PECUS | EUROPEAN LANDSCAPES OF TRANSHUMANCE

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CASE STUDY SHEET

CS code	*UK-02*	**CS Title**	**Ethnoarchaeology of Western Alpine upland Landscapes (EthWAL)**
GENERAL INFORMATION			
Type of case study	☐ National or regional level policy/plan/strategy ☐ Local level policy/plan/strategy ☐ Study/research X Project ☐ Other		
Responsible body/Promoter	University of York (UK), Newcastle University (UK)		
Location (region, locality)	Monregalese, Province of Cuneo, Piedmont, Italy; Parc National des Ecrins, PACA, France		
Geographical area covered	The study area corresponds to an upland sector of approximately 3000 hectares		
Year	2013 – 2015		
Summary description	The EthWAL project aims at understanding how changes in pastoral practices contributed to changing the character of mountain landscapes during the last three centuries. This will enable us to understand how modernity and capitalistic economy have radically transformed not only pastoral practices that we still regard as traditional, but also landscapes that we still largely perceive as marginal and pristine. The outcomes of this project will also provide an interesting ethnoarchaeological analogue for interpreting the material evidence of pastoral practices and their relationship with mountain ecosystems. The EthWAL project compares two study areas. One is the Val Maudagna (Italy), an economically marginal sector of the Maritime Alps where small-scale pastoralism has been characterised by the same strategies till the end of the 1990s, producing and maintaining a very specific and unique upland landscape. The second is the Vallée de Freissinieres (France), which has seen a really early phase of intensification of pastoral activities, followed by an abrupt collapse between the late 19th and the 20th century. These two areas share ecological and geological similarities, but different histories of land managements have created two very different landscapes. The project integrates methods of landscape archaeology, spatial analysis, ethnoarchaeology and historical ecology, to produce a comparative narrative and enable generalisations, to be used for the development of policy advice and the promotion of local historic landscapes.		
Link with laws/regulations and with other policies/ plans/strategies *(if any)*	Maudagna: there's no regulatory plan in place. The veterinary office of Mondovi (Cuneo) looks after the exploitation of the area by cattle-herders and shepherds. Freissinieres: the Parc des Ecrins (which this study area is part of) has a conservation policy which includes the exclusion of motorised vehicles from the protected areas (there are no proper roads that reach the upland sector, and all the monitoring is done by foot, with the support of donkeys and a helicopter). Some areas of the park are subjected to "wilderness" regulations, which prevent any human activity. In other parts (including Freissinieres), transhumant pastoralism is still allowed, and constantly monitored. No open fires and no camping are permitted within the area of the park. Tourism is regulated, to protect wildlife and plant biodiversity.		
PROBLEMS AND NEEDS TARGETED			
Problems	The last five or six decades have triggered profound transformations to pastoral practices. Vallée of Freissinieres experienced a rapid depopulation in the 1960s, followed by the inclusion of their "natural" upland landscapes into the Parc des Ecrins in the 1970s. At the end of the 1990s, new health and safety regulation for dairy productions, led to profound transformations of the small-scale dairy industry in Val Maudagna. The general perception was that the socio-economical phenomena of the 20th century were unprecedented, and caused the loss of a precious "traditional" world, immutable for hundreds or thousands of		

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	years. To prevent this loss, pre-industrial practices were rediscovered and promoted. But there was a significant flaw in this requalification of tradition and traditional landscapes: the assumption of their immutability. Pastoral practices and their landscapes were perceived as a linear process of adaptation to a hostile environment, rather than the result of historical dynamics, inherently discontinuous.
Needs	In order to debunk the myth of an immobile past, historical and archaeological research is necessary. A thorough analysis of the correlations between macro-economic processes or major socio-political upheaval and transformations in the subsistence of the agro-pastoral groups of the Western Alps, might show whether mountain communities were immune to the transformations occurred during the transition to modernity. The study of mountain landscape using a landscape archaeology approach (recording abandoned and active landscape features and identifying spatio-temporal patterns) enables upland transformations to be correlated with the same historical processes. Historical ecology can be used to assess the impact of these changes on vegetation. This multi-proxy evaluation highlights that mountain economies and landscapes have transformed over time, and not exclusively in the last decades. Besides, the methods and inferences produced by this approach can provide useful insights for understanding similar processes happened in other historical periods, for which we have got less detailed historical (and archaeological) records.
Quantitative data	This research was mostly qualitative. However, some quantitative data have been produced for the analysis of a pastoral hut in Maudagna. Here the distribution of objects on the floor has been analysed with sophisticated tools of spatial statistics, providing an important methodological and theoretical reference for understanding the use of domestic space in mountain environments and unravelling depositional and post-depositional formation processes in seasonal contexts.

FOCUS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

Themes	**Does the case study address this theme? (YES/NO)**	**If yes, how?** ***(max 750 characters for each theme)***
Spatial planning	NO	
Protection of environment (e.g. biodiversity, water, geomorphology, soil, climate…)	YES	The use of cartographic regression and interviews, integrated with palaeobotanical data, to investigate transformations in land-use and land-cover in the last 3 centuries, provide important information on ecological dynamics that can be used for informing future environmental plans. Collaborations with local policy makers (councils and park) during the project facilitates the dissemination of data and recommendations among relevant decision makers.
Protection/enhancement of tangible cultural heritage (e.g. historical paths, archaeological sites, architecture, terraces and field systems…)	YES	The methodological core of this project is the use of landscape archaeology methods to record and analyse the transformation of settlement patterns at high altitude, during the last three centuries. By mapping seasonal structures in the two study areas, and by assessing their complex history of use and abandonment, this project will provide important information for the protection and promotion of rural heritage.
Protection/enhancement of intangible cultural heritage (e.g. historical route networks, scenic views, folklore, food, music…)	YES	By recording traditional pastoral practices in the two study areas, through interviews and participant observation, this project will promote the conservation of activities and strategies threatened by depopulation, demographic change and economic processes. The investigation of the historical roots of some of these practices will contribute to reviving the interest of local stakeholders and attracting the attention of other relevant subjects (including tourists and decision makers)
Slow mobility (cycling routes, trekking paths, etc.)	YES	Slow mobility in the Parc des Ecrins area is already promoted by the park, and will only be complemented by the initiatives of this project.

		In Maudagna, instead, new itineraries for tourists and community members interested in pastoralism and cultural landscapes can be promoted. These itineraries can take advantage of the existing network of hiking paths in the area, which is well maintained although not significantly exploited for touristic purposes. This research will provide the historical and archaeological background for the development of hiking routes connected to local heritage.
Economic development of mountain & rural areas (e.g. tourism, agro-food production, agriculture, livestock breeding…)	YES	The promotion of cultural hiking in Maudagna will boost summer tourism in an area where winter tourism is heavily threatened by climate change. This, in turn, will be extremely beneficial for local touristic infrastructures and activities. The study of historic dairy farming (se called "gias" system) in the area might also have a positive influence on local agro-pastoral industry.
INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS		
Actors involved	For Maudagna we involved different actors from local communities (including retired and active shepherds and cattle herders) as well as civil servants (like the head of the veterinary office of Mondovi) and policy makers (mayor of local villages and city council of Mondovi) For Freissinieres, we involved the authorities of the Parc des Ecrins, who helped us engaging local farmers and herders, retired and still active.	
Involvement procedures	For Maudagna, local actors were involved individually and informally, and helped shaping the research since the beginning, by providing critical advice and information. Public outreach events were also organised in collaboration with these stakeholders, and provided important feedback on the results and new keys of interpretation. For Freissinieres the involvement of local actors was primarily through park's rangers and other authorities. Informal engagement was also established with villagers. Interviews carried out at the end of the fieldwork, contributed to a more solid interpretation of archaeological and historical data.	
Problems and challenges	There was no particular problem during the stakeholder engagement in Maudagna. On the other hand, involvement of local actors in Freissinieres was quite problematic for two reasons. The first is the demographics: a rapid depopulation affected the area towards the end of the 20th century, and most of the members of the local communities are new immigrants, and have no connections with the local landscape and traditional activities. The second is the language. Although the PIs of the project (Carrer and Walsh) speak French, the local dialect forced them to recruit a translator. This enabled them to acquire relevant information but prevented them to develop a connection with local stakeholders.	
EXPECTED OR ACHIEVED EFFECTS		
Type of effect	**Description** ***(max 750 characters for each type)***	
Effects on the environment (e.g. restoration of habitats, increased biodiversity, climate change mitigation or adaptation…)	Maudagna: • Identification of the effect of the recent collapse of dairy farming on biodiversity in the most and least intensively exploited areas • Assessment of the ecological advantages of protecting the historical pastoral system (so called "gias" system) • Prediction of the effect of the total collapse of the "gias" system Freissinieres: • Long-term assessment of the negative environmental impact of intensive pastoral strategies on upland pastures as much as lowland meadows • Long-term assessment of the negative environmental impact of un-manged re-wilding of mid and high altitudes • The possible advantages of high-altitude hay-making and small-scale pastoralism for biodiversity and soil protection	
Effects on immaterial, cultural assets (e.g. cultural	Maudagna:	

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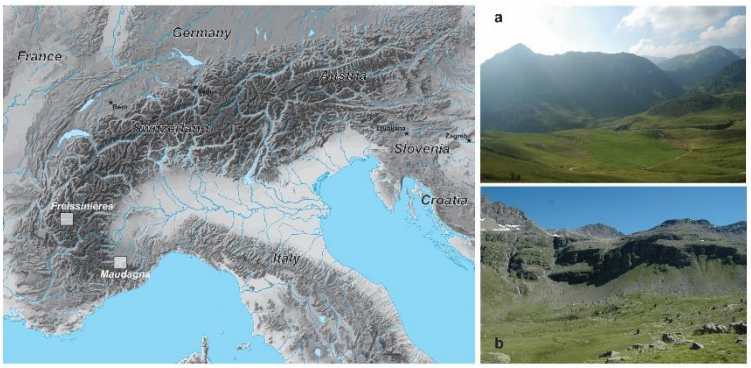
landscape, scenic views, folklore…)	• Evidence of the historical roots and cultural relevance of traditional pastoralism ("gias" system) • Promotion of the value of historic character of upland landscapes for tourism and for the protection of local identity Freissinieres: • Rethinking the economic, social and cultural role of transhumance for local communities, and how this can rebuild local identity, perturbated by depopulation and cult of upland wilderness
Effects on material, cultural assets (e.g. restoration of historic artefacts or buildings, restoration of traditional terraces or cultivation systems…)	Maudagna: • Abandoned dry stone huts in the uplands are now protected by the local councils, as part of the rural heritage of the area • Some huts have recently been renovated, rather than been put down and replaced by more modern dwelling structures Freissinieres: • The record of abandoned structures produced in this project provides a valuable database for monitoring the degradation of these structures and planning possible renovation works • Some of the recorded structures are ephemerally used by hikers (since tent camping in the area is forbidden). The new record and GIS mapping provide a useful tool for hikers who are planning long excursions and require a shelter.
Effects on social and economic aspects (e.g. new jobs, new enterprises…)	Maudagna: • A leaflet with a short explanation of the history of one of the investigated huts, complemented by an itinerary to get from the nearest hostel (*rifugio*) to the hut, was printed in 1000 copies and distributed to the local council, shops and the hostel itself. This initiative was aimed at stimulating cultural tourism in the area.
IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES	
Financial resources	The project was funded by the EU Marie Curie Actions scheme. This scheme provided a salary for the researcher (Carrer) and approximately 30,000€ to carry out the research and produce outputs.
Implementation procedures	Not applicable
SUPPORTING INFORMATION	
Images (pictures, graphics, maps, charts, etc.)	 Fig. 1: The two study areas: Maudagna (a) and Freissinieres (b). (from Carrer et al. 2020 *Hum. Ecology*)

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Fig. 2: an example of abandoned dry-stone hut in Freissinieres. (credits F. Carrer)

Fig. 3: An abandoned rock-shelter in Freissinieres. (credits F. Carrer)

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Fig. 4: The only structure still in use in Freissinieres: the hut currently occupied by the transhumant shepherd. (credits F. Carrer)

Fig. 5: A recently abandoned pastoral hut in Maudagna. (credits F. Carrer)

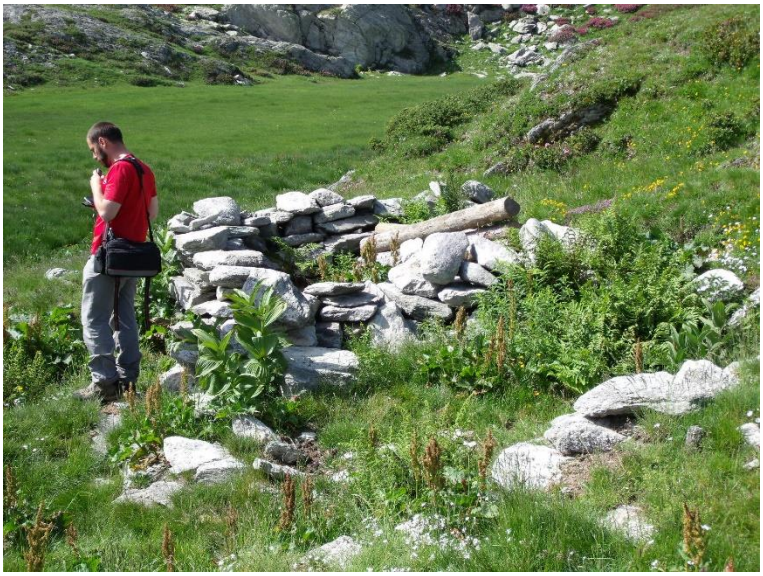

Fig. 6: A pastoral hut in Maudagna, possibly abandoned in the first half of the 20th century. (credits G. Dulbecco)

Fig. 7: The transhumant shepherd in Freissinieres. (credits K. Walsh)

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	 Fig. 8: One of the public outreach events held in Val Maudagna. (credits G. Dulbecco)
References (including web links)	**Blogs:** http://ethwalproject.blogspot.com/ http://frabosasottanaonline.blogspot.com/2013/07/progetto-di-ricerca-ethwal-relativo.html **Publications:** Carrer F., Walsh K. & Mocci F. 2020. Ecology, economy and upland landscapes: Transformations of human-environment interaction in the Alps during the transition to modernity. *Human Ecology*, 48: 69-84 Carrer F. 2017. Interpreting intra-site spatial patterns in seasonal contexts: an ethnoarchaeological case-study from the western Alps. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 24: 303-327. Carrer F. 2015. Herding strategies, dairy economy and seasonal sites in the Alps: ethnoarchaeological inferences and archaeological implications. *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, 28(1): 3-22. Carrer F., Mocci F. & Walsh K. 2015. Etnoarcheologia dei paesaggi alpini di alta quota nelle Alpi occidentali: un bilancio preliminare. In Stagno A. & Moscatelli U. (eds.), *Archeologia delle aree montane europee: metodi, problemi e casi di studio.* Il Capitale Culturale, n. 12. Università di Macerata, Macerata: 625-639. Carrer F. 2015. Magliano Alpi, località Sella Brignola. Indagine archeologica di una struttura pastorale tradizionale in alta quota. *Quaderni della Soprintendenza Archeologica del Piemonte*, 30: 326-329. Carrer F. 2015. Freissinières, Faravel XLIV. *Bilan Scientifique de la Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur* 2014 : 45-46. **Leaflet:** *Il Gias della Brignola. Un'antica struttura pastorale nei pascoli della Val Maudagna.* Text: F. Carrer. Graphic design: V. Tondato. Printed: June 2015

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