

Submitted Abstract

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Abstract

Today more than ever, we need to learn from the past to anticipate the future. Here we propose an historical ecology focus on the Faillefeu forest, which is a typical example of what we could call an "old growth forest". Since at least the Middle Ages, it has been exploited by humans for various uses (sylvo-pastoralism, firewood, export for shipyards) and it is today left to evolve freely without any particular management. We aim to reconstruct the role of human activities in the establishment of the structure and biodiversity of the Faillefeu forest over the long term (from prehistory to modern times) by an interdisciplinary approach between paleo-environmental (pedoanthracology) and historical data. Thanks to a large corpus of historical data (ONF archives, RTM, maps, and archaeological surveys), the human presence is well known in this forest since at least the 10th century. However, the impact of these activities on forest trajectories remains unknown. Moreover, the archives mention the presence of beech and fir trees, the current forest of Faillefeu is composed of fir and spruce in its lower part and of larch and Scots pine in its upper part, some of which are several hundred years old. But the beech is absent today. In order to compensate the lack of paleoenvironmental data and to try to provide some answers about the forest dynamics of the forest, two transects of pedoanthracological pits were made along an altitudinal gradient and arranged in opposition to the slope. The soil-anthracological analyses are currently being processed and will determine if the past forest composition is the same as today. The objective is to assess the resilience of this forest faced with multi-century exploitation. Finally, the presence of beech is also sought to be demonstrated.