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**SoHoM project**

1400 years of man-environment interactions and soil evolution in the Saint-Mont mountain (Remiremont, Vosges)


*Univ. Lorraine, CNRS, UMR 7355 UMR干预* (UMR), UFR of Sciences, 25060 Nancy, France. E-mail: Anne.Poszwa@univ-lorraine.fr. (b) Univ. Lorraine, UMR 7355 UMR intervenu (UMR), UFR de Sciences, 25060 Nancy, France. E-mail: Robin.V@univ-lorraine.fr; (c) Conservatoire des Forêts Territoires (CFT); (d) Lorraine, Université de Nancy 2, 25100 Nancy, France. E-mail: B. Gochtelli@univ-lorraine.fr. (e) Centre de Géologie des Territoires (CGT), 28600 Saint-Aubin, France. E-mail: A. De Junet@univ-lorraine.fr. (f) Conservatoire des Forêts Territoires (CFT); (g) Lorraine, Université de Nancy 2, 25100 Nancy, France. E-mail: P. Ngo@univ-lorraine.fr. (h) CNRS, UMR 7355 UMR intervenu (UMR), UFR de Sciences, 25060 Nancy, France. E-mail: J.-C. Harmand@univ-lorraine.fr. (i) Conservatoire des Forêts Territoires (CFT); (j) Lorraine, Université de Nancy 2, 25100 Nancy, France. E-mail: J.-P. Delangle@univ-lorraine.fr. (k) Conservatoire des Forêts Territoires (CFT); (l) Lorraine, Université de Nancy 2, 25100 Nancy, France. E-mail: D. Cartier@univ-lorraine.fr. (m) Conservatoire des Forêts Territoires (CFT); (n) Lorraine, Université de Nancy 2, 25100 Nancy, France. E-mail: C. Kraemer@univ-lorraine.fr. (o) Conservatoire des Forêts Territoires (CFT); (p) Lorraine, Université de Nancy 2, 25100 Nancy, France. E-mail: T. Chenal@univ-lorraine.fr. (q) Conservatoire des Forêts Territoires (CFT); (r) Lorraine, Université de Nancy 2, 25100 Nancy, France. E-mail: D. Barlier@univ-lorraine.fr.

**Context of the study**

The **Saint-Mont site**

- A relatively inhospitable mountain:
  - hard climate, steep slopes,
  - on acid soils developed from a granitic rock,
  - nowadays covered by forests.

Remains suggest human presence for at least 1400 years:

- At the top, the monastary Habendium (from the 7th century to the French Revolution) and a late antique occupation (Chenal 2016).
- Monumental enclosure dry-stones walls of unknown age (Grzesznik, 2019).
- The « Point des Fées » An enigmatic structure

**Objectives**

To investigate traces of ancient anthropic activities in soils and landscapes, on areas where archaeological structures have not yet been detected.

**Material and methods**

Joint work involving soil scientists, archaeologists, geographers, geologists and computer scientists.

**Approaches from the landscape to the microscopic scales.**

- **Archaeological data**
- **Field prospections / rocks and soils descriptions and sampling, floristic surveys**
- **LiDAR image to locate platforms connected to archaeological structures and all our sampling stations: subsoil subsols, pits and rock outcrops.**

**Results**

**Interactive extraction of linear structures from LiDAR raw data**

Development of new algorithms based on digital geometry tools to directly process 3D ground points and get rid of digital terrain model approximations in forested areas (Even and Ngo, 2020).

Immediate visualization of extracted structure, cross and longitudinal profiles and of geometric estimations (height or depth, width, volume, ...).

Time and precision performance evaluated on well controlled structures: forest roads (Even and Ngo, 2021).

Usability assessed on archaeomorphological enclosure walls and old hollways (Even et al., 2021).

**ILSD**: Available open-source software for direct exploitation by soil scientists or future integration in geographical information systems ([https://github.com/evepe/ILSD](https://github.com/evepe/ILSD)).

**Landscape and geological materials**

- A tectonic and glacial heritage
  - 3 axes of fracturing highlighted from rock outcrops and preferential feldspar orientations in thin-sections measurements.
  - Tectonic fracturing guided the action of the Quaternary. Both factors structure the massif and control its triangular shape.

**Geological heritage**

The rock descriptions (macroscopically and in thin sections) confirm that most of the Saint-Mont is composed of Remiremont granite (Vincent, 1976).

- New informations, not noted on the geological map:
  * Longer vein of apatite (supposed by the presence of apatite fragments in our studied profiles).
  * At the bottom of the vein, a lamprophyre vein rock more basic than granite.

**Soil covers**

1. Soils not clearly disturbed
   - Far from any known archaeological remains, two main types of soils develop on granite:
   - Humic alcalinous soils (HRS)
   - Non-structured soils

2. Highly anthropized soils on platform P
   - Anthropized (AP) » Transformed on a man made terrace » Anthrosol with a pristic horizon (WRB 2006)
     - Highly structured horizon (Ehrenswald): neutral to basic pH
     - Phytodetrital unstructured: organic horizon homogenized
     - Anthropicous artifacts: stones from burned middles -> manured soils.

**Analysis of expropriations**

- Light when pH is between 4 and 5
- More significant when pH is > 5
- Easily related to the long-lasting human occupation on the summit.
- More surprising on some western or southern platforms:
  => Leads for future archaeological studies.

**Conclusion and perspectives**

Our results confirm:

- A very strong imprint of historical human activities on soils close to the summit part of the massif.
- An heritage on the western slope mainly from natural glacial and pedogenetic processes.
- Possible other human activities on some western or southern platforms.

We hypothesize that the weak anomalies are due to older and/or different human activities than those that took place at the top of Saint-Mont (like breeding).

Other analyses are being acquired and interpreted on soils, rocks, and LiDAR images.