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# Mid-mountains and human being: resources and co-evolution. Shaping the landscape in Toledo Mountains (Central Spain) since Early Neolithic

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## Résumé

Since the very beginning, human being has used woodlands for supplies, building materials and firewood but also for hunting or apiculture, among other resources. This exploitation, along with climatic events over the environment through centuries has drawn a high valuable cultural landscape. Many studies have highlighted the main role that high-mountain spaces have played in the human necessities. Nevertheless, mid-mountains are still not well known as a survival space. These landscapes, not usually described as a single unit but comparing them with valleys or high-mountain spaces, show great resource diversity, heterogenic relief and a climatic mildness very useful for human interests, allowing management strategies such as terracing the slopes and a huge crop variety. Hence, they hosted broad human activities and represent a great scene for palaeoenvironmental research because the traces left by the co-evolution side to side of different cultures and the landscape through time are very present in mid-mountain areas even today. Thus, it is possible to point out the importance of fire as the most effective management tool, becoming essential on human history. It generates open areas used for human habitat, agriculture or grazing, which has deep consequences over the forest coverage, being deforestation or soil erosion the most relevant. This long-term interaction is present in Toledo Mountains. In the very heart of Iberian Peninsula, separating Tagus and Guadiana basins, this mid-mountain complex show an evident human management. El Perro peat bog is the southernmost sequence studied until today. The core, whose bottom is dated in 5500 *cal.* BC, shows an anthropic intervened environment but also the importance of climatic trends and their consequences over human communities and the landscape itself. Thus, this is a very interesting study site because shows the Toledo city influence and the role played by the population spread throughout this land crossed by main cattle roads and commercial routes. It is also possible to complete the study with the northern cores analysed and compare the results in order to find regional tendencies and different exploitation trends.

**Mots-Clés:** Palaeoenvironment, anthropogenic dynamics, fire, Toledo Mountains, Late Holocene

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