

# 10

## Palaeolithic Continental Europe

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### 10.1 Introduction

The collection of Palaeolithic material from Continental Europe in the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) is almost of equivalent size to the collection from the British Isles (see Chapter 9), but is not nearly as well known or as well published. It consists mainly of material from France that seems to have been an under-acknowledged highlight of the PRM archaeological collections for most of the 20th century. Despite the obvious care with which French Palaeolithic material was acquired by the museum, especially during the curatorship of Henry Balfour, the collection has mainly been used for teaching and display, rather than as a research resource. Due to the historic lack of work on the collection so far, this chapter presents a preliminary overview, to orient and inform future research, rather than a full account of the collections.

The exact numbers of Palaeolithic objects from Europe are difficult to state with certainty due to factors such as unquantified batch registration of groups of objects in the past, and missing or incorrect cultural attributions in the documentation. However, it is estimated that there are *c.* 3,760 Palaeolithic objects from continental Europe in the PRM, *c.* 534 of which are from the founding collection of the PRM (PRMFC)(1). The majority of the material comprises *c.* 3,585 objects from France (*Figure 10.1*), with smaller collections from Belgium (*c.* 63 objects), Italy (*c.* 35 objects), Germany (*c.* 32 objects), Spain (31 objects), and Hungary (*c.* 5 objects). There is also a single scraper from Malta (1921.37.56) and a cast of a female figurine from Dolní Věstonice in the Czech Republic (1931.43.1). Material from no other European country, apart from the UK (Chapter 9), is known to be present in the collections. However, as Palaeolithic material from Germany and Spain was identified by the author and Nick Barton during the characterization project, it is possible that other material is yet to be recognised.

This chapter provides a summary of the PRM's Palaeolithic collections from Continental Europe, as a companion to the British Palaeolithic chapter (Chapter 9), and does not attempt to be a thorough review, but an initial characterization. An overview (10.2) and regional review (10.3) of the collection from France are presented first, before an account of the material from the rest of Europe (10.4). The chapter concludes with suggestions regarding the research potential of the collection (10.5).

World Archaeology at the Pitt Rivers Museum: A Characterization  
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Figure 10.1 Map of the main sites in France from which the PRM holds Palaeolithic material.

## 10.2 Overview of Palaeolithic Material from France

### 10.2.1 Definitions and Terminology

There are *c.* 3,585 Palaeolithic objects from France currently recorded in the PRM database. However, this is only an initial estimate as the database includes some records which represent more than one object (e.g. 1913.41.1 from Grotte de Bize), and many others with absent or incorrect attribution of archaeological periods. To give just a few examples, 2 Magdalenian stone tools from Bruniquel (1884.133.108–9) have no cultural attribution, and a fragment of a Magdalenian harpoon head from La Madelaine, Dordogne, is recorded as being Mesolithic or Neolithic (1884.123.4). Most, if not all, of the material from the ‘French caves’ included in the PRM founding collection and the



*Figure 10.2 Lower Palaeolithic hand-axe, collected from St Acheul, France by John Evans in 1862. This object was probably transferred to the PRM from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History in 1887, although retrospectively numbered with objects donated to the PRM from the estate of John Evans in 1928 (PRM Accession Number 1928.68.493).*

donation from the Christy Trustees in 1907 (c. 1,907 objects altogether) is probably of Palaeolithic date, but was not consistently recorded as such in the past. As a result of these factors the full extent of the French Palaeolithic collections is under-represented in the PRM database at present. In addition, there are also some boxes of currently unaccessioned Palaeolithic bone material from France. This chapter is based on the current database records combined with inspection of a sample of the material in 2010, and recognises that further research will be necessary to clarify the scope of the collection.

Assessment of the French Palaeolithic material is further complicated as almost 30% of the database records are currently attributed only to the 'Palaeolithic', which masks the overall cultural/chronological composition of the collection. Based on the current database, the vast majority of the collection is of Upper Palaeolithic date (80%), with Lower Palaeolithic material making up less than 1% of the total. The apparent paucity of Lower Palaeolithic material in the PRM's French collections, if correct, would be unusual and noteworthy: especially given the extremely high proportion of Lower Palaeolithic material in the PRM's British collections, but seems certain to be an artefact of the database. For example, only 3 of the 67 objects from St. Acheul, Somme (the type site for Lower Palaeolithic Acheulean assemblages) are correctly recorded on the database as being Lower Palaeolithic, with most either having either no or only a general cultural attribution, and one (1928.68.493, *Figure 10.2*) being incorrectly assigned to the Upper Palaeolithic. A similar situation regarding cultural attribution on the database exists for Middle and Upper Palaeolithic records, but is perhaps not as obvious as those for Lower Palaeolithic material.

Some of the difficulties with period attributions in the database seem to result from material being originally accessioned or re-described in the early 20th century with typological descriptions that would have had an obvious chronologically-related meaning at the time, but which are now either obsolete or specialist terms. For example, the term 'boucher', which refers to the antiquarian Boucher de Perthes, was defined in 1911 by Professor William Johnson Sollas of Oxford University and refers to Lower Palaeolithic handaxes (Sollas 1911). The term was never widely used, even in England, and is all but forgotten today. However, it occurs in the description of several records on the database, most of which were not attributed to the Lower Palaeolithic until this assessment (e.g. the Lower Palaeolithic handaxe from St Acheul mentioned above). There are similar problems with the use of terms that are still in use but perhaps only

by Palaeolithic specialists. For example, seven artefacts from the site of La Ferrassie, Dordogne, are described as '*grattoirs caréné*' (carinated scrapers) in the 1931 accession document (1931.68.57–63) but have no cultural attribution on the database. At the time of accessioning '*grattoirs caréné*' were regarded as being one of the type-fossils of the Aurignacian, a subject apparently of considerable interest to PRM staff then in view of the quantity of such material in the collection, and presumably no further explanation was deemed necessary. As so very little research has been done on the French Palaeolithic collections since the mid-20th century, the use of obsolete or specialist terms has not been clarified and thus could not be easily transferred to standard modern terms when the PRM records were transcribed to the database.

A related difficulty is that the descriptive terms used in the PRM database are often anachronistic: reflecting understanding of French Palaeolithic chronology at the time when objects were acquired and being researched in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For example, terms such as 'Chelléo-Moustérien', 'Aurignacien-supérieur' and 'Aurignacien-inférieur' are used in the documentation for material from Laussel: 1910.52.1–181). The study of the Palaeolithic was then in its infancy and chronologies were being developed and refined as new sites were discovered and excavated. These chronologies depended upon typological argument and artefact associations as well as some stratigraphic successions, and could be hierarchical, complex, and occasionally controversial. Although the current accepted chronological model for the French Palaeolithic is broadly the same as that presented by Henri Breuil a century ago (Breuil 1913), which built on earlier work by Édouard Lartet (1861) and Gabriel de Mortillet (1872, 1883), much of the detail from the past systems is not always easily transferred to modern usage. This is especially true of Breuil's system, which was subsequently developed and refined by both himself and others, such as Denis Peyrony. Indeed, it was not until the invention of radiocarbon dating and the detailed work of François Bordes and Denise de Sonneville-Bordes in the 1960s that stability was really brought to the subject (for summaries of the development of the French Palaeolithic succession see Sackett 1981, 1991; Chazan 1995).

Although the current situation with regard to the cultural/chronological definition for French Palaeolithic objects in the database does represent a barrier for research, it is in essence only a minor documentation issue. This state of affairs simply reflects the lack of attention the collection has received from specialists in recent decades, and could be remedied easily by updating the otherwise excellent database following a more detailed assessment of the material than was possible for this chapter. Such updating would enhance the accessibility of the collection considerably and ensure that it could be used to its full potential as a modern research resource of considerable interest.

It should be said, however, that the use of contemporary terminology in the original documentation is entirely appropriate, especially during Henry Balfour's curatorship when there was a strong research emphasis on the classification and typological evolution of material culture at the PRM. Indeed, the precise recording in the PRM documentation of what was then cutting edge chronological and typological detail for French Palaeolithic material shows the extent of the interest that PRM staff had in this research area over several decades, and is a topic worthy of academic investigation in its own right. The subject of North American involvement with French Palaeolithic archaeology in the early 20th century has been a focus of research in recent years (e.g. White and Breitborde 1992; Straus 2003; Petraglia and Potts 2004). However, there has been little work as yet on similar activities by British archaeologists and institutions. The PRM's French Palaeolithic collections and the history of their acquisition, documentation and use could form an excellent case study into the relationship between British and French Palaeolithic scholars during the critical time of the development and professionalization of the subject between c. 1900–1940s.

### 10.2.2 Lower Palaeolithic

The quantity of Lower Palaeolithic material held by the PRM is undoubtedly larger than the database at present records, and certainly several boxes of material of this period, representing at least about 200 objects, were seen during the assessment undertaken for this chapter. The majority of the Lower Palaeolithic artefacts held by the PRM seem to have been discovered during the mid- to late 19th century, following the scientific acceptance of the greater antiquity of humans when Joseph Prestwich and John Evans verified in 1859 claims by Jacques Boucher de Crèvecœur de Perthes that stone tools had been found *in situ* with the remains of extinct animals in the gravels of the Somme River (Evans 1860, 1863; Prestwich 1860; see Gamble and Kruszynski 2009). Most of this material belongs to two major collections made by scholars who were actively involved with research on the Palaeolithic: Pitt-Rivers himself, and the geologist John Wickham Flower (1807–1873), whose collection was transferred to the PRM from the OUMNH in 1892. Both men collected Lower Palaeolithic material in an informed manner, and with the specific research purpose of furthering information about the period (Flower 1860, 1872; Bowden 1991). Both collections form an important resource for research into the history of the recognition of the antiquity of humans, and the definition and understanding of the Palaeolithic, especially if combined with associated archival material.

The PRM also holds objects originally from the collection of key 19th-century scholars such as John Evans and Joseph Prestwich. However these are mainly specimens that came to the PRM through secondary sources, such as from the collection of Alexander James Montgomerie Bell (1845–1920), and the research value is in relation to their collecting activities as a whole. An interesting exception is two handaxes from Moulin Quignon, Somme that John Evans donated as examples of the forgeries from this site which he was able to expose in 1863 (1897.13.2–3) (Evans 1863, 1866; Prestwich 1863).

### 10.2.3 Middle Palaeolithic

The French Middle Palaeolithic material at the PRM is perhaps even less well known than the Lower and Upper Palaeolithic collections at present. For the most part it consists of artefacts from classic Mousterian sites in the Dordogne department of southwest France: Le Moustier, La Ferrassie, La Quina, and La Micoque. As such, it is an excellent resource for teaching Mousterian typology and variability. There is also Mousterian material that was acquired as part of type series representative of the stratigraphic successions at other significant excavated sites: e.g. Laussel, Dordogne, donated by Diamond Jenness in 1910, and Grotte du Placard, Charente, purchased for the PRM by Professor Sollas via Henri Breuil in 1914. This material is of research potential as it comes from recognised archaeological contexts. Three largely unquantified and uncatalogued collections of Middle Palaeolithic artefacts from outside the Dordogne region are also of significant potential research interest: Grotte de Bize in Languedoc-Roussillon (1913.41.1), and Bois du Rocher (1884.122.168-317, 1884.122.448, 1884.122.463, 1884.122.166, 1884.122.477-481, 1884.123.665, 1884.123.787, 1884.128.81-82, 1884.132.183, 1921.91.268) and Mont Dol (1884.122.541-545, 1884.123.666-667) in Brittany.

### 10.2.4 Upper Palaeolithic

Upper Palaeolithic material clearly dominates the French Palaeolithic collection at the PRM. It is probably the most important collection of such material in England outside the British Museum, and is an excellent complement to the national collection. Over half of the French Palaeolithic material at the PRM is defined as being of Upper Palaeolithic date (*c.* 1364 objects): a figure that does not take into account that much of the uncatalogued

or incorrectly catalogued material is also Upper Palaeolithic. This proportion is very unusual for British museums, which usually contain a majority of Lower Palaeolithic handaxes, most collected from the Somme gravels in the late 19th century, with a small quantity of Upper Palaeolithic material from the Christy and Lartet excavations in the Dordogne caves. In contrast, the PRM also has quite extensive holdings of type series and specimens from various key sites in southwest France that were under investigation in the early 20th century. Although it is difficult to determine at present, collecting activity seems to have focused on obtaining material representative of the different divisions of the Upper Palaeolithic succession, and on keeping the PRM collection updated as new divisions were identified during the 1900s–1930s. As such it provides an excellent resource for study and teaching of both the Upper Palaeolithic period in France and how understanding of the period developed.

Supplementing the site-based collections is material donated by H.V.V. Noone in the 1930s–1940s that relates to his research on stone tool technology and its relationship to Upper Palaeolithic typology and chronology, and in particular to his work on burins (Noone 1931). This material provides insights to the processes of research on the Upper Palaeolithic in the early 20th century, and provides an interesting case study of a non-French researcher working on the subject.

Five major subdivisions of the French Upper Palaeolithic are currently recognised in the PRM database: Châtelperronian (1 object); Aurignacian (c. 499 objects); Gravettian (c. 15 objects); Solutrean (c. 259 objects); and Magdalenian (c. 394 objects). Although these figures are provisional until a further assessment of the collection can take place, they seem to suggest that the Aurignacian was the major focus of interest at the PRM when material was being actively collected from France: c. 43% of all Upper Palaeolithic material assigned to a specific sub-division, and 20% of the entire French Palaeolithic collection, is recorded as Aurignacian.

The emphasis on the Aurignacian is perhaps understandable as it was seen as the first major facies of the French Upper Palaeolithic since it was first defined by Édouard Lartet in 1861, and the history of its classification and sub-division is long and complicated. The two key systems during the period when the PRM was collecting and classifying French Palaeolithic material were those defined by Breuil at the 1912 International Congress (Breuil 1913), which established the relationship between the Solutrean and Aurignacian, and the major revision by Denis Peyrony in 1933 which separated the lower and upper Aurignacian phases from the main industry and redefined them as the Lower and Upper Perigordian (also known as the Châtelperronian and Gravettian). The last major revision of the Aurignacian succession for southwest France was by Denise de Sonneville-Bordes (1960), which remains the basis for modern work, although some of her terminology is no longer current and advances in radiocarbon dating techniques have revolutionized knowledge of the period. The subject of the Aurignacian across Europe and the Near East, as well as in France, is still a matter of considerable interest, and once the details of the PRM Aurignacian collections can be established then their potential for research can be properly assessed.

### 10.3 Materials and Artefact Types

The majority of the French Palaeolithic collection consists of stone tools, which are the most abundant artefact type recovered from Palaeolithic sites, but there is also a significant collection of worked bone and antler and some unmodified faunal remains (over 200 artefacts). The Museum also holds a small group of material relating to art and ornamentation in the Upper Palaeolithic. Finally, fragments of brecciated archaeological deposit from Les Eyzies are also represented, as are plaster casts, and natural objects once thought to have been of human manufacture.

### 10.3.1 Worked Bone and Antler

The PRM's European collections include more than 200 Upper Palaeolithic artefacts of worked bone and antler: an unusually large number. The collection – some 53 objects from which are of the PRM founding collection – has a high potential for teaching and research, especially with regard to the identification and interpretation of cut marks, traces of groove and splinter technique, and other modifications. Much of the material is from the Christy and Lartet 1863 excavations at La Madeleine, some acquired directly from the Trustees of the Christy Fund in 1907 and some through other sources. The material includes bâton fragments, several *sagaie* and barbed points and fragments of both, needles, awls, a *ciseau*, a possible tally, and fragments of other tools. Of perhaps greater research significance is a large collection of manufacturing debris from this site including fragments of reindeer antler with groove and splinter technique marks and/or signs of chopping. Many museums have examples of bone and antler tools from the Christy and Lartet excavations, but few, other than the British Museum, hold working debris. Indeed the quantity and quality of the working debris held by the PRM is such that it may have been acquired deliberately due to the Museum's interest in prehistoric technology. This material is of high research potential.

The PRM also holds two perforated reindeer phalange 'whistles' from La Madeleine, one probably from the 1863 excavations and the other found in 1931 (1938.34.271, 1931.14.1). These are rarely found in British museums and together with two other similar 'whistles' from Laugerie Basse (1909.4.1, 1938.34.272) probably form one of the largest groups of such artefacts held in the UK (Figure 10.3). They have been the subject of research in the past (Harrison 1978), and could certainly contribute to further research on this interesting artefact type. Other noteworthy worked bone or antler artefacts include two *sagaie* fragments from the 'Upper Solutréan stratum' of the Grotte du Placard, Charente (1914.74.109–110), and at least two Aurignacian point fragments from Abri Blanchard, Dordogne (1913.64.37–41). The PRM also holds a small collection of large mammal remains from the Middle Palaeolithic site of La Quina, Charente, that includes some bones with cut marks, and others with chopping/hammering traces. They were donated by Dr Léon Henri-Martin 'through the kind suggestion of Miss D. Garrod' in 1923 and are all from his excavations at the site (Martin 1931). All of the bones are marked with excavation codes (e.g. Couch II. Trench C<sup>2</sup> (LaQC<sup>2</sup>)) and so can be interpreted in context with the rest of the site.

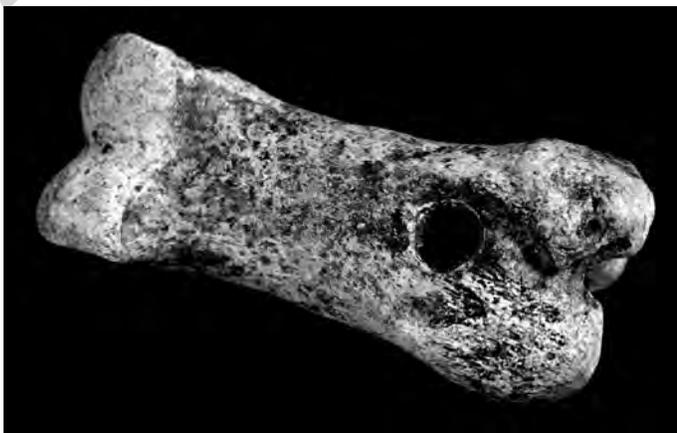


Figure 10.3  
Magdalenian-Period  
whistle made from  
reindeer phalanx bone,  
found at Laugerie Basse,  
Dordogne, France (PRM  
Accession Number  
1909.4.1).

### 10.3.2 *Unmodified Fauna*

The collection also contains unmodified faunal material. The PRM founding collection contains large mammal faunal remains from the 'Dordogne caves' that are in good condition and are mostly labelled with the species identification (e.g. horse, reindeer, cave bear). Most, if not all, of this material is from the Christy and Lartet excavations in the 1860s. Other bone and antler material from these excavations was donated by the Christy Fund Trustees in 1907. The PRM also holds a small group of three large mammal bones that have been gnawed by hyaenas from the Aurignacian site of Trou du Cluzeau, Charente (1923.59.135–138). There are also a number of unmodified faunal objects that were donated to the PRM by Henry Balfour. These include a brecciated skull, possibly of a small felid, from Grotte de Chateau, Saone et Loire (1898.12.13); reindeer teeth from Solutré, Saône-et-Loire (1898.12.14); and animal teeth and bones from Fourneau du Diable, Bourdeilles (1913.21.386-387), Gorge d'Enfer, Dordogne (1913.21.93-107), Cerilly, Auvergne (1898.20.54); and La Micoque, Dordogne (1931.15.66). There is also a specimen of antler from Gargas, Haute Pyrenees donated by R.R. Marrett (1916.15.2) and an unquantified assemblage of animal bones and teeth from the 'Aurignacian layer' at Laussel, Dordogne donated by Diamond Jenness (1910.52.181).

### 10.3.3 *Personal Ornaments and Art*

In addition to a few incised or decorated pieces of bone and antler, the PRM also holds some material relating specifically to ornamentation and art in the Upper Palaeolithic. This is unusual for British museums. The collection includes a perforated shell, possibly periwinkle or bulimus, from the 'upper Solutrean stratum' at Grotte du Placard, Charente, (1914.74.107) and two perforated reindeer canine teeth from Soualève, Dordogne (1931.74.72–73). In addition, a small, possibly antler, bead was seen during the assessment. It was labelled as coming from Gorge d'Enfer, Dordogne, and donated by Henry Balfour in 1913, but no accession number has been found for it as yet.

There are three examples of small stone 'palettes' interpreted as being used for grinding red ochre for a pigment: one from La Madelaine, Dordogne, and another from Fourneau du Diable, Perigord both collected by Henry Balfour during his visit to the area in 1913 (1913.21.263.2, 1913.21.384). The third is from the 'Lower Magdalenian stratum' of the Grotte du Placard, Charente (1914.74.146), and was purchased for the PRM by Professor W. Sollas. The Museum holds several natural samples of ochre from archaeological sites, which were collected as comparative materials.

The PRM also holds an Azilian painted pebble from La Grotte du Mas d'Azil, Ariège, that was donated by Louis Colville Gray Clarke in 1929 (1929.15.1). Clarke, a former diploma student at the PRM, had purchased the object through Henri Breuil. Two replica pebbles were donated at the same time. Also in 1929, Clark donated three painted pebbles from Mas d'Azil to the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology<sup>1</sup>, and the British Museum purchased 10 similar pebbles from Breuil. A major review of Azilian art objects was carried out by Claude Couraud of the Musée d'Archéologie Nationale at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in the late 1970s, and he developed a series of criteria to distinguish between genuine examples and forgeries of Azilian painted pebbles. Those criteria were later applied to Azilian pebbles held in English museums (Couraud and Bahn 1982). The investigators looked at 13 pebbles held by the British Museum and 12 by Cambridge, but seem to have been unaware of the one at the PRM. They found

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Accession Number CAE 1929.135.

that nine of the pebbles at the British Museum and three of the ones at Cambridge were forgeries; with most of these being sold by Breuil whom they thought had been misled when acquiring the pebbles in France. Authentication analysis of the PRM pebble should be undertaken in order to establish the research potential of the piece.

#### 10.3.4 *Breccia*

Donated directly to the PRM by the Trustees of the Christy Fund are 4 blocks of breccia from the 1863 excavations at Grotte des Eyzies by Édouard Lartet and Henry Christy (1907.14.52). At the time of the excavation, much of the archaeological deposit at this cave was found to be brecciated (Jones 1875) and the artefacts difficult to remove. Many small blocks of the breccia that could be seen to contain artefacts were collected by the excavators, and are now held by a number of museums around the world with the British Museum and the Musée d'Archéologie Nationale holding the largest number. The reason for so much of the Les Eyzies material being dispersed is explained in John Evans' report to the Geological Society on a trip to the Caves on the Vézère in 1864 that was guided by Henry Christy.

I now come to the renowned Cavern of Les Eyzies – renowned because, owing to the unprecedented liberality of its explorers (Messrs. Lartet and Christy), almost every museum of note, whether public or private, not only in France and England, but throughout a great part of the civilized world, has had specimens of its breccia, worked flints, and animal-remains presented to it; so that the name of Les Eyzies is everywhere known; and it is to be hoped that the collections formed there may in many instances prove to be the nuclei around which may centre collections from analogous cave-deposits in other countries' (Evans 1875 [1864]: 170–171).

The PRM founding collection contains several further pieces of this material that are recorded as being a 'table case containing fragments of floor of the cave at Les Eyzies' presented by Messrs. Christy and Lartet (1884.122.508). A similar collection, also originally in a table case, is recorded as being in the J. W. Flower collection that was transferred to the PRM in 1892 (1892.67.285). Both of these collections were probably originally gifts from Christy and Lartet to these two prominent Palaeolithic researchers. Also from the Christy and Lartet excavations at Les Eyzies is a breccia block donated by Henry Balfour (1897.48.1). Two further blocks from Grotte des Eyzies were purchased from Lhaumont in 1931, and may not be from the Christy and Lartet excavations (1931.76.17). Two pieces of breccia from the Henry E. Laver collection were purchased in 1926, and have no provenance, although they are likely to be from France (1926.89.19–20). During the late 1970s the British Museum excavated some brecciated material from Les Eyzies under laboratory conditions, recovering artefacts and faunal material and showing the richness of the original Magdalenian deposit (see Sieveking 1987 for discussion of the art pieces recovered during this work). This was an intensive research project, and when fully published will be of considerable value in assessing other material from the site.

#### 10.3.5 *Plaster Casts*

The PRM also holds *c.* 72 casts of stone and bone objects, some originally made by the Musée d'Archéologie Nationale. While most of these are replicas of objects, there are also casts of some of the rock engravings from Abri Blanchard, Dordogne, that are considered some of the oldest examples of rock art in Europe (1913.64.111–113). The collections include 13 casts of Palaeolithic objects purchased from the

natural historian Robert Damon from sites including Solutré, Le Moustier, and Les Eyzies (within 1907.68.1–14), and 19 casts from the PRM founding collection. The making and collecting of replica artefacts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is an interesting subject, but has not received much research attention as yet. The PRM's collection of French Palaeolithic casts is well documented and contains very few duplicates: it is worthy of further research.

### 10.3.6 *Natural Objects*

There appear to be no eoliths recorded in the French collection at the PRM, only 4 casts of such objects from St Prest that were transferred from the OUMNH (1940.12.165.1–4). This absence is surprising as eoliths featured prominently in studies of the French Palaeolithic in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Such natural pieces found in Tertiary deposits were first claimed as being objects of human manufacture in France, by Abbé Louis Alexis Bourgeois (1819–1878) for material found at Thenay (Bourgeois 1868). The term was first defined by the French archaeologist Gabriel de Mortillet who saw them as crude tools on an evolutionary development path for Palaeolithic artefacts (Mortillet and Mortillet 1881). Also, French scholars, especially the palaeontologist Marcellin Boule (1861–1942), were key figures in the resolution of the issue (e.g. Boule 1905). The absence of such material is also surprising in view of the large number of such objects in the British Palaeolithic collections of the PRM (see Chapter 9).

The collection does contain several groups of naturally perforated fossil sponges which have been claimed as Lower Palaeolithic beads in the past. These include examples from Les Boves, near Amiens, that were published by Charles Lyell (1884.76.67–96). The arguments for and against these fossils being used as ornaments at that early date are identical to those for similar 'beads' found in England (see 9.6) and recent research on this issue has included work on both French and British examples in the PRM collections (Bednarik 2005; Rigaud *et al.* 2009).

## 10.4 Regional Review of the French Palaeolithic Collection

### 10.4.1 *Regional Distributions*

This section provides an account of the geographical distribution of the *c.* 3,585 Palaeolithic objects from France. The locations of the main sites in France represented in the PRM Palaeolithic collections are shown in *Figure 10.1*. The vast majority of these objects (around 71 %) are from Aquitaine, and these *c.* 2,575 objects are reviewed in section 10.4.2 below. The subsequent sections review the other Regions of France from which the PRM holds Palaeolithic material, in order of the size of each collection: from the *c.* 326 Palaeolithic objects from Poitou-Charentes (10.4.3) to the *c.* 171 Palaeolithic objects from Brittany (10.4.4), the *c.* 148 Palaeolithic objects from Picardie (10.4.5), the *c.* 105 objects from Centre (10.4.6), the *c.* 58 Palaeolithic objects from Île-de-France (10.4.7), the *c.* 51 Palaeolithic objects from Midi-Pyrénées (10.4.8), *c.* 42 Palaeolithic objects from Bourgogne (10.4.9), and the *c.* 18 Palaeolithic objects from Nord-Pas-de-Calais (10.4.10). An unquantified assemblage of material from Languedoc-Roussillon is considered (10.4.11), before the remaining *c.* objects from the rest of France are introduced (10.4.12).

### 10.4.2 *Aquitaine*

The PRM holds *c.* 2,575 Palaeolithic objects of the Region of Aquitaine, *c.* 230 of which are from the PRM founding collection. All but 6 of the Aquitaine objects are from the Département of Dordogne. The Dordogne sites recorded in the PRM

database are dominated by sites at Les Eyzies-de-Tayac-Sireuil (variously recorded as Abri de Cro-Magnon, Abri des Eyzies, Abri Pataud, Abzac, Gorge d'Enfer, Grotte de la Mouthe, La Madeleine, La Micoque, Laugerie Basse, Laugerie Haute and Les Eyzies), but also include sites recorded as Grotte de Rouffignac, La Rochette, Fourneau du Diable, Champs Blancs, Abri Raymonden à Chancelade, Abri Ruth, La Ferrassie, Laussel, Badegou, Le Moustier, Combe-Capelle, Saint-Geniès, Abri Blanchard, Tremolat, and Soulaève. Outside of Dordogne, there are objects from Grotte D'Arudy and Fronsac.

The Dordogne has been a centre for research on the Palaeolithic since the mid-1860s, when Henry Christy and Édouard Lartet excavated in caves in the Vézère valley. While it is impossible to determine exact figures at present it appears that about a third of the PRM's Dordogne material was originally from the Christy and Lartet excavations, and often still bears their distinctive labels (small white rectangular labels printed with the initials C and L, the name of the site and the year of excavation). This material has entered the collection from a variety of sources, including the PRM founding collection, which contains material that seems to have been given to him by the excavators, or possibly by the Trustees of the Christy collection after the death of Henry Christy in 1865. Similar material in the J.W. Flower collection was probably acquired from the same original sources. In 1907 the Trustees of the Christy Fund at the British Museum presented an additional significant collection from the French caves to the PRM. This material was mainly from caves excavated by Christy and Lartet, but also included material from Grotte de Bruniquel (1907.14.30, see below). The donation included material from the following sites, and in many cases the individual accession number is for the bulk registration of a large uncatalogued group of artefacts or fauna: Le Moustier (1907.14.1–17); Laugerie Basse (1907.14.18); Laugerie Haute (1907.14.19–20); Laugerie, unspecified (1907.14.21–23); Gorge d'Enfer (1907.14.24–29); Les Eyzies (1907.14.31); La Madeleine (1907.14.32–38); Aurignac, Haute-Garonne (1907.14.48–51); and Dordogne caves (1907.14.39–47, 52).

Small type series of material from these caves were distributed by the excavators to people interested in the Palaeolithic in order to spread knowledge of their discoveries. After Christy's death the Trustees of his collection sent further type series to museums around Britain for the same purpose. Some of the smaller collections of objects from the Christy and Lartet excavations that have entered the PRM over the years may have originally been from one of these gifts (e.g. A.M. Bell collection). There have also been, as yet unsubstantiated, reports that the British Museum dispersed other material during the early 20th century. If true, this could be another possible source. In addition, Anne Sieveking records for Grotte des Eyzies that following the 1863 excavations people were able to collect artefacts from the debris on the slope beneath the cave (Sieveking 1987: 7). This could be the explanation for other groups of material such as the 60 stone tools from 'Abri des Eyzies' (1951.8.1–60) which the donor, Robert Henry Cunnington, records as being found by his uncle (probably the archaeologist Edward Benjamin Howard Cunnington).

The rest of the Dordogne material seems to have been acquired as a result of an active collecting of French Middle and Upper Palaeolithic material from this region during the curatorship of Henry Balfour (1890–1938). It is dominated by material which he collected himself, especially during a visit to the region in 1913, but also includes material collected by diploma students (Diamond Jenness; Dorothy Garrod), Oxford colleagues (William Sollas; Robert Ranulph Marett) and scholars associated with the PRM (Alfred Schwartz Barnes; Herbert Vander Vord Noone). A large part of the material seems to have been acquired through a network of connections which reads a bit like a 'who's who' of southwest French Palaeolithic archaeology in the early

20th century, including people such as: Henri Breuil, Denis Peyrony, Léon Henri-Martin, and Louis Didon; as well as foreigners working in France such as the Swiss archaeologist Otto Hauser and his French excavator Jean Leysalle, and the American George Lucius Collie. There are also lesser known excavators such as Joseph Simon Albaille, who may have been introduced to the PRM by one of the more prominent French archaeologists. Sites represented include: Abri Blanchard, La Ferrasie, sites in the Gorge d'Enfer, Laugerie Haute, Laugerie Basse, La Madelaine, Le Moustier, La Ruth (Abri Cellier) and Soulalève. All of this material has potential to contribute to research, especially when it is recorded to specific excavations and/or stratigraphic layers. It would also be important for any study of British involvement with French Palaeolithic archaeology in the early 20th century.

#### 10.4.3 Poitou-Charentes

There are *c.* 326 Palaeolithic objects from the Region of Poitou-Charentes, nine of which are from the PRM founding collection. The sites from which these objects were collected are variously recorded as Ronsenac, Coussay-les-Bois, Grotte du Placard, and La Quina. The material from La Quina derives from excavations undertaken by Léon Henri-Martin (Henri-Martin 1931; see 10.3.1 above).

#### 10.4.4 Brittany

There are *c.* 171 Palaeolithic objects from the Region of Brittany, all but one of which are from the PRM founding collection. The material derives from two sites – Mount Dol, Ille-et-Vilaine and Bois du Rocher, Dinan – and appears to have been collected in fieldwork undertaken by the General himself, mostly during a trip undertaken in March–April 1879 (1884.122.168–317, 1884.122.448, 1884.122.463–66, 1884.122.477–81). Many of the objects are marked with his initials and the year of discovery ('1879 A.L.F.') while others are only marked with the year (1879). That he collected the material himself is confirmed by comments he made in a later paper in reference to a type of scraper found in Egypt: 'This form of tool I have before identified with palaeolithic forms at the palaeolithic station at Bois du Rocher, near Dinan, in Brittany. I there found a number of them of smaller size, the other forms at that station being invariably palaeolithic' (Pitt-Rivers 1882: 385). The material is mainly Middle Palaeolithic and is made on siliceous material, previously described as quartzite, but which is a form of silicified sandstone.

The site of Bois du Rocher is a large open air site that was first investigated in about 1870 (Fornier and Micault 1872), and was well known in the late 19th century as a place of interest for Palaeolithic scholars. As a result it is not unusual for museums in Britain to hold a few pieces from the site, although usually acquired by the original donor through purchase or exchange rather than by first-hand fieldwork. The one Palaeolithic object from Brittany that is not from the PRM founding collection is a hand-axe from Bois du Rocher from the collection of Alexander Montgomerie Bell (1921.91.268), acquired in this way. The site was analysed by Jean-Laurent Monnier in the 1970s as part of his work on the Palaeolithic of Brittany (Monnier 1980). The site is now seen as part of a larger 'Group Bois du Rocher', that are non-Levallois industries with similarities to the French Middle Palaeolithic handaxe tradition (*Moustérien de Tradition Acheulien*: MTA) although most often made on non-flint materials and occasionally containing cleavers (*ibid.*, Cliquet and Monnier 1993). The affinities of the assemblages to the European Micoquian tradition have also been recognised and have been the subject of research in recent years.

The Pitt-Rivers collection from Bois du Rocher is unusual in that both flakes and handaxes were collected from the site, and these by a single informed collector within

a restricted time period. As such it provides a good type series for the site and could be an excellent resource for teaching and research on European Middle Palaeolithic industries, including the Micoquian, especially if combined with similar material from the site now held by the British Museum and the Ashmolean Museum.

Perhaps of similar research potential is the material from Mont Dol, in the bay of Mont Saint-Michel. This Middle Palaeolithic site, which has been described as a rockshelter, was discovered in the late 1860s, and a rich deposit of faunal remains and stone tools was excavated in 1872–1873 by the zoologist Simon Sirodot (1825–1903) from the University of Rennes (Sirodot 1873). Unusually for the time, Sirodot conducted a careful excavation and kept detailed records including descriptions of the stratigraphy and sediments. The quality of his records and of the faunal and artefact assemblages that he recovered is such that it is still valuable for modern research (e.g. Chaline and Monnier 1976, Monnier *et al.* 1995). How Pitt-Rivers obtained the material is unknown, as Sirodot bequeathed his material to the Natural History Museum and the Faculty of Sciences of Rennes. If this material could be related in some manner to the Sirodot excavations, or to the stratigraphy of the site, then it could be of some importance. The delivery catalogue records 33 flint flakes from the site, but only seven are recorded on the database at present (1884.122.541–5, 1884.123.666–7). This material needs to be located and assessed.

#### 10.4.5 Picardie

There are *c.* 148 Palaeolithic objects from the Region of Picardie, most of which is from the Somme region: although there are some objects from Chalandry and Bois-de-Pargny (Aisne) and Foulanges (Oise). The Somme material is mostly from the type site of St Acheul, although there is also material from the well-known nearby locales of Abbeville, Amiens and Montières. As well as the PRM founding collection, donors include John Wickham Flower, Henry Balfour and E.B. Tylor. Additional material was acquired through the purchase of the A.M. Bell collection. One handaxe collected by Boucher de Perthes was donated by Balfour, and specimens found by Joseph Prestwich or John Evans were acquired from Arthur Evans and A.M. Bell. John Evans also donated two of the notorious forgeries from Moulin Quignon, and another from Abbeville. All of this material is of value for the study of the early history of the recognition of the Palaeolithic. Also of interest are two handaxes, apparently from St. Acheul, which Pitt-Rivers had hafted onto wooden shafts to illustrate how they might have been used originally (1884.140.587–588). An additional group of about 7 artefacts from Freville's Pit at St. Acheul was seen during the assessment and seems to have been transferred from the OUMNH although accession numbers can not be determined at present. Most of this material seems to have been collected by J. Barker, and some was found in 1863. A large Levallois flake is marked 'Fréville's 2nd Pit, white sand bed, Amiens, Aug/20/74' and is of interest due to the contextual information.

#### 10.4.6 Centre

There are also *c.* 105 objects from the Centre region, nine of which are from the PRM founding collection. The sites from which these objects were collected are variously recorded as Janville, Le Grand-Pressigny, Preuilly, Pontlevoy and Chaussy le Bois.

#### 10.4.7 Île-de-France

There are *c.* 58 Palaeolithic objects from the Region of Île-de-France, just one of which is from the PRM founding collection (1884.132.331). Sites represented by

these collections are listed as located at Paris, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Nemours, Blangy-sur-Bresle, Les Mureaux and Meulan-en-Yvelines.

#### 10.4.8 *Midi-Pyrénées*

There are *c.* 51 Palaeolithic objects from the Midi-Pyrénées Region, just five of which are from the PRM founding collection. Sites represented by these collections are listed as located at La Grotte du Mas d'Azil, Grotte de Tarté, Aurignac, Gargas, Lacau, and Bruniquel.

From Tarn-et-Garonne, Midi-Pyrénées, the PRM holds an uncatalogued group of artefacts from 'Grotte de Bruniquel', which was part of the 1907 donation of material from the Christy Fund Trustees at the British Museum (1907.14.30). The material is assumed to have been collected originally by Henry Christy, presumably as it was donated by the Christy Fund Trustees, however Christy is not known to have excavated at Bruniquel and the material probably comes from a different source. The uncertainty could result from the distinction between the original Christy collection (i.e. material that was collected by Henry Christy) and additional material purchased from the Christy Fund (i.e. the money that he bequeathed for that purpose). The PRM's accession book records the exact phrase in the donation letter from Charles Hercules Read, who says that he has '...selected a nice lot of French cave things and they will be dispatched to you tomorrow...'. Read does not say that all of the material being donated is from the original Christy collection.

The British Museum contains two major collections of Upper Palaeolithic material from the Bruniquel area, which has caused confusion in the past as both have been known as 'Bruniquel' in the early literature. La Grotte du Courbet was dug by Vicomte de Lastic Saint-Jal in 1863–1864, with the assistance of Richard Owen of the British Museum in 1864. Owen purchased the collection for the British Museum in 1864, and the site is referred to as a comparison to the Dordogne sites dug by Christy and Lartet in *Reliquiae Aquitanae* (Jones 1875). Abri Montrastruc was excavated by Peccadeau de l'Isle in 1866 and his collection was acquired by Augustus Franks and Hercules Read for the Christy Fund in 1887 as an addition to the original Henry Christy collection held by the British Museum (Sieveking 1987). While the material donated by Read could theoretically come from either collection, it is most likely that it comes from Montrastruc, which was part of the Christy Collection and which Read could legally disperse as the main trustee. Re-examination of the material may be able to confirm this suggestion.

The small group of material from 'Abri sous Roches, Bruniquel' that was donated by Henry Balfour in 1898 (1898.12.17–27) might also be from Montrastruc as the site was referred to an 'abri sous roches' after it was first discovered. However, Palaeolithic remains have been found in other rockshelters in the Bruniquel area and this provenance can not be assumed without further evidence. A single stone artefact from 'Bruniquel' that was purchased from the collection of S.G. Hewlett (1927.78.34) is also without further provenance and the suggestion that it is from excavations by Christy and Lartet in 1863 seems to derive from it being acquired with a flake from La Madelaine with that provenance. The PRM also holds plaster casts of the two most famous portable art objects from Abri Montrastruc, the 'swimming reindeer' and a spear thrower in the form of a mammoth (see Sieveking 1987, 64–65).

Also from Midi-Pyrénées, is a painted pebble from La Grotte du Mas d'Azil, Ariège, the type site of the Azilian industry (1929.15.1, see above). Also possibly from Maz d'Azil, according to an associated note, are 3 bone fragments, one of

which has scrape marks (1926.89.21–23). They are from the collection of the Colchester-based antiquary Henry E. Laver that was split up and sold following his death in 1926. The PRM acquired the material from Stevens Auction House along with other material from his collection including fauna from Grotte de Tarté, Haute Garonne (1926.89.2-13).

#### 10.4.9 *Bourgogne*

There are *c.* 42 Palaeolithic objects from the Region of Bourgogne, five of which are from the PRM founding collection. The sites from which these objects were collected are variously recorded as located at Sauvigny, Grotte de Chateau, Mâcon, Solutré, and Yonne. Solutré is the type site of the Solutrean, which is located at the base of the Roche de Solutré and is now known to be an extensive site with well-preserved levels of Mousterian, Aurignacian, Gravettian, Solutrean and Magdalenian activity (Combiér and Montet-White 2002). The PRM material from Solutré consists of stone artefacts and fauna donated by Henry Balfour in 1897 (1897.43.34), 1898 (1898.12.14; 1898.12.28), and 1912 (1912.39.24) from the ‘Cave of Solutré’. He also donated 5 artefacts from the same location which are said to have come from excavations by Christy and Lartet in 1863 (1908.5.52–56), but this provenance must be an error as the Solutré site was found by Adrien Arceilin in 1866, a year after Christy’s death. Arceilin and the geologist Henri Testot-Ferry conducted the earliest excavations on the site in the late 1860s, and were in contact with Edourd Lartet about their finds. Arceilin conducted further work on the site in the 1870s–1890s with Abbé Ducrost. It is possible that Balfour obtained the material now in the PRM collections from Arceilin, or from Testot-Ferry, but it is also possible that he obtained them from another less well-documented episode of excavation at the site, such as the one that was the source of material now in the Field Museum in Chicago (Pestle *et al.* 2006). It would be very interesting to determine the source of the PRM material, both to determine how the material relates to the rest of the site, and as an example of Henry Balfour’s collecting activities.

#### 10.4.10 *Nord-Pas-de-Calais*

There are *c.* 18 Palaeolithic objects from the Region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, some 13 of which are from the PRM founding collection. Sites represented by these collections are listed as located at Le Bois des Montagnes, Saint-Remy-au-Bois, Béthune and Marquise. These include four hand-axes from Béthune from the collection of John Wickham Flower (1892.67.231, 1892.67.233–234, 1892.67.244), and another from Marquise donated by Arthur Maurice Hocart (1917.39.1). A backed point found on the surface at Cap Gris Nez (1884.123.739) has been attributed to the Gravettian, but is more likely to be of Mesolithic or Late Upper Palaeolithic age.

#### 10.4.11 *Languedoc-Roussillon*

There is only one record of Palaeolithic material from the Region of Languedoc-Roussillon: an unquantified collection of Mousterian quartzite artefacts from the Grotte de Bize, Aude, that was received from Joseph Simon Albaille in 1913 (1913.41.1). From the date of acquisition it might be assumed to relate to Henry Balfour’s 1913 trip to France, but this can not be confirmed at present. Joseph Simon Albaille was a winemaker who conducted excavations at the ‘Grotte de Bize’ from 1911–1914, and in other nearby caves in the late 1920s. He is known as an early excavator of La Grotte Tournal à Bize (La Grande Grotte de Tournal à Bize) and his collection and surviving notes were included in Henry de Lumley’s analysis of

the lithic material from the cave in 1971. It was also considered in more recent work on the cave, which was re-excavated by André Tavano in the 1980s (Tavano 1987). Neither Lumley nor Tavano seems to have included in their work the material from the cave that is held by the PRM. The material should be assessed to determine the research potential.

#### *10.4.12 The Rest of France*

There are 6 objects from the Auvergne Region: four hand-axes, a fragment of worked antler, and a flint core (1898.20.54, 1912.39.27, 1915.37.15-17, 1915.37.20). There are further four hand-axes from Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (1892.67.518, 1892.67.530-531, 1892.67.596), and a single hand-axe from the Rhône-Alpes Region (1892.67.522). There is also a single object from the Pays de la Loire Region: a cast on an engraved bone (1898.44.1) taken from an original 'found in a cave on the banks of the Charente'. There are also *c.* 72 objects currently recorded as Palaeolithic and from France, but for which the precise provenance is currently unrecorded. These include an antler pick from the PRM founding collection (1884.122.551), and a range of unassessed material acquired by Henry Balfour, some of which may be of a later date.

### **10.5 The Rest of Continental Europe**

While the Palaeolithic material from France seems to have been collected actively by the PRM, especially through the agency of Henry Balfour, this is not the case for material of similar age from the rest of continental Europe. Instead, the material from other European countries seems to relate more to the research interests of the various collectors than to the Museum, and has mainly been acquired during the mid- to late 20th century. The material is all of interest to the study of Palaeolithic stone tool technology, which is presumably why each part was donated to the PRM, but as a group it lacks the coherence and research potential of the French collection. The exception to this generality would be the material from Italy, which was collected as French material.

#### *10.5.1. Belgium*

The PRM Belgian 'Palaeolithic' collection comprises *c.* 63 objects. These are mainly eoliths and casts of eoliths, although it does include a few genuinely Palaeolithic artefacts. Two bifacial ovate chert implements from Engis were purchased by the PRM from Raymond Wilson in 1910 (1910.72.78-79) and should be assessed to determine if they could be of Middle Palaeolithic age, as there is a well-known site at Engis which produced Neanderthal remains. A third Belgian artefact purchased from Wilson and attributed to the Palaeolithic is a large chert core from Spiennes (1910.72.80), which is more likely to be a product of the Neolithic flint mines there. In addition, 3 'Chellean' pieces from Rutot's excavations at Helin, Spiennes, may well be Lower Palaeolithic in age despite doubts over this predominantly eolith-producing site (1921.91.336-338). Certainly a few genuine artefacts were observed in the boxes of Belgian eoliths during the assessment undertaken for this chapter.

The bulk of the Belgian material, however, is eolithic and all of the objects were originally collected by Aimé Louis Rutot (1847-1933), a well-known proponent of eoliths between about 1900-1920 (De Bont 2003). Eoliths are natural flint or chert objects that were once thought to be of human manufacture, and the term was defined by the French archaeologist, Gabriel de Mortillet, who saw them as very

early crude manufactured tools (Mortillet and Mortillet 1881). Rutot believed instead that most eolithic implements were not deliberately manufactured, but that their use by early humans caused recognisable signs of flaking and other modification on the pieces. He saw three main Eolithic industries in Belgium: the youngest the 'Mesvinian', the oldest the 'Reutelian' and in between the 'Maffian' (also known as the 'Reutelo-Mesvinian'). He also recognised a final eolithic phase for the Lower Palaeolithic, the 'Strépyan', and an eolithic industry for the Neolithic that he called the 'Flenusian'. In the late 1900s he even claimed that eolithic artefacts had been found in an Oligocene deposit at Boncelles (Rutot 1907).

None of the PRM Belgian eoliths were acquired directly by the Museum from Rutot, but came through two major collectors who had different views on the material. The Oxford antiquarian Alexander James Montgomerie Bell was interested in eoliths and there are a number of examples of such pieces in his collection from various places in southern England. From Belgium the Bell collection contained 31 of the Oligocene pieces from Boncelles, which seem to have been acquired by Bell at about the same time as Rutot's first paper on this material in 1907 (1921.91.275–305). There are also 33 objects from various layers at Rutot's excavations at Helin, Spiennes, that were acquired by Bell in 1908 (1921.91.306–38). These consist of one Maffian, 22 Mesvinian and 6 Strépyan eoliths, as well as the 3 Chellean pieces mentioned above.

Professor Alfred Schwartz Barnes was a specialist in stone tool technology who had a long association with the PRM (Petch 2009). He had apparently acquired examples of 3 key eolithic industries in connection with his research on defining the features of natural and artificial flaking, and on distinguishing between handaxes and other artefacts and eoliths (Barnes 1939). His collection consists of 8 'Mesvinian' eoliths from Spiennes (1950.5.2–9), 5 'Reutelian' ones (1950.5.10–14), and 4 'Flenusian' pieces from Grace-Berleur (1950.5.15–18). It is unknown when Barnes acquired the material, but it was donated to the PRM after Barnes's death by Sir Francis Knowles. There has been a revival of interest in eoliths in the past decade, mainly from the perspective of the history of archaeology (e.g. O'Connor 2007; McNabb 2009; Ellen and Muthana 2010), and the PRM Belgian material could be of research potential, especially if combined with Rutot material held by the OUMNH and other museums.

The PRM collection also contains a series of casts of Belgian eoliths that were originally in the collection of the Department of Geology, and which were transferred from the OUMNH in 1940. This consists of 27 casts of Strépyan (1940.6.46–73) and 6 of Maffian pieces (1940.6.127–132), plus 7 additional casts donated by S. Hazzledine Warren (5 Reutelian, one Mesvinian, and one Strépyan: 1940.12.166.1–5, 1940.12.167.1–2).

### 10.5.2 *Germany*

The PRM holds a small collection of 32 unmarked flint artefacts 'of the Ahrensburg culture' from Germany, that are recorded as being collected by 'Alfred Rust of Hamburg in 1934' (1959.4.11–36). Before the present assessment, these were mis-identified in PRM records as being of Mesolithic age ('Mesolithic Period I, Pre-Boreal Culture'), but were recognised during the curatorial review of the collections undertaken for this chapter. The Ahrensburgian is a Final Palaeolithic industry of Northern Europe that is mainly associated with the Younger Dryas climatic phase of the Lateglacial, and is characterised by the presence of small tanged points. It is often seen as a precursor of the early Mesolithic, and it is presumably in this context that the PRM material was acquired. The material was donated by Armand Donald Lacaille of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in London, who seems to have

become interested in Final Palaeolithic tanged point industries in relation to his work on the Mesolithic in the 1930s–1950s. Lacaille mentions the Ahrensburgian in his discussion of the origins of the ‘Magelmocean Forest Culture’ in his book on the Stone Age of Scotland (Lacaille 1954: 110–11). He also identified an Ahrensburgian point in the assemblage from Daylight Rock Fissure, Caldey Island, in his work on the Mesolithic of Wales (Lacaille and Grimes 1955). How Lacaille obtained the Ahrensburgian artefacts is unknown at present, but it is possible that he received them from Rust for comparative purposes.

Alfred Rust (1900–1983) was a German archaeologist best known for his 1930s excavations of the classic Late Upper Palaeolithic sites of Meindorf (1932–1934, Hamburgian) and Stellmoor (1934–1936, Ahrensburgian and Hamburgian) near Hamburg in northern Germany (Rust 1937, 1943). The assemblages from these excavations are held in the Archäologisches Landesmuseum in Schleswig, and have been the subject of recent research (Grønnow 1985; Bokelmann 1991; Bratlund 1996). It is unlikely that the material now in the PRM comes from either of the two classic excavations. However, the Stellmoor site was first identified from surface finds, and it is possible that the collection date of 1934 might suggest that artefacts now in the PRM material were part of this material. The Wellcome Collection archive holds Lacaille’s correspondence from 1932–1959<sup>2</sup>, and might contain some documentation about the acquisition of the material. Without a clear provenance the material is useful for teaching and comparative purposes only.

### 10.5.3 Hungary

The PRM collection contains five small pieces of a silicified lithic material, probably radiolarite, from the site of Vértesszöllös in Hungary: 2 are claimed to be ‘burnt’ (1978.1.5 .1–2) and 3 to be ‘unburnt or only mildly heated’ (1978.1.6 .1–3). They were donated by Kenneth Page Oakley, who collected them in 1965 from ‘cultural layer 1’ at this site which was then claimed to have the earliest evidence of fire in Europe. Vértesszöllös was discovered in 1962 and excavated between 1963 and 1968 by Laszlo Vértes (Kretzoi and Dobosi 1990). The site is thought to date to about 500,000 years ago on the basis of the associated faunal assemblage (Dobosi 2003). Oakley undertook chemical analysis of some of the bone from the site (Oakley 1990), and this lithic material may have been acquired in relation to that work. This is of little research potential except as an example of the lithic materials used at the site.

### 10.5.4 Italy

There are *c.* 35 objects from Italy that are recorded as Palaeolithic on the PRM database, one of which is a cast, purchased from the natural historian Robert Damon, of a Palaeolithic object from the ‘Baussi Rossi’ caves in Italy (within 1907.68.1–14). The remaining objects comprise a collection of *c.* 34 objects from the Balzi Rossi caves (aka Baoussé-Roussé; Baussi Russi; Roches Rouges; Red Cliffs) on the Italian side of the French/Italian border.<sup>3</sup> The caves are located in the base of the limestone cliffs near the village of Grimaldi, between the French resort of Menton and the Italian town of Ventimiglia. They are usually referred to as the Grimaldi caves, after Albert Honoré Charles Grimaldi, Prince Albert I of Monaco (1848–1922), who financed excavations in the caves at the end of the 19th century. In the late 19th century they were also commonly known as the Caves of Menton (Grottes de Menton) (e.g.

<sup>2</sup> Wellcome Collection archives WA/HMM/CO/Lac.

<sup>3</sup> A confusion in the documentation as to which country they are located in seems to derive from the caves commonly being described as being ‘near’ Menton (or Mentone) in the early literature.

Rivière 1873). This presumably as people visiting the caves stayed at Menton which was the nearest large town and a popular resort as the climate was thought to be beneficial to people in ill health. In order to avoid future confusion, the material from the Grimaldi/Menton caves is listed below in probable order of discovery.

- 1892.67.297–302. From the ‘Bone Cave’ Mentone. From the collection of the geologist John Wickham Flower (1807–1873) that was transferred from the OUMNH in 1892.
- 1935.46.28.1–7. Cave at Mentone. Described in the accession book as being found by Howard Wyndham in 1876. From Professor Rolleston’s collection, transferred to the PRM from the OUMNH in 1935. (Perhaps a relation of the geologist Heathcote Wyndham (1842-1876), Fellow of Merton College, who had advised Rolleston on mineralogical matters during the Frilford excavations).
- 1934.63.31. Cave, Menton, S. France. Dec. 1897. Purchased from the S.G. Hewlett collection in 1934.
- 1898.12.31–33. From the ‘Grottes de Menton, Italie’. Balfour. The printed labels on these pieces have a monogram of ER in the bottom right hand corner, which probably indicates that they came from the excavations of Émile Rivière.
- 1901.14.10–12. From the prehistoric cave, Mentone. Presented by Henry Balfour. Two of these are perforated univalve shell beads (11–12).
- 1919.33.39–51. From Barma Grande Cave, Baoussé-Roussé Rocks. From Oscar Raphael. 1903. Some labelled from the ‘Reindeer layer’ recorded as being 3–4 feet above a stalagmite floor, and some from below the stalagmite floor in the ‘elephant layer’.
- 1940.12.665. Menton. From the Seligman collection.

Although the caves were known and were being investigated from about 1858 (see Bennet 1870) they first rose to international prominence in the 1870s when Émile Rivière (1835–1922) began his work there (Rivière 1873). Given the dates of discovery and acquisition for the material in the PRM collections, it is likely that most was collected after the caves became well-known attractions. While the material is of general interest for teaching, and the perforated beads for research on Palaeolithic ornaments, the only group of material of real research potential is that from the Barma Grande cave which is associated with specific stratigraphic layers (i.e. “Reindeer” and “Elephant” layers, see Onoratini *et al.* 2012).

### 10.5.5 Spain

The Palaeolithic archaeological collections from Spain consist of 22 quartzite artefacts, 7 unworked stone pebbles of different materials (perhaps geological samples) and 2 unworked shells (2010.32.1–31), all of which are from ‘Guadiana, West River Bank, boulder area’ according to a note found with the material. The collection was identified by Nick Barton in June 2010 during the characterization project assessment, unregistered in the Spanish prehistoric stone tool collection. Investigation by PRM staff has not yet identified a source for the material although it is possible that it may relate in some way to the PRMs involvement with fieldwork in Spain by either Dr W. H. Waldren (D.Phil. Oxon., 1982: Balearic prehistory) or Professor M. Walker (Orce Research project; see for example Roe 1995).

### 10.6 Conclusions

The continental European Palaeolithic collections at the PRM have considerable value for future research, especially the extensive assemblages from France. However, further documentation work needs to be undertaken to clarify the scope of the

holdings before they can be used to their full potential. This basic documentation work for this virtually unstudied collection is the main priority for future studies.

Some specific suggestions regarding possible work on the collections have been mentioned above and in general the following general topics for research can be identified. Firstly, there is considerable potential for research into the history of the recognition of the Palaeolithic and the antiquity of humans, with reference to Lower Palaeolithic material in the PRM founding collection and J.W. Flower collections. Second, there is potential for research into Upper Palaeolithic bone and antler technology. There is also potential for research into typological studies and development of the French Palaeolithic sequence from the 1850s to 1950s, and in particular to British interest and involvement with those studies. A programme of reassessment of known sites and find locations would also be beneficial: for example Middle Palaeolithic sites in Brittany and Upper Palaeolithic sites in the Dordogne with Aurignacian levels. Finally, research into recognition of stone tools and the 'eolith' debate in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially in relation to material from Belgium, holds considerable potential.

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