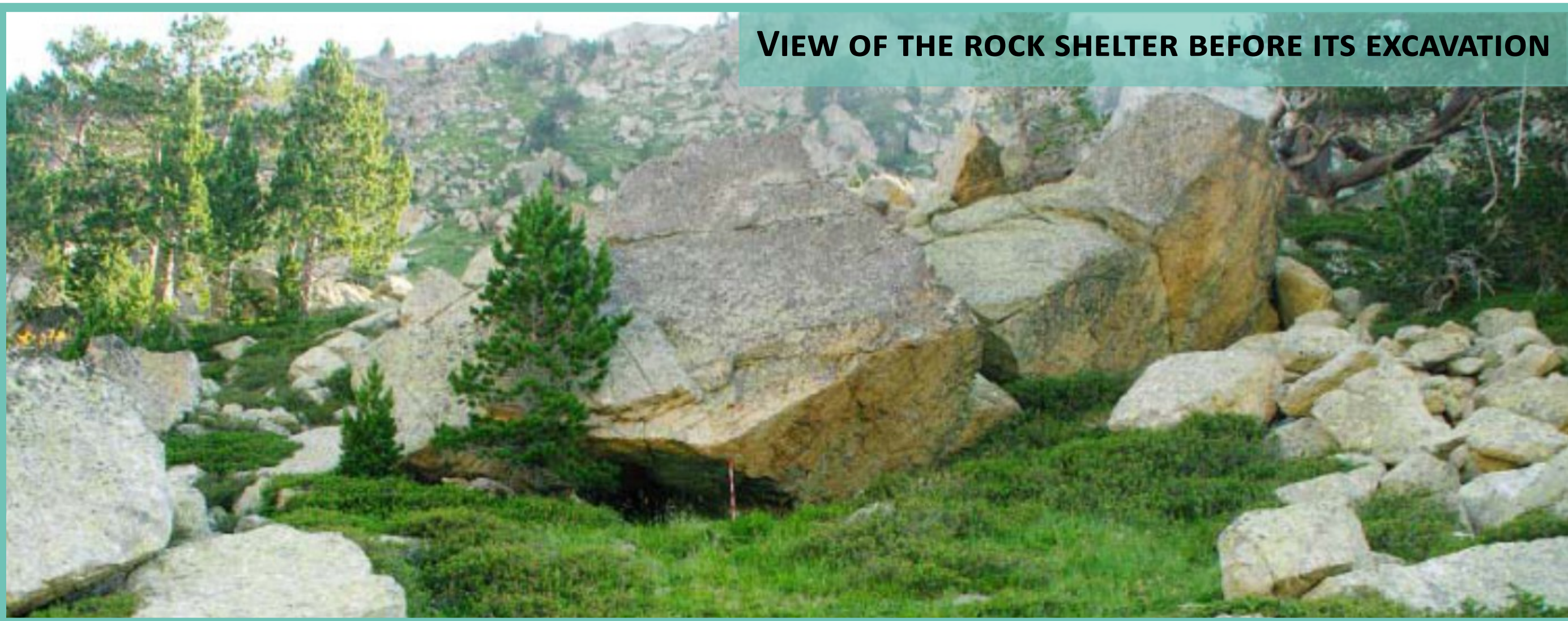


VIEWS FROM ABOVE

The Neolithization of the Southern Central Pyrenees and the Obagues de Ratera Rock Shelter

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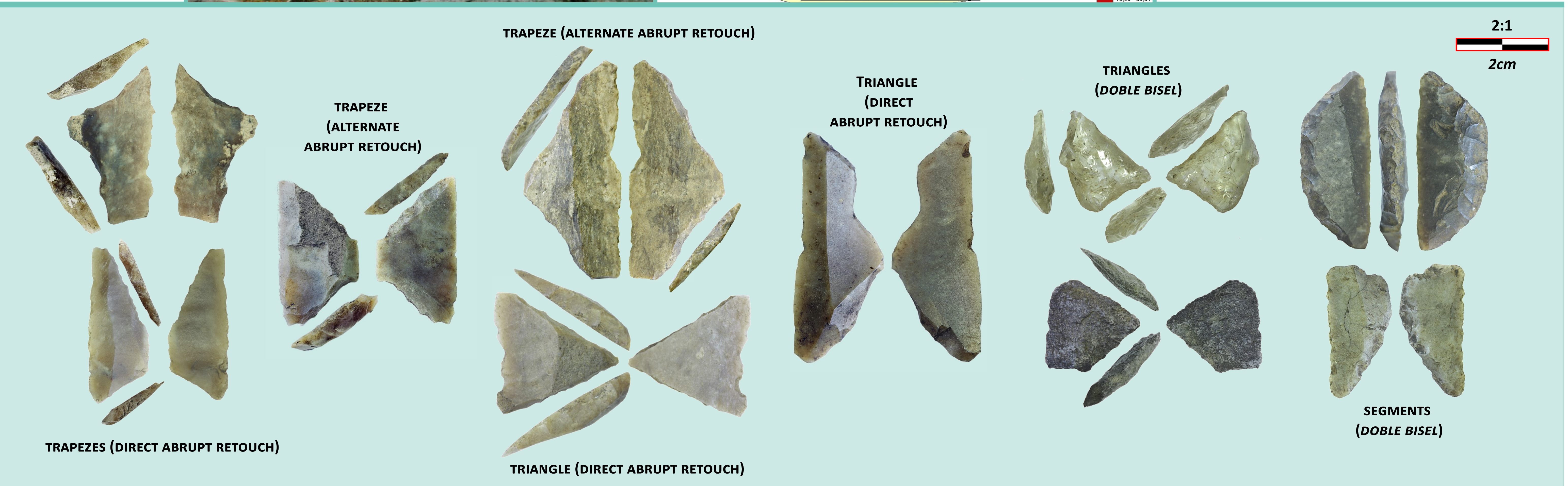
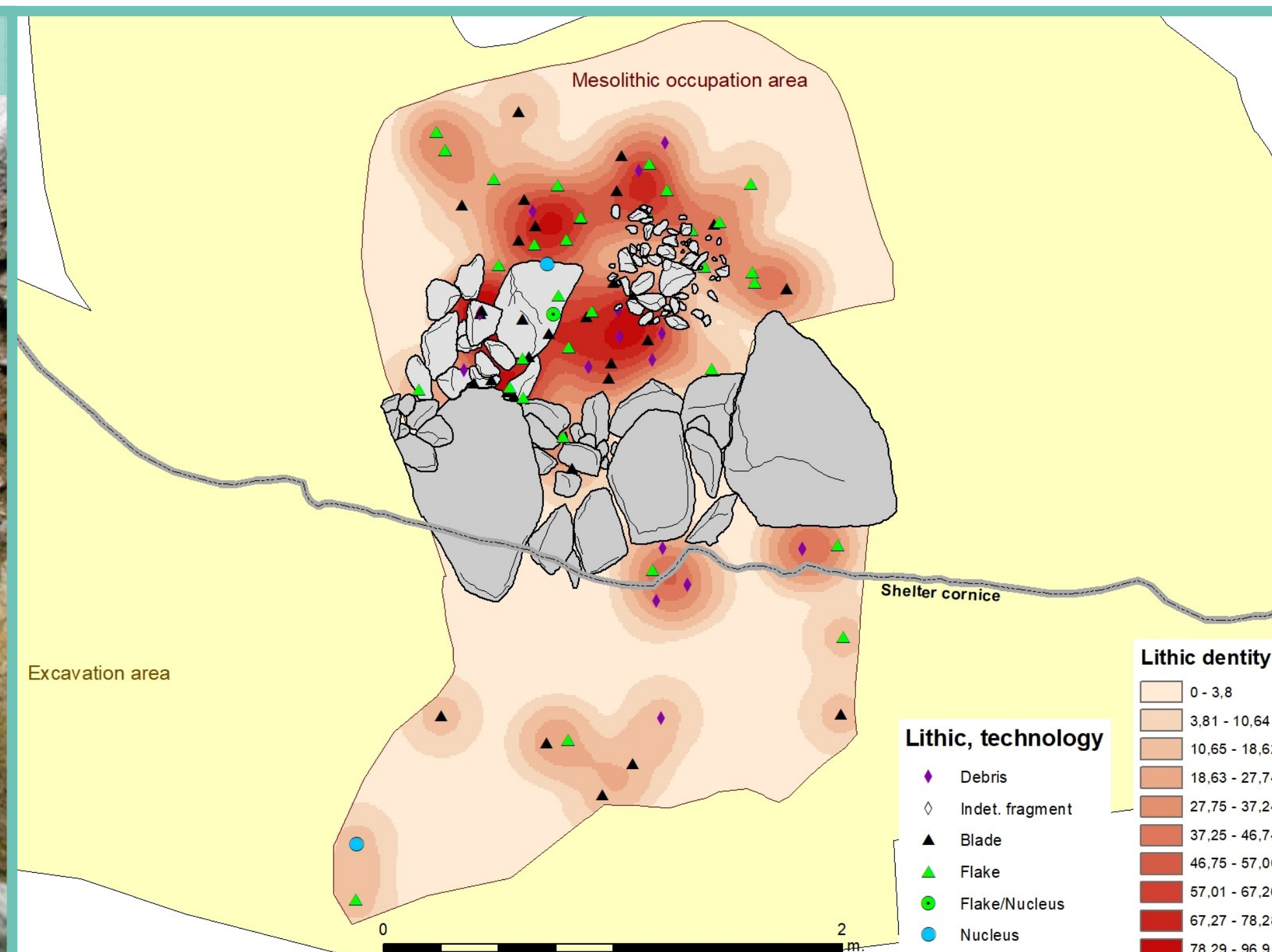


THE SITE

Between the 2015 and 2017 the excavation of the Obagues de Ratera rock shelter have been carried out. The site is a small rock shelter formed by an erratic boulder located at 2.329 m asl. A previous survey made in 2005 highlighted an occupation dated to the Final Neolithic period; however, excavation works revealed a large sequence covering almost all the Holocene, including occupations during the Bronze Age (1700-1000 cal BCE), Late (3100-2600 cal BCE) and Middle Neolithic (4050-3950 cal BCE). In this poster we will present one of the earliest occupation of the rock shelter, Phase 12.

PHASE 12

During this phase the site is occupied mainly in the interior of the rock shelter. A stone wall, composed of several large granite blocks, is placed under the cave vault, closing the inner space. Remains of combustion areas have been identified in the central sector. A radiocarbon date of 5750-5600 cal. BCE has been obtained from a fragment of *Pinus tipus sylvestris/ uncinata* from one of the excavated hearths. No pottery remains have been recovered, while lithic materials are relatively abundant.



THE LITHIC ASSEMBLAGE

The lithic assemblage from Phase 12 is the most abundant of the entire occupation sequence (254 specimens). 50% of lithic remains are composed of chert materials, rock crystal represents the 22%, quartzite the 11,5%, while the remaining remains are debris of granite and quartz. Exploited chert formations mainly (38%) proceed from the Upper Cretaceous marine cherts of the Aguas Salenz / Pardina formations, situated in the pre-Pyrenean ranges. Ebro valley cherts are well represented (22%), while cherts from the Tremp Basin are little represented (2,5%). Indeterminate chert amount to 37%. Rock crystal is locally available at few hundred meters from the site. The technological study of the chert assemblage indicates the prevalence of bladelets (47,4%), followed by blades (35,3%), flakes (11,2%), one core and a few indeterminate elements. The only core is made from a flake with a certain thickness, bipolarly exploited from two carving platforms that have generated 5 deep non-centripetal bipolar negatives. The production of bladelets appear quite standardised (2,2 x 0,8 x 0,2 cm). At least part of the production might have been realised on site, and cores carried elsewhere to be further exploited. The presence of by-products that could respond to small, sporadic, configurations carried out at the site, confirm such idea. Bladelet reduction techniques are: direct percussion (57.14%), pressure (28.57%) and indirect percussion (14.29 %). Bladelets are mostly fragments; proximal and distal fragments prevails. This well fits with the presence of several geometric tools (62,5% of a total of 36 tools), made on mesial fragments of bladelets.

DISCUSSION

During Phase 12, the Obagues rock-shelter was briefly occupied by a small group engaged in hunting activities. The presence of several microliths with impact traces attest the production and repairing of tips for arrows. It is the first "hunting camp" located at such altitudes in the Pyrenees. Radiocarbon dating has provided a chronology that would correspond, following the conventional periodization, to a late phase of Mesolithic period. In the Pyrenean area, during this phase, lithic assemblages are often characterized by a particular association of geometric tools, including trapezes and triangles shaped through direct and alternating abrupt retouch, and triangles and segments shaped through plain (*doble bisel*) retouch. Such a mixture of Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic traits in the lithic assemblage has been often interpreted as a result of technical transfers. Obagues assemblage meets such characteristics, as demonstrated by the correspondence analysis carried out, showing similarities with Esplugón and Forcas II (layers IV and V) assemblages. However, this is the first time that this type of assemblage are found at such altitudes, testifying the occupation of alpine areas already in early chronologies. Especially interesting at Obagues are the two *doble bisel* triangles were made on local rocks, suggesting that the group that occupied the rock shelter adopted such retouching method. Future investigations will better define the role of such groups in the Neolithization process of the Pyrenean area.

CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS INCLUDING GEOMETRIC TOOLS PRIMARY TYPES OF MESO/NEOLITHIC SITES OF THE NORTH-EAST OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

