

English booklet



F A B U L E U S E
Aventure
A R C H É O L O G I Q U E



D U D O C T E U R



Baillieu

On 29 August 1866, Doctor Guillaume-Joseph Bailleau began his diary entitled «Bric-à-brac, notice and wanderings» with these words : «I am 36 years old today, which does not make any difference, but in writing this date that chance has brought to my pen, I begin by noting that I have been practising medicine in Pierrefitte for ten years now, and that during the leisure time that my practice has given me I have been busy looking for traces of the first men in our territory». He kept it faithfully until his death on 2 March 1909.

Bailleau studied at Moulins highschool and then continued his medical studies in Paris to take over the practice of his father, who died in 1852, in Pierrefitte-sur-Loire.

As a lover of beautiful objects, he began a collection of artefacts very early on, which, over the course of his life, transformed the family home into a real museum. He was also interested in a new science: archaeology. His job as a country doctor was to be a considerable asset, since, during his rounds of the countryside, he never failed to ask his patients or their farmers if they had found any carved flints or other ancient objects in their fields. This habit earned him the nickname «Doctor Flint» in the Bourbonnais countryside.

One of his neighbours led him to a cave in Châtelperron in 1865 or 1866. The significant presence of carved flints on the site led him to undertake excavations there from 1867. This was the Grotte des Fées (“Fairies’ cave”), which was to become the most emblematic site of his career.

The richness of his collection is known and renowned. He was asked to send artefacts to the Universal Exhibition of 1867, for which he provided about sixty pieces. Thanks to his privileged relationship with the National Antiquity Museum (Musée des Antiquités Nationales), he donated objects over the years, but was also a vigilant agent for it in the Bourbonnais region. Thus, when exceptional discoveries were made, such as the Bronze Age gold treasure unearthed in 1868/1869 at Jaligny-sur-Besbre, or the burial of a Roman officer in 1874 at Chassenard, Bailleau was one of the first on the scene. He observed, documented, questioned the inventors, and reported his findings to the museum.

On these occasions, he acted as an intermediary and negotiator between the discoverers and the museum in order to allow the acquisition of the objects and guarantee their conservation.

After his death on 2 March 1909 at the age of 78, his important collection was divided in nine, one for each of his eight heirs, which were kept in the family, sold or given to museums. The last part was inventoried and classified by Abott Pépin, parish priest of Neuvy, at the beginning of the 1930s, was offered to several French institutions before being, for a large part, acquired by the Wellcome Historical and Medical Museum in London. The rest was kept at the bishopric of Moulins since then. It was donated to the Anne-de-Beaujeu Museum in 2017.

Room #1 : The origins of Prehistory

Prehistory as we know it has been emerging since the middle of the 19th century. It stems from two different academic traditions: natural science and archaeology. Since the years 1820-1840, they have each been asking, with different methodological tools, the same question about the origin of Man.

The year 1859 represents a time of «crystallisation» between these approaches by offering the conditions for an international scientific consensus. In the field, in the south of England at Brixham Cave, but especially in the quarries of the Somme valley, British and French geologists, palaeontologists and archaeologists validated together decisive observations that put an end to several decades of controversy: they noted the association, in deep and undisturbed sedimentary layers, of cut flints with fossilised bones of large mammals.

It is proved that man was indeed contemporary with animal species that are now extinct or disappeared thousands of years ago, such as the woolly mammoth (*Elephas primigenius*) or the woolly rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros tichorhinus*)!

This being settled, the question of the extent of prehistoric man's presence across the European continent arises. Any new discovery in different places was therefore opportune to confirm the achievements of 1859. Now, the time is ripe for archaeology.

In 1860, Pierrefitte-sur-Loire was a small town with a population of about a thousand, half that of the county town (Dompierre-sur-Besbre) and far from the 20,000 inhabitants of Moulins. It would therefore be possible to imagine that Bailleau was isolated, far from regional and Parisian circles, and even outside the scholarly community. In reality, his activity was organised according to a first local circle of collaborators (friends, colleagues, learned societies), completed by a second, made up of personalities and national institutions with which he maintained closed contact (The topography of Gaul committee, National Antiquity Museum, international congresses, etc.), with interactions between these worlds taking place through collections and publications.

Actually, through his practice, Bailleau illustrates the movement of rupture that took place, from the years 1860-1863, within a prehistory that was increasingly oriented towards lithic typology, freeing itself more and more from stratigraphic considerations and envisaging fauna as a dating element. Bailleau seems more at ease in this universe of artefacts, admitting that he «does not collect the Tertiary period [limiting himself] to the history of human work and the branches that relate to it».

Room #2 : The Bailleau «galaxy»

Dr. Bailleau's scientific circle was made up of the greatest names of 19th century French archaeology. Throughout his life, he considered himself an amateur in the field of archaeology, and he maintained a significant correspondence with his peers.

Joseph-Guillaume BAILLEAU

1830-1909

Born in Pierrefitte-sur-Loire.

He was a collector and history enthusiast, he devoted more than 50 years of his life to archaeological research in the Bourbonnais.

Alexandre BERTRAND

1820- 1902

He was a pioneer in Celtic and Gallo-Roman archaeology, he was the founder and first director of the National Antiquity museum in Saint-Germain-en-Laye for 35 years. It was through Bailleau that this museum acquired artefacts from the soldier's tomb at Chassenard and the gold treasure at Jaligny.

Édouard LARTET

1801-1871

Born in Gers, he became interested in natural sciences after studying law in Toulouse. His passion for palaeontology and geology quickly became a daily hobby. He is considered one of the founders of prehistoric archaeology. He kept up a regular correspondence with Bailleau, with whom he exchanged numerous artefacts.

His son Louis Lartet also carried out archeological research and discovered the famous Cro-Magnon Man at Eyzies-de-Tayac (Dordogne) in the Southwest of France.

Gabriel de MORTILLET

1821-1898

He was a geological engineer trained at the Conservatory of Arts and Craft (Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers) in Paris, his political opposition led him into exile in Savoie, Switzerland and Italy. It was during his exile in Switzerland, in 1849, that he became concerned by the prehistoric question. He organised the prehistoric section of the *History of Work* gallery during the Universal Exhibition of 1867, in which Bailleau participated. On the recommendation of Édouard Lartet, in 1868 he became the curator of the new National Antiquity Museum in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. He proposed one of the first chronology of Prehistory.

Abbot BREUIL

1877-1961

Henri Breuil, a Catholic priest and prehistorian, was nicknamed «the Pope of Prehistory». It was at the seminary that he was confronted with evolutionary ideas and the emerging history of early man and that his passion for Prehistory was born. He obtained his degree in natural history in 1904 and taught Prehistory at the University of Fribourg and then at the Institute of Human Paleontology (Institut de Paléontologie Humaine) in Paris. In 1929, the first chair of Prehistory was created for him at the College de France, a prestigious French institution. He came to see the Bailleau collection in 1906.

Louis ESMONNOT

1807-1886

Born in Paris, he moved to Moulins at the age of 29 and participated as an architect in the construction of numerous buildings such as the Sacré-Coeur church. He was a member of the Historical Monuments Commission which looked after the oldest buildings in the department. He helped create the Moulins museum, which was to become the Anne-de-Beaujeu museum. Archaeology was his passion, he excavated and donated his collections to several museums. He is a contemporary of Bailleau, they sometimes excavated the same sites, such as Saint-Pourçain-sur-Besbre. Bailleau bought back part of his collection of ancient bronze.

Jacques BOUCHER de PERTHES

1788-1868

Native of the Northern France, he succeeded in proving the existence of what he called «the antediluvian man». He is considered to be one of the founders of prehistoric science. Author of “Antiquités celtiques et antédiluviennes”, he demonstrated that a «prehistoric» man already existed at a very early period, contemporary of the bones of mammoths and dwarf rhinoceroses. In 1860, he asserted that Man was indeed the contemporary of certain extinct animals, at a time before the Flood. He was a precursor of Bailleau but they were not in contact.

Joseph DECHELETTE

1862-1914

Born in Roanne, he worked in the family business specialising in the trade and manufacture of cotton. Introduced to archaeology by his uncle, J.G. Bulliot, he devoted himself to his passion from 1899. He annotated dozens of notebooks in the course of his research. The October 1902 entry contains a description of the Bailleau collection, which he came to see at its owner's home. He was the curator of the museum in Roanne, which now bears his name, for 22 years.

The evolution of man

In old school textbooks, in the press and on the web, an image is often used to represent the evolution of Man. This image shows (from left to right) a crouched ape moving towards the right, straightening up and becoming more human, to «end up» as a standing-up right Homo sapiens... If the evolution of Man is not a line leading from a quadruped chimpanzee to a modern bipedal man, scientists do not all agree on the same model. However, they all agree on the idea of a “tree” evolution. This shows the diversity of our ancestors, but without tracing a falsely linear evolution.

The topography of Gaul

On 17 July 1858, Napoleon the Third (1808-1873) set up a commission ‘to study the geography, history and archaeology of France up to the time of Charlemagne’. Between 1858 and 1879, this topographic commission produced more than ten archaeological maps.

In 1867 and 1869, two maps regarding Prehistory were published by the Imperial printing house : Monuments of the Stone Age and the Cave Age. Because the credibility and legitimacy of research on prehistoric times are at stake, it is necessary to offer guarantees of veracity to the discoveries. Three criteria are chosen:

- the discovery of «cut flints, offering definite and obviously intentional shapes» which cannot therefore be the result of animal action or natural phenomena;
- their association with the bones of large mammals, which led to the conclusion of their «consecutive association», their «community of origin» and their «pre-existence synchronism»;
- «to find unequivocal traces of human action on the bones, even of buried animals, with the flints worked by human hands».

The accumulation of these three criteria provides proof that the digger is indeed in the presence of a prehistoric site.

The remarkable concentration of discoveries in the Allier department is essentially due to the intense activity of doctor Bailleau.

Lower Paleolithic

Acheulean

1.7 million BC / 100,000 BC

This period's name comes from the site of Saint-Acheul (Somme). Although the first traces of the Acheulean are dated to 1.8 million years ago in Africa, they quickly spread to Europe (traces are found as early as 170,000 BC in Georgia) and Asia.

Humans were more skillful at stoneworking: biface (a double-edged kernel) and axes (with a sharp edge at one end) are created. Bipedalism is acquired. Homo erectus is associated with the Acheulean industry. It was also during the Acheulean period that the first traces of manmade fire were found, dated to 400,000 years ago, in France, Hungary and China.

Human of the period : Homo erectus, Homo heidelbergensis, Homo antecessor

From about 500,000 years ago, some Homo erectus in Europe are said to be Pre-Neanderthals (Tautavel).

Characteristic sites: Keungul Ynxian (China), Saint-Acheul (France), Terra Amata (France), and especially Tautavel (France) and Atapuerca (Spain).

Middle Paleolithic

Mousterian

350,000 BC / 45,000 BC

This period's name comes from the site of the Moustier shelter in Dordogne. The humans of this period are Homo sapiens and Homo neanderthalensis. It is to the latter that we attribute the majority of the Mousterian lithic production. Scrapers and points are the most frequently found tools, but bifaces are still present. The Levallois cutting method was developed, which made it possible to obtain a predetermined tool shape from a block of raw flint.

The worker must therefore preview the desired shape before working the stone. Thanks to increasingly sophisticated tools, the human of this period were able to attack larger animals: bison, aurochs, reindeer, etc. The oldest sketch dated to this period (70,000 BC) was found on a block of ochre at Blombos (South Africa). On this site, pierced shells were also discovered, which were to be mounted as necklaces.

It was also during the Mousterian period that the first real burials were discovered, proof of an awareness of humanity and death.

Human of the period : Homo neandertalensis, Homo sapiens,
Characteristic sites : La Ferrassie, La Quina, La Chapelle-aux-Saints, Isturitz (France).

Upper Paleolithic

Chatelperronian

45,000 BC / 39,000 BC

This period's name comes from the site of the Grotte des Fées ("Fairies' cave"), in Châtelperron (Allier).

Evolved from the Mousterian, the Châtelperronian is characterised by curved-backed blades. The «Châtelperron knives» are a typical example.

This culture was once attributed to the first Homo sapiens in Europe.

Today, it is considered to be the work of the last Neanderthals.

Châtelperronian sites can be found in a large part of southwestern France and northern Spain.

The Châtelperronians seem to be the first manufacturers of pendants made of pierced teeth. For several thousand years, the last Neanderthals lived on the same territories as the first Homo sapiens. It is not known exactly why the Neanderthals became extinct.

Human of the period : Homo sapiens, Homo neandertalensis.
Characteristic sites : Châtelperron, La Ferrassie, Saint-Césaire, Combe-Capelle, Arcy-sur-Cure (France).

Upper Paleolithic

Aurignacian

42,000 BC / 32,000 BC

This period's name comes from the site of the Aurignac cave (Haute-Garonne). The Aurignacian is characterised by long retouched blades, but also by the use of animal bones and antlers to create tools.

The Aurignacian lithic industry is generally attributed to Homo sapiens, who came from the Near East and gradually spread throughout Europe and Asia. In Europe, artistic representations appear around 35,000 years ago: Chauvet cave and Pair-non-Pair cave... ornate blocks in the Eyzies shelters. Ornament and furniture art appears with sculpted statuettes being made, particularly in Germany.

Human of the period : Homo sapiens, Homo neandertalensis.

Characteristic sites : Pataud shelter, La Ferrassie (France).

Upper Paleolithic

Gravettian

34,000 BC / 26,000 BC

This period's name comes from the site of La Gravette (Dordogne).

The lithic industry is characterised by narrow, elongated blades.

The flint is cut in the form of points that were fixed on a wooden shaft.

There are also many smaller points.

Numerous female statuettes in ivory or stone were carved.

The last Neanderthals disappeared in Spain about 25,000 years ago. The causes of this extinction are multiple. For the first time in the history of the world, humanity is now represented by only one species: Homo sapiens.

Human of the period : Homo sapiens.

Characteristic sites : La Gravette, Pataud shelter, Cro-Magnon, Pech-Merle, Arcy-sur-Cure, Cosquer (France).

Upper Paleolithic

Solutrean

26,000 BC / 23,000 BC

The period's name comes from the site of Solutré (Saône-et-Loire). This culture concerns the southwestern France and Spain. The Solutrean craftsmen mastered stone cutting perfectly, achieving an unprecedented level of delicacy: their technical skills allowed them to retouch the flints in the form of "laurel leaves" or "willow leaves". To achieve such perfection, the flints are heated and worked by pressure. In addition to sewing tools (stamps, drills), the Solutreans invented the bone eye needle, which was used to assemble leather pieces.

Characteristic sites : Roche de Solutré (Solutré rock), Laugerie, Haute, Roc de Sers, Fourneau du Diable (the Devil's Stove), Grotte de la Vache (Cow cave), Grotte Cosquer (Cosquer cave) (France).

Upper Palaeolithic

Magdalenian

21,000 BC / 14,000 BC

The period's name comes from the site of La Madeleine (Dordogne). The Magdalenian lithic industry is highly differentiated: points, burins, scrapers, etc. The Magdalenians also invented the harpoon and improved the propeller.

Semi-nomadic, they exploited their environment (hunting, fishing, gathering) according to the seasons and their campsites could be used several times from one year to the other.

Magdalenian art is very rich (the best known example is the Lascaux cave, Dordogne), the animal representations on the walls of the caves are increasingly naturalistic and animated. Furniture art is very abundant.

Characteristic sites : La Madeleine, Laugerie-Basse, Pincevent, Etiolles, Grotte de la Vache (Cow cave), Lascaux, Villars, Gabillou, Font-de-Gaume, Les Combarelles, Niaux, Rouffignac, Cap Blanc (France), Altamira (Spain).

Room #3 : Châtelperron

THE GREAT AND SMALL STORIES OF A DISCOVERY (1838-1870)

The Châtelperron paleontological site was discovered during the construction of the industrial railway line going from the Bert/Montcombroux coalmines to the Dompierre-sur-Besbre ironworks (Allier) in 1839 and 1840. The decades following the discovery of the site were marked by numerous operations involving eminent personalities of the prehistoric discipline (Édouard Lartet, Henry Christie).

Bailleau visited the site in 1865-1866; he was struck by the number of stone remains uncovered. This led him to undertake his own excavations: they began in the autumn of 1867 and continued, intermittently, until 1870. The chronology of the site remained uncertain for a long time. Bailleau himself hesitated about its attribution.

The doctor never made a precise statement on the chronology of Châtelperron : questioned on this by Mortillet, he wrote cautiously on 20 June 1869 :

«I consider the “Grotte des Fées” to be one of the oldest inhabited by man, although it was inhabited until the time of the Reindeer, but never during the late Stone Age».

Subsequently, prehistorians appropriated the suspended time of the «Grotte des Fées», each according to their choice, the site being successively linked to the Aurignacian Period, to a period «intermediate between the Solutrean and the Magdalenian» before forming, for Breuil, the first term of the Upper Paleolithic (1911).

No new field research took place until 1951, when the prehistorian Henri Delporte (1920-2002) undertook a new series of test pits on the site. As a result of his work, Delporte proposed to clearly distinguish the different phases of the Early Upper Paleolithic (Châtelperronian, Aurignacian, Gravettian), thus allowing the site of Châtelperron to become eponymous. From now on, the site thus covers the transitional phase between Neanderthal and modern man, a phase that is extremely important for human history.

Between 1962 and 2019, non archeological operations were planned on the Châtelperron site. At the beginning of the 21st century, the question of the chronological position of Châtelperron returned to the forefront of the scientific scene. From 2019, the setting up of a multidisciplinary research programme on the site, on the initiative of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs (direction Raphaël Angevin), enabled the excavation of the site to resumed. This investigation continues in 2023 as part of a third excavation campaign. At the end of a turbulent history, the archaeological adventure continues more than ever!

Stratigraphy

Stratigraphy consists of studying the superposition of geological layers (strata) in order to understand their succession and relationships. In 1840, in the Somme, Jacques Boucher de Perthes followed earthworks and discovered a set of cut stone tools whose relative age he deduced from the depth of their burial. By confirming that these objects were contemporaneous with fossil animal bones from the same layers, he noted for the first time the «very high antiquity of Man». The observation of superimposed layers on a given section or at various locations of a site is for archaeologists the main means of giving relative dates to the remains discovered, and thus of answering central questions of chronology and cultural periodisation. It was in the mid-20st century that stratigraphy became a fundamental principle of archaeological excavation. Every human action (construction of a wall, a road or the filling in of a pit) or every action of nature (an alluvium, the eruption of a volcano or an earthquake) leaves marks in the ground. These marks are presented to archaeologists in the form of a sequence of strata, each of which is called a stratigraphic unit (or SU). The analysis of the stratigraphic units of an archaeological site is an essential part of the archaeological excavation to determine its nature (craftsman's workshop, dwelling, military camps...) and to trace its history.

Climate in the Paleolithic

Climate has changed over the course of the Earth's history.

Archaeologists are interested in paleo-environmental data to better understand the role of climate on the economy and lifestyle of ancient human groups.

Prehistory should not be thought of as a long glacial period; on the contrary, strong climatic alternations are observed, whose consequences can be seen in the types of flora, fauna and ways of life of humans.

The study of pollens and the reconstruction of climates and seasons show that landscapes evolve according to climate variations: tundra in the coldest periods; a wooded steppe in intermediate periods; aspects similar to ours during warming episodes.

Large fauna is less sensitive to climate variations than small fauna.

However, the presence or absence of some species may reflect particular climatic episodes:

- some animals (mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, ovibos, reindeer, megaceros) correspond more particularly to the coldest episodes.

They are frequent at the beginning of the Late Paleolithic (but they are also found later);

- during periods of warming, the fauna is made up of horses, bison and in particular aurochs, deer and deers, and ibex.

About ten thousand years ago, the last ice age came to an end.

Mammoths, woolly rhinoceroses and musk oxen have disappeared since a long time. The last reindeer have moved up to the North in search of lichens. A warming climate changes the environment.

The temperate forest is established with its corresponding fauna: deer and hinds, roe deer, wild boar, hares and rabbits. Within a few millennia, humans become producers of their own food.

The impact of humans on their environment can thus be documented from prehistoric times to the present day, exacerbated today by the climate changes we are witnessing.

Mammoth tusk

Discovered by Bailleau in Châtelperron, it was sent to the National Antiquity Museum in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which still holds it today. In his diary, Bailleau wrote : «[I found] three mammoth tusks, but in decomposition, I could only get one and still in part, it is two metres long. I broke off 50 centimetres of it. About 1.5 metres remains. I donated it to the museum of Saint-Germain. It is to this day proudly placed in the great hall of honour».

Stone tools

The lithic industry of Châtelperron is characterised in particular by the presence of curved-backed points for which the prehistorian Abbot Breuil proposed the name «Châtelperron knives».

At the “Grotte des Fées”, the raw material for stone tools is largely what is known as ‘Tilly flint’. This is named after a farm about 5 miles from the site. It has got a wide variety of shades ranging from brown, pink, red, brown and grey. It is characterised by a white exterior (cortex), and often by fossil inclusions that are clearly visible macroscopically. In the Bailleau collection, the flint artefacts are mainly unweathered and undamaged. This may indicate that little sediment displacement took place before the first excavations. However, the Châtelperronian is not the only paleoculture represented on the site. It is framed by Mousterian (c. 60,000 BP) and Aurignacian (c. 36,000 BC) occupations.

The Mousterian of Châtelperron is characterised by a production of tools retouched on fragments, and sometimes the production of bifaces. In the Aurignacian period, there is a preference for the production of tools on blades. These different technical traditions refer to the work of Neanderthal man (Mousterian) and modern man (Aurignacian), which makes the Châtelperron site a reference for understanding the conditions and rhythms of the biological and cultural transition that took place between 55,000 and 40,000 years ago in Europe.

Thus, the attribution of the Châtelperronian to one or other of these species is still a matter of debate among prehistorians.

The Châtelperron knives

Operating chain

The great novelty of the Châtelperron lithic industry was the «mass production» of the «Châtelperron point or knife», a tool with a curved back, which may have been fitted with a handle.

The Châtelperron knife is a thin, straight blade of modest size, with a pointed end and only one sharp edge.

This tool is initially a fragment extracted from a nucleus by laminar cutting. It is then pointed, in a thin straight blade. One of the edges is left sharp, while the other is arranged in a generally curved back giving the appearance of a «knife».

Room #4 : Peregrinations

Although the site of Châtelperron will forever be linked to the name of Bailleau, he only excavated it for a few years. Far from devoting himself exclusively to this site, Bailleau used his rounds as a doctor to collect artefacts and locate new sites throughout the eastern Allier area. Thanks to his privileged relationship with the farmers, who were often also his patients, he probed, excavated and studied many other Bourbonnais sites. This is the case, for instance, of the prehistoric sites of Tilly, Monétay and Bornat in Saligny-sur-Roudon, which are the main sources of the flints in the Bailleau collection.

The sites he excavated were not exclusively from the Prehistoric period. Indeed, if this period seems to have his preference, as indicated by the number of flint tools in his collection, he is also interested in other periods: the Bronze Age, Antiquity, the Middle Ages.

In Saint-Pourçain-sur-Besbre, for example, he discovered a Gallo-Roman potter's workshop containing numerous remains of terracotta figurines. He wrote in his diary: «In the last few days I have come across a large pottery workshop in Beauvoir (Saint-Pourçain-sur-Besbre), which was certainly related to those in Toulon-sur-Allier.

I only excavated a site where there was a furnace; I brought back more than 150 artefacts, statuettes of Venus, and others gods Risus, Hercules, monkeys, busts, portraits, consecration of marriage, ox, cock, pigeons, peacocks, birds, etc. The moulds are signed with the potters' names». His collection of antique terracotta figurines and moulds was one of the most important in France.

Saligny-sur-Roudon

Bailleau identified a whole network of prehistoric sites around the commune of Saligny-sur-Roudon: Tilly, Bornat, Les Truges, Sauvelours... Localities identified both in the doctor's diary and directly on the flints, thanks to the handwritten inscriptions. If we take the example of Tilly, Bailleau states in his diary that in 1867 he had 80 flints discovered on this site and the following year he had 337 flints in his collection.

The Tilly flint is a Tertiary flint - called 'jasper' by the doctor - of poor quality, with inclusions, which is used in large part in the Châtelperron lithic industry. The tools collected include scrapers, burins, blades and drills.

Saône-et-Loire

The proximity of the Saône-et-Loire region to Bailleau's home made it an ideal area for collecting archaeological artefacts. Here again, several Paleolithic sites have been identified: Digoin, Vitry-en-Charollais, Paray-le-Monial...

An exceptional fragment

A flint fragment from Saône-et-Loire is particularly exceptional. On one side, Bailleau has noted «Volgu», the place of discovery. It leads us to a very singular story.

In 1874, about 3 miles north-east of Digoin, the digging of a small canal to divert the waters of the Arroux brought to light a batch of exceptional flint blades. In a «hiding place» there were several blades

(between 17 and 30), dating from the Solutrean period (around 26,000 to 23,000 BC), to make these required such skilfulness that they are real masterpieces. These blades are called «laurel leaves» because they are reminiscent of the shape of a laurel leaf. Some blades are translucent. The fragment in the Bailleau collection was acquired after its discovery by a pharmacist from Digoin, Eugène Serré. Although Bailleau tried to buy the piece from him very early on, he always refused to give it to him. Fifteen years later, in October 1890, Bailleau found the lost fragment in an attic of the abbey of Sept-Fons where Serré, had given it to the Father librarian, after having thought for a while of giving it to Abbot Ducrost.

Charente-Maritime

A series of artefacts from the Bailleau collection come from the Gros-Roc cave, (Douhet, Charente-Maritime). This may seem a surprising origin, but research carried out with the Bailleau family has made it possible to identify the presence of the doctor and his son in the department during the latter's studies. Although excavations were undertaken on this site by the local schoolteacher in 1889, it is not known when Bailleau and his son visited the site. The series uncovered date from the Mousterian (around 350,000 to 45,000 BC) and the Aurignacian (around 42,000 to 32,000 BC) to the Magdalenian (around 21,000 to 14,000 BC).

Dordogne

Bailleau visited Dordogne in 1883, with his son Abel, to reward him for passing his bachelor's degree. He wrote in his diary on 12 September «Journey to the Midi. Carved flints of the castle of Bridoire, Dordogne. My son Abel having passed his exam in mathematics, I have just rewarded him with a trip to the south of France (...). We travelled through the country rich in prehistoric discoveries in Dordogne.

I saw the station of Eyzies then, arrived at Bridoire, I noticed caves in the natural park which certainly must have been inhabited by the primitive man. It is said that there are no flints in the region, but the question has not been properly examined, because in the only walk I took in the garden of the castle, I found a quantity of authentic and debris. If our relations with the Marquis continue, and it is to be hoped they will, I shall return there and make successful excavations, I am sure.”

Was he able to realise his dream and excavate in Dordogne? It seems not, as nothing is recorded in his diary. On the other hand, we know that some of the pieces in his collection come from this region and were given to him by Édouard Lartet. Among the artefacts discovered in Dordogne, some are marked, which makes it possible to refine their route. For example, the blade scraper n°2017.9.1611 is marked «gorge d'enfer 1863 Dordogne». The Hell's Throat (Gorge d'Enfer) valley is located in Les Eyzies-de-Tayac, where we find the Poisson shelter dated to the Gravettian period (around 34,000 to 26,000 BC).

Antiquity

Grave of a Gallo-Roman officer from Chassenard

Bailleau had the opportunity to excavate the potter's workshop at Saint-Pourçain-sur-Besbre. It is from this site that the majority of his ancient collection of terracotta figurines comes from. We also find tableware (plates, bowls, etc.) made of common ceramic or sigillated ceramic, which are more luxurious. Thanks to his privileged relationship with the National Antiquity Museum, he has made several donations of artefacts over the years, but he was also a vigilant agent for the museum in the Bourbonnais.

Thus, when exceptional discoveries were made, such as the Bronze Age gold treasure unearthed in 1868/1869 at Jaligny-sur-Besbre or the burial of a Roman officer in 1874 at Chassenard, Bailleau was one of the firsts on the scene. He observed, documented, questioned the inventors, and reported his findings to the museum. On these occasions, he acted as an intermediary and negotiator between the inventors and the museum in order to acquire the objects and guarantee their conservation.

Although these negotiations were unsuccessful, it was finally thanks to Déchelette's intervention that the objects were purchased by the National Antiquity Museum in 1904. It included a helmet with a cephalomorphic visor, monetary coins, an urn and a metal vase used as a container, items of jewellery, etc.

From Protohistory to the Middle Ages

Bronze Age - 2,300 to 800 BC

Several objects date from the Bronze Age: bracelets, axes, pins... Marked by important technological and social advances, the Bronze Age was an significant stage in the evolution of European societies. It is characterised by the use of bronze metallurgy, an alloy mainly composed of copper and tin, whose golden colour blends with gold. The bronze objects that have come down to us are now covered with a green patina. The Allier region has been rich in discoveries of Bronze Age metal deposits since the 19th century: La Ferté-Hauterive, Charroux and also Jaligny-sur-Besbre documented by Bailleau.

Iron Age - 800 to 52 BC

On the plateaus of Buxières-les-Mines and Montcombroux-les-Mines, the Iron Age settlements are linked to the exploitation of oil shale. Beads and bracelets were made from these materials.

Middle Ages - from the 5th century

The artefacts from the Middle Ages in the Bailleau collection are mainly made up of items found at the site of Charrin(Nièvre), a municipality where the Bailleau family had a family home. At the end of his life, Bailleau excavated a cemetery from the Merovingian period to the Modern period.

End of the world collection

Several objects in the Bailleau collection were discovered outside France. There is no evidence that Bailleau travelled outside of France, so the presence of these objects in his collection points to gifts or acquisitions from foreign researchers or travellers.

Europe

Belgium

Two objects come from Spiennes in Belgium, they are large flint tools, probably blanks for Neolithic axes.

Denmark

Two objects come from Denmark, a flint dagger and a polished axe. The inscriptions on these pieces read 'Denmark / Denmark coll. (...) vet' for the axe and 'Da. Coll. Ch. Denmark' for the dagger. They may be artefacts from the Charvet collection.

Lapland

A stone scraper is noted as coming from Lapland.

Africa

Five arrowheads with stalks and fins come from the Sahara, without further details.

America

One arrowhead is from the American city of Newark, Ohio.

Oceania

Two obsidian artefacts are noted as coming from Polynesia, without further precision.

mab

Musée Anne-de-Beaujeu
Château des ducs de Bourbon
Maison Mantin