A new etymological methodology with Pyrenean place-names as study samples

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LINGUISTICS RESEARCH SEMINAR
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The aim

1 - To propose an interdisciplinary method with a cognitive approach that reveals the etymology of the settlement-names in the region of Pallars Sobirà (Pyrenees).

2 - To discover some characteristics of the language that created them.

Alt Àneu
Lladorre
Esterri d'Àneu
Esterri de Cardós
Vall de Cardós
Espot
Alins
La Guingueta d'Àneu
Tírvia
Llavorsí
Farrera
Rialp
Sort
Soriguera
Baix Pallars

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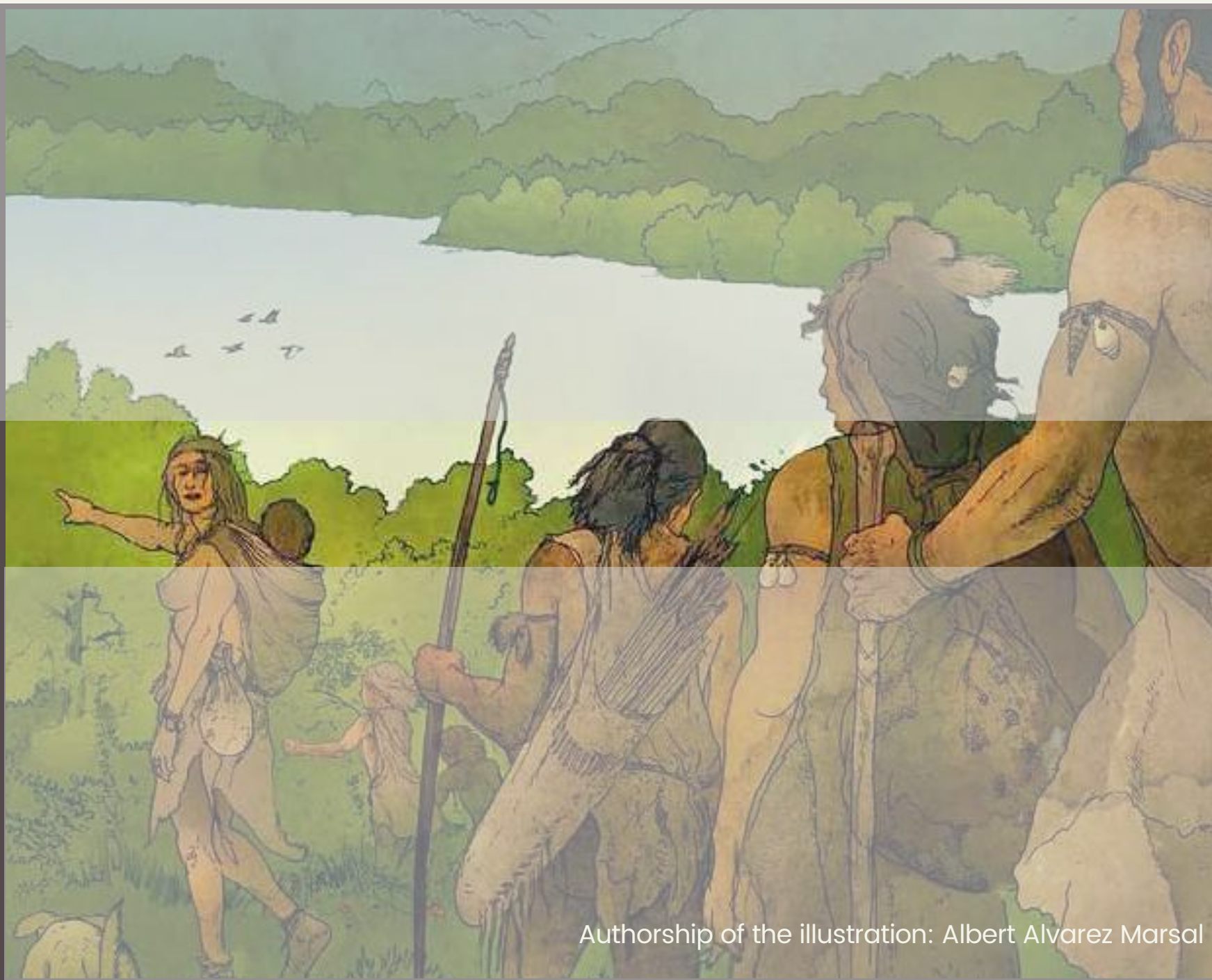Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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The traditional method

1 - Collection of old documentary forms of the opaque place name to be studied.

2 - Decision of the language of the place name.

3- Search for words in the chosen language that resemble the place name.

4- Etymological proposal with the diachronic study of the place name.

JOAN COROMINES
ONOMASTICON
CATALONIAE
VIII
VI - Z
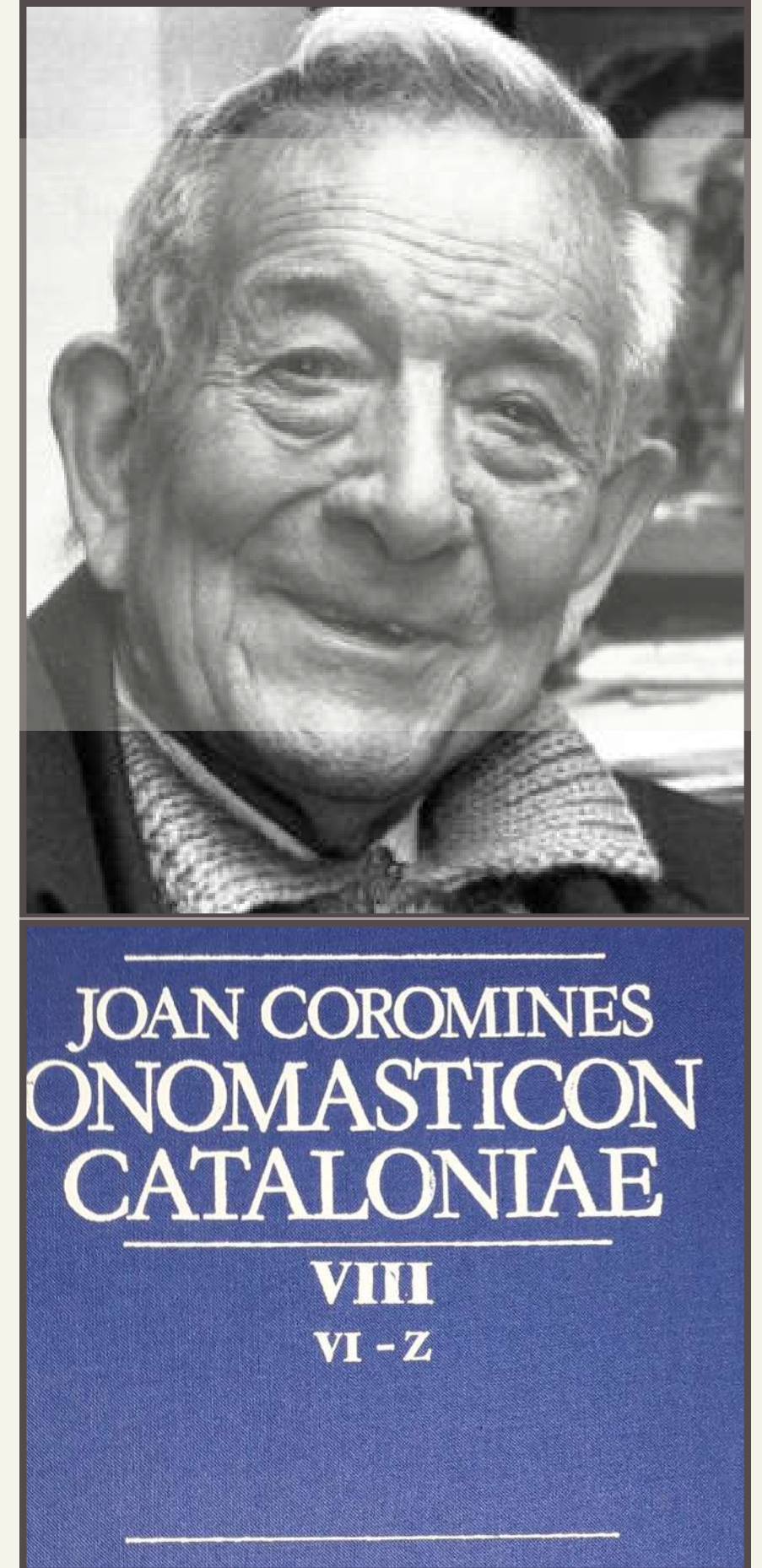
What would you call the specific place where you want to settle down with your family?

Hypothesis

1) Opaque toponyms are the description of the place where they are found.

2) Repeated segments of these toponyms refer to elements of the landscape.

Esca-: Escalarre, Escaló, Escart, Escàs, Escós...

Esta-: Estac, Estaís, Estaon, Estaron, Esterri...

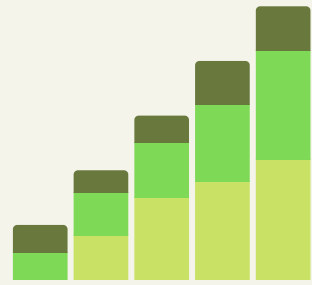**-ós:** Berrós, Cassibrós, Escós...

-rre: Bonestarre, Escalarre, Ginestarre, Isavarre...

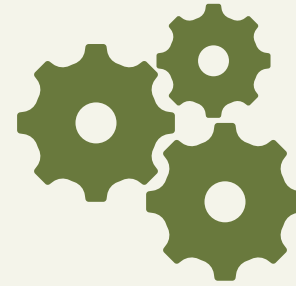**-ui:** Arestui, Balestui, Bernui, Bressui, Bretui, Embonui...

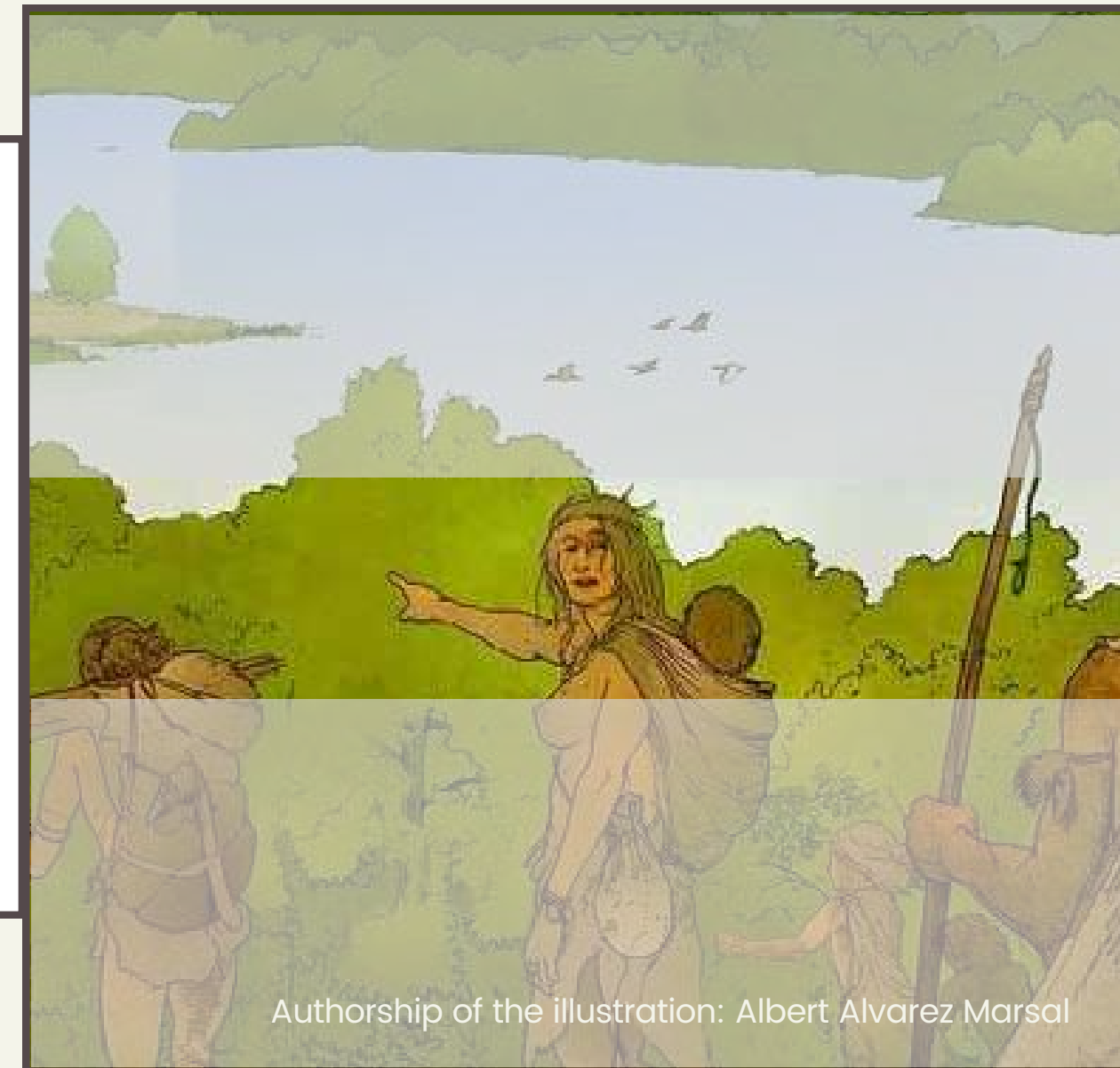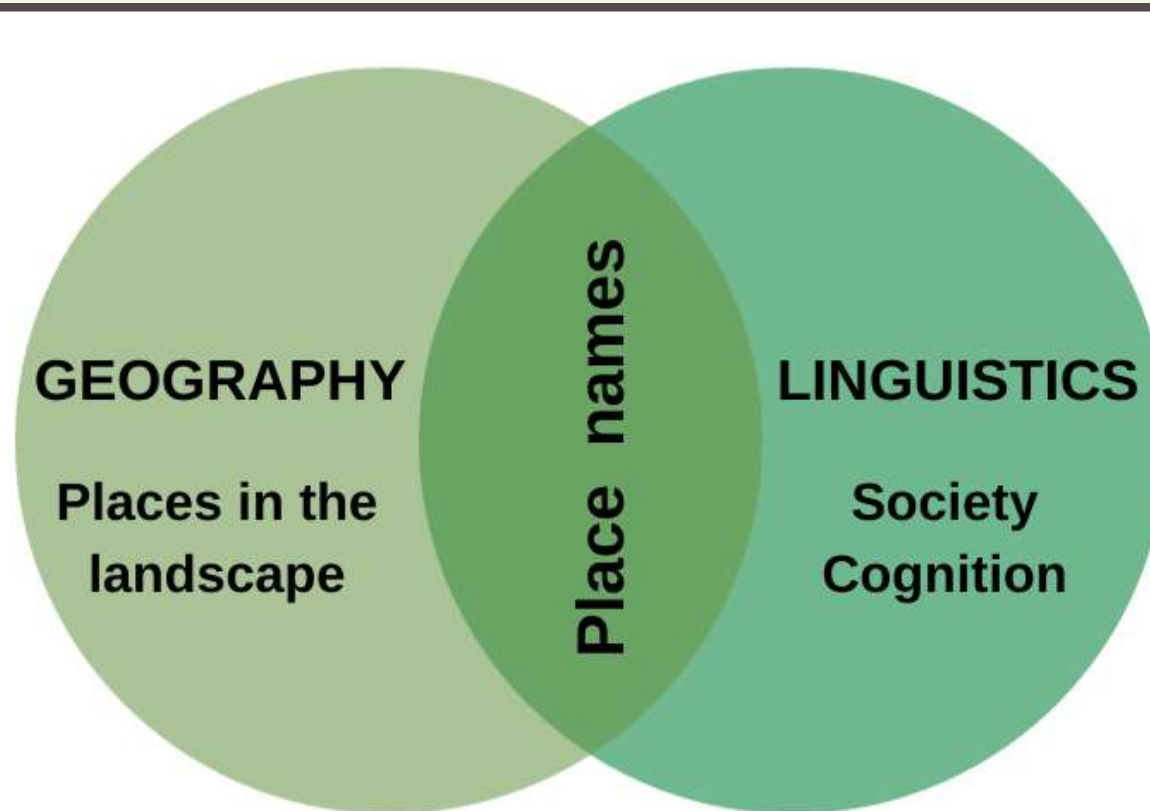**3) Opaque toponyms are formed by the compounding of words.**

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Methodological principles

EMPIRICAL

INTERDISCIPLINARY

COGNITIVE APPROACH

TOPONYMIC CORPUS
List of the place names of the villages

Old common names

MORPHOLOGICAL VARIABLE
Segments of the place names of the corpus

GEOGRAPHIC VARIABLE
Geographical characteristics of the villages in the corpus

GEOGRAPHY
Places in the landscape

Place names

LINGUISTICS
Society Cognition
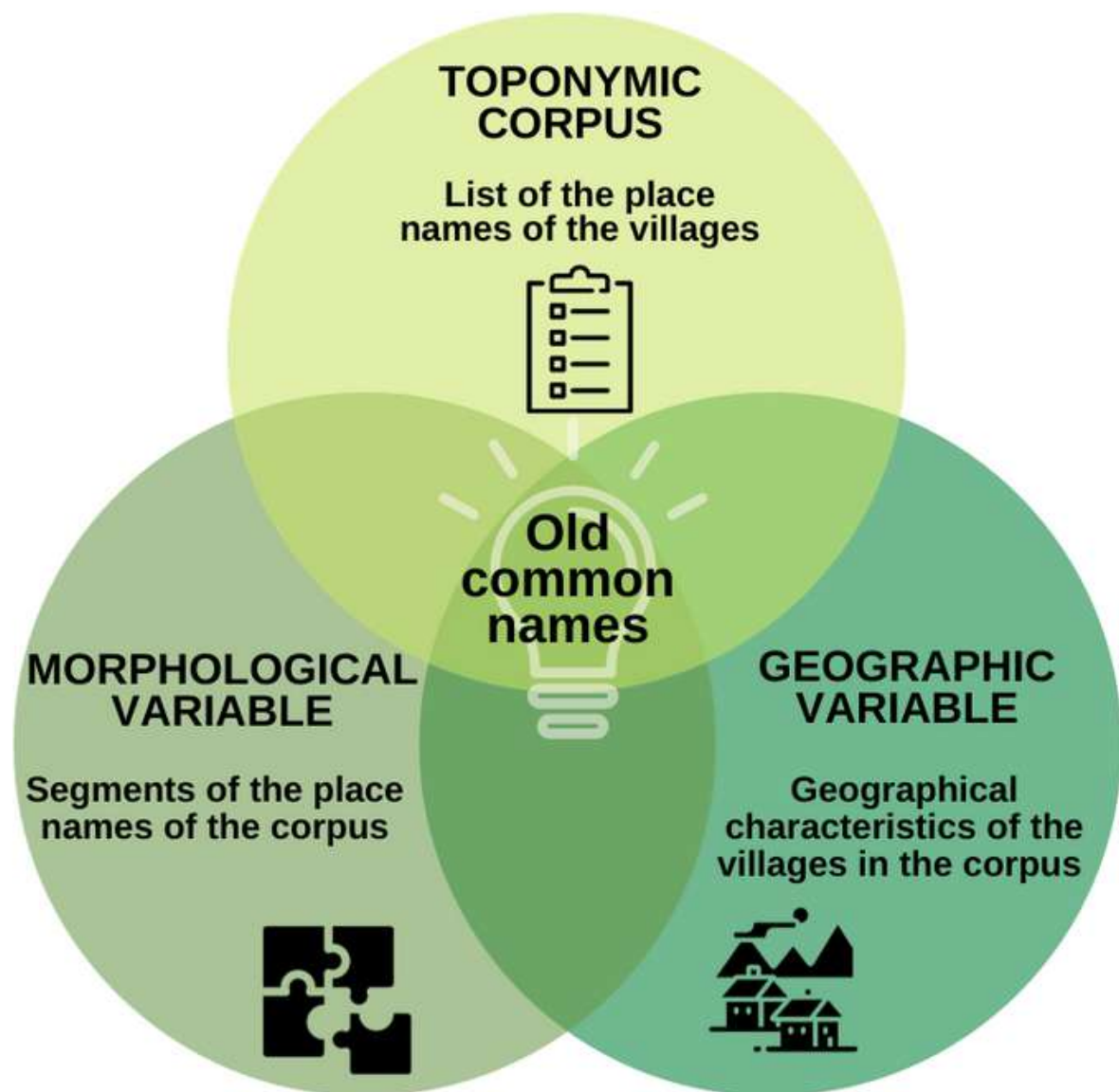
Authorship of the illustration: Albert Alvarez Marsal

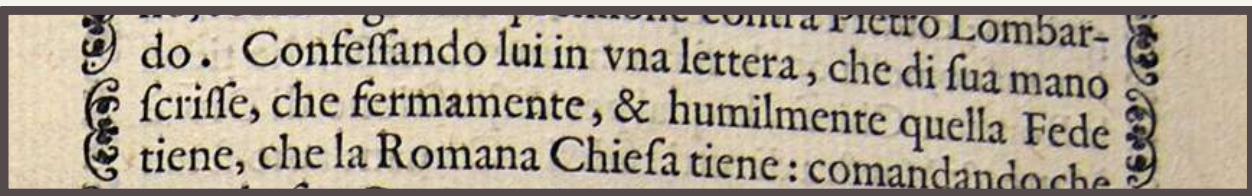A new etymological methodology with Pyrenean place-names as study samples

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Data collection

Explorations on the ground
Geographic Information Systems
138 interviews: 177 people interviewed

158 village names with their medieval citations. Total: 464 samples
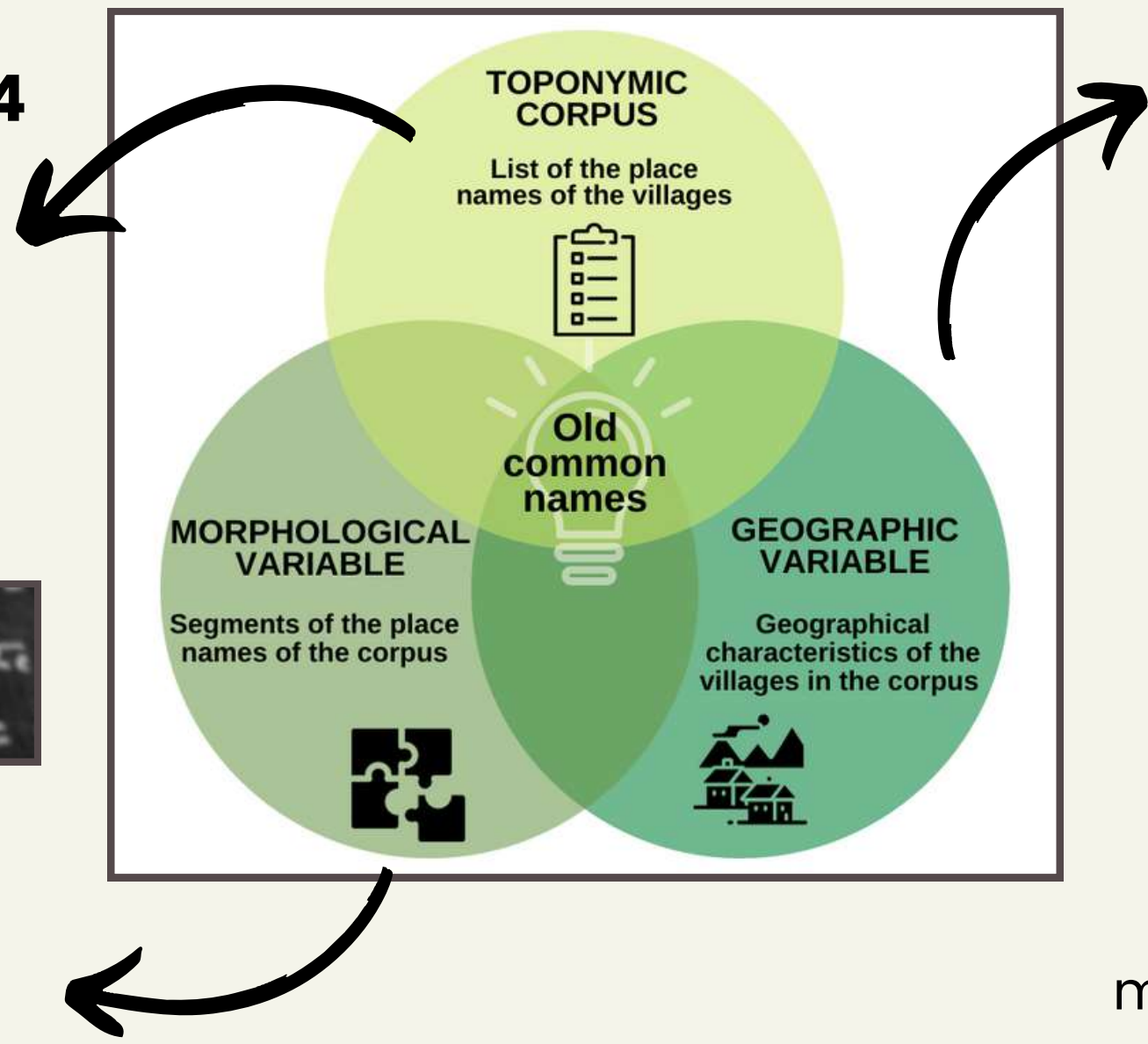
Àrreu, Arestui, Baén, Beraní, Bonestarre, Caregue, Cartanís, Dorve, Enviny, Escàs, Escós, Esterri, Gerri, Isavarre, Isil, Jou, Llarvén, Llavorre, Llavorsí, etc.

$$\mu_2^2 = \mu_2^2 = \frac{2,168 + 7,8}{5 + 9 - 2}\left(\frac{1}{5} + \frac{1}{9}\right) = 0.2582$$
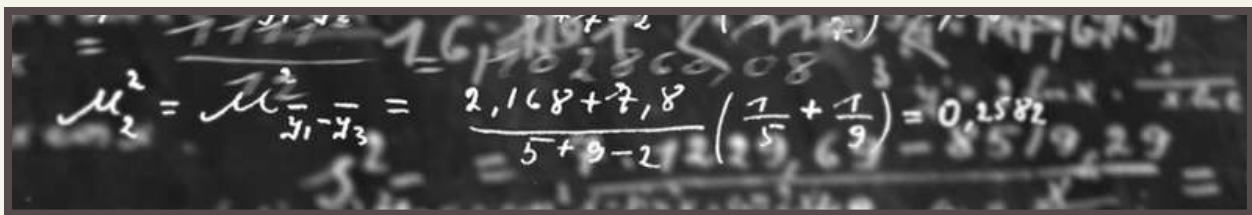
1.179 different segments

AI, AIE, AIS, AÍS, AL, AÓS, AVÀ, AVAS, AVE, AVEN, AVOR, AVORR, BA, BAI, BAL, BALA, BALE, BAN, BANA, BAR, BE, BEI, BEIR, etc.

TOPONYMIC CORPUS

List of the place names of the villages

Old common names

MORPHOLOGICAL VARIABLE

Segments of the place names of the corpus

GEOGRAPHIC VARIABLE

Geographical characteristics of the villages in the corpus

Authorship: Joan Manuel Soriano

Authorship: Víctor Fabró

31 general variables and 132 specific ones to describe the situation of each village

main valley, secondary valley, altitude, orientation, visual basin, relief, insolation, flat meadows, wood, etc.

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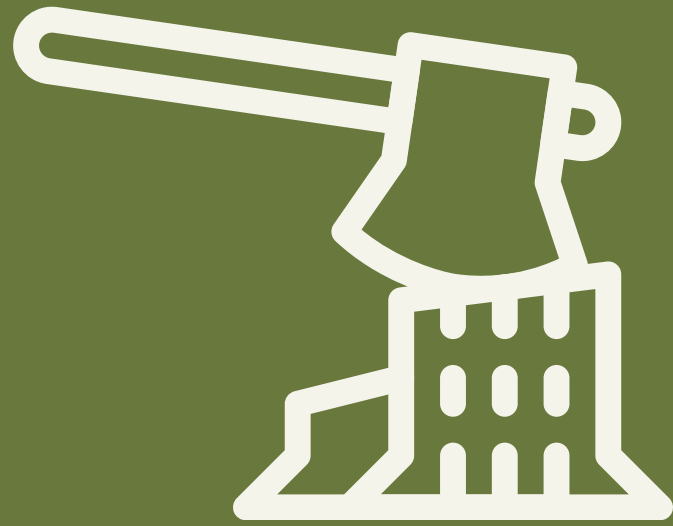Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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Old words

*oil

lookout

[eye]

*esca

gorge, crack...

[cut]

*(v)orte

ford, pass, port...

[passage place]

*esta

stagnant waters

[immobile permanent]
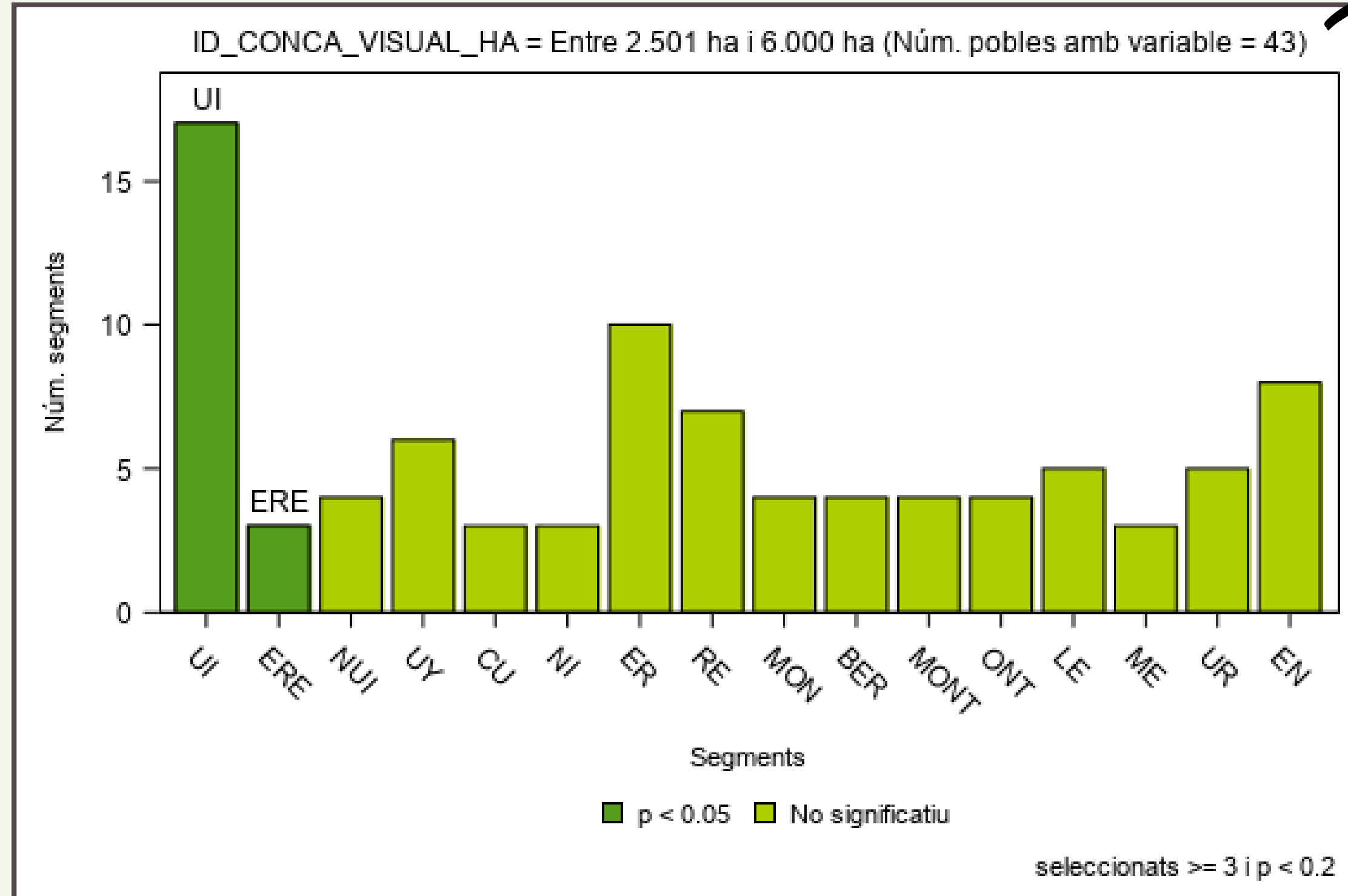
*one

TOP

places located on top of others

[above]

Old word *oil

*oil

lookout

[eye]

ID_CONCA_VISUAL_HA = Entre 2.501 ha i 6.000 ha (Núm. pobles amb variable = 43)

Segments

p < 0.05   No significatiu

seleccionats >= 3 i p < 0.2

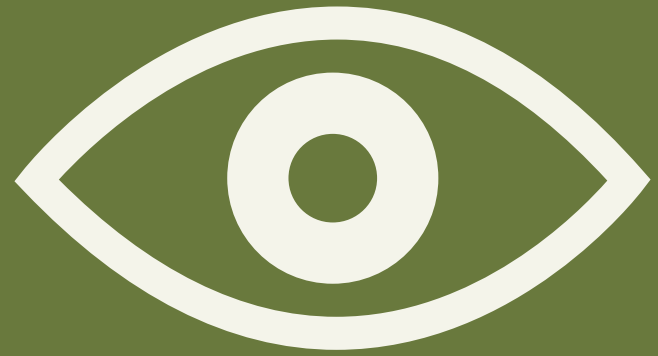**Segments of the place names that are best related to a <u>visual basin between 2,501 hectares and 6,000 hectares.</u>**

Old word *oil

*oil

**lookout
[eye]**

*oil at the beginning Olp, Auló (past Olone), Alós, Alendo, Alins

*oil in the middle Arcalís, Escalarre, Escaló, Rialp

*oil at the end Arestui(l), Balestui(l), Bernui(l), Bressui(l), Bretui(l), Embonui(l), Llessui(l), Mencui(l), Mentui(l), Pernui(l), Sellui(l)
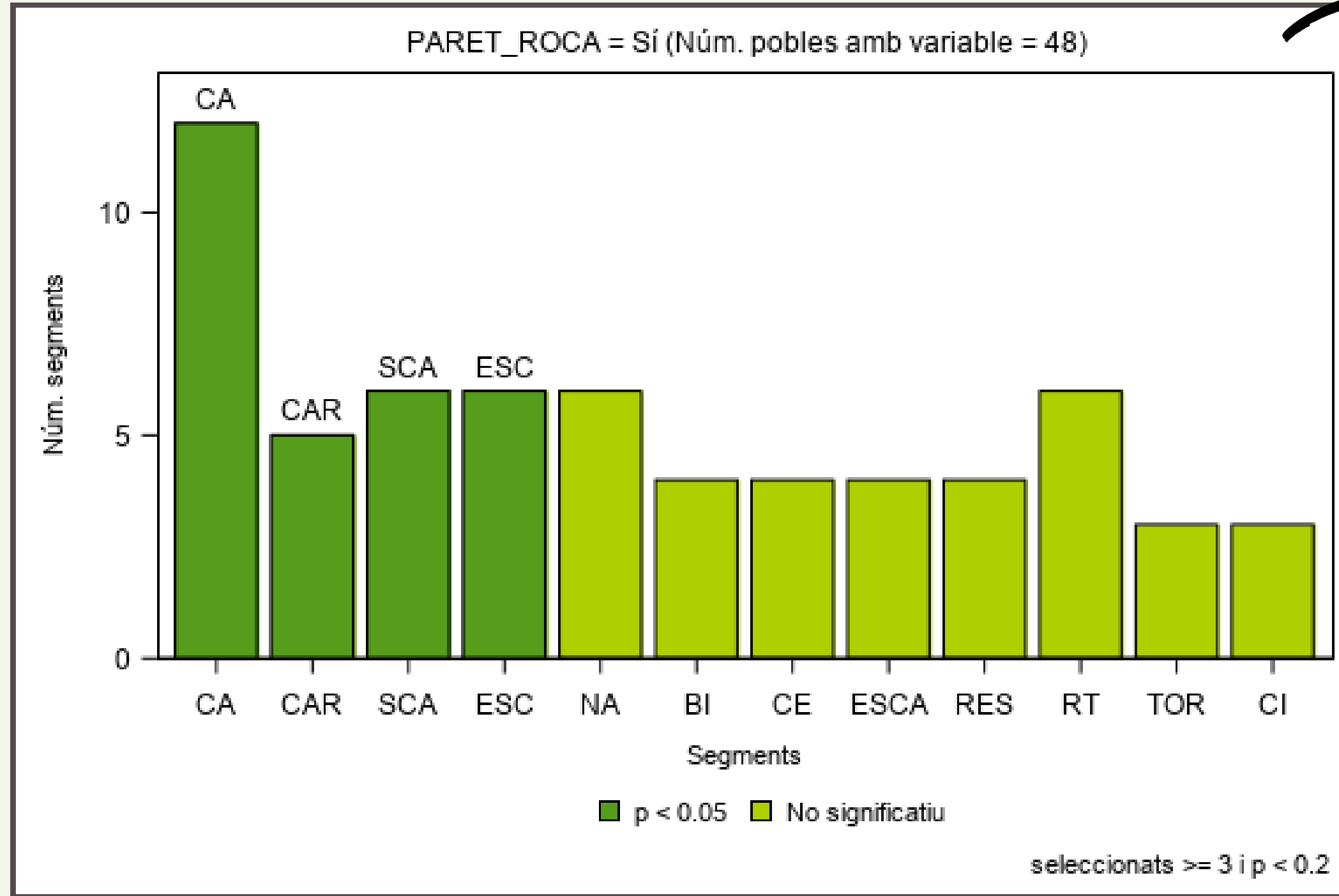
THE LANDSCAPE IS A BODY, be it a person or an animal

oeil (French), øje (Danish), olho (Portuguese), ollo (Galician), øye (Norwegian), suil, sùil, sooill (Scottish Gaelic), súl (Irish).

Old word *esca

*esca
gorge, crack...
[cut]

*esca at the beginning Escaló, Escart, Escàs, Escalarre
*esca in the middle Tavascan
*esca at the end Baiasca, Bresca

Greek: skhisma 'división'
Latin: scindo 'cut, separate'
Catalan: esquerda 'crack', osca 'notch', escarpa 'escarpment', esquinç 'sprain', llesca 'slice'
English: scar, scrap, scrape, scratch, scree
Scots: skerry, scaur, scarnach
Basque: aska 'channel', eskail 'chip', puska 'piece'

Old word *(v)orte

*(v)orte

ford, pass, port...

[passage place]

*(v)orte at the beginning
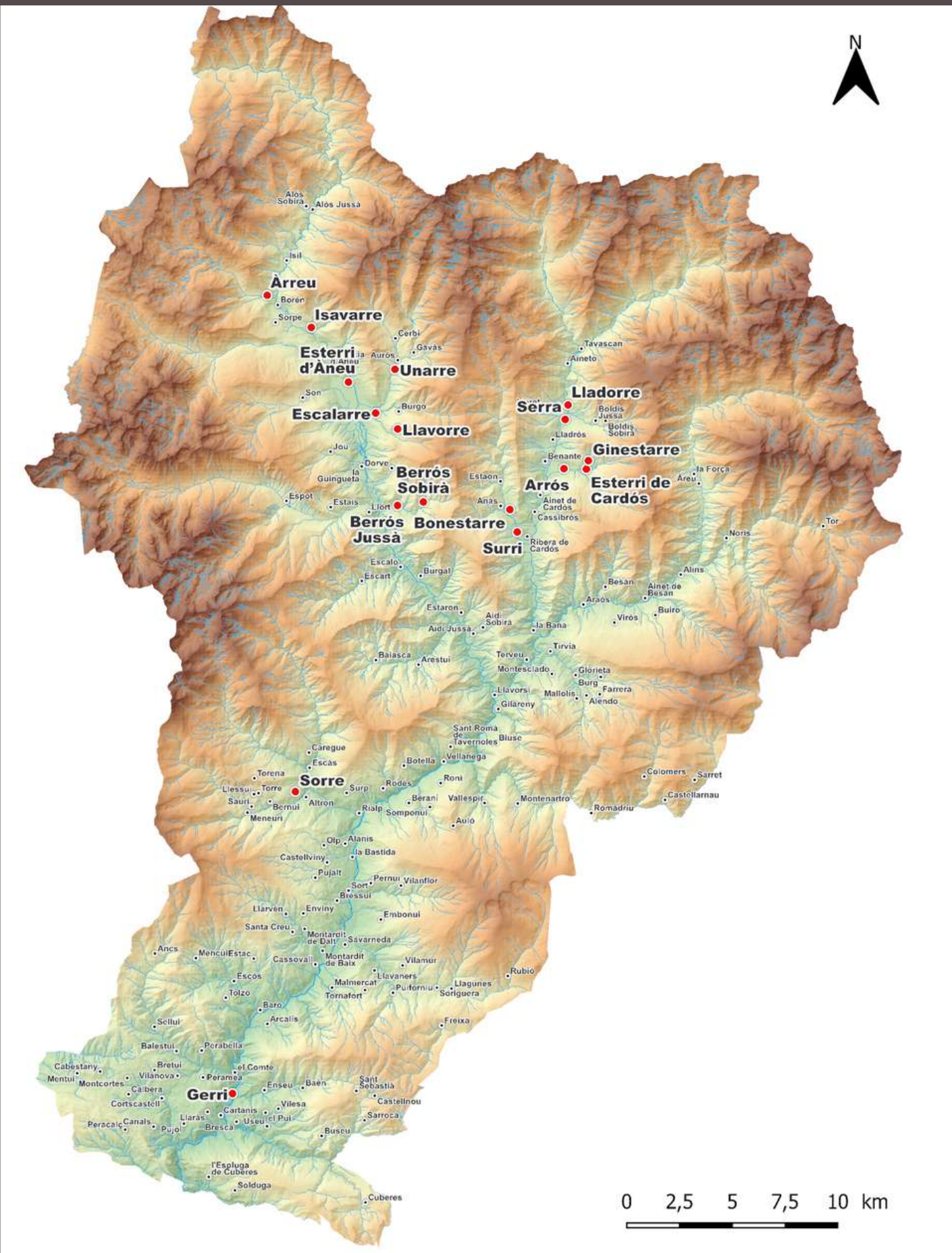
Aurós (past Ordaros), Montenartró (past Montano Ortone)

*(v)orte in the middle

Cartanís, Cortscastell, Llarvén (past Lertuen), Montcortès

*(v)orte at the end

Escart, Llort (past Leovorte, Leorte), Sort (past Savorte, Saorte)

Llavorre, Bonestarre, Escalarre, Esterri, Ginestarre, Isavarre, Unarre

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Old word *(v)orte

*(v)orte

ford, pass, port...

[passage place]

ford: f<u>urde</u>, f<u>orde</u>, f<u>wrde</u>, f<u>uird</u> in Older Scottish Tongue (up to 1700), f<u>ord</u> in English, Latvian, Maltese or Serbian, v<u>oorde</u> in Dutch

door: p<u>orte</u> (French), p<u>orta</u> (Latin, Catalan, Italian, Cor, Galician, Portuguese, Bulgarian), p<u>ortë</u> (Albanian), p<u>orte</u>, p<u>oirt</u>, p<u>ourt</u> (Older Scottish), p<u>orth</u> (Welsh), p<u>ortti</u> (Finnish), v<u>artai</u> o v<u>ārti</u> (Lithuanian, Latvian), ворота v<u>orota</u> (Russian, Ukrainian)

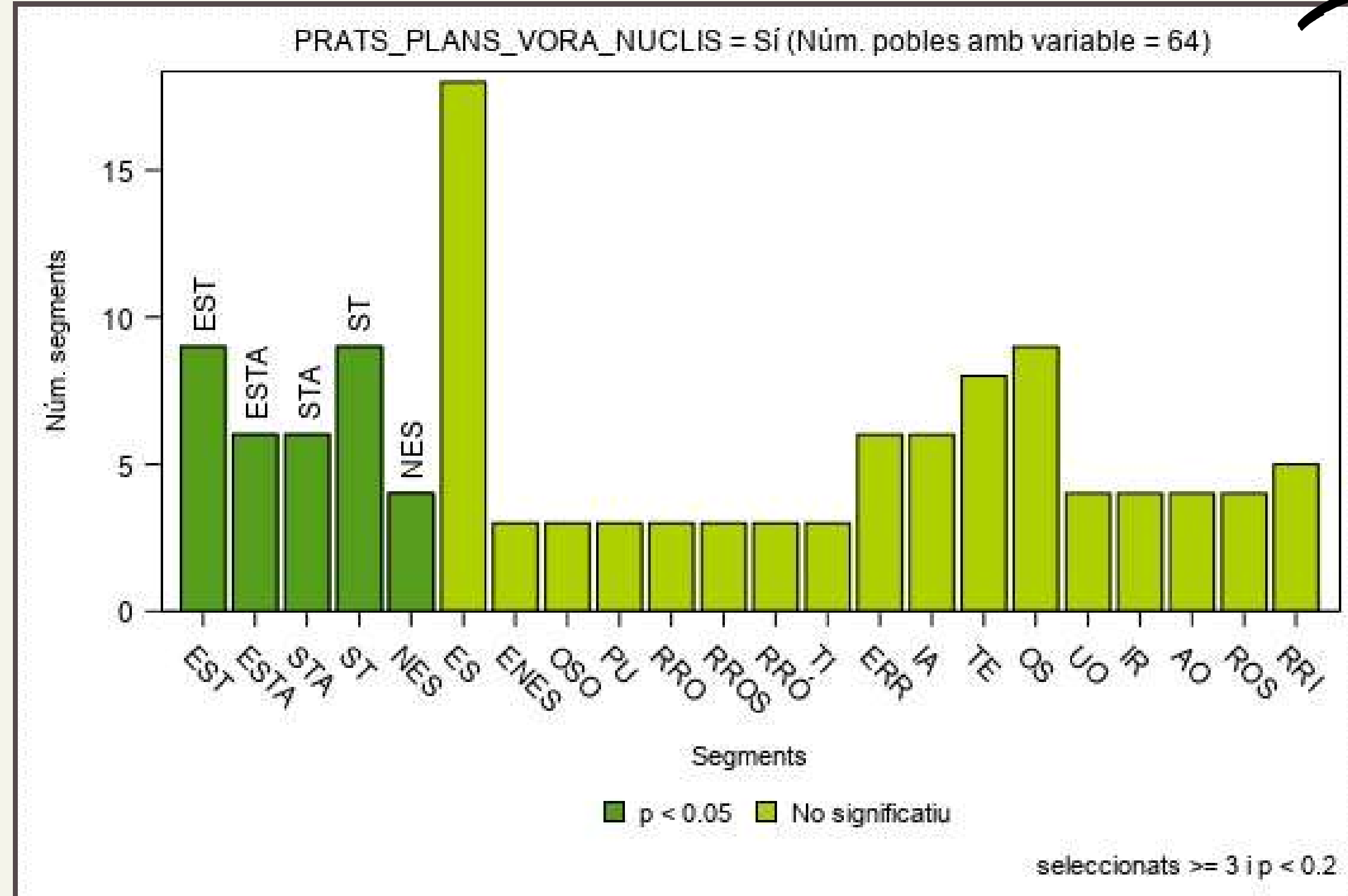**(mountain) pass:** p<u>ort</u> in Catalan, Spanish, Basque, Gascon

(sea) port: p<u>ort</u> (Catalan, French, Romanian, Maltese, Bulgarian, Scots, English, Russian, Serbian, Welsh), p<u>uerto</u> (Spanish), p<u>orto</u> (Italian), p<u>orta</u> (Portuguese)

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Old word *esta

*esta

stagnant waters

[immobile permanent]

PRATS_PLANS_VORA_NUCLIS = Sí (Núm. pobles amb variable = 64)

Segments of the place names that are best related to flat meadows.

Legend: p < 0.05 | No significatiu

seleccionats >= 3 i p < 0.2
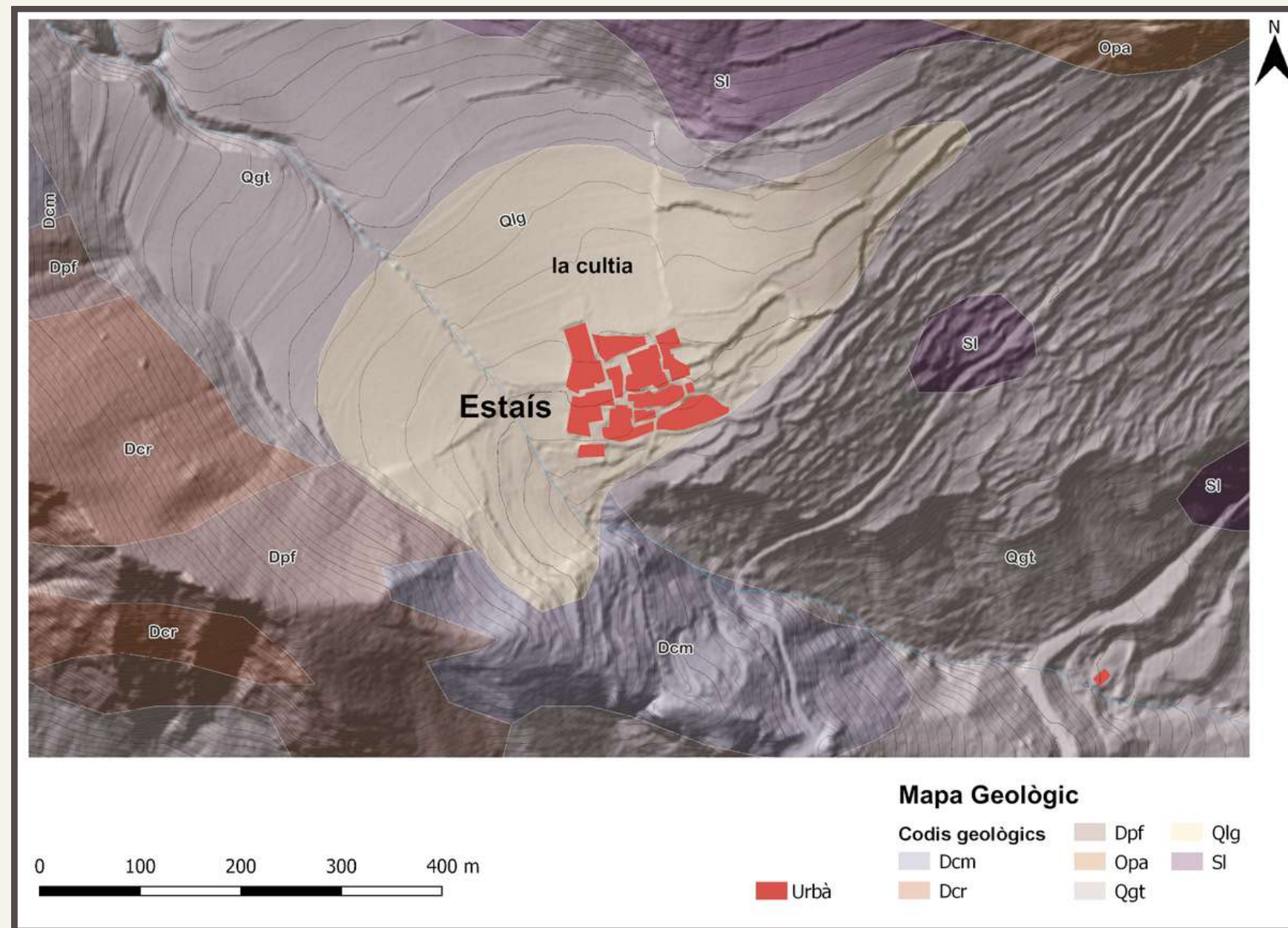
Old word *esta

*esta

stagnant waters

[immobile permanent]

*esta at the beginning Estac, Estaís, Estaon, Estaron, Esterri

*esta in the middle Arestui, Balestui, Bonestarre, Sestui

*esta at the end Alós(t), Araós(t), Arrós(t), Aurós(t), Berrós(t), Escós(t), Cassibrós(t),Virós(t)

Mapa Geològic

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Old word *esta

*esta

stagnant waters

[immobile permanent]

Esterri d'Àneu

Mapa Geològic

Codis geològics

- Urbà
- ÇOrcm
- ÇOrgl
- Qco
- Qgt
- Qll
- Qt0-1
- Qv0-1

0 200 400 600 800 m

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Old word *esta

stagnant waters

[immobile permanent]

Greek: sta̱tos 'static'

Latin: sta̱re 'to be'

Catalan: esta̱ny 'lake', esta̱ble 'sta̱ble', està̱tua 'sta̱tue', esta̱ca 'sta̱ke', esta̱ncar 'sta̱gnant'

English: ste̱ady, sta̱y, sti̱ck, sto̱p, sta̱nd, sto̱rage, stu̱bborn, sta̱ll, stṟike
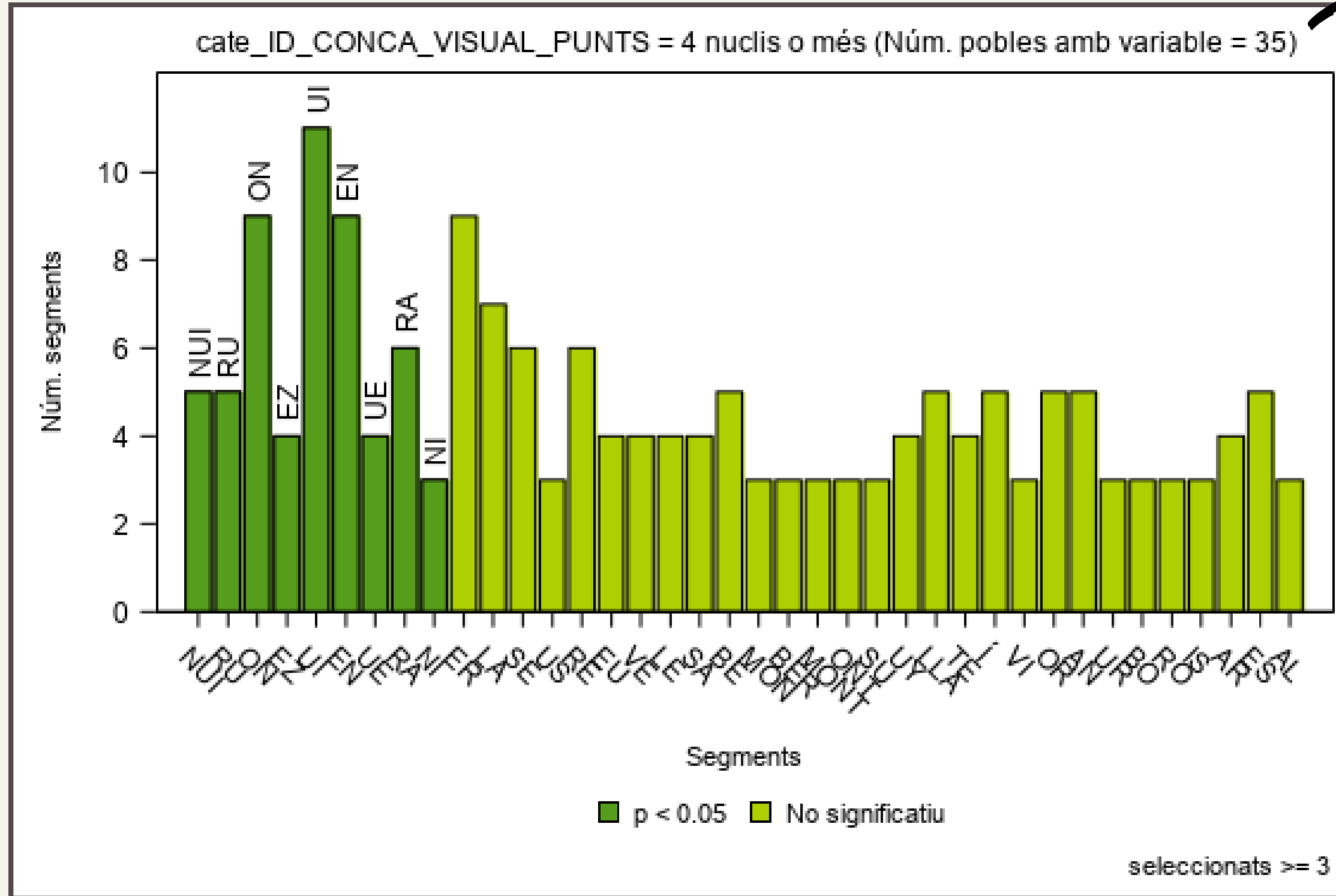
Scots: sta̱b, sta̱undin, ki̱st

Basque: eusta̱ga 'stake that, crossed over the axle of a wheel, prevents the cart from moving', osta̱tu 'ho̱stel, inn, accommodation, boarding house, lodge', uste̱an 'waiting'

Old word *one

*one

↑
TOP

places located
on top of others

[above]

cate_ID_CONCA_VISUAL_PUNTS = 4 nuclis o més (Núm. pobles amb variable = 35)

Segments

■ p < 0.05 ■ No significatiu

seleccionats >= 3

Segments of the place names that are best related to 4 or more villages visibles.

Old word *one

*one

↑

TOP

**places located
on top of others**

[above]

*one at the beginning U̲n̲arre, Norís (past A̲n̲oris), A̲n̲às

***one in the middle** Cartanís (in the past Cart̲o̲n̲is)

*one at the end Auló (past Ol̲o̲n̲e̲), Montenartró (past Montano Ort̲o̲n̲e̲), Rubió (past Rubi̲o̲n̲), Son (past S̲o̲n̲n̲e̲), Altron (past Otr̲o̲n̲e̲)

on (English), **aan** (Dutch), **an** (German), **ana** (Avestan), πάνω **pano** (Greek), **ant** (Lithuanian), **на na** (Belarusian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Bosnian, Croatian, Slovak, Slovenian, Polish, Portuguese, Czech), **në** (Albanian)

Etymological interpretation
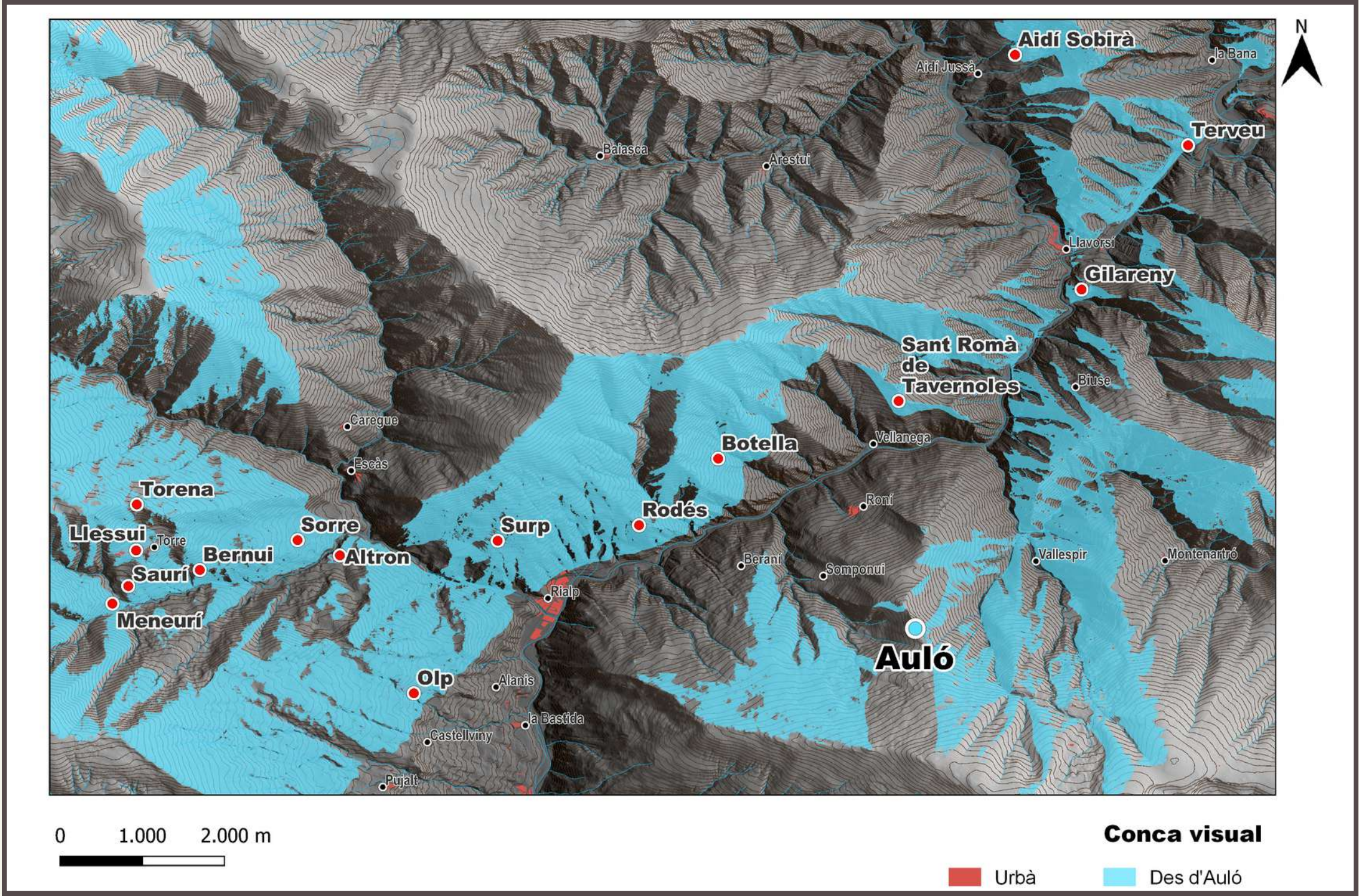
Auló (past Olone) ← OL *oil 'eye (lookout place)   ONE *one 'above' = 'the eye above'

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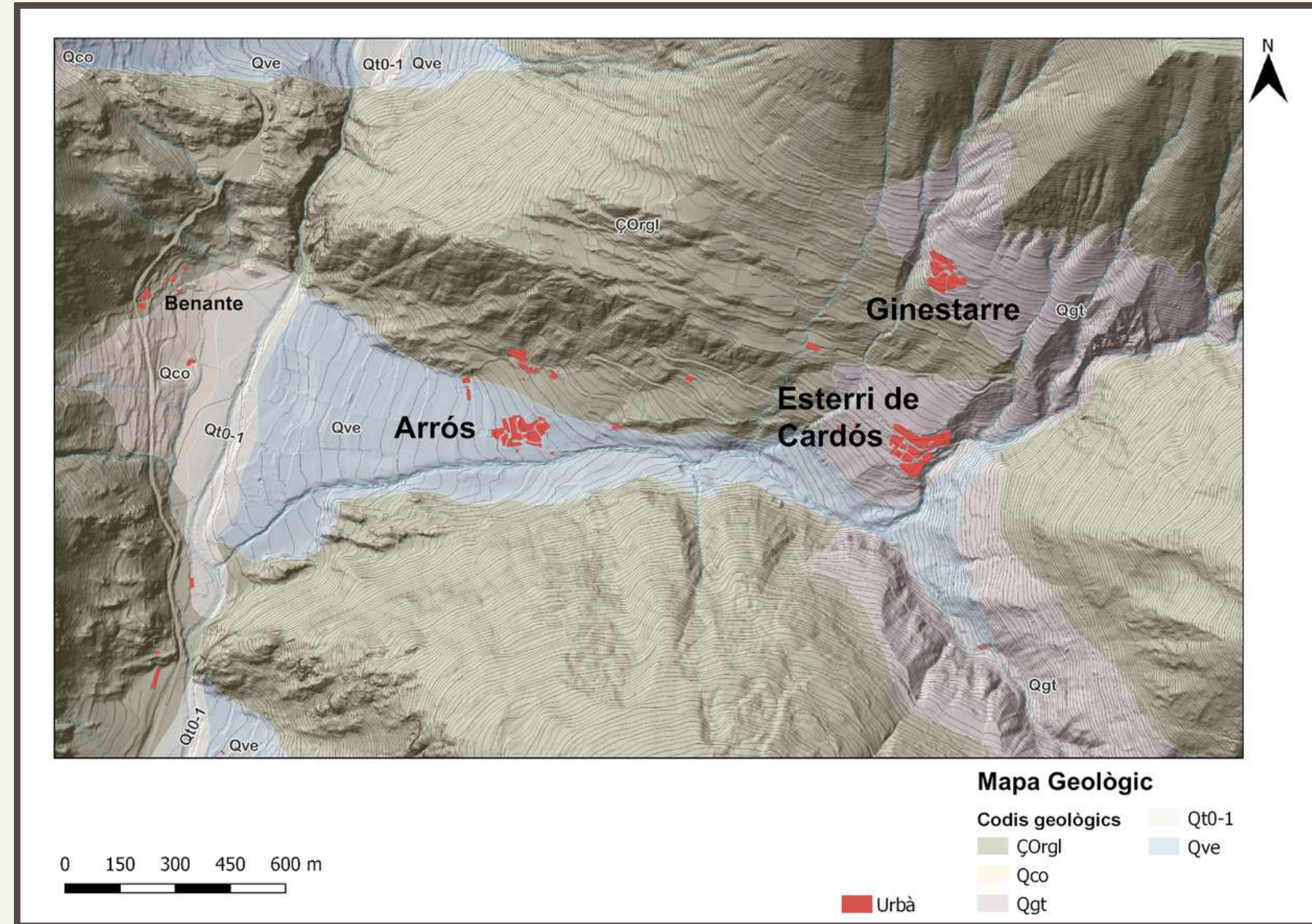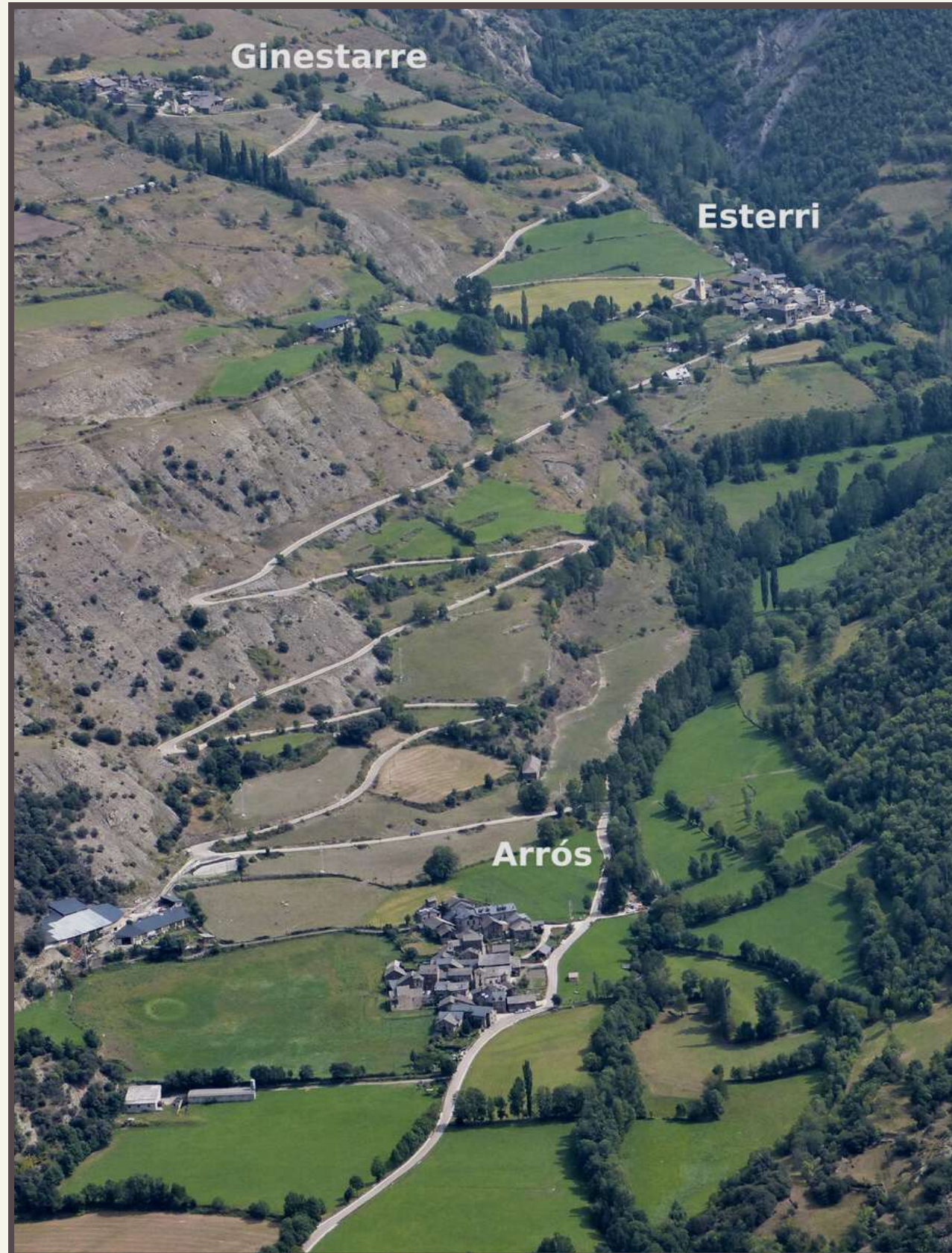de Barcelona

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Syntax

Escalarre <   **esca**   **al**   **arre**
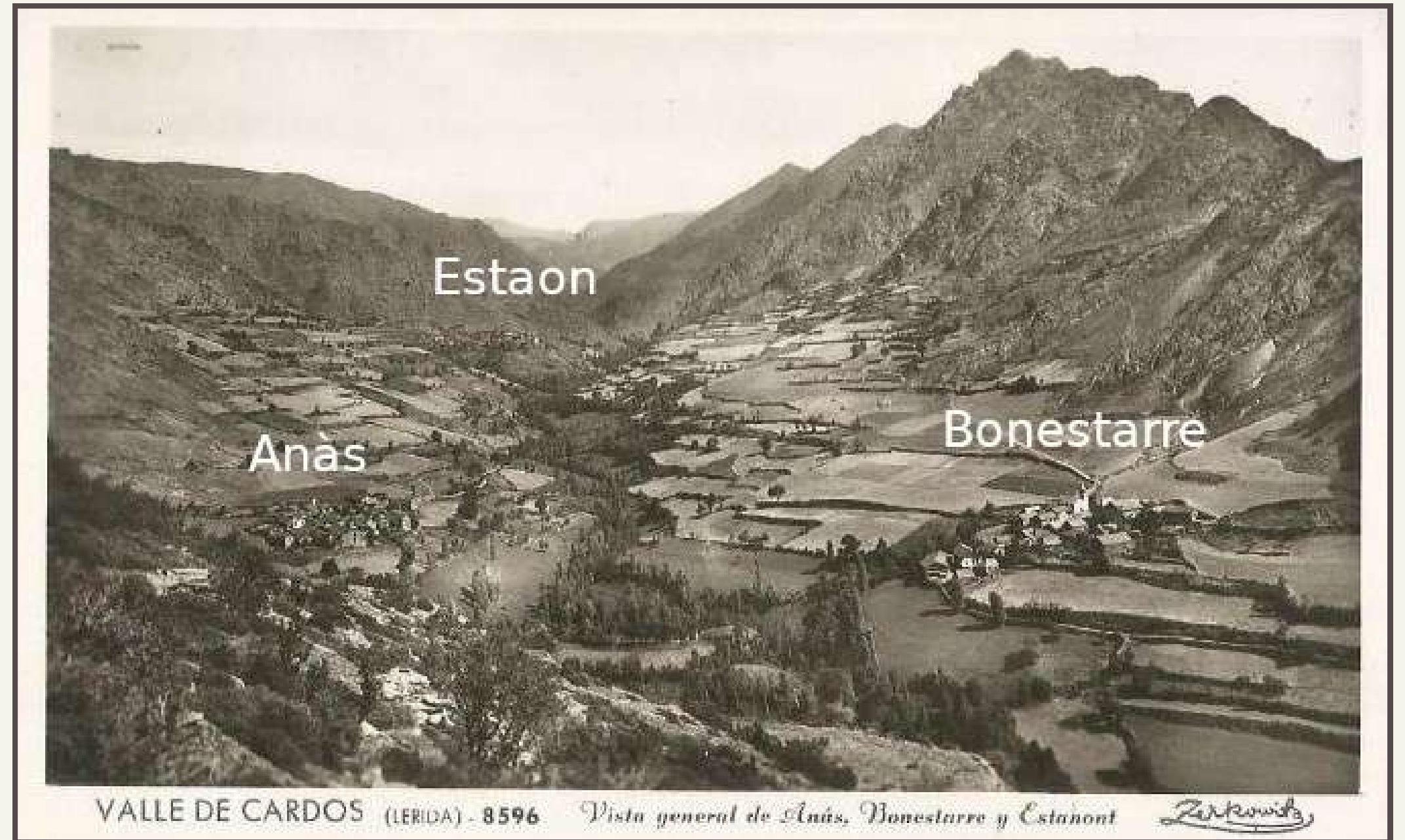
*esca   ***oil**   ***(v)orte**
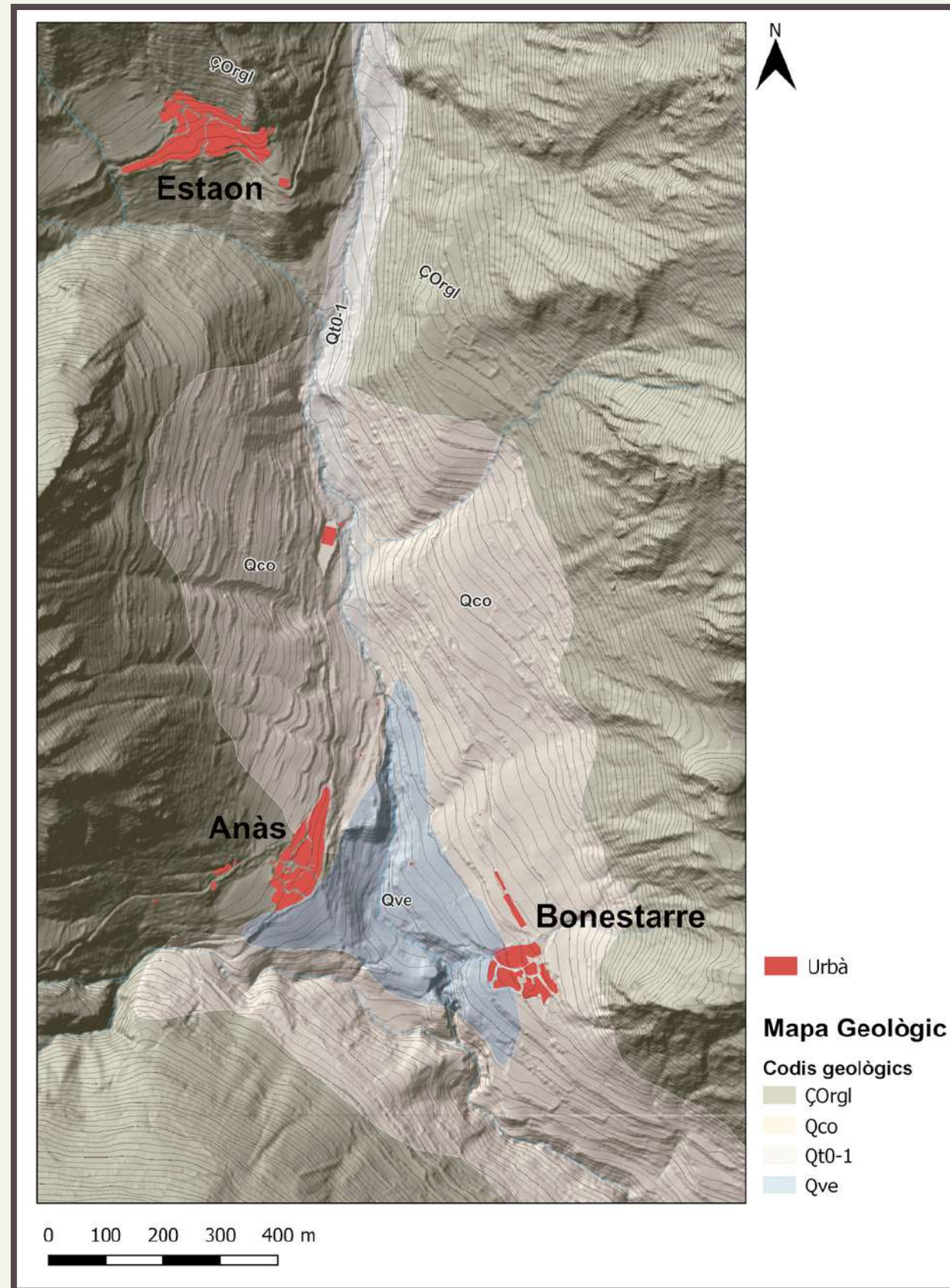
'in the cut (gorge), eye (lookout) of the passage place (crossroad)'

Clusters of nearby place names

Mapa Geològic

Arr<u>ós</u>(t), Est<u>er</u>ri, Gin<u>est</u>arre *esta 'stagnant waters'

Arr<u>ós</u>(t), Est<u>erri</u>, Ginest<u>arre</u> *(v)orte > *orre 'passage place'
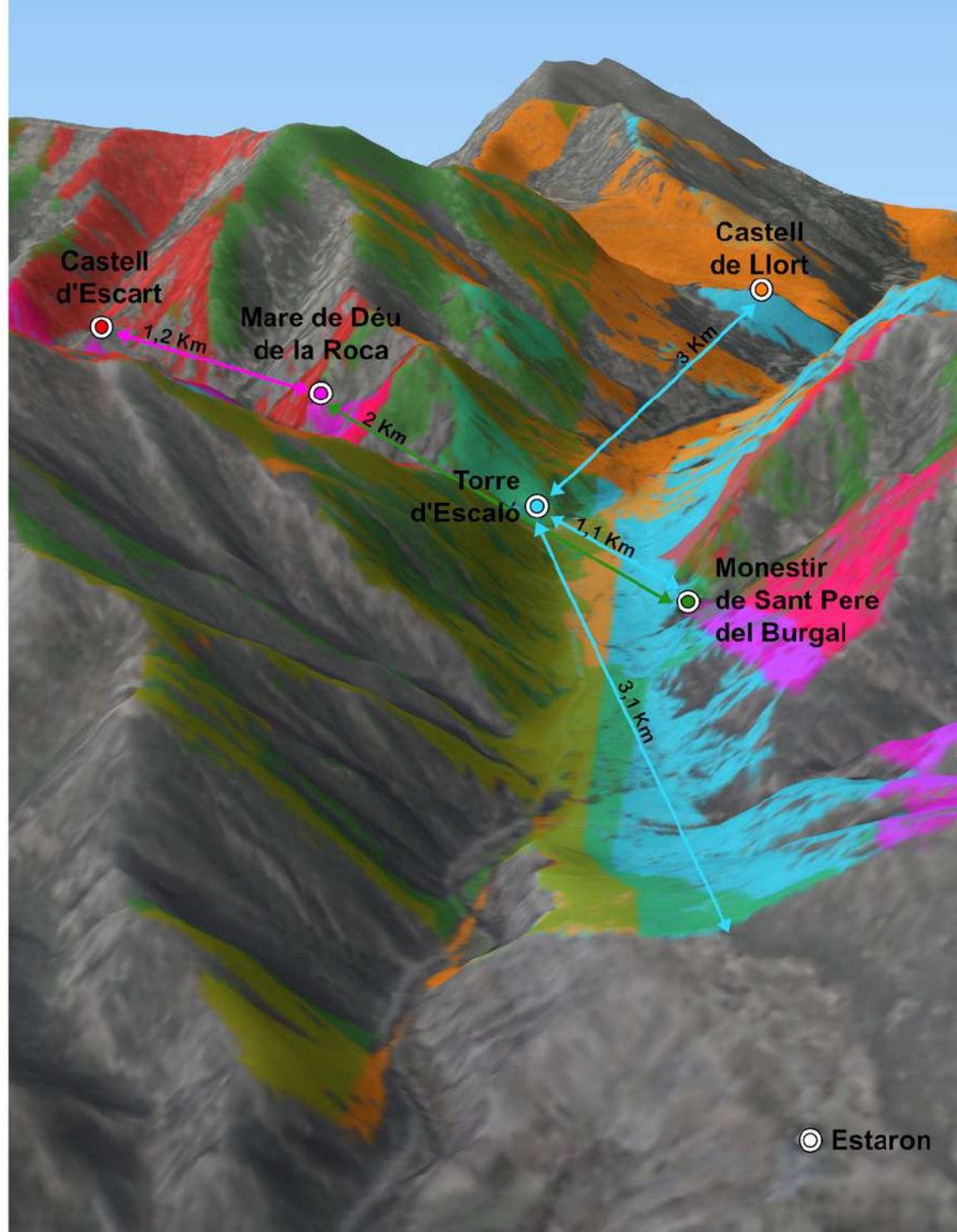
Clusters of nearby place names

VALLE DE CARDOS (LERIDA) - 8596. *Vista general de Anás, Bonestarre y Estanont*

Anàs(t), Estaon, Bonestarre *esta 'stagnant waters'

Anàs(t), Estaon, Bonestarre *one 'above'

Clusters of nearby place names

Conques Visuals

- 🟥 Des del Castell d'Escart
- 🟪 Des de l'ermita de la Mare de Déu de la Roca
- 🟦 Des de la Torre d'Escaló
- 🟩 Des del Monestir de Sant Pere del Burgal
- 🟧 Des de la Torre de Llort

Map labels: Castell d'Escart, Mare de Déu de la Roca, Castell de Llort, Torre d'Escaló, Monestir de Sant Pere del Burgal, Estaron

Distances: 1,2 Km, 2 Km, 3 Km, 1,1 Km, 3,1 Km

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Clusters of nearby place names

Escart

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Clusters of nearby place names

Burgal

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Clusters of nearby place names

Escart

ESCA *esca 'cut, gorge'
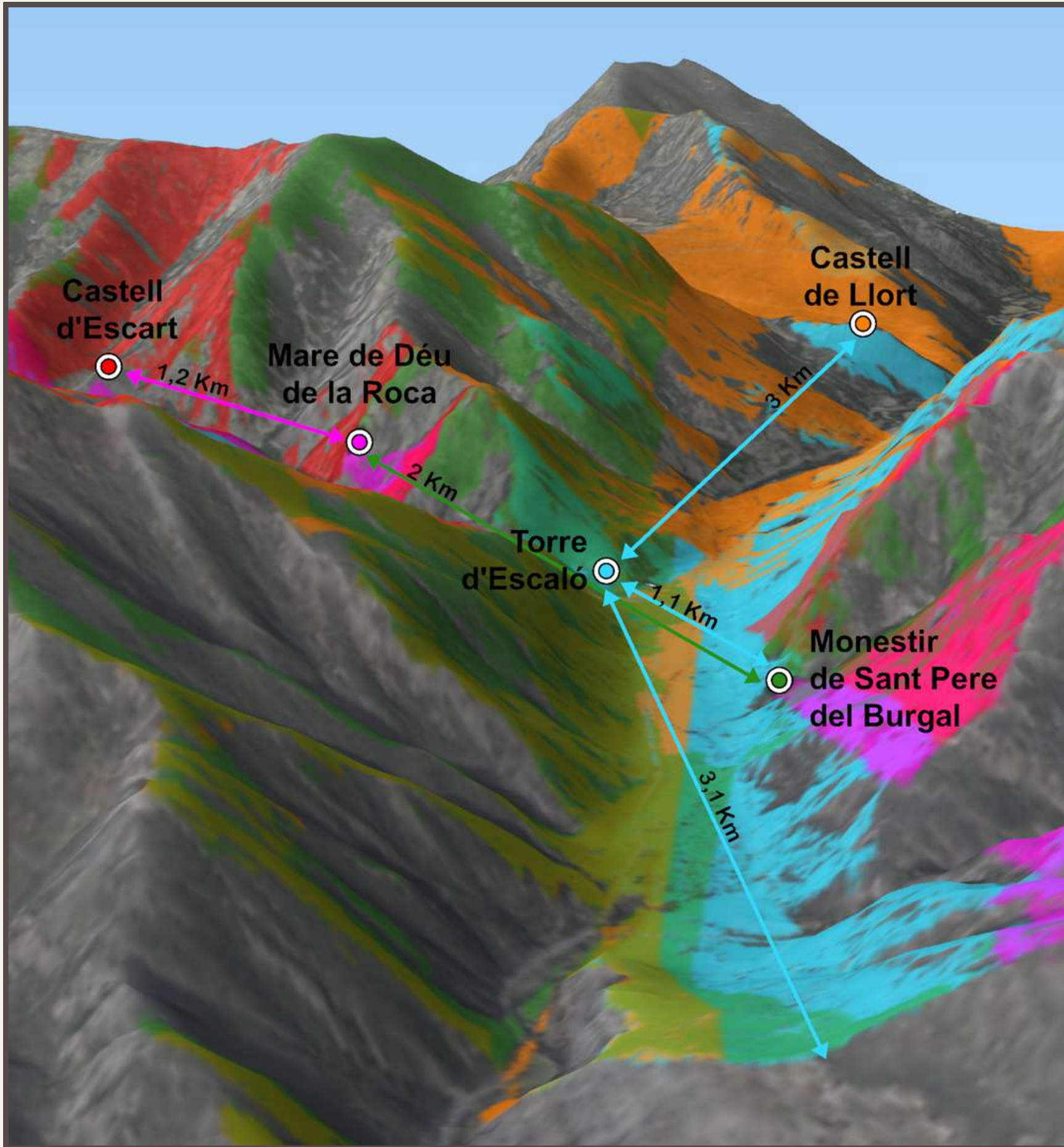ART *orte 'entrance'
= 'in the gorge, the entrance'

Escaló

ESCA *esca cut, gorge'
AL *oil 'eye, lookout place'
Ó *one 'above'
= 'in the gorge, the upper sentinel place'

Burgal

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Traditional method	Novel method
Analysis based on the comparative method, but without a systematisationAnalysis based on the comparative method, but without a systematisation	Analysis based on a computerized corpus
Decision of the language of the opaque place name based on the region and the history of where it is	It is considered a risky stage
Etymological proposal based on the similarity between the opaque place name and a common name of the chosen language	It is considered a subjective stage
Opaque place names are considered [kənsídəd] to be formed by roots and affixes, although in some cases also by composition	Opaque place names are considered considered to be formed by composition
Use of comparative linguistics and historical grammar	Use of corpus linguistics, proximity geography (with the use of GIS), statistics and cognitive linguistics
The humans who named the places are not taken into account	Place names are considered to reflect the knowledge and perception of the environment by humans, so the cognitive part is taken into account
The specific place which are named by place names is not always taken into account	The specific place that topoynims name are the basis of toponymic etymology

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Future research

Portree

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THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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