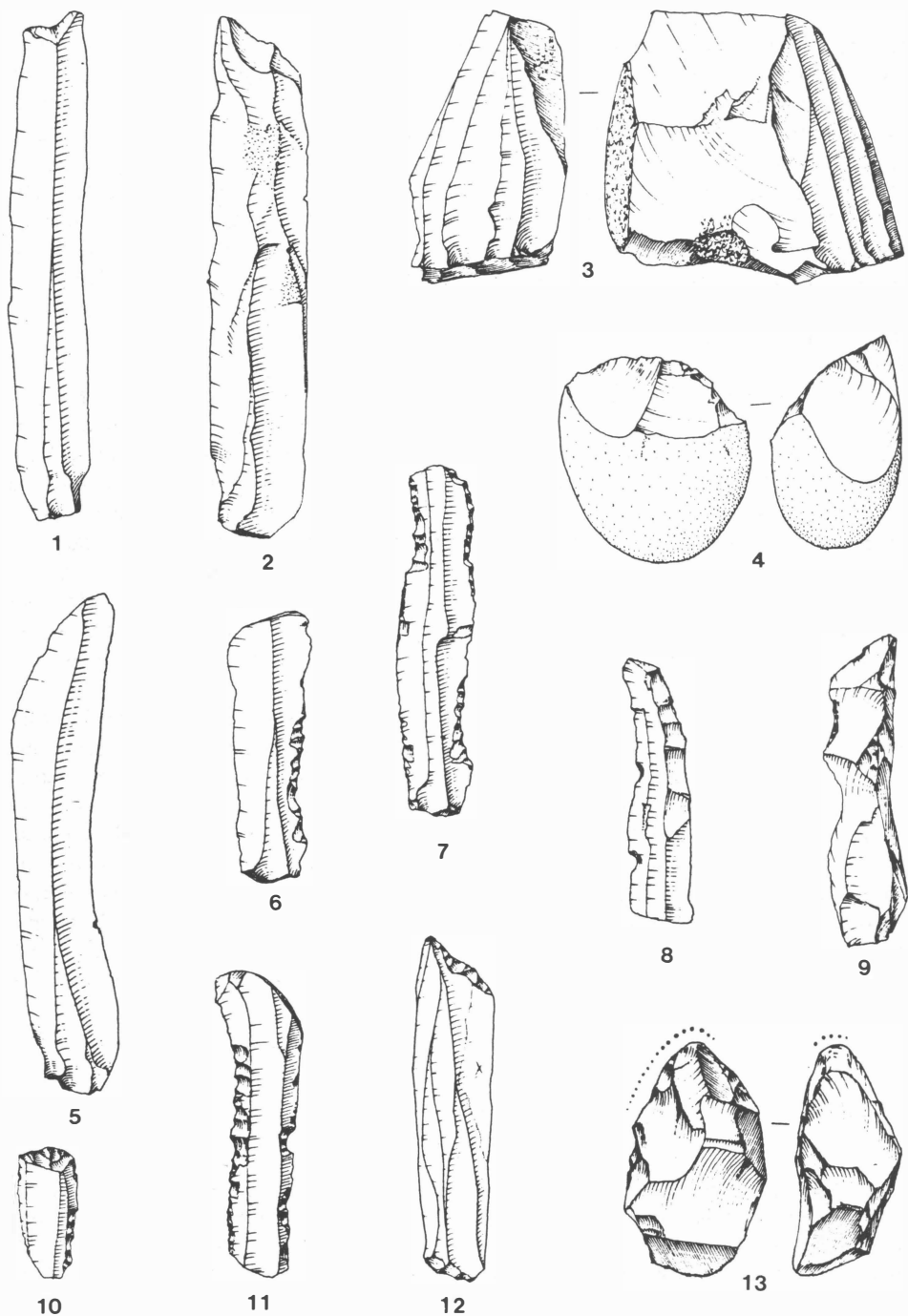


Fig. 7 - Elements of the grave goods: 1 and 5. Blades found above the shoulders, 6-11. Stone tools from the 1st group; 3 and 4. Cores from the 1st group; 2 and 13. Stone tools from the 2nd group; 12. Truncation from the 3rd group (2/3 natural size, drawing by G. Almerigogna).

(BROGLIO, 1984; GUERRESCHI, 1984). Therefore it seems likely that in the summer months groups of hunters followed herds of animals up to Mondeval de Sora, such as red deer which migrate seasonally into the highlands, and that at the same time they profited from the presence of those animals which lived permanently above the tree-line, such as ibex.

The animals used as a «source» for the bone and horn industry were red deer, elk and wild boar. Although red deer, which clearly dominates, would have been locally available, elk and wild boar on the other hand both inhabit swampy woodland zones in the lowlands. Therefore the tools made from these two species must have been imported. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the elk identified in one of the bone points in the burial seems to be the most recent in date that has been found so far in northern Italy.

As regards the lithic industry various lithological materials were used. Flint is clearly dominant, with both material of poor quality which was used rarely, and which comes from Upper Ladinian conglomerates outcropping on the slopes of Corvo Alto, and good quality flint coming both from river pebbles collected from the alluvium of the Piave river and from nodules probably coming from sedimentary strata of the Treviso Prealps. A certain number of artifacts, including tools and microliths, were made from the «green stone» of Livinallongo, a Ladinian ashstone of volcanic origin which outcrops in zones not very far from the site. Finally, some of the artifacts are made from hyaline quartz, of which the nearest source is the Aurine Alps, circa 60 km north as the crow flies (BROGLIO & LUNZ, 1984). The estimated provenance of this quartz is thus diametrically opposed to that of the flint.

It seems unlikely that the group which lived at Mondeval de Sora during the summer months, and which appear to have come from the Piave Valley-Treviso Prealps area, went as far as the Aurine Alps specifically in order to procure a lower quality raw material of which it had no need and which was obviously of so little importance as not to find traces of it in lowland and valley sites of winter occupation. One possible explanation could be that the quartz was imported to Mondeval by seasonal hunters who came to the site from areas where quartz was easily procured. The wide diffusion and homogeneity of the Mesolithic in northern Italy suggests that during this period a dense network of contacts existed between the various groups whereby «exchanges» of various sorts were carried out. This leads us to think that Mondeval de Sora may have been one of the sites used for this type of encounter.

SUMMARY

Preliminary results from the excavations at Mondeval de Sora suggest that during the Mesolithic period this high altitude site was occupied by seasonal groups of hunters following game herds into the mountains in the summer months. Furthermore, the presence of non-local lithic and bone tools suggests that the process of exchange formed an important part of the role of this site.

SOMMARIO

Il sito mesolitico di Mondeval de Sora è ubicato sulle Dolomiti bellunesi, a 2.100 mt di quota, sotto l'aggetto di un masso erratico dolomitico. La presenza di depositi di tipo limoso-argilloso e di un cordone morenico dalla tipica forma ad arco, documentano, per il passato, la presenza, nelle vicinanze del sito, di un lago di origine postglaciale, successivamente ricoperto da materiale alluvionale. La complessa serie stratigrafica indica che il sito venne occupato, seppure con numerose lacune, dal Mesolitico al periodo storico. Le evidenze di maggior rilievo riguardano la fase sauvetteriana del Mesolitico, alla quale si attribuisce una pavimentazione costituita con materiale locale (principalmente lastrine tufitiche), pertinente ad una struttura addossata alla parete rocciosa del masso, e a quella castelnoviana, dai cui livelli proviene la sepoltura, incredibilmente ben conservata, di un individuo di sesso maschile, accompagnata da corredo, composto da 61 elementi da un arpone di palco di cervo e due agglomerati sferici costituiti da terriccio misto a varie sostanze di origine organica (resine e propoli).

Benché gli studi relativi alla fauna siano ancora in corso, è possibile mettere in relazione alla presenza di animali come cervi, che durante la stagione estiva migrano verso quote elevate, e stambecchi, abitatori abituali delle zone situate al di sopra del limite del bosco, la frequentazione del sito di Mondeval di Sora da parte di popolazioni mesolitiche.

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