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Mountainous and forested hinterlands as a front line. Small peasants and *petite gens* in the work of Pierre Deffontaines

Antoine Huerta

Introduction : Deffontaines and the *petites gens*

- 1 The great mountain geographer André Allix published in 1950 in the prestigious journal *Géocarrefour*, of which he was then director of the publication, a vitriolic text aimed at establishing the balance of the wrongs and assets of the French geographer Pierre Deffontaines (Allix, 1950). Allix put up a list of simplifications, imperfections, forgetfulness, errors, typos and oddities contained in a long article by Deffontaines. The form, he confessed, was “alert and pleasant” (*Idem*, p. 75), mainly because:
- 2 “Pierre Deffontaines has all the qualities that made Jean Brunhes so successful. One feels (one knows moreover) that in his turn, and like his illustrious predecessor, he is a brilliant writer, a very justly tasteful speaker of broad and sometimes distant audiences. French propaganda, and we must praise it, owes a great deal to his talent and his eloquence. Science, unfortunately, at the risk of becoming sad with pedantry, has more austere requirements” (*Idem*, p. 76).
- 3 The first publication of the *Revue de géographie humaine et d'ethnologie* in 1948, drew up a Prévert-style inventory in a book review and showed some errors of Deffontaines, after having sung the praises of the ethnologist and prehistorian André Leroi-Gourhan, co-director of the publication. But where did Deffontaines “find that *La Bérarde en Oisans* do not see the sun for five months? [...] Where, that the hunters of marmots ‘Magdalenian and Aziliens’ went up in *Dauphiné* more than 2.000 meters, ‘in colder times than today’, where they found glaciers and no marmots at such altitudes?”. He also notes: an error in the location of a museum, some confusion in the definition of different types of

alpine houses, and “no reference to the difference between permanent and temporary habitat” (Allix, 1949, note 6, p.75) He concluded his biting indictment thus, denying the scientific nature of Deffontaines' speech: “is it necessary to erase the definitions of science from the public habits?” (*Ibidem*).

- 4 Under these corrosive critics, a story of French geography was told, in which the Jean Brunhes' school was opposed to the most classic geographical framework, through his fervent disciple Pierre Deffontaines. Deffontaines felt rejected from the French school for this reason: he was not wrong¹. Nevertheless his work presented many aspects as amazing as interesting, that his contemporary scholar fellows did not always find interesting. This paper aims at analyzing Deffontaines' work on mountains and forests, focusing on the small peasantries in the mountainous hinterlands, trying to present them from a new perspective. The objective here is to show how Deffontaines conducts its analysis to all the populations and spaces studied from the Mediterranean model. We will examine specifically the works of Deffontaines from an assumed ethnographic perspective, in which he gives an important place to the material aspects; the immaterial objects of the different populations, spirituality and psychological, will not be forgotten as they are of major importance in the explanation of the geographical phenomena. To analyze this approach and present its specificity, it will first be necessary to recontextualize its vision of geography in order to draw a picture as faithful as possible, and to show some divergences with the so-called *French Classical Geography*. In this context, his vision of the small peasantry of the mountainous and forested hinterlands in the Mediterranean world is a typical example according to him of the *horizons de travail* (Deffontaines, 1948 b, p. 228), where an astonishing mirror image of determinism takes place. After having stressed these preliminary aspects, his vision of a human geography of the Mediterranean will be depicted to show that what he calls *Méditerranées* were, according to his feeling, the place where the story about the origin of the world, humanity and civilizations, took place in first times.

Pierre Deffontaines in 1948: a human geography of transparency around the Mediterranean

André Allix and the *géographie problème* : a reading of Deffontaines

- 5 We briefly mentioned André Allix's remarks on the work of Pierre Deffontaines about mountains. It is not for him to quibble about points of detail in a simple list to note errors and approximations: it is the whole conception of geography that takes place in this criticism. André Allix proposes an implicit definition of what makes good geography, a *géographie problème*, like what was then done in History within the framework of the *Annales* school. This method differed significantly from the vision of Deffontaines because it sets up problems.
- 6 This is the main complaint regarding Deffontaines' approach: it is not problematized enough. He deplores, for example, his conception of a “unique alpine pastoral mountain house which would have ‘spread with variants’ as far as the Jura, the Black Forest, the Basque country and Gascony. Let us admire this art of simplifying the ‘problems’, however just the concern of many scientists and in particular Lucien Febvre, whose first edition gave us a reverent mention which disappears from the second².” (Allix, 1950, p. 74). The problem is what is sorely lacking in this geography:

“the problem, imperfectly concealed under the mass of sample information, indiscreetly recalls its perpetual presence” (*Ibidem*). This bias in the analysis would be mainly due to a lack of prior readings: Allix adds that “too many new problems would certainly have risen” (*Ibidem*) to the reading of classic authors on the issues. “In all of this, the omission of the classics, and even of more modest authors, can avoid problems only for the superficial reader” (*Idem*, p. 75). What Allix describes is a geography of transparency that, far from focusing on issues, is interested in describing a framework and writing a story. How could we qualify this geography of transparency, without problems permitting a scientific approach, according to the conceptions of the time? The example of the small Mediterranean peasantries is indicative of this atypical geography.

The Mediterranean mountain example and the *petites gens*

- 7 1948 was a year of many publications for Pierre Deffontaines. Besides *Géographie et religions*, his great book on the spiritual marks in geography, *La Méditerranée, étude de géographie humaine* was published in Spain. His collaboration with André Leroi-Gourhan was once again concretized that same year by Gallimard with the first issues of their *Revue de géographie humaine et d'ethnologie*. It was not the first time they worked together and it was not the last because they had, among other things, the taste of prehistory. Already in 1936, Pierre Deffontaines published in his prestigious collection 'Géographie humaine', the work of the young Leroi-Gourhan: *La civilisation du renne*³. Some twenty years later (1957), they signed a preface to the book by André-Georges Haudricourt about *L'Homme et la charrue à travers le monde* also published in the 'Géographie humaine' collection. Their understanding, certainly intellectual, was perhaps strengthened by their religious beliefs. Both were indeed fervent Catholics (Soulie, 2018 and Tissier, 2019).
- 8 The publication of this journal, as ephemeral as it was, allowed it to illustrate a certain interest for the material and immaterial aspects of the studied populations, which could also be observed in the other cited works. The geography of Deffontaines affirmed itself as very peculiar. In addition to his attachment to prehistory⁴, he revealed some inclination for anthropology. He certainly acquired such a taste when he was studying Jean Brunhes and his human geography (Brunhes, 1912), and then when he was collaborating with his daughter Mariel Jean-Brunhes Delamarre to revise and expand the work of the *Collège de France* professor⁵. Mariel Jean-Brunhes Delamarre whose Leroi-Gourhan “was [the] godfather at the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the director of his thesis” (Segalen, 2002).
- 9 During his career, Deffontaines never stopped this collaboration, as his bibliography testifies (Delfosse, 2000). The cooperation with André Leroi-Gourhan (1911-1986), with whom he conceived this journal after World War II, increased his interest for anthropology. Mariel Jean- Brunhes Delamarre has taken part in and contributed to this process and the project's secretariat. The first papers he published there are representative of his thought. We will quote these works from this journal, but also from the Portuguese version he gave to the *Revista Brasileira de Geografia* since 1947 (Deffontaines, 1947, a and b).

- 10 In these texts, the small peasantry has an important place in its conception of geography, it forms the colonization front of the earth by humans, what it names the *petites gens*. He would give later and more precisely the following definition:

"We consider the '*petites gens*' as the part of the population that stands at the edge of habitable zone: the 'hostile area' do not only include territorial areas, but also social classes. These 'small people' - we use this expression, which has no hierarchical or pejorative meaning, on the contrary) - constitute for the human geographer a major field of study. The geographer will have a special attention and sympathy for their labors. This part of the population, which forms or has often formed the mass, that is to say, the geographical size of humanity - we said with Jean Brunhes, the fundamental seedling of the population - is delivered in geographical instabilities. These *petites gens* are in constant adaptations, they must constantly find new solutions: emigrations, amenities, innumerable small anonymous inventions. They realized the slow and constant progress of devices, techniques and civilization; they are, and have been, the active element and the men of pain of all the clearings, all the colonizations, all emigrations; they populated the pioneer zones and marked the progressive front of the oecumene" (Deffontaines, 1948a, p. 13).

- 11 Since his first works on man and mountain as author, and publisher (Blache, 1926), until the development of an autonomous geography in the center of which are the human settlements and the small peasantries, these *petites gens* form a key concept of its geography which we propose to study. The objective of this contribution is to treat an aspect of Deffontaines' productions which is sometimes unknown, and where the study of these populations and its agropastoral forms are a significant contribution.
- 12 The main question is about thinking how Deffontaines understands the small peasantry in a historical perspective, but also geographical and ethnographical. But the problem is to determine the place given to this author in the framework of the French geography in its classical age as well: historical and epistemological points of view will provide tools to appreciate this process. Some specific aspects of this geography must now be developed to better understand his vision of the Mediterranean Basin and its human inhabitants.

A brief picture of human geography 'revised and corrected' by Deffontaines: the pioneering function of the Mediterranean

- 13 Throughout his career Deffontaines never ceased to reflect and practice human geography as he learned to conceive it in his field of explorations. His bibliography shows the evolution of his reflections on the subject, wherever he exercised his magisterium (Eastern Europe, France, Spain, Brazil, South America or even North America). His paper "Positions de géographie humaine" (Deffontaines, 1958) reproduces his 1948 text (Deffontaines, 1948 a). We have composed the following synthesis, as a compendium of his views about what he considers an essential question. It clearly appears that this discipline, in his own vision, is constituted as follow: Geography was called human because it had the task of analyzing the mark of men on the earth. Indeed, among the first questions she had to ask herself, the one about the effective presence of men on the planet was one of the most important. Here is a brief glossary for a better understanding of the latter.

The reasons for a human geography and the pioneering function of the Mediterranean

- 14 At first, Deffontaines returns to the origin of this expression. Why “human geography”? Because “it has for its own field the study of the work of man on earth, visible work, tangible ('landscapist', we would say as geographer), accomplished by the human caravan that takes place in the surface of the globe ”(Deffontaines, 1958, p. 104). It is thus that after the physical cycles, the earth knows the cycle of the human beings: the geography tries to take stock of this activity.
- 15 All regions are not equally populated: “the degree of humanization is variable according to the quantity of men already passed, what one could call the 'flow of men'!” If it is important to put a 'coefficient of the past' on human geography (*Idem*, p. 107), this is all the more true in the Mediterranean context, because of its very old colonization.
- 16 Hoyon Christine 2019-12-20T16:30:00CH As a result of this questioning, the geographer can do his examination of conscience. “Is the balance of all this positive? Hoyon Christine 2019-12-20T16:32:00CH If spaces that have gained access to a long-term exploitation of the land to print its trademark, the country stage, is rare. The work of man on earth allowed ‘a promotion of beauty and art; Soils have become fields, stones have been turned into architecture and woods into sculptures, perspectives have been spared... humanity has provoked a fermentation in the landscape of the earth, it has begun an astonishing cycle.’ ” (*Idem.*, pp. 108-109)
- 17 So this geography, at bottom, is especially that of the psychic marks of man on the earth. “Man is more than any other being, a *homo geograficus*⁶, in that it has inscribed a very typical landscape on the earth; the human garment, of which he has increasingly covered the planet, bears the mark of his nature of thinking, so that the most typical part of human geography is that which deals with the geography of the spiritual. We are witnessing the advent of a more and more human land because more and more dense thoughts; ultimately, the 'men's union' is responsible for producing a superabundance of spirit, spiritualizing one's earthly homeland”(*Idem*, pp. 119-120). The immaterial aspects are thus as important for the geographer as the material elements.
- 18 To explain the scheduling of this gradual takeover of men on their environment? Deffontaines considers a starting point of the civilizational process: the emergence of the Mediterranean, a theme that he helped to develop by publishing in his *Géographie régionale* two studies on the Arctic Mediterranean and the American Mediterranean (Guilcher, 1975 and Enjalbert, 1979). He explains: “In addition to the toil of men, there are certain areas where apathy dominated. Large marine pits surrounded by high mountain peaks. Not populated for many years, but a source of history and civilizations. Birthplace of the continents.” Thanks to “the combination of a powerful physical dynamism and a no less violent human dynamism” (*Idem*, pp. 114-115). He notes the progress of “all manifestations of the human spirit in these regions. [...] The Mediterranean has marked departures; a true pioneer front of the human intellect” (*Idem*, p. 114).
- 19 The man, says Deffontaines, is rebellious: “it is the main difference between this geography of the human species and the geographies that one could also legitimately

do for the other living species, a geography of the bees, ants, swallows or elephants..." (*Idem*, p. 118). Thus man lives according to his psyche more than according to physical precepts: inaccessible cities, in hostile zones, etc. This phenomenon is called a geographical mark of thought, it encompasses all human activities. This is why Deffontaines focuses first and foremost on studying this mark: "it is not man who transforms the earth but his thought in full extension" (*Ibidem*). It was only later that other domestications, such as that of animals and plants, played a central role.

- 20 For Deffontaines, the inordinate growth of human populations results in densely populated islands, making the land a vast trap for humanity; it is only a kind of large island in space where difficulties are the main fuel of the progress of humanity.

Geographical role of the difficulties and men's union.

- 21 The difficulties are, more generally, the drivers of progress: cosmic and geographical difficulties, such as seasonal changes. The importance it gives to areas of lasting difficulty such as deserts and the mountains, for example, make it possible to better understand why the Mediterranean is central to its thinking. And it is the human beings union that is charged with accomplishing this mission. At the forefront of that process stand the *petites gens* and in particular those of the mountains.
- 22 Thus, settlement related issues were exposed on various occasions. By examining the publications of Pierre Deffontaines, six of them can precisely answer this term. And from this settlement, from its duration, came the notion of country: more human being established himself, the more the land bore his mark, transforming it little by little into 'country'. Faced with this and this enrichment, the geographer had to measure the *raubwirtschaft* (economy of plunder) dear to the German geographers and the remarks of Brunhes on the facts of degradations (Guieysse and Rebour, 2014). Human beings, meanwhile, were responsible for their work. This question of responsibilities is essential in understanding this framework of analysis. It was the 'human beings union' that had to assume this function, the task it had been entrusted with: the progressive domestication of its habitat.
- 23 In this long quest, difficulties were a precious stimulant, without them, no progress. Thus, the climates, the reliefs and all the geographical formations imposed to the man to find adapted solutions. The mountains represented particularly rich centers of creativity and demographic expansion. In this long adventure, the Mediterranean, in that they were places of political and economic concentration, also had a central role (there are about fifteen items on this notion in Pierre Deffontaines' publications). But only human beings formed the real wealth of geography: they populated and allowed the creation, the seizure of space.
- 24 According to Deffontaines, human beings have a mission on earth, that is to populate it with thoughts. Thus, man develops his insubordination to geographical determinism in a growing way, constantly trying to increase his hold, whatever the adverse conditions. This increase and predominance of the spiritual factor on earth leads to an increase in the religious factor in geography. This was a testimony, the coronation of a companionship begun more than half a century ago in the shadow of Jean Brunhes.

Auteur inconnu2019-12-20T16:11:00The origin of the world: mountainous and forested Mediterranean hinterlands.

- 25 Deffontaines defended a highly paradoxical thesis. Contrary to the commonly accepted idea that “the mountainous and forested Mediterranean hinterlands, anchored by small peasantries at the margins of the centers of power, have historically been places of refuge for the people displaced from the plains, the excluded, the damned and the rebels on the lookout for means of subsistence and resistance” (Braudel, 1966, Debarbieux, 2001), these areas of long-term hardship are at the origin of a model of exploitation and export of a specific world. It is from the example of the Mediterranean model of diffusion of the peoples and mountain lifestyles that the geographic march of the world can be understood.

Ascents and descents: the terms of a debate.

- 26 In his synthetic paper on the causes of mountain settlement, Deffontaines reopened various hypotheses, setting up on occasion a method which was dear to him, aiming at starting from a certain number of facts to be traced back to more general considerations. Thus, on reading the summary we see very clearly the content of the statement: among the many factors he perceives, “the pastoral life, hunting, overcrowding of the plains, the agricultural benefits of the mountain, represented by the abundance water” have the share (Deffontaines, 1947, p. 356).
- 27 First of all, the mountain is a zone of lasting difficulty, which makes it possible to focus the efforts of the men living there, but also the modes of habitations, the kinds of life which depend, above all, on what he called the human factor. For this, his analysis returned to the variety of types of occupation (*Idem*, p. 343). Deffontaines left many questions related to the conquest of the mountain by the men, a species of the plains which, little by little, thanks to various strategies, were 'mountainized'.
- 28 Why did men go to these hostile areas? Why did they dominate the mountain in so many ways? Would the explanation be that they gradually took control of the mountain from the plain? Would it not be plausible for these groups to have taken refuge in these places, preferring free living in a difficult area to a more servile one in a welcoming environment? Or would they not, little by little, have taken control of the mountain, trying to cross it, into a progressive occupation? In short, would not man be a kind of the plain become the man of the mountain? (*Idem*, p. 345).
- 29 If he asked these questions, it was to answer them through the typology of the means of living in the mountains (*Ibidem*). The first of these interests us in more ways than one because he finds that it originates in the highlands bordering the Mediterranean: pastoral and animal life and the links with the mountains (*Idem*, p. 346). For Deffontaines, pastoral life was built around the Mediterranean as a concept that allowed him to model this reality in other areas.

From the Pyrenees to the Himalayas, a single mountain and the sea in the middle of the mountains

- 30 Deffontaines considered a vast area covering what he called the Mediterranean-Alpine civilization (*Idem*, p. 347). Men learned animals to survive in this environment (*Ibidem*) and it was only later that they discovered agriculture. This is the central thesis of Deffontaines. A Mediterranean-alpine civilization served as a model in that it was the first: “It seems that the oldest examples of this new kind of life appear in the Mediterranean region as understood in its broadest sense” (*Idem*, p. 347).
- 31 And “the origin of this great civilization, it was not the people of the plains who originally invaded the highlands, but on the contrary, it was the mountain customs that poured into the lowland areas. Instead of a progressive 'montagnisation', there was, conversely, a subsequent 'plea'”. In this, the pastoral mountain according to him was necessary to the Mediterranean life.
- 32 “The influence of mountains has often been so essential; emigration, exportation, inventions, dominations. [...] So many plains have been constantly replenished by the surrounding mountains [...]. The plain of Po has been filled with Piedmontese and also Bergamo; At present, the Ebro Delta is still being colonized by small people from the Maestrasgo Massif or the Teruel Highlands. The descent movements of the mountain are much more natural than the uphill movement and everything happens as if it were the higher regions with more difficult life that have spread in the low region to make life easier How many mountains have been centers of issue of men” (Deffontaines, 1958, p. 113). Deffontaines transposes this theory representing the mountainous hinterlands of the Mediterranean as a source of dissemination of populations to the American Mediterranean. It is thus thanks to “the association of a powerful physical dynamism and to no less violent human dynamism”, that this other Mediterranean that is the sea of the Caribbean and the Antilles “shows a proportionally similar human ancestry in the New World. There also appeared the oldest political organizations of the American continent, the oldest cities, the most ancient and the largest pre-Columbian monuments.” As for the question of “how to explain this curious privilege of these seas between the lands and their periphery,” Deffontaines notes, laconically, “the association of a powerful physical dynamism with a no less violent human dynamism.”

Conclusion. The Mediterranean without cities, an unrecognized approach to Deffontaines

- 33 In 1948, Pierre Deffontaines autographed one of his recently published books at the address of Fernand Braudel⁷. It is a work whose theme could please his former colleague of the University of São Paulo and entitled: *El Mediterráneo: (estudio de geografía humana)*. The dedication was as follows: “From a Nordic also passionate about the Mediterranean to another great enthusiast of the same sea” (Deffontaines, 1948 b).
- 34 This present did not convince Fernand Braudel to write a review, as it might be customary in this kind of situation. At the time, Braudel had not yet published his *Méditerranée*, although it was a question of time (Braudel, 1949). Apart from a brief account of his re-edition (Davy, 1972), this work was relatively unnoticed even by those for whom the Mediterranean was a subject of concern. Either there was nothing to say,

or what there was to say was worth the trouble, this work perhaps having been considered a work of popularization. Only his former Barcelona colleague Joan Vila Valenti emphasized “the importance of *El Mediterráneo*” in Deffontaines’ work (Valenti, 1980, p. 10).

- 35 The place of Deffontaines as a geographer is therefore almost nil in the conception of Braudel's *Mediterranean*: the essential works for the general orientation of the book were more for him those of Charles Parain, Maximilian Sorre, or André Siegfried; (Braudel, 1967, vol. 2, p. 543). The only reference about Deffontaines in the *Méditerranée* concerns the *Problèmes de géographie humaine* (*Idem*, p. 553). The Mediterranean works aroused little interest from him. However, Braudel's reference to Parain is interesting, because it was a book published by Deffontaines. Let's see the ties linking these two books.
- 36 Deffontaines was probably inspired by Parain's *Méditerranée*. There is a community of mind that needs to be presented. Let us see for this reason Parain's warning to the reader: “Historical studies need, for enlightenment and nourishment, the precise knowledge of the natural conditions in which human societies have evolved. It also appears that, without ethnography, archeology can not revive the deep life of old civilizations. [...] Beside these aspects, or rather below them, carrying them and explaining them, there is the popular life in its most familiar frame: the natural resources, the fields and the villages, the variety of social groups, maritime life, pastoral life and agricultural life, 'trades and techniques'” (Parain, 1936, p. 7). Deffontaines fully subscribed to this definition of the study, him who “had adopted a curious regressive approach, [and] that went for each of the fields he was exploring, as far back in the past as it was necessary to explain. the observed facts”(Claval, 2004, pp. 43-72).
- 37 In the same way, Charles Parain insisted on the absence of cities in his work. It is that “cities are already the geography of history. The development of cities reflects the transition from the domestic economy to increasingly large economic units. [...] Now [he had to] first [take care of] the elementary activities from which this development started” (Parain, 1936, pp. 7-8). And again, this was an option followed by Deffontaines, setting up his analysis around the first geographical facts and in the study of the *petite gens*. When cities were present, they were briefly presented, and much was still done to the people and their way of life (Deffontaines, 1948 b, pp. 179-194). It is in these particular perspectives that Deffontaines worked his *Méditerranée*. From this point of view it did not bring only new things, but certain aspects were however innovative.
- 38 Some really peculiar things may be found in this book, things that are somewhat detracted from the geographical landscape of his time, especially in the concluding paragraphs of *El Mediterráneo*, where he put forward the idea of a tendency towards 'Mediterraneanization' (Deffontaines, 1948 b, p. 235). He developed his analysis on the role of the Mediterraneans: “at the bottom of this human attitude there is a confidence, a certainty of the function that is played out. This manifests itself in the propensity for expansion, emigration, proliferation” (*Ibidem*). He also sought to show the religious or artistic progress of this region, but insisted especially on nature. The latter, “undoubtedly, and an infinity of predispositions that we perceive badly, allowed the man to improve [...] and that it is always maintained on the front line [...] of progress. The first of all humanities in history who felt human, the first who used all his capacities of body and mind, soul and imagination, was a Mediterranean humanity and

this humanity, the most human, without doubt, among all, the most adapted, and perhaps also the most divine, that which is closest to the program that a Creator would give to human nature" (*Idem*, p. 237). The small peasantries, working on these fronts of humanity that Deffontaines evokes, have all their place in the Mediterranean geographical struggle.

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NOTES

1. See Deffontaines' letter to Mariel Jean-Brunhes-Delamarre, dated October 27, 1947, reproduced in Deffontaines' personal diary, Book of Today, vol. 5, from March 19, 1946 to December 21, 1947, p. 122.
2. The text in question here is published for the first time in the Journal of Human Geography and Ethnology. The second edition is the one commented on here, where the mention to Lucien Febvre disappeared for an unidentified reason.
3. Roger-Pol Droit, devoted on October 11, 2018 in Le Monde, about the work of Philippe Soulier (2018). He commented on this work of the great prehistorian: "Behind the imperfections and clumsiness of a youth work, this study embodies a clear desire: to confront natural environment and human world, to grasp their complex interaction. This axis organizes all the work to come. (Law, 2018 and Soulier, 2018). There is no doubt that his publisher Pierre Deffontaines, who, with his human geography, followed throughout his scientific life very close objectives found strong resonance in his work.
4. Between 1913 and 1929, Deffontaines published 21 papers or conference texts dealing with prehistory. Among them, include "Appearance of the kind of coastline life in prehistoric times", Geography, 1924, vol. XLII, No. 1, pp. 232-233.
5. The original founder of the Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions (1937-1967), Georges-Henri Rivière, recognized in 1964 Mariel-Jean-Brunhes Delamarre his role in the valuable link of ethnology with geographical discipline. (Segalen, 2002).
6. This expression, dear to Deffontaines and used in 1958, does not have the same meaning as the concept coined by Numa Broc in his *homo geographicus* (1993). If for Deffontaines, nothing that is human is foreign to geography, Broc strives to make a radioscopy of French geographers between the wars (*Idem*).
7. This book is stored in the Bibliothèque d'espagnol of the Bibliothèque universitaire de l'université Bordeaux Montaigne, call number 115.01.DEF.MED.

ABSTRACTS

This article aims to analyse Pierre Deffontaines' work on mountains and forests, focusing on small Mediterranean farmers, presenting them in a new light. As a field geographer, he had the opportunity to travel extensively through the Mediterranean mountains and study their rural populations. In addition to this personal taste, this small peasantry has an important place in his conception of geography, it forms the front of colonization ; it makes it possible to clarify a key concept of his geography : the small people (*petites gens*). This article deals with some unknown aspect of Deffontaines' productions where the study of these populations and the agropastoral forms associated with them is of great importance. This questions both the way Deffontaines thinks small farmers from a historical, geographical and ethnographic perspective. But also the place given to this author in the context of French geography of the classical period in a logic of historical and epistemological study. Pierre Deffontaines in 1948 developed a geography of transparency that left little room for problems. The Mediterranean example is particularly

striking in his work because it supports the thesis of a pioneering function of the Mediterranean in the settlement and control of the land by humans. In his opinion, the origin of the world is then partly in the mountainous hinterlands and Mediterranean woodlands.

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Keywords: Pierre Deffontaines ; Little people ; Mediterranean ; Settlement

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