Bone retouchers from Lower Palaeolithic sites: Terra Amata, Orgnac 3, Cagny-l’Epinette and Cueva del Angel

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Abstract
Bone retouchers are more common during the Middle Palaeolithic (from MIS 7 to 3) and are now considered as a part of the tool kit of Neanderthals. In Middle Pleistocene and Lower Palaeolithic assemblages, they are few in number and attest to the scarcity of use of bones as material for shaping tools. Some MIS 11 to MIS 9 sites allow the description of the onset of bone use and its multiplication after the MIS 9 attests of another functional relationship between bones and hominins.

Our aim is to provide details about the bone retouchers found in some MIS 11–9 sites with lithic assemblages, often described as late Acheulean, that include handaxes and heavy-duty tools. The sites sampled are Terra Amata (south-east France, MIS 11), Orgnac 3 (south-east France, MIS 9–8), Cagny l’Epinette (Northern France, MIS 9) and Cueva del Angel (Spain, MIS 11–7). The study examined the number of retouchers, their support and type of animal, types of marks, bone sizes, and the lithic and faunal contexts.

While bone retouchers sometimes total several hundreds of pieces in Middle Palaeolithic sites, our Lower Palaeolithic corpus yields generally between 1 and 6 retouchers. Retouchers are always made on fragments of bones from the main hunted species (horses, large bovids and cervids). Marks on bone retouchers indicate specific processes for selecting fragments of bones, and hypotheses are provided on their method of use. Categories may be suggested according to their types of support (diaphysis, epiphysis) as well as their types of marks, and allow us to suggest hypotheses for the retouching of both bifacial tools and flake-tools as well as for direct percussion. The results are compared with other sites from which bone retouchers were already published (Cueva del Bolomor, Gran Dolina TD10 in Spain, and La Micoque in France and Qesem in Israel). They are also compared with younger Acheulean assemblages such as Lazaret cave in France.

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1. Introduction

The first records of bone retouchers were made by Leguay (1877), Daleau (1883) and by Henri-Martin (1906, 1907, 1907–1910) at the Middle Palaeolithic site of La Quina (Charente, France). Henri-Martin described “ces os à impressions” and discussed several hypotheses regarding their function according to their support (Baudoin et al., 1906). Recently, Patou-Mathis and Schwab (2002) provided a broader definition for bone retouchers as, “fragments of teeth, long bones, phalanges or ribs of big mammals, which present on their exteriors one or more impressed areas, related to crushing marks, and/or cupules, and/or scores, without modification of initial morphology, made by impact against a sharp and hard artefact with the edge of flake, tool or handaxe”. Bone retouchers are present in various ratios in many Middle Palaeolithic sites from Western and Central Europe and the Levant. They are linked to the Levallois and laminar core technologies and also Micoquian industries in Central Europe (i.e. Vincent, 1993; Auguste, 2002; Valensi, 2002b; Mallye et al., 2012; Jéquier et al., 2012; Guadelli et al., 2013; Daujeard et al., 2014).
It was often considered that bones were not recovered for use in Lower Paleolithic assemblages in Europe. Nevertheless, discoveries made during recent decades indicate that bones were punctually collected for making heavy-duty tools such as handaxes, for instance on elephant bones at Fontana Ranuccio, La Polledrara di Ceanbiblio, Castel di Guido in Central Italy (Segre and Ascensi, 1984; Radmilli and Boschian, 1996; Anzidei et al., 2012; Boschian and Sacca, 2015). Some studies have also pointed out that some bones with marks could be assimilated to bone retouchers (for shaping tools by percussion or pressure) or hammers. They are mainly on herbivore bones, rarely Carnivores or human (Auguste, 2002; Verna and d’Errico, 2011). These bones exhibit pits and scores of varying depths, with a V-section, located on specific areas considered as active. The sites yielding such retouchers are Bois-grove in Great-Britain (MIS 13; Smith, 2013), Caune de l’Arago in France (MIS 12; Moigne, 1996), La Micoque (MIS 12–11; Langlois, 2004; Risco, 2011), Gran Dolina TD10 in Spain (MIS 10–9; Rosell et al., 2011, 2015), Orgnac 3 in France (MIS 9; Sam, 2009; Sam and Moigne, 2011, Moncel et al., 2012), Cagny-l’Epipnette in France (MIS 9; Tuffreau et al., 1995), Bolomor Cave in Spain (MIS 9) and Qesem in Israel (400–200 ka) (Blasco and Fernandez Peris, 2012; Blasco et al., 2013b; see Stiner et al., 2009, 2011). These observations have documented some of these bone retouchers dated between MIS 11 and 9, sometimes not related to the bifacial technology. The presence of these bone retouchers indicate that bone recovery has to be considered as part of the behavioral strategies, and are among the modalities of behavioral changes observed in Europe between 400 and 300 ka.

We present in this paper data coming from four sites where bone retouchers were observed, completing evidence of bone uses in MIS 11–9 European sites: Terra Amata (South-East France, MIS 11), Orgnac 3 (South-East France, MIS 9–8), Cagny-l’Epipnette (North France, MIS 9) and La Cueva del Angel (Southern Spain, MIS 11–7) (Fig. 1). The bone retouchers will be examined through their number, support and type of species, types of traces, sizes, related to the lithic and faunal contexts. While bone retouchers total sometimes several hundreds of pieces in Middle Palaeolithic sites, our Middle Pleistocene corpus only yielded between 1 and 6 retouchers.

2. Sites

2.1. Terra Amata

The site of Terra Amata is an open-air site, situated in Nice, on the western slopes of Mount Boron. The archeological deposits consist of a littoral marine formation at the bottom (stratigraphic unit C1a) composed of a beach of pebbles and silt (M unit) surmounted by a silt level (P4 unit) recovered by a littoral barrier beach made of pebbles (CLS unit), and at the top a large dune of sand (stratigraphic unit C1b). During the excavations in 1966 by H. de Lumley, theoretical levels have been established by the location of each artefact in order to preserve field data (de Lumley et al., 1976). These preliminary levels were questioned by Villa (1978) who suggested recognizing levels by the refitting of artefacts. Recently, archeostratigraphical units were determined underlying phases of human occupations. These units were defined by the vertical and horizontal distribution of the archaeological material and the refittings of lithic pieces and faunal remains (Pollot, 1990; de Lumley, 2013). The taphonomical and archeozoological studies have been performed using six large units (units M, P4, CLs and three units from the dune: DA, DB, DC) (Valensi and El Guennouri, 2004, Valensi et al., 2011). These six units are rather similar to the layers suggested by P. Villa, although more accurately defined and applied to all the material.

The lithic industry, described as Acheulean, is characterized by many products coming from the shaping of pebbles (choppers, chopping-tools, handaxes and cleavers). Flake-tools are composed of a majority of scrapers and secondarily of denticulates and notches. The Levallois core technology does not exist (de Lumley et al., 2008; de Lumley, 2015).

The large mammal corpus consists of 8000 remains, including around 11% which have been determined (Valensi et al., 2011). The faunal remains are composed of eight large mammals with Palaeo-oioxodon antiquus, Cervus elaphus and Sus scrofa as the most abundant species. The others species are Bos primigenius, well represented in the upper levels (dune), Ursus arctos, Hemitragus bonali, and Ste-phanorhinus hemitoechus, which characterize the Mediterranean population between MIS 11 and MIS 8 (Lacombat, 2006, 2009). The mammal corpus, similar in the different levels, characterizes a temperate period of the Middle Pleistocene, attributed to the beginning of Aurelian formation (MIS 9 or 11) (Valensi, 2009; Valensi et al., 2011). Geology and general context of the site led to a corre-lation of Terra Amata to MIS 11 (de Lumley et al., 2001).

The taphonomical study indicates the best preservation for the bone corpus from the beach levels (M, P4 and CLs units). The archeozoological data (Valensi et al., 2011) show hunting of Cervus with transportation of the whole carcasses in the habitat, followed by intense treatment for food. Cervid long bones are mainly shafts, intentionally broken for marrow extraction. These results are also confirmed by the fact that 20% of bones exhibit percussion cones, bone flakes, and percussion marks. Deer remains also show a significant number of cut-marks and striations (about 8% of NISP in the different units and more than 20% in CL unit). Hominids also brought portions of carcasses of aurochs and young elephants to the camp. Only cranial fragments and extremities of claws of wild boars were found, which seems to be the result of scavenging. Marks left by carnivores are almost nonexistent on the material (less than 10 remains).

During this period, the site was located at the coast, near a delta in a swamp environment, explaining the recurrence of the human occupations. Distinct Acheulean occupations were observed on the different archeostratigraphic units (de Lumley, 2015):

- On the beach (P4 unit) and the dune (DA, DB and DC units), occupations are organized with remains of huts with fireplaces, with faunal and lithic remains in situ.
- On the barrier beach (CLS unit), the artefacts are scattered and poor, some of them rolled by the sea. Cervus deciduous teeth were recovered from this unit, suggesting late-season use. Occupation differs with many choppers, few flakes, and extensive use of local stones.

2.2. Orgnac 3

The site was at first a cave, then it was transformed into a rock shelter and finally into an open-air site (Combier, 1967; Moncel et al., 2005). The sequence was divided into 10 archeological levels.

Recent studies of complete lithic and faunal assemblages from the ten archeological levels of Orgnac 3 (1959–1972 excavations) (Combier, 1967; Aouraghe, 1999; Sam, 2009; Moncel et al., 2011, 2012) provide an opportunity to observe the contextual evidence of some behavioural changes and focus that occurred on both technological and subsistence strategies. The site contains records of Upper Acheulean occupations (Combier, 1967), with evidence of Middle Paleolithic behavior at the top of the sequence (Moncel, 1999). This site consequently offers the opportunity to address the question of gradual versus punctuated changes in hominin behavior while the Neanderthal lineage was evolving.
The lower levels (6, 5b and 5a) of Orgnac 3 yielded several hominin teeth attributed to Pre-Neanderthals, similar to the hominin remains discovered in level G at the Caune de l’Arago (south-west France) (de Lumley, 1981). Electron Spin Resonance (ESR) and Uranium/Thorium (U/Th) methods yielded ages of $288^{+45}_{-45} \pm 82$ ka, $309 \pm 34$ ka, and $374^{+165}_{-94}$ ka for these levels (Shen, 1985; Falgueres et al., 1988; Laurent, 1989; Masaoudi, 1995), associated with MIS 9.

Four pure calcite samples from level 5b–6–7 were taken and dated by U/Th using a multicollector (MC)-ICPMS at the High-precision Mass Spectrometry and Environment Change Laboratory (HISPEC, Taiwan). The ages obtained vary between 255 and 319 ka (Michel et al., 2011, 2013).

Fauna is rich and well preserved, with an abundance of cervid bones. Horse represents the second most hunted species. Carnivores are well represented and marks on bones indicate wolf activities after human activities. Fire places are clearly located near the wall of the cave (Moncel et al., 2005, 2011, 2012; Sam and Moigne, 2011).

The upper level 2 contains volcanic minerals, from an eruption of Mont-Dore volcano, which can be attributed to the beginning of MIS 8 ($298^{+55}_{-55}$ ka) (Debard and Pastre, 1988). Direct dating was carried out with $^{40}\text{Ar} / ^{39}\text{Ar}$ on sanidine grains of cineritic material that were recovered from level 2 (Org-C1). The remaining 12 ages are between 276 and 326 ka with a weighted mean age of $289^{+55}_{-55}$ ka obtained by fission track dating (FT) on zircons (Khatib, 1994). Based on mineralogical analyses, the tephra from the eruption of the Puy de Sancy is considered to be the same as in Orgnac 3. The age of $276 \pm 5$ ka may represent the Orgnac 3 date, discarding the furnace age due to mixture of juvenile sanidine phenocrysts and older K-feldspar xenocrysts (Michel et al., 2013).

Combined biostratigraphical studies of mammal remains, microfauna, and fossil pollen suggest that the basal layers of the sequence were deposited in a temperate context, characteristic of an interglacial Middle Pleistocene period (Mourer-Chauvire, 1975; Tillier and Vandermeersch, 1976; Guerin, 1980; Jeannet, 1981; Gauthier, 1992; El Hazzazi, 1998; Aouraghe, 1999; Sam, 2009). The upper level 1 is indirectly attributed to MIS 8, due to the presence of the tahr (Hemitragus bonali) and the bear (Ursus deningeri), which suggest that this level cannot be more recent than MIS 8. Levels 2 and 1 are mainly characterized by species typical of an open landscape and by the replacement of the equid Equus mosbachensis by Equus steinheimensis (Forsten and Moigne, 1988).

2.3. Cagny l’Epinette

Excavated since the 1980s, the open-air site of Cagny-l’Epinette belongs to the Somme Valley terraces (Tuffreau et al., 1986, 1995, 1997). Around Amiens, 10 different alluvial sheets were recognized (Antoine, 1994) and designated with a local toponym. The number IV is for l’Epinette system. Each represents an interglacial/glacial cycle; the oldest is the Graça alluvial sheet with an age older than the Brunhes–Matuyama palaeomagnetic limit, position supported by the paleontology (Auguste, 1995), the silt cover and different types of dating methods (ESR, U/Th and magnetostratigraphy (Bates, 1993; Laurent et al., 1994)).

At l’Epinette, the thin fluvial deposits were dated by ESR of $296^{+53}_{-53}$ ka (cf. Laurent et al., 1994) which is in agreement with the characteristics of the large mammals (Moigne in Tuffreau et al., 1995) especially red deer and horses, although the microfauna would indicate a younger age (Van Kolfschoten in Tuffreau et al., 1995). The explanation for the problem of the data given by micromammals is the taphonomic situation. Teeth and bones come from holes and are not contemporaneous with lithics and large mammal remains but younger by at least one glacial cycle.
In the thin fluvial deposits of the middle terrace (end of MIS 10, MIS 9), one main level (11) on a surface of 148 m² contains many lithics artifacts (around 3000) associated with teeth and bones of large mammals (2630 elements including 2412 determined remains; Auguste, 2012). The auroch Bos primigenius is the main taxon identified in these fluvial levels, and the red deer Cervus elaphus is the second species well represented (Table 1). Large caballin horse Equus cf. mosbachensis is also present but with fewer remains. The large quantity of bones without external agents of destruction could indicate rapid burial of the site by sediments. Some bones of aurochs and red deer show marks caused by river activity and carnivore gnawing. Nevertheless, many bones exhibit cutting marks indicative of anthropological butchery activities (dismembering, defleshing, tong extraction, removal of tendons) and especially long bones with typical breakage patterns characterizing direct percussion on fresh bone to extract the marrow. In addition, some bones were used as tools and hammers. There are many shed antlers in the fluvial levels of Cagny-l’Epinette, but also some parts of frontals with the antlers unshed. No clear modifications are present on these antlers, and no functional aspect can be detected.

The cutting marks were made with flakes, handaxes and fresh gelifracts. They are located in different parts of the skeleton (cranial, on these antlers, and no functional aspect can be detected. The great number of parts of handaxes, and bifaces-tools on gelifracts (raw material and tools blank) (Lamotte and Tuffreau, 2001).

Other taxa are present, but only with few remains: a large Cervid, probably Megaceros, the Fallow Deer, Steinheim horse but only in post alluvial sediments, the asinid, the steppe rhinoceros, the straight-tusk Elephant, a hyena, and a fox. They exhibit no anthropic modifications and therefore have no clear connection with human activities.

2.4. La Cueva del Angel

The Cueva del Angel archaeological site is an open-air sedimentary sequence (over 5 m deep), a remnant of a collapsed cave that is part of a karst complex (Barroso et al., 2011, 2014). At present day, 8 m² were excavated with a high density of archaeological and paleontological material, with more than 5000 lithic and 9000 fossil remains recorded. The stratigraphic sequence is composed of seventeen archaeological levels without hiatus.

Taphonomical characteristics of the herbivore faunal assemblage (dominated by the horse Equus ferus, large boids Bos/Bison and cervids) indicate the intense fragmentation (95%) of the bones for marrow extraction with a significant number of cut-marks and striations (10%), and the high proportion of burnt elements. About 90% of the faunal bone remains and a third of the lithic artifacts are burnt. A preliminary $^{230}$Th/$^{234}$U date of 121 ± 11/−10 ka was obtained in layer VIII (Zouhair, 1996). However, the review of the paleontological evidence favor a chronological positioning of the site in a period stretching from the end of the Middle Pleistocene to the beginning of the Upper Pleistocene, from MIS 11 to MIS 5. Given the latitude of the site and the average size of the species identified, smaller than the same species of northern Europe, this fauna may be correlated with faunal associations of the end of the Middle Pleistocene, and especially to MIS 11–9.

The Cueva del Angel lithic assemblage, dominated by flakes and abundant retouched tools with the presence of 46 handaxes, appears to fit well within the regional diversity of a final Acheulean industry. Knapping patterns reflect exhaustive, well standardized, and economic use of relatively fine quality materials. Early phases of knapping are not represented in the assemblage, as initial shaping was performed outside of the cave. The hominins practiced a core technology based on repeated application of recurrent unidirectional, often radial, knapping from prepared striking platforms. This method sometimes produced cores with morphology close to Levallois forms. Another technological specificity at this site concerns the flakes extracted from retouched tool edges. They make an extraordinary use of small flakes and scrapers, in a great typological diversity. The stratigraphic continuity of the sedimentary sequence without hiatus or interruptions of anthropic presence, low intervention of carnivores, along with continued use of fire and similar processing patterns, suggest a prolonged occupation and persistent subsistence strategies (Garcia Solano, 2014).

3. Material and methods

Bone retouchers of four faunal assemblages have been studied, coming from recent excavations (Cueva del Angel, Cagny-l’Epinette) or older excavations (Terra Amata, Orgnac 3) with fieldwork exhaustive enough for a detailed and careful analysis. These assemblages were all analysed through taphonomical and archeozoological analyses published in previous papers. A systematic and detailed observation of the whole faunal material for each site allows us to emphasize bone retouchers. The small quantity of bone retouchers in each assemblage is thus confirmed (Table 1).

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of species</th>
<th>NISP (number of identified specimens)</th>
<th>MNI (minimal number of individuals)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terra-Amata</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paleoloxodon antiquus Cl4</td>
<td>118/7</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equus c. mosbachensis and E. ferus</td>
<td>728/33</td>
<td>54/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equus hydruntinus</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>515/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bos primigenius</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1116/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervus elaphus</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>316/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dama clychotiana</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>91/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sus scrofa</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>50/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megaloceros giganteus</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capreolus sussenbornensis</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanorhinus hemitoechus</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemiarthus bonali</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursus arctos</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crocuta spelaea</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orgnac 3</strong></td>
<td>Level 5a-6</td>
<td>178/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cagny l’Epinette</strong></td>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>167/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cueva del Angel</strong></td>
<td>Level IX to XIII</td>
<td>178/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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For selecting our corpus of bone retouchers, we used first the broader definition of Henri-Martin describing pieces with striations at their extremities (Baudoin et al., 1906) and the definition of Patou-Mathis and Schwab (2002) of bones with impressed areas, related to crushing marks, and/or cupules, and/or scores, made by impact against a sharp and hard artifact. Detailed terminology and orientation of areas of stigmata are from papers from “Commission de l'Outilage en os” (Patou-Mathis, 2002 and from Mallye et al., 2012).

The criteria retained to identify the bone retouchers are the following:

1) The large categories of marks are pits and scores, more or less deep.
2) When the scores are not deep, they resemble striations and their edges are irregular with a high magnification
3) When the scores are deep and dense on a same surface, this provides a hatched aspect to the active area.
4) On some retouchers, thin striations can appear perpendicular to the score, due to the contact between the retoucher and the edge of the artefact (Vincent, 1993; Valensi, 2002b).
5) The surface of the fragment of bone is plano-convex, however after much use it is a deep depression.

Moreover, following the various experiments made during the last decade and the numerous publications, retouchers are assimilated to active pieces used for percussion while compressors were used for pressure (Vincent, 1993; Defleur in Valensi, 2002a; Mallye et al., 2012; Daujeard et al., 2014). Active percussion implies a possible standardization of the support and a specific location and orientation of the marks (some distance from the edge for the diaphysis or for the humerus on the mass, Vincent, 1993; Valensi, 2002a). Moreover, the scores are all turned in the same direction and present asymmetrical shapes (Valensi, 2002b; Daujeard et al., 2014).

Through the study of the numerous bone retouchers at Isturitz, Patou-Mathis and Schwab (2002) has observed specificities of the scores (length and orientation) according to the chrono-cultural groups. For the Mousterian, the scores are deep and long, perpendicular to the main length of the bone fragment. For the Aurignacian and Gravettian, scores are shorter, and for the Magdalenian, the scores are parallel to the main length of the bone.

Beside bone retouchers, other categories of “os à impressions”, attesting to contact between bone and artefacts, may be mentioned with hypotheses of use (de Beaune, 1997): compressor (active or passive use by pressure), “billot” or anvil (passive use) and in the Upper Paleolithic, “dè” or “cousoir” (active use).

The compressors, handled as the bone retouchers, indicate retouch by pressure. Shchelinskii (in Plisson, 1988) described in detail stigmata and underlined (among others) parallel striations and short and not deep scores. de Beaune (1997) observed that small pebbles or diaphysis, experimentally used by pressure on the flake cutting edge, result in thin striations without specific orientation. Even if the retouch by pressure is general for the Upper Paleolithic, use for earlier reduction processes cannot be excluded (Bordes, 1961 in Patou-Mathis and Schwab, 2002).

In contrast, anvils and blocks (“billot”) correspond to passive use as a support for percussion or for cutting. Mark areas are on the centre of the bone rather than near the extremities and edges of the bone fragment. Marks are less asymmetrical than on active retouchers and they do not have a preferential direction (de Beaune, 1997).

For each site, we examined:

1) bone retouchers in their context (levels, faunal data) and number
2) type of support: species, type of bone, bone fragment, sizes
3) active areas: number, localization, morphology, size of the area
4) description of the stigmata (pits and scores)
5) association or not with other traces (fractures, cut-marks, scraping marks, polish, etc.).

We examined and described the active zone, recorded an accurate description of their distribution across the bone surfaces localization area, then photographed each bone retoucher using a stereo-microscope (Vincent, 1993; Fisher, 1995; Armand and Delagnes, 1998; Auguste, 2002; Patou-Mathis and Schwab, 2002; Malerba and Giacobini, 2002; Valensi, 2002a,b; Biasco et al., 2013a; Daujeard et al., 2014).

4. Description of the bone retouchers

4.1. Terra Amata

The only bone retoucher comes from a pebble layer or barrier beach (CLS) attributed to the stratigraphic level C1a (Table 2, Fig. 2).

Table 2
Bone retoucher of Terra Amata: inventory and general data of the support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Taxa</th>
<th>Type of bone</th>
<th>Type of fragment</th>
<th>Length, mm</th>
<th>Width, mm</th>
<th>Thickness, mm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TA-I11-P2-405</td>
<td>CLS</td>
<td>Cervus elaphus</td>
<td>femur</td>
<td>Caudal shaft</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

orientation of the marks (some distance from the edge for the diaphysis or for the humerus on the mass, Vincent, 1993; Valensi, 2002a). Moreover, the scores are all turned in the same direction and present asymmetrical shapes (Valensi, 2002b; Daujeard et al., 2014).

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In contrast, anvils and blocks (“billot”) correspond to passive use as a support for percussion or for cutting. Mark areas are on the sequence, levels 6 and 5b. They total 4 pieces, 1 unipolar and 3 with bipolar areas (Table 3).

- E16 507 level 6: Metatarsal of Equus cf. mosbachensis, intentionally longitudinally fractured. The bone shows long sinuous cutmarks related to butchery activities. The retouch is on one area. Pits are rare, dispersed on a small surface and there are two series of scores. The three initial scores are deep and large
between 1 and 2.5 mm long with smooth sides and asymmetrical sections, perpendicular to the long bone axis. The second series corresponds to four scores (Fig. 3). They are large, thin V shaped, oblique and characteristic of flint work on fresh bones (according to experimental data from Mallye et al., 2012).

- D14.496, level 6: Tibia diaphysis of Bos primigenius. The long bone was previously longitudinally broken. The retoucher presents two active concentrated pitted areas. Pits are triangular, deep, with rough sides. Scores are rectilinear, perpendicular to the long bone axis. Use was intensive (dense and deep pits and scores) when the bone was probably not fresh. The second area is partly covered by calcite (Fig. 4).

- C15.272 level 5b: Tibia diaphysis of Cervus elaphus with a percussion cone of intentional green fracture. The active area is concentrated on a 30 × 30 mm² area, on a slightly convex surface (Fig. 4). It is not located at the extremity of the diaphysis but on the edge of a fracture. The hatched area presents parallel scores. They are thin and elongated (more than 10 mm in

Fig. 2. Terra-Amata. Fragment of left deer femur (85–27 mm) with green fracture. Unipolar area on the distal part with deep transversal marks and cutaways interpreted as soft hammer (photo by Patricia Valensi). (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

Fig. 3. Bone retoucher on an Equus bone fragment from level 6 of Orgnac 3 (photos by Denis Dainat, EPCC CERP Tautavel).
length). Thin scores (resembling striations but with irregular edges) are oriented perpendicular to the long bone axis and undulated. This is typical of a hatched area related to the final shaping for a tangential abrasion of the flint edges (cf. Mallye et al., 2012).

- **D16.10717 level 5b**: Metacarpal bone of *Cervus elaphus*. It presents a green longitudinal fracture and bipolar active area (Fig. 4). Scores are short and deep, parallel, V shaped, and perpendicular to the long bone axis. Analysis of sediment imbedded into the scores revealed a very high level of silica (EDAX-EPCC-CERP Tautavel) compared with the sediment of this layer. This richness can be related to a use of this retoucher on flint or quartzite.

### Table 3

**Bone retouchers of Orgnac 3: inventory and general data of the supports.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Taxa</th>
<th>Type of bone</th>
<th>Type of fragment</th>
<th>Length, mm</th>
<th>Width, mm</th>
<th>Thickness, mm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OR3-E16-507</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Equus mosbachensis</em></td>
<td>Metatarsal</td>
<td>Lateral shaft</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR3-D14-494</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Bos primigenius</em></td>
<td>Tibia</td>
<td>Shaft</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR3-C15-272</td>
<td>5b</td>
<td><em>Cervus elaphus</em></td>
<td>Tibia</td>
<td>Shaft</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR3-D16-10717</td>
<td>5b</td>
<td><em>Cervus elaphus</em></td>
<td>Metacarpal</td>
<td>Shaft</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3. Cagny-l’Epinette

The bone tools come only from levels I1A and I1B. Six bone retouchers were identified in these levels (Table 4). Four are made from aurochs bones and two from horse bones; bones of red deer were not used. For the auroch, three humerus and one metatarsal were used. For the horse, one humerus and one metatarsal were used.

### Table 4

**Bone retouchers at Cagny-l’Epinette: inventory and general data of the supports.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Taxa</th>
<th>Type of bone</th>
<th>Type of fragment</th>
<th>Length, mm</th>
<th>Width, mm</th>
<th>Thickness, mm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ep90-20V-50</td>
<td>I1</td>
<td><em>Equus mosbachensis</em></td>
<td>Humerus</td>
<td>Lateral shaft</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep93-22U-39</td>
<td>I1B</td>
<td><em>Equus mosbachensis</em></td>
<td>Metatarsal</td>
<td>Lateral diaphysis</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep95-25T-12</td>
<td>I1B</td>
<td><em>Bos primigenius</em></td>
<td>Metatarsal</td>
<td>Lateral diaphysis</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep2000-250-318</td>
<td>I1B</td>
<td><em>Bos primigenius</em></td>
<td>Humerus</td>
<td>Distal articulation</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep2007-1647</td>
<td>I1A</td>
<td><em>Bos primigenius</em></td>
<td>Humerus</td>
<td>Distal articulation</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep2008-26UJ-2342</td>
<td>I1B</td>
<td><em>Bos primigenius</em></td>
<td>Humerus</td>
<td>Proximal diaphysis</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The main element of these six retouchers from Cagny-l’Epinette is the use of large herbivorous mammals with thick bones, aurochs and horse. Moreover, the “classical” retouchers are made with part of the diaphysis of the same bone (metatarsal) for the two species. The other retouchers use the same part of the same bone, the distal part of the articulation of the humerus, for the two taxa.

The characteristics of these bone tools are:

Ep90.20V-50, I1: Horse distal humerus with a classical spiral fracture to obtain marrow (Fig. 5). It was then used with two areas of stigmata. On the lateral view, the active part is concentrated and superposed on a 70 × 35 mm pitted to scaled area. It is a retoucher with large pits, ovoid and triangular, and the general orientation is perpendicular to the long bone axis, but the intensity of blows was really hard and some irregular fissures occur with a heavily scaled area. On this scaled area, some large scores are also noted, oblique and rectilinear. These scores with rough sides seem to have been done after the initial intensive retoucher utilization.

The second area is located on the mesial part of epiphysis, as noted in the La Quina historical collection. The use hypothesis is now related to the shaping of handaxes or bifacial tools and for retouch (Vincent, 1993). However, at Cagny l’Epinette, the humerus does not indicate particular management: the distal part is always present. The bone fragment could not have been put on the ground as an anvil because the stigmata are clearly located on the distal part of the trochlea and not on the cranial face. The area, located on the trochlea, is 30 × 30 mm. The pits, triangular, deep and at least n = 12, superposed, are all oriented perpendicularly to the main axis of the articulation (Fig. 5). The active part has the same characteristics as the retouchers, but the blows on the articulation modified its original convexity (Moigne in Tuffreau et al., 1995).

Ep 2007.1647-I1A: Auroch distal humerus with no clear breakage pattern of the shaft. The area is in the same location as for the previous bone tool, and is characterized by a lack of bone indicative of hard and/or long use, perhaps due to the disappearance of organic elements in the bone, meaning it was not fresh (Fig. 6). The area, on the trochlea, is 40 × 40 mm and is both hatched and pitted near the edge. The pits are triangular rather than ovoid. The scores are rectilinear and smooth.

Ep 2000.250-318, I1B: Auroch distal humerus with a classical spiral fracture to obtain marrow. The area of stigmata is located on the mesial part of the articular trochlea in dorso-distal position, as was noted in the La Quina historical collection and from a humerus of a horse. The area is 29 × 22 mm and hatched. The pits are triangular, deep and at least n = 19, superposed, all oriented perpendicular to the main axis of the articulation (Fig. 7). The scores are rectilinear and generally smooth. The active part has the same characteristics as the retouchers, but the blows on the articulation are heavier with a lack of bone. This bone must have been used when it was fresh. According to the results from Vincent (1993), the best efficiency of the retoucher is a green bone, no older than 2–4 days. As in the other retouchers on the distal extremity of a humerus at Cagny-l’Epinette, the trochlea is the active part. That suggests that the capitulum was taken in hand by the user. The fact that the diaphysis still exists does not help either to grip the bone, or a good rotation of the wrist by the user. However, use of the bone fragment as a retoucher is feasible (Vincent, 1993).
Ep 93.22U-39, I1B: Horse metatarsal diaphysis with a longitudinal fracture. The active part is 50 × 22 mm, from hatched to pitted area. It is located on the lateral side, on a broad and slightly convex surface. It is a retoucher with many deep, rectilinear scores with rough and asymmetrical sides. These scores are sometimes covered by deep triangular pits (Fig. 8, left). This may correspond to the retouch of a flint edge with a bone of intermediary freshness (Mallye et al., 2012). The originality of the active area is the location centered on the diaphysis rather than on an extremity. The scores show a regular orientation (perpendicular to the length of the bone) and they are asymmetrical. That confirms that the bone has not been used as an anvil but as a retoucher (active use with the piece taken in hand).

Ep 95.25T-12, I1B: Aurochs metatarsal diaphysis with spiral intentional fragmentation. The active area is located on the lateral face. It is a characteristically hatched 36 × 18 mm rectangular and flat area. Scores are concentrated, thin, sinuous, 6 mm long, around 25 striae, parallel, perpendicular to the long axis of the metatarsal. Microscopic view presents a V-shaped section of the marks. This hatched area is correlated with the retouching of flint flakes (Mallye et al., 2012).
Ep 2008.26I/J-2342, I1B: Aurochs shaft humerus, proximal part of the diaphysis in cranial location with a clear breakage pattern upon fresh bone with one notch corresponding to the percussion point. The area, located just above the “tuberosity of the large round” is clearly hatched, 50 × 40 mm, with at least 21 stigmata (Fig. 8, right). The pits are also clearly triangular. The scores are rectilinear and smooth, obliquely oriented with an angle of 45° to the main axe of the bone. The active zone is dispersed from the edge of the fracture to the center of the fragment. This retoucher can be considered as a typical flint edge retoucher (Mallye et al., 2012).

4.4. La Cueva del Angel

The bone retouchers only come from the bottom of the sequence, levels IX and XIII. At least 8 bones have marks that could be related to a bone tool (García Solano, 2014) (Table 5). To compare and use the same methodology, at this state of the art, 4 retouchers are observed, 3 unipolar and 1 with bipolar areas. They come from unit II and are associated with assemblages including handaxes and Middle Pleistocene species.

- CA-K7-204-level IX: Large Bovid vertebra spine. The single active zone (24 × 18 mm) is located on the lateral face of the spine, and is centered. It is a concentrated and superposed area with curved and parallel deep scores (Fig. 9, left). Many blows formed a depressed area, probably made with a flint tool on fresh bone. No antagonist of teeth marks could be detected on the other site of the vertebra spine. This retoucher is considered as passive area and could be called a compressor. This term may be understood in a general meaning, i.e. a bone being in contact with a cutting edge by pressure.

- CVA-K7-532 level XIII: Equus ferus metatarsal, with a longitudinal intentional fracture and percussion cone (Fig. 9, right). The single active zone is located on the lateral face, on a broad slightly convex area on the center of the bone. A concentrated area (25 × 30 mm) contains at least 6 deep and crushed asymmetrical grooves (Daujeard et al., 2014), perpendicular to the bone axis. The direction of violent blows was from the proximal to the distal part of the metatarsal bone. It could have been made by a heavy tool.

- CVA-J7-511 level IX: Cervus elaphus tibia with a single active area (26 × 28 mm) located on the proximal part of the shaft. The active zone is dispersed, with ovoid pits and large, rectilinear and smooth side scores. It can be considered as a pitted area (Fig. 10, left). The retoucher was used to deliver a limited number of blows but with high intensity. We could consider, following Mallye et al. (2012), that it was used to retouch quartzite pebble tools. Quartz and quartzite raw-material is rare in Cueva del Angel but is collected from Guadalquivir terraces and partly manufactured in the cave. This observation is rather important, as typologists believe that the retouch was mostly done with a hard hammer, and it seems strange that a Cervus tibia was used, rather than a larger bone from Equus or Bos.

- CA-K6-904-level XIII: Cervus elaphus metatarsal lateral shaft with two active zones, proximal and distal side (Fig. 10, right). The shaft exhibits long thin and sinuous cut marks from previous nutritional activities and longitudinal fractures to recover the marrow, as usually on this site. This bone exhibits cracks corresponding to alteration by heat but it was not burnt. This is exceptional in this site where 90% of bones show fire alteration. The first proximal area is concentrated in 38 × 12 mm. It is a pitted area with triangular pits, convex with asymmetrical cross section and thin rectilinear scores. On the second distal area, scores are longer, deep and convex. Many thin convex marks form a hatched area, covered with scores. According to Mallye et al. (2012), the retoucher was probably used as a fresh bone on flint.

Fig. 8. Left: Cagny-l’Epinette, Equus metatarsal (Ep 93.22U-39, I1B), lateral view (photos by Denis Dainat, EPCC CERP Tautavel). Right: Cagny-l’Epinette, Aurochss right humerus (Ep 2008.26I/J-2342, I1B), crano-medial view (photos by Noémie Sevoie).
5. Discussion

5.1. Comparison of species, type of bone, bone fragment, sizes

The bone retouchers from our Middle Pleistocene corpus are made in general on bone fragments of the main hunted species, large herbivores such as *Equus* (Cueva del Angel, Orgnac 3, Cagny l’Epinette), *Bos/Bison* (Orgnac 3, Cagny-l’Epinette) and *Cervus* (all sites) (Table 1). The exception is Cagny-l’Epinette, where red deer, second in number of remains and individuals, was not selected.

Bone fragments are generally thick and flat. The most frequent bones are humerus, tibia and metatarsal fragments. In this paper, “classical retouchers” are those made on diaphysis, which are the most frequent in the Palaeolithic. At Cagny-l’Epinette, three retouchers made on a distal epiphysis of a humerus have also been identified. Moreover, the use of a large spine of thoracic vertebra at Cueva del Angel is surprising.

The size of these retouchers mainly varies from 80 to 100 mm, with some longer exceptions. This indicates selection among the longest shafts. Supports are varied and of various weights. The heaviest supports are the humerus of Cagny l’Epinette; they may work with more strength and speediness than the fragments of diaphysis (Vincent, 1993, p. 233).

They seem to be fragments resulting from butchery activity. They were used green or dry. Prior preparation was not observed. We have to mention in particular the use of distal extremities of humerus at Cagny l’Epinette, without removal of the diaphysis, unlike retouchers discovered in the Mousterian levels at the Quina site.

5.2. Active areas: number, localization, morphology, size of the area

Apart from their little numbers in the collections, what characterizes bone retouchers before MIS 9 is the great variability of the type of fragment, the form and especially the kind of traces, greater than for the Middle Palaeolithic sites (Malerba and Giacobini, 1996; Giacobini and Patou-Mathis, 2002; Mozota, 2009; Jéquier et al., 2012). Depending on the sites, there are one or two active areas composed of pits and/or scores. The traces are centered except for some cases where they are near one extremity (Terra Amata, Orgnac 3) or lateral (one piece from Cueva del Angel). The active areas are mainly concentrated or concentrated and superposed, although they are dispersed in a few cases (cf. Mallye et al., 2012). In general, the retouchers have been intensively used. The location of the active areas on the diaphysis of our corpus is different from those observed on Middle Palaeolithic bone retouchers where
Stigmata are generally located ~10 mm from the edge of the fracture (Patou-Mathis and Schwab, 2002).

The morphology of the active areas and their size are diversified depending on the degree of use. These characteristics do not indicate specificities with the Middle Palaeolithic bone retouchers.

5.3. Description of the stigmata (pits and scores)

The marks are variable in size and depth, and some active areas present similarities with carnivore activity. This confusion could reduce the number of retouchers in Lower Palaeolithic sites, but not for our corpus (Binford, 1981; Blumenshine and Selvaggio, 1991; Clark, 1991; Lyman, 1994).

There are a high diversity of pits and scores despite the little number of retouchers. We can observe the variability of traces obtained during experiments (see Tartar, 2002; Mallye et al., 2012). We explain this diversity by the use of green, non-greasy, and moderately fresh bones but also by the use of these retouchers on various raw materials such as flint, quartzite, and others. That can be related in part to the Acheulean behaviour, especially in southern Europe with the use of various materials.

5.4. Association or not with other marks

Bone retouchers correspond to food wastes. Some have cut-marks such as at Orgnac 3. Some indicate fractures on green bones (according to criteria of Villa and Mahieu, 1991) and percussion notches indicate marrow extraction.

According to the kind and position of the marks, most of our retouchers could be grouped in the category of bone retouchers used for active percussion (soft hammer). That may be proposed in relation to the experimental data published, although bone retouchers described as “billots” by Henri-Marin at La Quina were finally considered as retouchers for active percussion for bifacial pieces (Vincent, 1993; Valensi, 2002a). The soft hammer could be used for flaking, shaping and scratching by using a frontal percussion on the flake edge according to the experiments (Blasco et al., 2013a,b).

Categories of bone retouchers and hypotheses of use (Table 6):

1) “Classical” bone retouchers on a diaphysis, with pits and scores on the edge of the fragment. This type is largely identified in the sites younger than MIS 9 (Lazaret, Biache-Saint-Vaast and most of the Mousterian sites).

In our corpus, the “classical retouchers” with triangular pits and rectilinear scores with smooth edges are the most abundant. They are related in the experiments to flint work on green bones.

Other retouchers of this category carry deep, short, rough pits and scores with the same orientation (Terra Amata, Cueva del Angel, Orgnac 3 and Cagny l’Epinette). They exhibit different stages of freshness and could be linked to work on flint and quartzite.
2) The distal articulation of humerus at Cagny-l’Epinette show the area of work located at the same place, the distal articular surface, meaning probably the beginning of standardized work with these bones. They are similar to the experimental bone retouchers (Valensi, 2002a,b), but with no preparation as in Middle Palaeolithic sites. The diaphysis is present for a large part. There are no other marks on the bone, except another retoucher for one piece. Used as soft hammers, from an ergonomic point of view these bones are not really adapted to good prehension. They could not be “billots” or anvils because of the location of the active area in the distal position on the epiphysis, inconsistent with a large part of the diaphysis. Moreover, the microscopic traces reject the hypothesis of “billot” because traces are similar to the use as a soft hammer to retouch the bifacial pieces (Vincent, 1993; Valensi, 2002a,b).

3) The third category groups the bone retouchers with centered and hatched active areas (scratching). They exhibit only superposed thin and slightly sinuous scores with smooth and U-shaped morphology. There is only one piece at Cagny-l’Epinette, one piece at Orgnac 3 and one area of a bipolar piece at Cueva del Angel. When the flint tool edge is sharp during experiments, a simple abrasion is useful and the action of scratching allows the improvement of the cutting edge (Rigaud, 2007).

4) For the two retouchers with deep and centered traces at Cueva del Angel, two possibilities exist: 1) a “billot”, but traces are possibly too organized, 2) a compressor, and in this case, all traces would be well oriented.

5.5. Particularities of the Lower Palaeolithic bone retouchers: a broader perspective

Sites earlier than MIS 9, with or without handaxes, yielded bone retouchers. At the Caune de l’Arago (level G, unit III, 450 ka), there is already some evidence of bone use. Large and very large mammal teeth and mandibles carry traces and can be considered as “billots”. Traces are deep with scars (Moigne, 1996). At Boxgrove at 500 ka, there are also some bone retouchers (Roberts and Parfitt, 1999; Smith, 2013). In the MIS 11–9 sites, such as Gran Dolina TD10, level H La Micoque, Bolomor or Qesem Caves, with or without handaxes, contemporaneous to innovative behaviours, the bone retouchers are on long and thick fragments collected from the main hunted and eaten species (Langlois, 2004; Risco, 2011; Blasco et al., 2013a,b, 2014; Ollé et al., 2013; Rosell et al., 2015).

The state of freshness is varied, fractured when fresh at Bolomor or Gran Dolina, semi-fresh at Qesem. At Bolomor, we see the elimination of the periosteum to be effective with traces of scraping when it was fresh.

At Gran Dolina TD10–1, one bone retoucher is mentioned (Rosell et al., 2015). It is a shaft from a medium-sized animal with oblique, short, and deep scores and pits on the center of the cortical surface, related to a retouching activity during a short time.

At Bolomor, the bone retoucher belongs to the level XVIIa (MIS 9) and in an assemblage without handaxes (Fernández Peris, 2003; Blasco et al., 2013a,b; Rosell et al., 2015). It is a fragment of a right femur of Cervus elaphus. There are oblique, short and deep striations with the V-shaped bottom and percussion pits, typical of retouching activities. There are also parallel strie to the bone axis from scratching, similar to those observed at Orgnac 3 and Cagny-l’Epinette. Hominins selected flat and broad surfaces such as flat pebbles.

At Qesem, the retoucher published by Blasco et al. (2013a,b) is a long bone shaft of a medium-sized animal with soft hammer damage. In the middle of the fragment, short, deep overlapping pits with thin, elongated scores are preserved, with V-shaped asymmetrical and long parallel striations preceding the pits and scraping of the bone. It can be classified as a “classical retoucher”. More retouchers are described as soft retouchers in Rosell et al. (2015). Some show burning damage. They are mainly from fragments of medium-sized and large-sized animals, while the small-sized hunted species predominate.

For younger sites including handaxes, such as the Lazaret cave (South-East France), in younger levels (MIS 6), retouchers appear different (Table 6). In this site, 18 bone retouchers are counted (0.2% of the determined material) (Michel et al., 2009, 2011; Valensi et al., 2013). Selective hunting of Red deer and ibex characterizes the occupations (Valensi and Psathi, 2004; Valensi, 2009; Hanquet et al., 2010) with handaxes in the lower unit CI while they disappeared in the upper unit CII at around 130 ka (de Lumley et al., 2008; Cauche, 2012). In addition, there are retouchers on small and flat limestone pebbles (Darlas, 1994; Cauche, 2012). Four bone retouchers come from CII and fourteen from CII (Valensi, 2000; de Lumley et al., 2004) (Table 6).

Table 6
Bone retouchers: number of active areas and hypothesis of use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Localisation Unipolar/bipolar Areas</th>
<th>On diaphysis (or lateral edge)</th>
<th>Distal epitaphysis of humerus</th>
<th>Centered on diaphysis</th>
<th>Centered on diaphysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of marks</td>
<td>Pits and unsymmetrical scores</td>
<td>Unsymmetrical scores</td>
<td>Unsymmetrical scores</td>
<td>Poorly individualized scores + crushed marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terra Amata</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poorly individualized scores + crushed marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orgnan 3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poorly individualized scores + crushed marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cagny l’Epinette</td>
<td>5/0</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>Poorly individualized scores + crushed marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Cueva del Angel</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>1,5</td>
<td>Retoucher</td>
<td>Bone retoucher type « Compressor » ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of retoucher</td>
<td>“Classical retoucher” with pits and scores</td>
<td>Retoucher type “Soft hammer” with heavy percussion</td>
<td>Scatching</td>
<td>Retouches by percussion</td>
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<td>Possible use</td>
<td>Retouches by percussion</td>
<td>Shaping or retouched (bifacial tools) + retouches by percussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
All the retouchers are made on long bones of the main large herbivores (mainly *Cervus*), parts of diaphysis. Sizes vary between 35 and 110 mm, the smallest one being possibly longer during its use. They are wide and elongated.

Bones carry cut-marks, scratching marks and percussion notches due to the carcass management (Valensi, 2000; Valensi et al., 2013), prior to the use of bone as a retoucher. Preparation is attested. A large proportion of retouchers made on *Cervus* bones is burnt (7/18, 39%).

Stigmata are grouped in areas, more or less large and dense, centered or located on the edge, and 13 of them have only a single active area. Most of them have less than 30 scores for each area. It is, however, impossible to determine the intensity of use, as experiments indicate either that each impact could have left a mark on the cortical bone surface (Mallye et al., 2012), or repeated and strong gestures are necessary for leaving marks (Armand and Delagnes, 1998; Daujeard et al., 2014) (Fig. 11).

Referring to data published by Mallye et al. (2012), the form of stigmata is linked to the material worked and the state of freshness of the bone. At the Lazaret, there are mainly rectilinear striations parallel to the bone axis and rare pits, and therefore retouchers could have been used.

Other younger sites such as Biache-Saint-Vaast (beginning of MIS 7; Auguste, 2009) also show more regular marks on retouchers, although there are no handaxes in the assemblages. At Biache, the early phase of the Middle Palaeeolithic at the end of the Middle Pleistocene, the retouchers are typically Middle Palaeeolithic and are distinct from the less regular and less standardized bone retouchers of the MIS 11–9 sites. An important data for the site of Biache-Saint-Vaast with one of the largest collections of retouchers for the Early Middle Palaeeolithic is that there is a large proportion of bones showing stigmata of retouches contrasting with the number of retouched lithic artefacts. For example, for level IIa, there are 303 retouchers for only 449 retouched artefacts (Auguste, 2002). This notable disproportion is not yet explained.

In summary, the bone retouchers of MIS 11–9 present some characteristics already recognized in more recent sites:

- Species selected for the retoucher correspond (mostly) to the main hunted species.
- Retouchers, that we name “classical”, exist from MIS 11–9.

However, some particularities of the bone retouchers of our sites may be mentioned:

- Preparation of the support is lacking.
- Supports are diversified and not standardized as for the younger sites.
- The active areas show diverse locations (centered or on an extremity of an edge).

### 6. Conclusion

Bone retouchers existed before the Middle Palaeeolithic and before MIS 9, where they became systematic tools among the tool kit. They may be considered as one of the most relevant criteria to examine the onset of new behaviors that mark the Early Middle Palaeeolithic (Moncel et al., 2012). This type of bone tools appears in relation to new technological behaviors, land-uses and subsistence strategies in Europe before MIS 9. It has its roots as soon as 500 ka, apart from some rare cases (D’Errico and Backwell, 2009).

The MIS 11–9 bone retouchers resemble younger Acheulean/Middle Palaeeolithic bone retouchers (later than MIS 9) in term of kinds of support (diaphysis, main hunted species), and position of the marks (on the center of the fragment and not at the extremity excluding “billots”). Orientations (oblique) and types of scores are similar as well. Preparation of the support before use is rare before MIS 9. The bones retouchers seem to be however more varied in one site between MIS 11 and 9, due perhaps to their small number (absence of regularity of use) or the large diversity of uses and materials. The various states of freshness of the bone retouchers suggest an immediate selection among the longest butchery shafts or recovery of discarded bone fragments rejected during long-term or recurrent short-term occupations.

Relationships with the lithic artefacts are commonly made for the Middle Palaeeolithic, even though it is not obvious for all the series. Some sites yielded a high number of retouchers and few flake-tools (see the French sites of Saint-Marcel or Biache-Saint-Vaast, Auguste, 2002; Daujeard and Moncel, 2010; Daujeard et al., 2014).

For our period of time, handaxes and other large tools belong to the tool kit, with flake-tools which are often thick and modified by invasive retouches, perhaps explaining the diversity of bone
The ratios of flake-tools differ among sites. It is high (15–20%) at Cueva del Angel and in the lower levels of Orgnac 3 that include bone retouchers, and low at the bottom level without bone retouchers. At Cagny l’Epinette, flake-tools are composed of scrapers, denticulates and notches (between 10 and 20% according to the levels). The ratio is low at Terra Amata (less than 5%). Handaxes in our corpus of sites indicate that both hard and soft hammers could have been used to shape them. Our bone retouchers described as soft hammers and classical retouchers could have been used for shaping, retouching, and regularizing the tool edges. For Cagny-l’Epinette, besides the bone retouchers, the presence of many deer antlers, shed and unshed, is noted. No clear stigmata can be observed on those bones, but we may imagine a probable use as soft hammers as in Boxgrove (Tuffreau et al., 1995; Roberts and Parfitt, 1999; Smith, 2013; Stout et al., 2014). At Terra Amata, Orgnac 3, and Cueva del Angel, wild boar canines have been intentionally fractured, indicating that the bone use is much more varied than commonly admitted for this period (Sam, 2009; Valensi et al., 2011; Barroso et al., 2011). Moreover, the bifacial tools on elephant bones of the Latium sites such as Castel di Guido, is evidence of a broader use of bone than expected (Boschian and Sacca, 2015). Bone tools are similar to stone tools (handaxes, scrapers), sometimes recycled (Gaudzinski et al., 2005; Boschian and Sacca, 2015).

The raw material used for the artefacts is also of interest. At Cagny-l’Epinette, all the lithic tools are made on flint (Lamotte and Tuffreau, 2001). At Orgnac 3 and Cueva del Angel, flint is dominant but some large flake tools are made on quartzite, basalt, millstone, and quartz (Barroso et al., 2011; Moncel et al., 2011, 2012). At Terra Amata, limestone is dominant, associated with flint. According to experiments, most of our thin traces should be related to work on flint, while the deep scores and pits should be related to flint or quartzite (Mallye et al., 2012). One retoucher at Orgnac 3 yielded traces of silica in the scores, allowing the suggestion that it was used for working on flint or quartzite.

Why, although in some sites such as Cagny-l’Epinette flint is the only raw material used, do observe the same diversity of traces as in other sites? Perhaps the intensity of activities and the strength of knappers on tools could explain the greater or lesser intensity of marks, regardless of the raw materials and the freshness of bone. The interaction between the kind of bone tool (large herbivorous and notably thick cortical diaphysis and the articulation) and lithic industries have to be considered.

If these bone retouchers were reliable and useful for retouching and managing tools, how can the limited numbers be explained?

1) The bone retouchers should be more numerous due to the quantity and the technology of tools. According to the sites, the number of handaxes differs, as does the mode of shaping, hard and soft percussion. The current core technologies produce thick flakes that have often to be retouched in order to modify the cutting edges, in contrast to Levallois core technology which provides thin flakes that could be directly used and does not need retouch. This technology is very rare before MIS 9.

2) The bone retouchers should be more numerous due to the kind of retouches which are commonly invasive and abrupt, as with some tools from younger sites. Bone retouchers consequently could have been useful.

3) Few bone retouchers existed because other types of retouchers were used, such as vegetal retouchers, antlers (Boxgrove) or small and flat pebbles (Terra Amata and Lazaret). These types of material, although always available in the environment of the sites after MIS 9, would be rarely used in the Mousterian sites. This could be explained by a shift in the hominids’ perception that occurred from MIS 9, and included the widespread diffusion of bone retouchers in parallel to technological and behavioural changes.

No clear explanation may be given at present. The recovery of fragments of bones (not only from solid fragments of bones of some
species such as auroch) for bone retouchers would not have been among the habits of MIS 11–9 hominin groups or would have been a minor solution among a large diversity of items useful for retouching.

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