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A “Rock-spring” Sanctuary in the Greek Tradition? Ritual Practices at La Fajouse, a Sacred Spring on the Summit of the Eastern Pyrenees (Late 6th Century BC–6th Century AD)

Ingrid Dunyach

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Rock & Ritual

*Caves, Rocky Places and Religious Practices
in the Ancient Mediterranean*

Edited by
Sonia MACHAUSE
Carmen RUEDA
Ignasi GRAU
Réjane ROURE



Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée

ROCK & RITUAL

*Caves, Rocky Places and Religious Practices
in the Ancient Mediterranean*

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A “Rock-spring” Sanctuary in the Greek Tradition? Ritual Practices at La Fajouse, a Sacred Spring on the Summit of the Eastern Pyrenees (Late 6th Century BC–6th Century AD)

Ingrid DUNYACH¹

1 Research History and Approach

The archaeological excavation of the Greco-Roman sanctuary of La Fajouse has given a new insight into ritual proceedings around sacred water springs. The site is located on the last peak of the Mediterranean Pyrenees, on the present-day border between France and Spain. Its dominant position in the landscape makes it visible from the massif, as well as from the plains of Roussillon (France) and Empordà (Spain), on the latter of which the Greeks founded two colonies, Emporion and Rhode, in the 6th and 4th centuries BC, respectively (Fig. 1).

La Fajouse was discovered in December 2011 and archaeological excavation campaigns were carried out between 2012 and 2014. These first explorations were followed by an interdisciplinary research project covering the whole eastern massif of the Pyrenees.² The data collected during the first campaigns has been already published (Dunyach, Roudier 2016). Since 2017, the research has focused more on specific aspects of the sanctuary, especially the human and religious landscape surrounding the sacred spring (Dunyach, Roudier 2018; Dunyach *et al.* 2016; Dunyach 2018; Dunyach *in press*). A second research project “*Sacred spaces of a water spring. Study of a religious landscape at the top of the Pyrenees*” is under development. It will enable the continuance of the excavations at the site, as well as a thorough examination of the neighbouring environment using LIDAR and surveys to assess all the archaeological remains uncovered in the Massane Valley. Undertaken simultaneously, these two research lines would help us draw up a dynamic history of the Mediterranean Pyrenees and to place the sanctuary in its overall context.

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2. Since 2012 this research has been supported by the LabEx ARCHIMEDE under the programme entitled “Investissements d’Avenir” ANR-11-LABX-0032-01. Research programme *Le Roussillon: interaction, production et organisation (VI^e-I^{er} siècle avant J.-C.)*, directed by M. Galinier within LabEx ARCHIMEDE Montpellier-CNRS, Axis 1 and 2, associating a team from the archaeological association of the GPVA and the Massane Forest National Natural Reserve.



Fig. 1—Location of the sanctuary of La Fajouse (Map: H. Bohbot, CNRS, UMR 5140).

2 The “Rock-spring” of La Fajouse

2.1 Site Topography

The water flows at the base of a large, pyramid-shaped rock almost 6 metres high. At the bottom there is a semi-circular cavity from which the water gushes (Fig. 2). The site is situated on a vast slope with numerous ledges and has an east-west orientation. The rock is located on the ridges of the Massane, slightly lower than the pass. In fact, it is regularly exposed to natural elements such as lightning (which strikes frequently this area) and especially the north (Tramontane) and south winds.

2.2 The Archaeological Surveys

A total of 230 m² have been explored to date. Four main sectors have been the object of extensive surveys: the spring area and three terraces on the lower part of the site. The depth of the remains varies between 10 cm for the spring area and 80 cm to one meter of stratigraphy for the terraces. The main dig has been coupled with a series of surveys of the immediate site surroundings. Some archaeological windows have revealed the presence of remains almost as far as 20 m from the spring (see the path in Fig. 4).



Fig. 2—View of the rock-spring with part of the terraces during the excavations (Photos: I. Dunyach; Aerial photography: S. Durant).

2.3 General Chronology

The stratigraphic levels can be organised into three chronological phases. Phase I, dated between the end of the 6th and the 5th / early 4th centuries BC, marks the beginning of religious activities at La Fajouse. Phase II begins in the middle of the 4th century and covers the whole of the 3rd century BC, when the sanctuary was most intensively frequented. The spring and its surroundings are organised around a basin and several terraces. Finally, Phase IIIa (3rd and 2nd centuries BC) coincides with the establishment of the Romans in neighbouring Spain. A profound change in ritual practices brought about by Roman influences took place during this phase. This third phase is followed by a hiatus between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Phase IIIb) recognised at the site and across the entire Pyrenean Massif (Dunyach, Roudier 2018). However, a renewal of religious activities is discernible between the 3rd and 4th/6th centuries AD (IIIc), then the site was abandoned, and religious activities no longer attested.

3 Synthesis of the Discovered Remains

The rigorous methodology followed during the excavation enabled a spatial analysis of the sanctuary and brought to light a variety of singular religious phenomena. The vast majority of the offerings and religious ware were found around the spring cavity. This sacred space is characterised in the Iron Age (Phase I/II) by pottery used in Greek ritual practices. This includes miniature *krateriskoi*, cups and glass perfume vessels on clay core. During the Roman phase (III), offerings and/or ritual coin throwing became central to the cult (*jactatio stipis*) (Dunyach, Roudier 2016).

3.1 Phase I (Late 6th Century–Early 4th Century BC)

The first cultural traces appear around 535 and 500 BC and continue until the middle of the 4th century BC. The remains were organised into two distinct areas. The first, dedicated to offerings around the spring, contained a variety of fragments of imported Rhodian perfume vessels in coloured glass and a few rare sherds of Attic ware (Fig. 3). These remains are

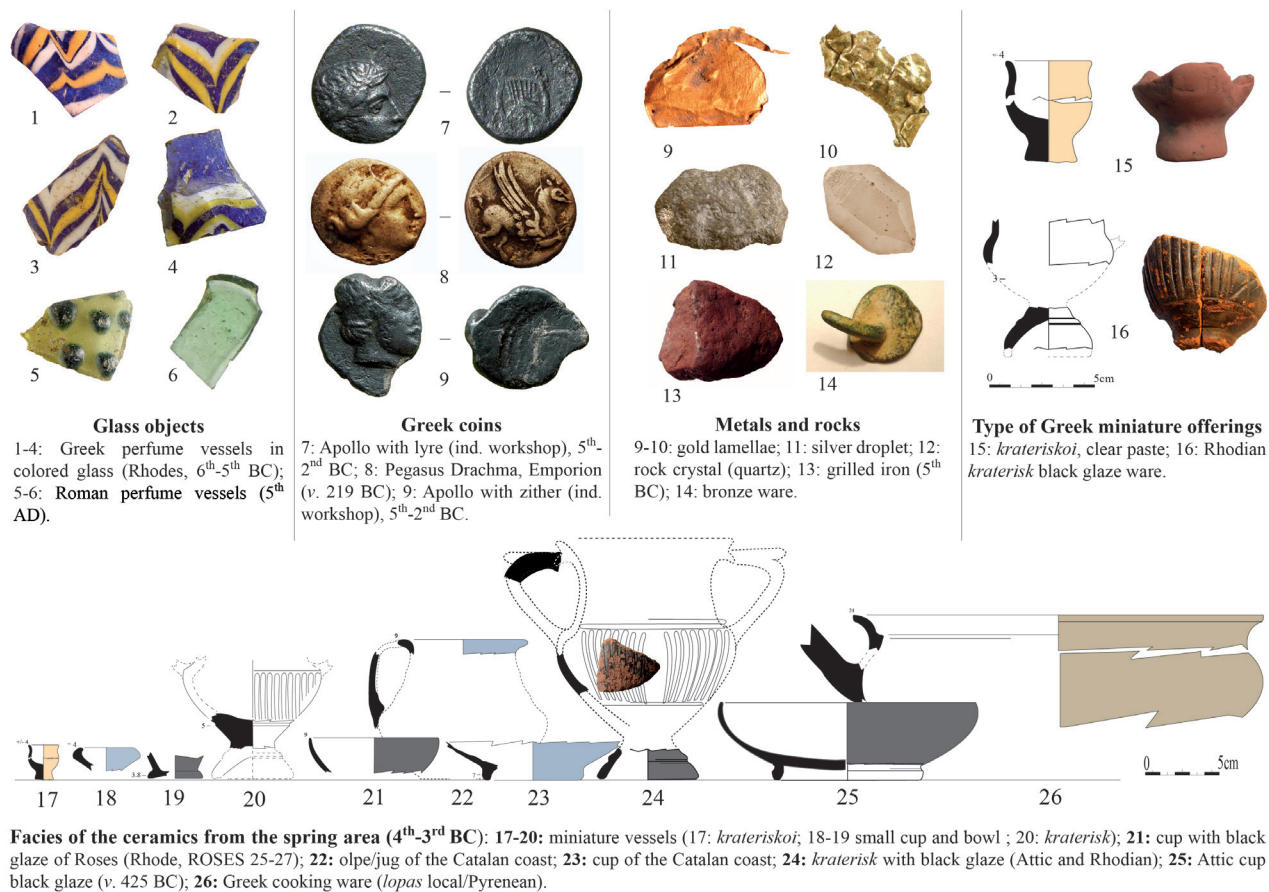


Fig. 3—Type of material discovered at La Fajouse (phases 6th–3rd BC).

associated either with open air iron ore deposits and silver droplets or with buried vegetal deposits in pits.³ The second area, which has been interpreted as the sacrificial space, is directly below the spring cavity (Fig. 4: Terrace 2). Close to the natural rock, a small rock altar (a quadrangular stone and mortar structure) is associated with a charcoal fill level. In front of the altar, a number of small pits contained residues of consecration rituals (charcoal, purposely broken and/or burnt ceramics).

Around 400 BC, these two areas were covered by a sterile level of earth in which a posthole (TP304) was dug.⁴ Do these elements mark a voluntary concealment and a signalisation of the ritual pits? In any event, this episode is an indication of a reorganisation of the zone underlining a change in ritual practices and the spaces they occupied. Indeed, from this point on, the religious activities would exclusively take place near the spring cavity.

3.2 Phase II (mid-4th and 3rd Centuries BC)

During the second half of the 4th century BC, the spring and the areas situated on the slope of the site were restructured and a basin and numerous terraces were built. These

structures would mark the ritual topography of the sanctuary until the Roman period (Fig. 4).

3.2.1 Around the Spring's Cavity: Offerings and Vegetal Sacrifices

The offerings were deposited at the spring water's edge and in its immediate surroundings. Only two gold lamellae have been found (Fig. 3: Nos. 9 and 10). A perishable support, possible a wooden plank, may have been used to place the vessels on, after which they would have fallen and accumulated over time at the bottom of the basin (Dunyach, Roudier 2016: 8–10; Dunyach in press: Fig. 8–9). The interior of the basin and the southern part of the cavity were empty, they seem to have been preserved from human activities and in fact can be interpreted as a space dedicated to the god(s).

The pottery was probably deposited in the open air. It consists of miniature Greek vessels (Fig. 3: No. 15, *krateriskoi*, intended for holding small offerings: 7.7%), pouring vessels (*olpe*/jugs: 20.5%) and drinking vessels (cups, bowls, *krateriskoi*: 71.8%) (Fig. 3: Facies of the ceramics from the spring area) (Dunyach, Roudier 2016: 8). Some of the ceramics were ritually broken on the spot and then buried under fine gravel. This act was repeated several times, illustrating the existence of ritual behavioural patterns, plausibly replicated over time and generations.

On the water's edge, a small pit contains evidence of a ritual sequence associated with liquid offerings (FS. 104).

3. FS.1051: ashes, partially burnt vegetables and fatty substances (butter, milk?) (see DUNYACH, ROUDIER 2016: 5–6).

4. Carbon dating (TP304) gave a chronological range between Cal BC 510–395 (95 % probability) with a peak at Cal BC 405.

After use, the vessels (64 fragments from 12 different vessels) were broken, some burnt and trimmed, before being partially retrieved and methodically buried in pieces with vegetal material, charcoal and small stones (3 to 5 cm) (Dunyach in press). The plant matter adhered to the interior of the sherds demonstrates the use of the pottery for or during the preparation of vegetal offerings, whereas the fragments of *olpe*, cups and a small *kraterisk* suggest libation-type practices.

At this period, the burning of these elements (plants, pottery, etc.) took place near the spring, where a small structure with rubified rocks is located, on the north side of the cavity. In the charcoal-filled level surrounding this small rustic altar, numerous sherds of Greek cookware (*lopas*) were found (Fig. 3: No. 26). This structure appears to have replaced the former sacrificial altar on which the ritual proceedings were practiced. The remnants of ritual activities undertaken on the altar (fire, the burning of plants and pottery) were in part collected and then buried near the water's mouth (FS.104).

3.2.2 The Lower Part of the Sanctuary: the Terraces

In the lower part of the sanctuary, the terraces are delimited by large stones (40 x 50 cm) that can be interpreted as boundaries. Their fill is characterised by a succession of "layering stone" calibrated (10-20 cm) between which sparse pottery sherds were found (Fig. 2). These different stone layers cannot be attributed to a geological phenomenon but rather to a voluntary overlapping, probably related to a rite or to the sanctuary maintenance (Dunyach, Roudier 2016: 13, Fig. 12; Denti 2016). A path leading to the water cavity is punctuated by a considerable number of cup fragments. This type of pottery was discovered below stone layers from separate stratigraphic horizons, indicating ritual gestures repeated between the 4th and 3rd centuries BC.

The peripheral areas of the sanctuary are still under study. The remains visible now on Terrace 2 are quite poorly preserved. However, we can indicate the discovery of a monetary treasure composed of Greek silver coins (Fig. 3: Nos. 7 and 9). This lavish offering could indicate that the zones on the lower part of the sanctuary (the terraces) should be considered as part of the sacred sphere. A study led by P.Y. Melmoux and P. Amandry identified these coins as Greek. They are adorned with an Apollo wearing a laurel wreath on the obverse and a zither (or lyre) on the reverse. They are inscribed with Greek characters, although the study has not yet been able to conclude their exact origin; based on their stylistic and metrological characteristics, they are most likely to have been produced between the 5th and 4th centuries BC (maybe in Emporion?).

3.3 Proposal Regarding the Evolution of Ritual Practices Over Time

The spatial analysis of the archaeological material and more widely the close examination of all the data collected allows us to propose an initial reconstruction of the religious practices (Fig. 4). In every chronological phase identified at La Fajouse, the sacred space is situated near the spring water. The votive material of Greek origin was mainly deposited on the water's edge and in the stream flowing from the basin. It consisted of offerings (perfumes, precious metals, plants) and

miniature vessels (*krateriskoi* and other miniature ceramics) associated with drinking and pouring vessels (jugs/*olpe* and cups). This type of pottery is commonly found in religious contexts where it was used for consumption and libation practices throughout the Greek or, more widely, the Hellenic world. Based on over 4,000 pottery sherds, the homogenous archaeological levels from Phase II encompass a total of 2,597 vessels in terms of the finds made between 2012 and 2014. The imported pottery is mainly from the Mediterranean, more specifically the Greek world: perfume vessels produced in Rhodes (Fig. 3, No. 1-4) (Nenna 2012: 64-65, Fig. 3d and 4b), coins depicting Apollo (Fig. 3: Nos. 7 and 9) and Attic ware (5%). The rest of the pottery (80%) consists of fine ware produced in north-eastern Spain (black-glazed Attic ware from the Greek colony of Rhode (Rosas): 33.5%; Catalan coastal ware: 26.9% and Iberian common ware: 14.6%). This data indicates that the main worshippers at the sanctuary were in all likelihood Greeks and native peoples from nearby Rhode and Emporion. The Greek cookware (*lopas*) and the sparse presence of elements from large vessels could be evidence of culinary preparations related to commensal practices at the site. We could imagine that meals would have been prepared and then shared with the divinity; but what remains of a meal taken in the open air that an archaeologist can perceive?

We have seen that animal and plant offerings (entirely conserved or partially burnt) were deposited in pits near the water (basin and stream)⁵. This is a constant factor in all the practices undertaken around this area that were visibly dedicated to a divinity in the archaic and classical periods (Phases I-II). To date, no faunal remains have been uncovered at the site, although the plant offerings during the Iron Age, as well as the presence of wine amphorae during the Roman period (Phase III), suggest the traditional ritual practices of the Greco-Roman world were carried out there. In fact, wine was largely used as part of vegetal offerings, as were fruits or cereals; meat and plant offerings occupied different levels of practices, although they are equivalent in a way and both equally important (Scheid 2011: 110-111).

Finally, although the rituals at La Fajouse differed between the Greek and Roman periods, there was a certain continuity, if not in the offerings, in the religious topography of the sanctuary. In that respect, this continuity in the organisation of the sacred spaces does not express the continuity of a pre-Roman cult but rather "a respect for the religious memory and local history as part of a reformulation of the religious system" (Van Andringa 2017: 343) over almost a thousand years.

An interesting illustration of our remarks is the description of the Otáñes Patera which depicts a sacred space around a spring water source (Iglesias Gil, Ruiz Gutiérrez 2012: 351). Dated between the 1st and the 4th centuries AD, this plate offers a unique perception of a sacred landscape in three parts. Firstly, the divinity of the spring and its natural environment

5. It is important to note that the offerings could also have been deposited in the open air, in miniature vessels found around the water's edge. The sieving of the fill from the basin did not return any identifiable domestic seeds (fruits or unprocessed cereals). However, the chemical analysis of the pits (N. Garnier) rendered a small percentage of vegetal species and traces of a greasy substance from a ruminant animal, probably a left-over from a processed product such as butter or milk.

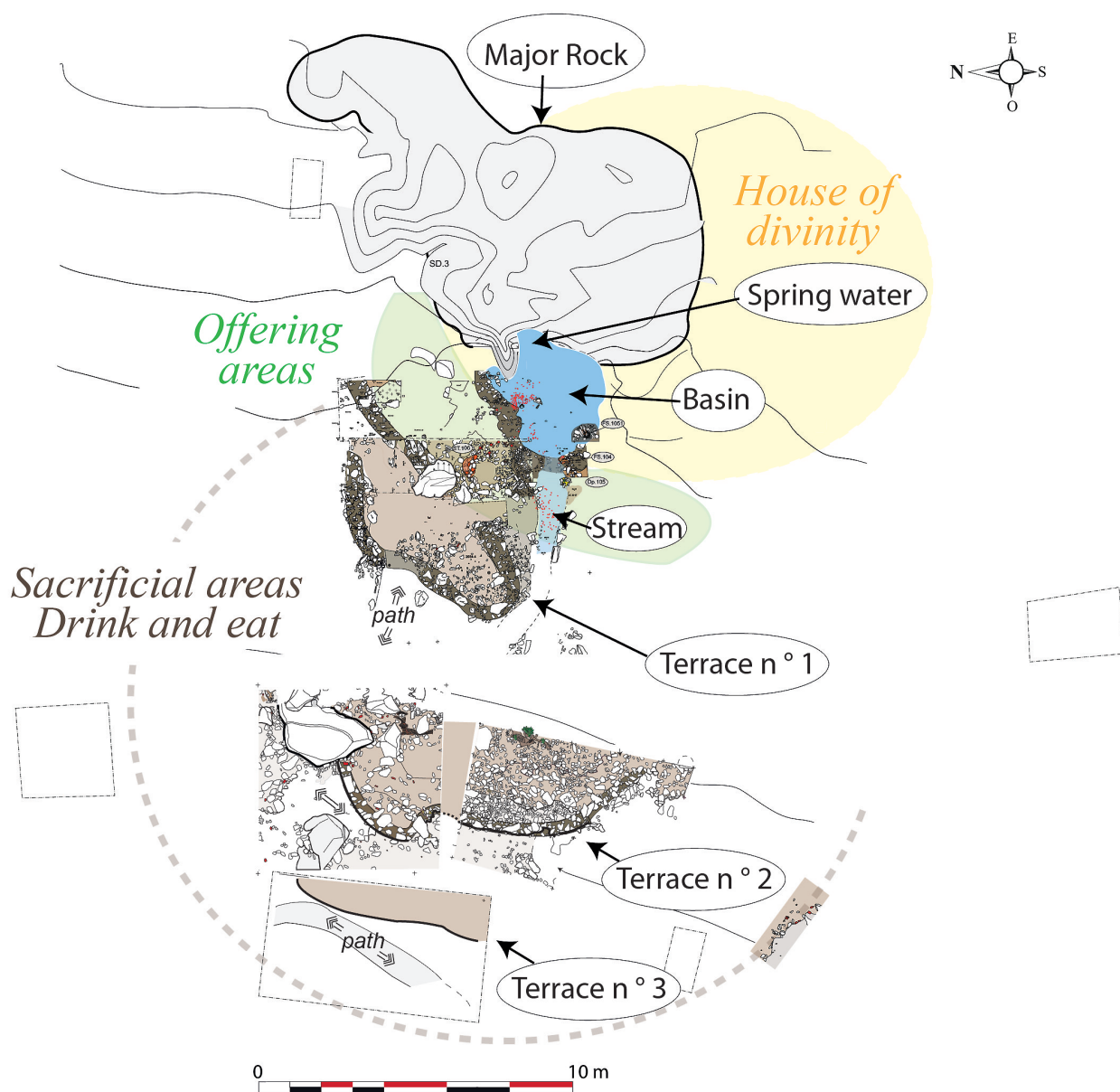


Fig. 4—Interpretative plan of the spaces identified at the sanctuary of La Fajouse.

(the sacred space it inhabits). Directly below, a pontoon marks “the limit between the sacred and the profane” (Scheid 2007: 632), between the source and the basin. Secondly, a sacred space is reserved for religious acts of human devotion (libation, burning of the offerings, etc.). And finally, the use of the water by humans: drinking, drawing water, etc. These three parts are reflected in the activities observed at La Fajouse with a sacred space reserved for the divinity, an area for acts of a religious nature and another for profane activities (Fig. 4). Even though the zones dedicated to the divinity/divinities and those for offerings are clear at La Fajouse, the limits and full extent of the sacred space are more complex to grasp as it appears to encompass the whole mountain summit and could extend in the direction of the Mediterranean Sea.

4 A *hieron* on the Summit of the Eastern Mediterranean Pyrenees?

It is clearly necessary to evaluate on various scales the religious landscape in which the sanctuary is set and to understand its place and role in this particular territory (Dunyach 2018: 376–388). Since 2012, various surveys have been carried out on the eastern part of the Albères, from the Mediterranean to the summits of the Pyrenees, with a study encompassing a total of 660 ha (Dunyach *et al.* 2016; Dunyach 2018). In general, it is difficult to approach religious landscapes and comprehend identified sites and our hypothesis will no doubt evolve over the coming years. However, a few remarks are in order.

We can rule out the existence of a permanent presence around La Fajouse, as no traces of habitat or indications of

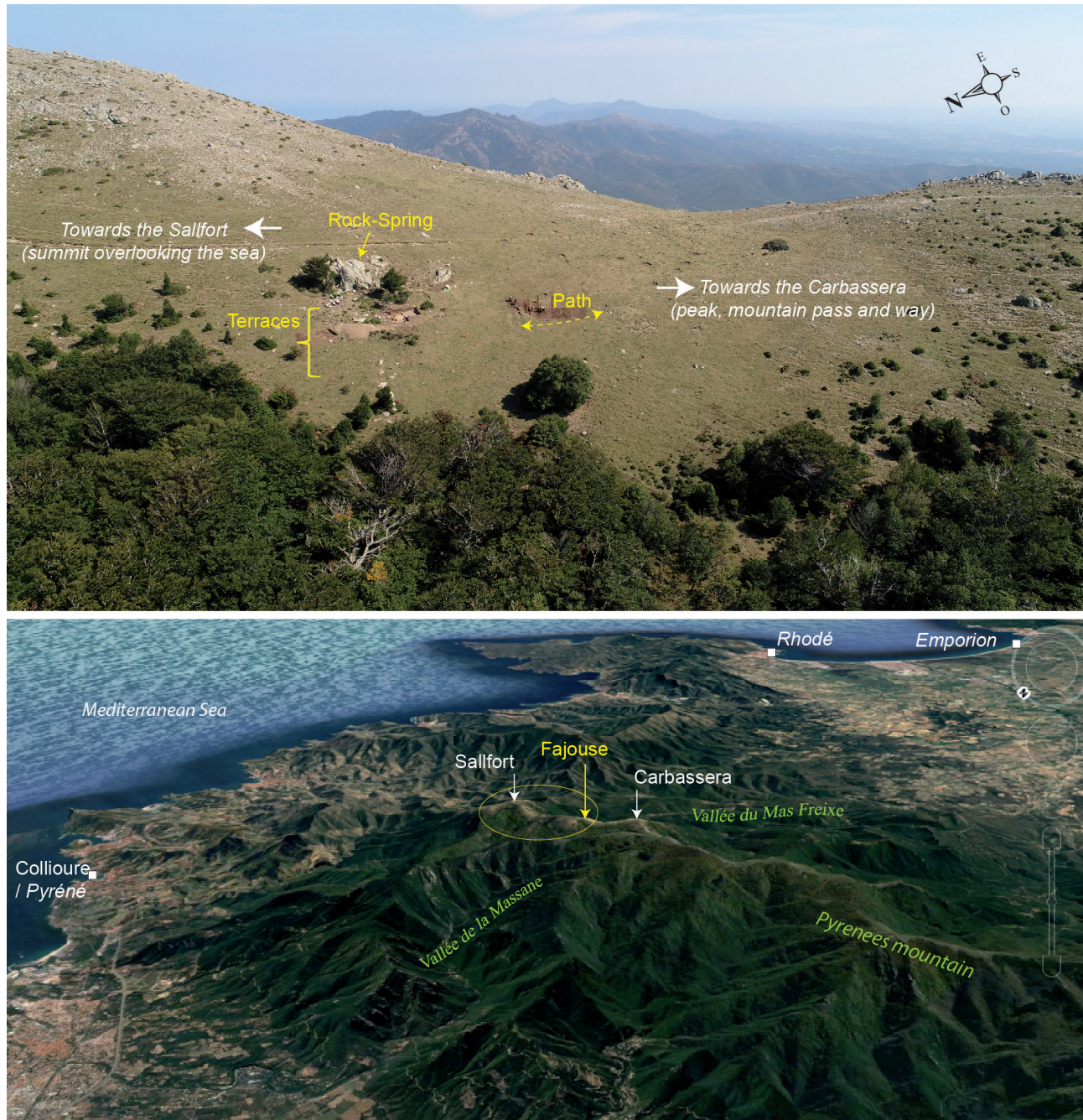


Fig. 5—Hypothesis of the localization of the sacred space around the sanctuary of La Fajouse (aerial photography: S. Durant, Geoptère archaeology), base map: Google Earth.

perennial activities, such as millstones, have been found. The human occupations are concentrated on the ridge line situated to the west of the sanctuary, notably around the Carbassère Pass (Fig. 5), where a menhir, a monetary deposit (Rhodian drachmas), a path and a large number of Roman amphora sherds have been found. The path (cut into the rock) seems to have been a frequented land circulation route from as early as the Neolithic, as well as during the protohistoric and Roman periods. It could plausibly be the Heraklean Way, which connected the agglomerations of Emporion (around 35 km from La Fajouse) and Ruscino (around 30 km from La Fajouse). The geographical situation of this ridge offers an evident strategic advantage by ensuring a point of passage

and control between the territories of Iberia and Gaul (Dunyach, Roudier 2018).

In fact, to the east, between the sanctuary and the Mediterranean Sea, the landscape appears to be a “no man’s land”. The rare remains documented are all of sacred nature: several religious deposits (five pits) containing bronze axes punctuate the area leading to the hill known as Puig de Sallfort;⁶ they represent nearly half of all the known Bronze Age axes in the Roussillon area (Pyrénées-Orientales, Occitanie Region) (Dun-

6. On the surface: five shells (eye of *Lucie*, *Astrea rugosa*) and five fragments from the Iron Age have also been found in prospections on Puig de Sallfort (see DUNYACH *et al.* 2016: 25, Fig. 8).

yach 2018: 378–379). A platform above the sanctuary could be interpreted as a summit altar facing the sea (Montagne Rase) (Dunyach, Roudier 2019); a number of fires were set during the second half of the 4th century BC, in other words, coinciding with the most active phases of the sanctuary. Among the charcoal and burnt seeds, a laurustinus seed (*Viburnum tinus*) was found; this plant grows exclusively on the plains and therefore had been taken there. This data reinforces the idea of a particular nature attributed to this high point in the landscape that had probably been “sacralised” since the Bronze and Iron Ages. In fact, we can now hypothesise that the pyramidal rock and its underlying spring could have marked the entrance to a “sacred landscape” stretching across the whole of the final Pyrenean promontory overlooking the Mediterranean (Fig. 5: Sacred space circled in yellow).

The absence of a dedicatory inscription or a specific type of offering does not allow us to identify the divinity or patron divinities of La Fajouse. Ancient texts only indicate the presence of a sacred space on the Pyrenees massif. Thus, we have advanced the hypothesis that the landscape of La Fajouse may well be the sanctuary of Aphrodite-Pyrene, a *hieron* indicating the frontier between Gallia Narbonensis and Iberia. Dedicated to Aphrodite Pyrenaia (τὸ ἱερόν τῆς Πυρηναίας Ἀφροδίτης), it is mentioned and situated by Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy on the summit of the same name (Πυρήνης ἄκρον).⁷

5 Ritual Practices Around “Rock-spring” Sanctuaries

So far, La Fajouse sanctuary does not have an equivalent in the north-western Mediterranean (Dunyach 2015). Places of worship associated with water are attested since the Iron Age, although their nature, offerings and chronologies differ (see other study cases in this volume). Moreover, they are almost exclusively streams, rivers, swamps or caves, whereas La Fajouse is a spring that emanates from a rock in the open.⁸ The finds from these sites are often characterised by the presence of fibulas, rings, weaponry or metal votive plates. La Fajouse is, therefore, unique among the sacred spaces in the Iberian, Celtic and Gaul world.

The existence of Hellenic worship practices in the west near natural elements is known at only two sacred sites:⁹ the

7. For the retranslation of the Greek and Latin texts, see DUNYACH, 2018: 317–345. See: Strabo, *Geography*, IV, 1, 3; IV, 1, 5; IV, 1, 6; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, III, 22; Ptolemy, *Geographia*, II, 6, 11. Historically, the word *hieron* was interpreted as a “constructed temple”, a monument searched for in vain in France and Spain (see the historiography summarised by RIU-BARRERA, 2004). As M. Bats remarks, we say *Athena Promachos*, without translating the epiclesis. Aphrodite (or Venus) Pyrenaia, from a geographical point, could become the epiclesis for the goddess, and it would make particular sense when compared to the myth of Pyrene (RIPOLL, 2009).

8. See the re-examination of the chronology of ritual practices relating to the element of water (ARCELIN 2003) by GOLOSETTI (2015), who reveals the absence, to this day, of cults or deposits of pre-Roman objects in the water sources of south-eastern France; we agree on this observation for the south of France (ROUDIER, 2015).

9. For sanctuaries outside Greek cities, see: Santos Retolaza and Sourisseau, 2011. We will mention the votive material discovered formerly

sanctuary of La Fajouse (from the end of the 6th century BC to the 4th and 6th centuries AD) and L’Acapte in Hyères (2nd and 1st centuries BC - 1st century AD). The sanctuary of the Rock of Acapte is situated next to the Greek town of Olbia de Provence. It is dedicated to Aristaeus, son of the nymph Cyrene and Apollo. The site yielded coins and almost 320 dedications on over 40,000 pottery fragments deposited in the open air. These finds were discovered at the foot of the rock that emerges from a swamp-like landscape (Bats 2011: 260). A dedication mentions an enclosure (*temenos*) and an altar (*bômos*), although no structures were found during the excavations (Bats 2011: 260–263).

We must look to the eastern end of the Mediterranean, particularly eastern Greece, to find a sacralisation of water.¹⁰ These divine spaces are linked to foundation myths regarding the colonisation of the west. This is the case of the myth of Heracles in which the nymphs give birth to springs so that the god could rest from his long walk.¹¹ Water, called by Seneca the “native”,¹² to name the point water emerges from the springs, can be found either associated with oracular or medicinal properties in large religious complexes (Delphi, Corinth, Epidaurus) or isolated in the heart of natural spaces dedicated to the gods (usually coexisting with a sacred wood). Springs are at the basis of the implementation of these cults, left in their natural form, sometimes covered over time by a temple. This is the case of the monumental temple of Apollo in Didymes, which was originally (v. 700–600 BC) a sacred space around a rock-spring (Parkes 1986: 121; Fontenrose 1988: 8–9; Cole 1988: 163; Kenan 2009: 66–70). At Brauron, before the construction of the site in the 6th century BC, ground surveys highlighted a concentration of votive objects (miniature *krateriskoi*, gold *lamellae*, bronze ware, glass objects, etc.) in the water spring that flows from the rock and along rock cavities.¹³ In these examples, the house of the god seems to be directly associated with the rock from which the water gushes, which is why we propose to qualify worship practices around this natural phenomenon as “rock spring sanctuaries”.

Pausanias is our best informant as he describes springs and his notes “give the reader who follows in his steps the occasion of witnessing how much water constitutes first and foremost a marker in the Greek perception of space” (Jourdain-Annequin in press). However, despite a number of studies at

in “offering caves” in the massif of Marseilleveyre (SANTOS RETOLAZA and SOURISSEAU, 2011: 236–237), and the spring situated in the cave of l’Hôtel-Dieu à Marseille (HERMARY and TREZINY, 2000), although the archaeological data are limited and the finds have not been published.

10. As Arnould (1994: 16) points out, even though it is a vital resource in daily human life, “Water is a divine, sacred and supernatural element” in ancient Greek thought: Homer, *Odyssey*, XIII, 407; XVII, 210. See: Cole (1988) and Brule (2012:36, 113, 117–118, 152, 190 and 216), for the numerous prohibitions in sacred natural spaces, such as cultivation, grazing and wood exploitation.

11. We would like to thank Colette Jourdain-Annequin who pointed out to us the example of the Heraclea myth in Sicily. This myth is at the heart of the spring Cyané, where its extra-urban situation marks “the material and moral print of the polis” on its territory (JOURDAIN-ANNEQUIN 1989: 275, 526).

12. Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* III, 3 (see RUDHARDT 1971: 97–98).

13. For the 8th–6th century BC phase. The temple overhanging the spring source was built in the 6th century BC (see EKROTH 2003: 102–103, Fig. 6).

the beginning of the 19th and the 20th centuries in search of the sacred springs mentioned by Pausanias, rare are the cases that have been identified and surveyed. The absence of a major architectural (monumental) investment could explain the disinterest and difficulty there has been in identifying these sites in a landscape in which the religious nature is generally signalled by the presence of miniature vessels.

However, there are exceptions, such as the surveys undertaken during the 1980s in the region of Mount Hymettus in Kolaka (Kyrtones), where a “rock-spring” was identified as “a sanctuary of the Nymphs and a sacred wood” (Étienne, Knoepfler 1976).¹⁴ There is also the mountain of Helicon consecrated to the Muses, where Pausanias tells us of a sacred wood and two spring water sources (among many) situated on the massif (Roesch 1992: 271).¹⁵ This sacred space, the Valley of the Muses, has been identified at the top of the Thespis (Béotie). It is a massif with a prominent geographical position (altitude 1300–1500 m). The excavations and surveys have enabled the mapping of the remains, which seem to be spread over two kilometres (Robinson 2012). This mountain was consecrated to the gods and marked a natural border between the coastal plains of two neighbouring towns (Rousset, Katzourous 1992: 197–215). Thus, large surfaces dedicated to the gods in a mountain environment do exist. We can also refer to the sacred space in Oronte (north-eastern Syria), where the *temenos* of Apollo (who shared a grove with Aphrodite) enclosed a large forest of 80 stadiums in circumference and numerous sacred springs; the sacred space covered almost 16 km (Dietrich 1986: 154).

These religious areas created the first civic spaces for Greek communities through a religious possession of land (De Polignac 1995). Researchers have brought to light a number of towns defining the limit of their *eschatiai* through markers from the natural topography of the mountains that surrounded them. Peaks, ridges, places of worships and large rocks constitute the majority of landmarks used as limits for the confines of towns. These spaces on the borders of the towns have been recognised as places where the gods live and men pass through but never settle; they are often categorised as desert-frontiers and these sacred landscapes are seen as a “no man’s land” in the eyes of an archaeologist (Rousset 1994: 117–119).

Conclusion

La Fajouse appears to be a sacred space closely related to those attested in Greece, recognizable by a singular respect for the natural landscape, invested in sparsely by mankind perhaps only through ritual practices. The remains in Greece and La Fajouse should not be seen through the exact same

lens, although there are many similarities that cannot be mere coincidence. The geographical situation, the nature of the religious remains and their changes in structure over time allow us to identify the site of La Fajouse as a landmark chosen by Greek communities settled in the southern part of the Pyrenees to delimit their territory.

Research has shown that the installation of the Greeks in Emporion (580 BC) was accompanied by contacts and trade between them and the local populations in various forms, including the establishment of sanctuaries. Recent research has shown that as early as the 6th and 5th centuries BC, the territory of the Greco-native people of the *Neapolis* stretched to the rural plains of the north-eastern Iberian Peninsula, although the northern limits had remained enigmatic until now (Plana 2012: 162–165). However, the only visual limit on the northern side of the Greek colony is the oriental massif of the Pyrenees, where the “rock-spring” of La Fajouse is located. The first worship practices began at this exact time (late 6th century BC). Thus, today the presence of Greek populations and/or Greco-Iberian peoples needs to be envisioned as far as the massif of Πυρήνη, coincidentally a Greek name (see Ripoll 2009). Secondly, the first transformation in ritual practices at La Fajouse has been dated to between the end of the 5th century and the beginning of the 4th century BC (Phase II); in other words, at the same time as the foundation of a second Greek colony called Rhode (Rosas) around 375 BC (Puig Griessenberger 2010). This second phase marks the most flourishing period in La Fajouse (4th and 3rd centuries BC), during which Greco-Iberian commerce was at its height on both sides of the Pyrenees, particularly due to the port of Collioure (surely the port of Pyrene mentioned by the ancient texts) in the south of the Roussillon region and the *oppidum* of Elne, both established along the main maritime and land routes at the foot of the Pyrenees (Fig. 6) (Dunyach 2018: 272–281). Thirdly, the last change perceived at La Fajouse between the late 3rd and the early 2nd centuries AD, with the beginning of the *jactatio stipis* rite, coincides with Roman control of Emporitan territory, which transformed it completely. These observations reinforce the established relationship between religious practices and political changes that affected the Greek and native populations of Emporion and Rhode, the probable administrators of La Fajouse sanctuary.

To summarise, it is a global approach to the archaeological finds that suggest a Greek identity for the sanctuary. First, the choice of the consecrated area (a rock and its spring, the landscape context); secondly, the natural environment, the choice of offerings and the pottery with a significant identity of belongingness (notably the *krateriskoi*); and thirdly, the spaces dedicated to the rites, the methods of the deposits and ritual sequences associated with them are important components that need to be critically approached and contextualised. In the future, we hope to contrast our methods and findings with fieldwork and surveys carried out at similar sites in the Greek world, for example in Italy, Greece or Turkey.

14. See ÉTIENNE and KNOEPFLER (1976: 20 and 26, Fig. 5), with photography of the rock-spring of Kolaka (Kyrtones) taken by Oldfather in 1916. The surveys led by N. Valmin in the 1930s allowed the discovery of numerous sites, as well as the recovery of a batch of miniature vases discovered in the stream of a spring on the site of Hagios Floros (VALMIN 1938: 419–420, 455–456). See the inventory of springs in Greece by Glaser (1976), commented by COLE (1988).

15. Pausanias, IX, 29, 1 and 29.5.

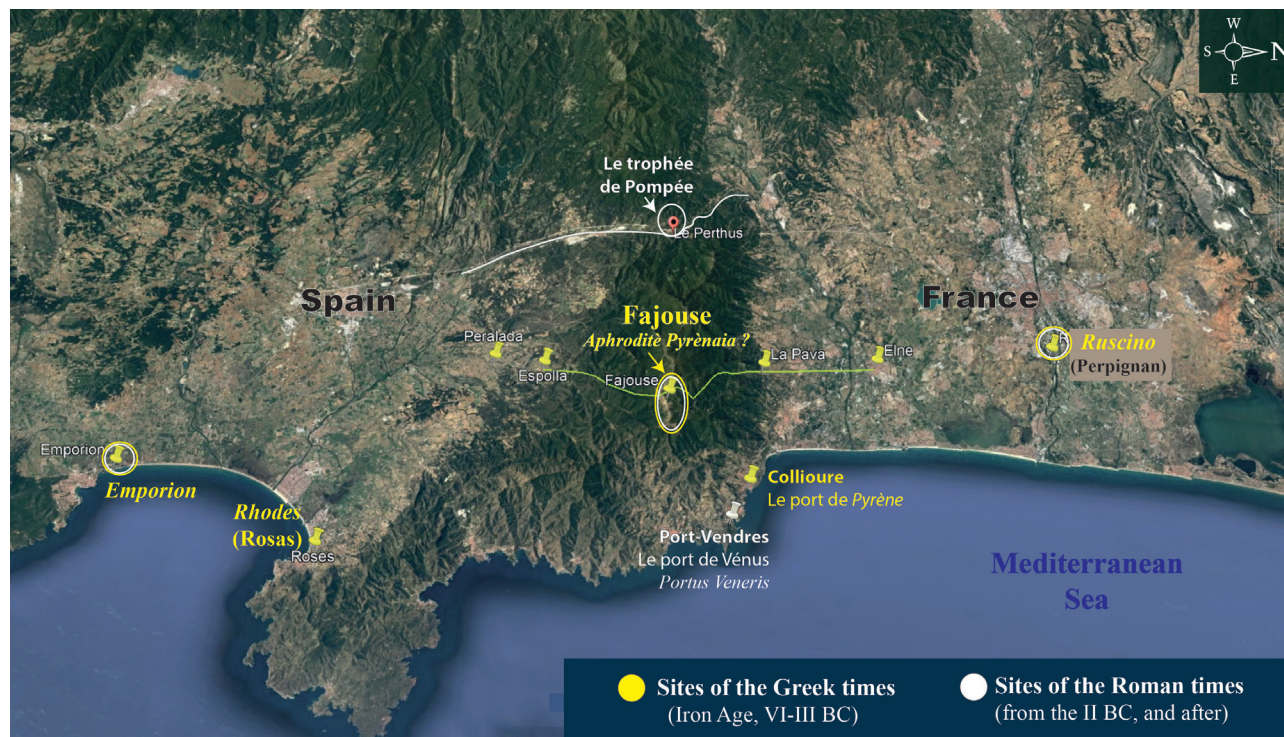


Fig. 6—Situation of the sacred space of La Fajouse between Emporion (Spain) and Ruscino (France) (the inventory of sites is not exhaustive) (map: Google-Earth).

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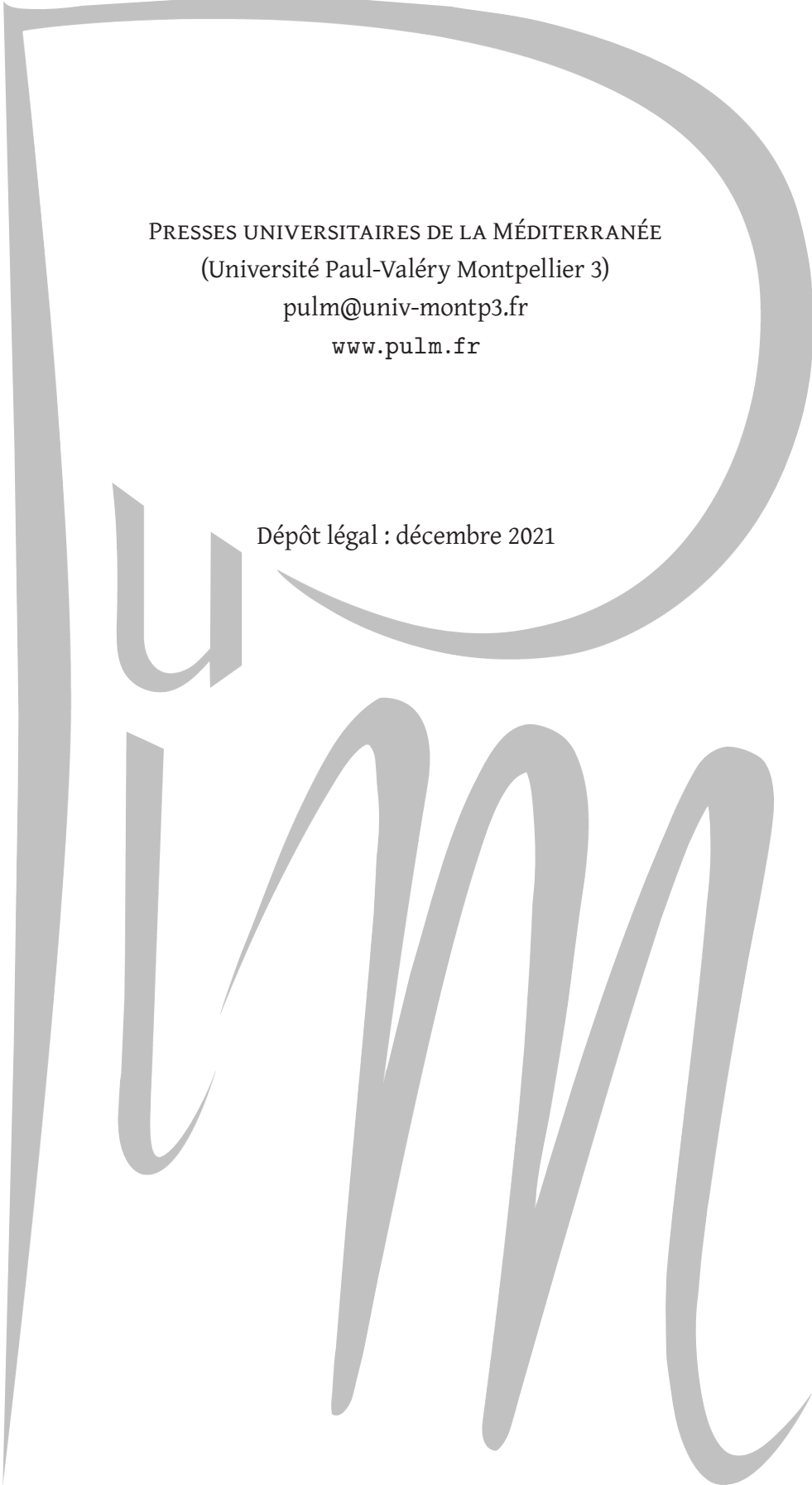
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