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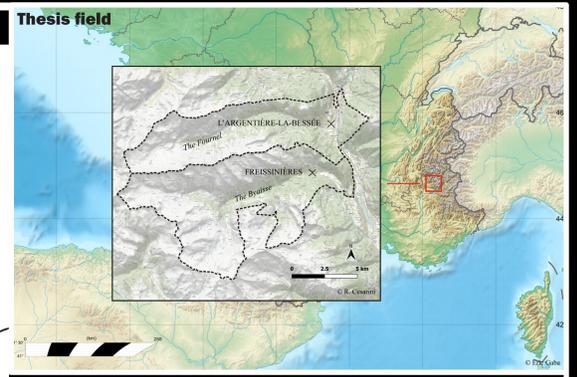
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# Settlements, economy and mobility in the Ecrins massif during the Middle Ages: first results of a doctoral research

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In the **Byaisse** and **Fournel valleys** (Freissinières and L'Argentière-la-Bessée, Hautes-Alpes), archaeological research was initiated in the 1990s, in parallel with paleoenvironmental studies. Although important work has been conducted on the aristocracy in the upper Durance Valley and the mining sectors at high altitudes, data remain incomplete on the occupation of mountains in the Middle Ages. This is why the chronological limits of this thesis are **between the 8th and 16th centuries**.

This work, conducted in close collaboration with the *Parc National des Écrins*, aims to **shed light on the socio-economic mechanisms of medieval populations in mountains**. In this way, it questions the link between **settlements, economic activities, their mobility** and that of humans, herds and products in the Middle Ages.

This mountain context offers a **plurality of sources** that require an appropriate method :

- **Archaeological approach** : is being developed to high-rise occupations to **document the different forms of settlement and to draw their evolution**. It is enriched by a series of **interviews with the local population** to learn more about **land use and management**. The **archaeological excavation of hamlets and agropastoral structures** is envisaged to **document the mobility of the settlement and to observe the relationships between the upper and lower part of the valley**. Surveys are currently being carried out to identify sites that would be interesting to excavate.
- **Experimental approach** : to **characterise the different structures** the classical sedimentary approach will be coupled with a **chemical analysis of soils**. All this will be used to establish a **functional typology** which, enriched by other corpora, will **encourage reflection on the way mountain pastures are occupied over a very long period of time and on a European scale**.
- **Text-based approach** : to **identify economic activities, define resource management and document the mobility of people, herds and products**, archival sources are used. All textual information is recorded in a relational database **to be able to model networks and different forms of mobility**. For the time being, the mobility of people and herds has been addressed through the study of Vaudoise heresies, summering, wintering and fairs.

Finally, this work will offer a **synthesis on the evolution of the medieval landscape based on the archaeological and historical data collected**, enriched by palaeoenvironmental and cartographic documentation covering the long period from the Middle Ages to the present day.