

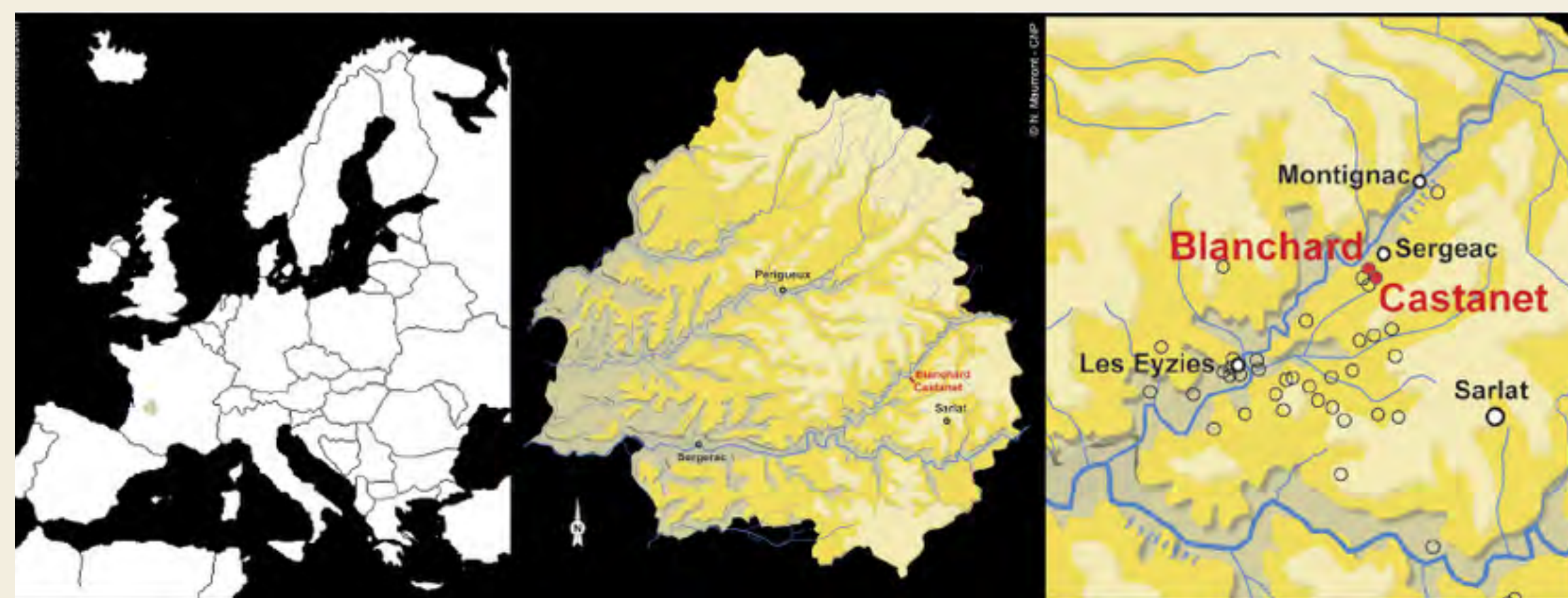
## Points for the Gravettian

### New observations on an old collection from Abri Blanchard, Dordogne

Christina-Maria Wiesner B.A.

#### Abri Blanchard - an Aurignacian site with history

Since the beginning of its long history of research, the Abri Blanchard at Castelmerle, Dordogne, has always been considered one of the most important and most typical Aurignacian sites in Western Europe. Louis Didon, who led the first excavations in 1910, attributed the two find layers to the Aurignacian, as did Denise de Sonneville-Bordes almost 50 years later. Also the results from recent excavations conducted by Randall White in 2011 did not contradict this chronologic attribution.



Location of Abri Blanchard and Castanet (Chiotti et al. 2015)

#### Analysis of the NHG-collection

All the more notable were the results of the analysis of a small collection from Abri Blanchard belonging to the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg (NHG). Probably selected by Louis Didon himself and acquired with the help of Hugo Obermaier in 1912, it contains 313 objects, among them 166 lithic artefacts. A formal typological analysis of these pieces shows that—besides typical Aurignacian forms—the collection also yields a considerable Gravettian component. The most significant indicators of Gravettian technology are eight Noailles burins and six Gravettian points, which together constitute 10,4% of all tools. They are accompanied by a bipolar core with two opposing striking platforms that stands in the tradition of typical Gravettian blade production.

#### Comparison with the Aurignacian collections from Castelmerle

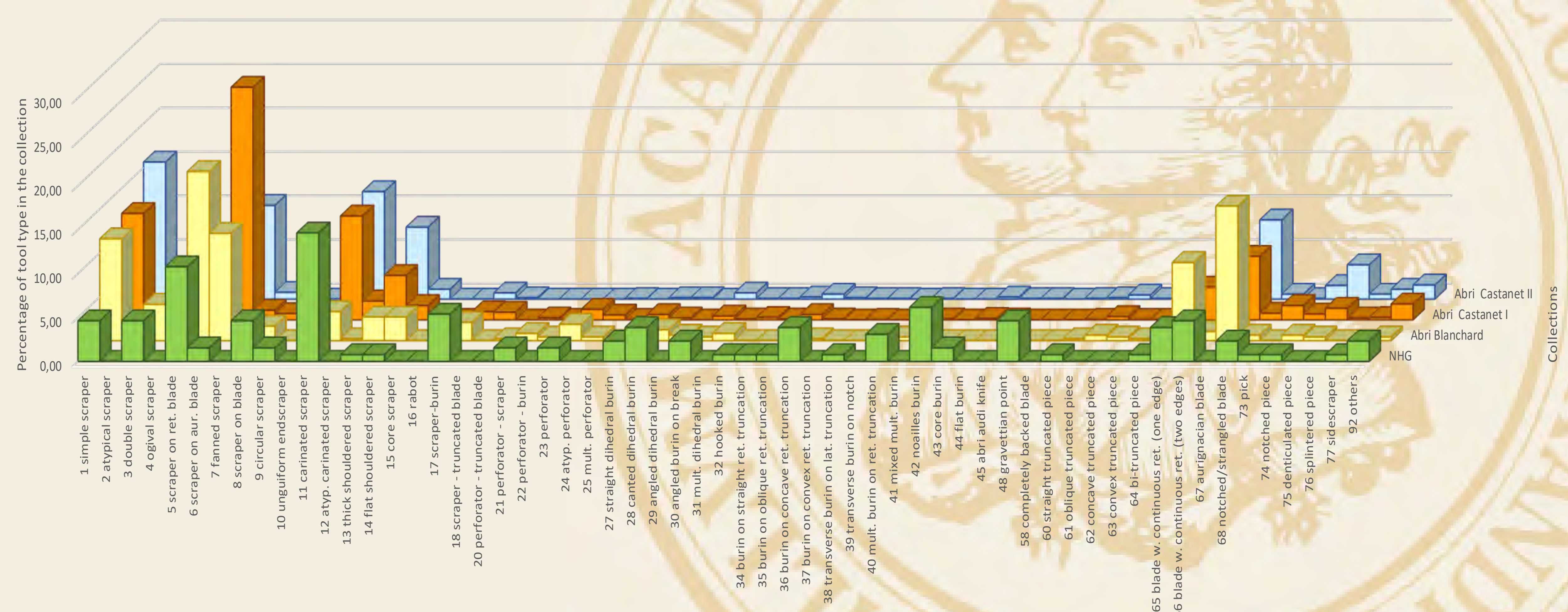
A comparison with a second collection from Abri Blanchard and two collections from the neighbouring Aurignacian site Abri Castanet, all previously analysed by Denise de Sonneville-Bordes, shows further deviations concerning tool composition. In summary, the collection from NHG contains types that do not appear in the other collections (e.g. Gravettian points and Noailles burins) and yields a significantly larger number and variety of burins.

Since a possible Gravettian component has never been seriously discussed in any publication on Abri Blanchard so far, these results are yet to be explained.



Core (left), Gravettian points (upper right) and Noailles burins (lower right) from the NHG collection

Comparison of the tool composition of the NHG-collection with other collections from Castelmerle



Lithic tool types according to D. de Sonneville-Bordes