GIAP plans new archaeological works at Coll de Molleres (eastern Pyrenees), the highest Roman site discovered so far in Catalonia (2,500 m)

ICAC archaeological surveys in the area (carried out since 2018) raised the possibility of a military settlement at an altitude of 2,500 m.

Meranges City Council and the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC) have reached **an agreement to reactivate this summer the archaeological works at Coll de Molleres site (Cerdanya)**, the highest Roman site discovered so far in Catalonia, at 2,500 metres above sea level. The project thus enters a second stage, after the first surveys within a wider investigation in which the municipalities of Guils and Lles, in La Cerdanya, were also involved.

⇒ Journalist Miquel Spa reports on this project in Regió7 news (May 16, 2022).

The archaeological works carried out by the **GIAP** research group (ICAC) focus on the study of human occupation, from the Neolithic period onwards but especially the Roman period, around and above an altitude of 2,000 m. The Roman site at Coll de Molleres would unseat another site in the Vansa and Fórnols valley (Cadí mountain range), at an altitude of 2,000 m, as the highest in the country.

At this site located in an area known as Goleró, **GIAP archaeologists found evidence of military metallurgical exploitation from the Roman period** that has been stated as very important by the ICAC.

> ICAC director, Josep Maria Palet, explained that “this site in Coll de Molleres has surpassed that of El Goleró because we are working in a site which probably dates from a similar chronology as the Roman city of *Iulia Libica* in Llívia, but which is at 2,500 m

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and is, therefore, the highest in Catalonia".

Palet also pointed out that, in the same way as the Vansa site, the **Meranges site may also have been a strategic control point for the passage of troops through the Pyrenees**: "It was probably a small military settlement with a quadrangular structure", and he announced that "this summer we will begin to excavate it extensively".

Four years of GIAP archaeological works in the Pyrenees

Thus, the Meranges City Council and the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC), through the **GIAP group, will now activate a four-year archaeological excavations project** that will leave behind the different survey tasks carried out since 2018. Coll de Molleres site is located on land owned by the City Council, which has expressed its willingness to promote the archaeological investigations.

The archaeological works will be directed by GIAP researchers **Dra. Lídia Colominas** (Ramón y Cajal researcher), Arnau Carbonell (PhD researcher), and Dr. Josep Maria Palet (co-director of GIAP and ICAC director).

Archaeological works at Coll de Molleres site, 2019. Photo: ICAC (GIAP).

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