Romans in the Pyrenees, at 2,500 m? Summer excavation works in Meranges give us new evidence

Excavation works carried out this summer in the area of Meranges (between July 11 and 19) provide new data on the presence of Roman settlements in the high mountains.

A research team lead by the **GIAP** worked in two archaeological sites, located in the headwaters of the Duran and in Coll de Mulleres (Meranges, Cerdanya). By summer 2018, a first exploration campaign led to document 78 farming structures grouped in 13 archaeological sites, and to inventory three other more. The archaeological sites corresponded to farming units that showed different occupation stages. The results, very positive, motivated a new excavation campaign that allowed to carry out diagnostic surveys and to characterise the oldest phases of occupation.

As a result of 2019 excavation works we can know that the **Coll de Mulleres site dates from the Ibero-Roman era**, with a chronology between II B.C. and I B.C., looking forward the results of radiocarbon dating analysis. The structures discovered seem to correspond to long-term occupations initiated in the Neolithic and with continuity until modern times.

Contingut extret de la web de l'ICAC (www.icac.cat)



The archaeological site of Coll de Mulleres I, Meranges. At the foot of the Puigpedrós mountain (2,450 m). Photo: Josep M. Palet

Among different recovered materials (pottery, metals, crystals…), special mention should be made of the **presence of *sigillata ceramics***, a characteristic type of bright red Roman pottery. This finding is been very positively valued by the researchers and is a sign of the Roman influence in the Pyrenees.

The specific features of the site –with extraordinary territorial visibility– along with the documented archaeological materials suggest its **importance as a surveillance spot of the territory**, in addition to its livestock function.

The excavation campaign belongs to the research project «Cultural Mountain Landscapes Archaeology in the headwaters of Ter and Segre (Ripollès-Cerdanya)», led by **Josep Maria Palet** and **Lídia Colominas**, financed by the Culture Department of the Catalan Government (Quadrennial Research Projects Program).

All the work team were ICAC members: **Josep Maria Palet** (acting director of the ICAC and leading investigator at the research group GIAP), **Lídia Colominas** (postdoctoral researcher), **Abel Gallego** and **Jesús Martínez** (PhD candidates), **Katie Tardio** (PhD Fulbright Research Fellowship), and **Mariona Montes** and **Daniel Benítez** (students of the Master on Classical Archaeology).

Contingut extret de la web de l'ICAC (www.icac.cat)