

North Peru 2023

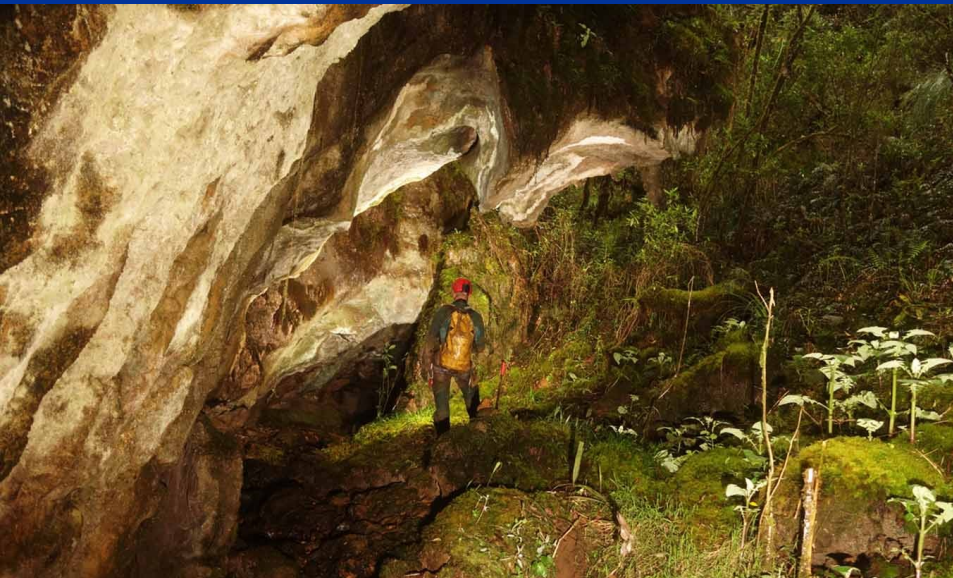
Speleological expedition Franco-Peruvian in northern Peru (regions of Amazonas, San Martín and Loreto)

Organization:

ECA Espeleo Club Andino de Lima (Peru),
GSBM Groupe Spéléologique
de Bagnols-Marcoule (France).

From October 30 to December 2, 2023

Tragadero Olvidado, Soloco, Chachapoyas, Amazonas.



2 – The team



Olivier Fabre



Elisa Armijos



Jean-Yves Bigot



Antonio de Pomar



Pierre Bévengut



Jean Loup Guyot

3 – Halloween in Lima

Arrived in Lima at Clémentine’s house, we dried our luggage left in the pouring rain at Marignane airport.



It’s Halloween and everyone is dressed up except us.

So, we play incognito tourists drinking a pisco at the Haiti café in Miraflores.



4 – Lima - Chachapoyas

Two days of driving are required to travel from Lima to Chachapoyas, with a stopover in Lambayeque.



Represa Limon, Cajamarca.



Chachapoyas City, Amazonas.

5 – A caving activity centered on Soloco

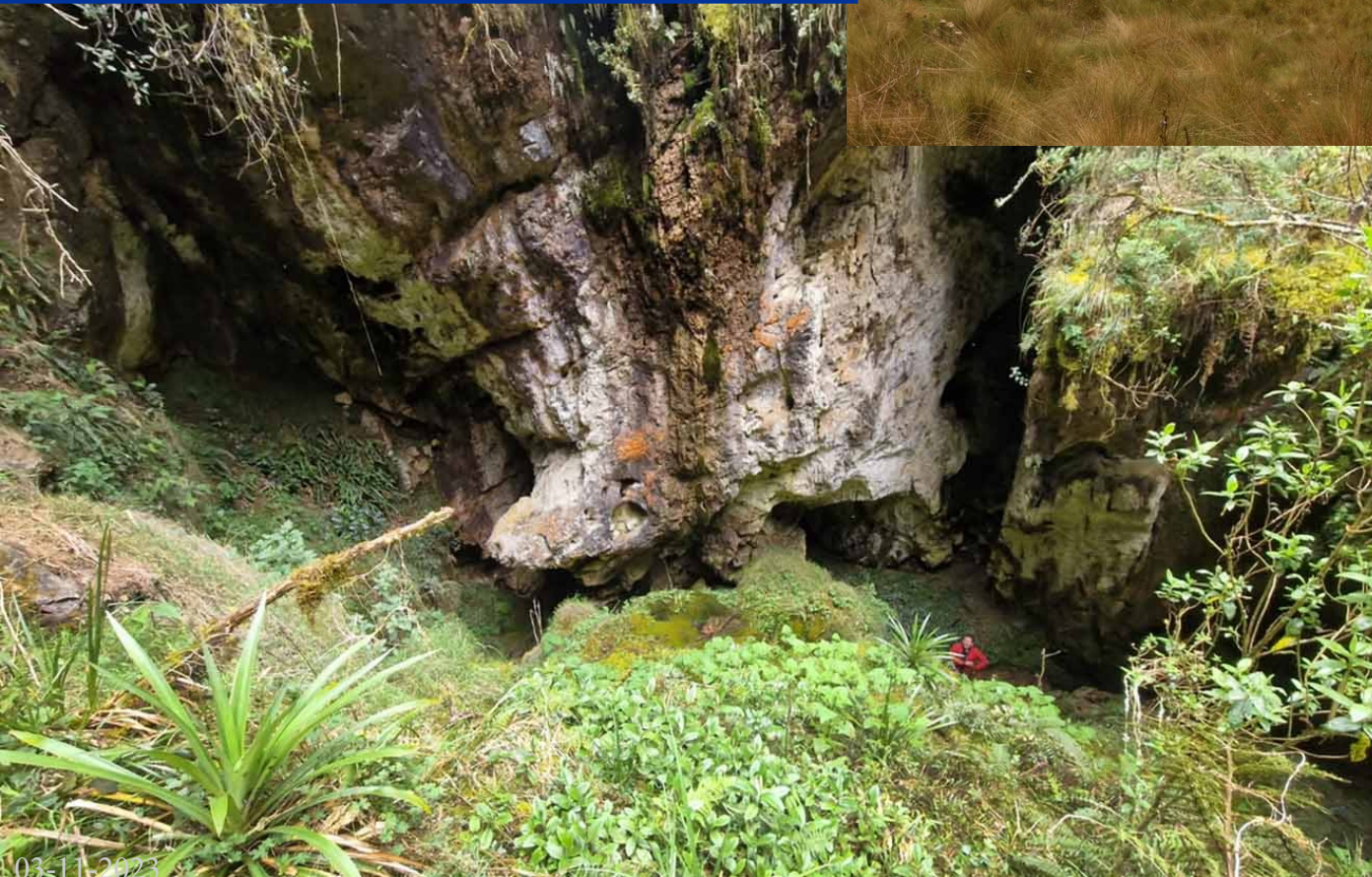
Mainly, caving activity will be concentrated in Soloco, near the town of Chachapoyas, (Amazonas) in northern Peru.



6 – Prospecting in Toclón

A search in the forest on a wrong route leads nowhere.

We decide to cross a pass to examine the bottom of a large sinkhole.



This area was already seen 5 years ago (in 2018) during the Ancayrrumo camp.

Jean Loup and Tonio discover a little-known and forgotten Tragadero during the reconnaissance of the previous camp.

7 – Tragadero Olvidado

06-11-2023



The exploration of the forgotten Tragadero (Tragadero Olvidado or Toclón 50) begins well with a beautiful gallery which drains the bottom of the sinkhole.

We did well to come and check the background of this forgotten tragadero.

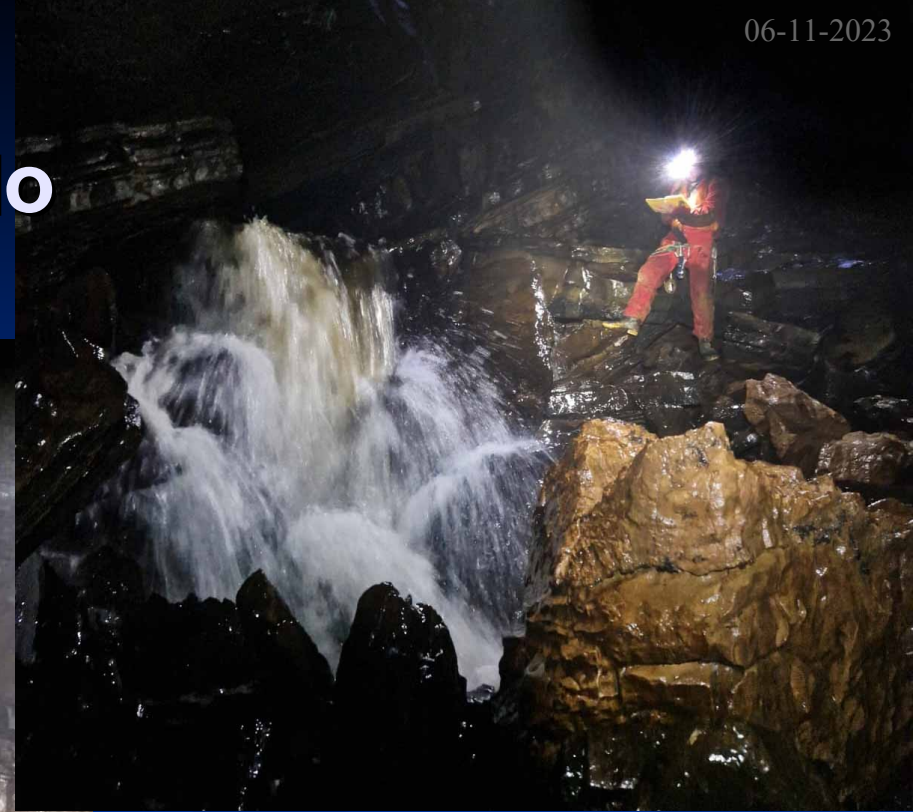
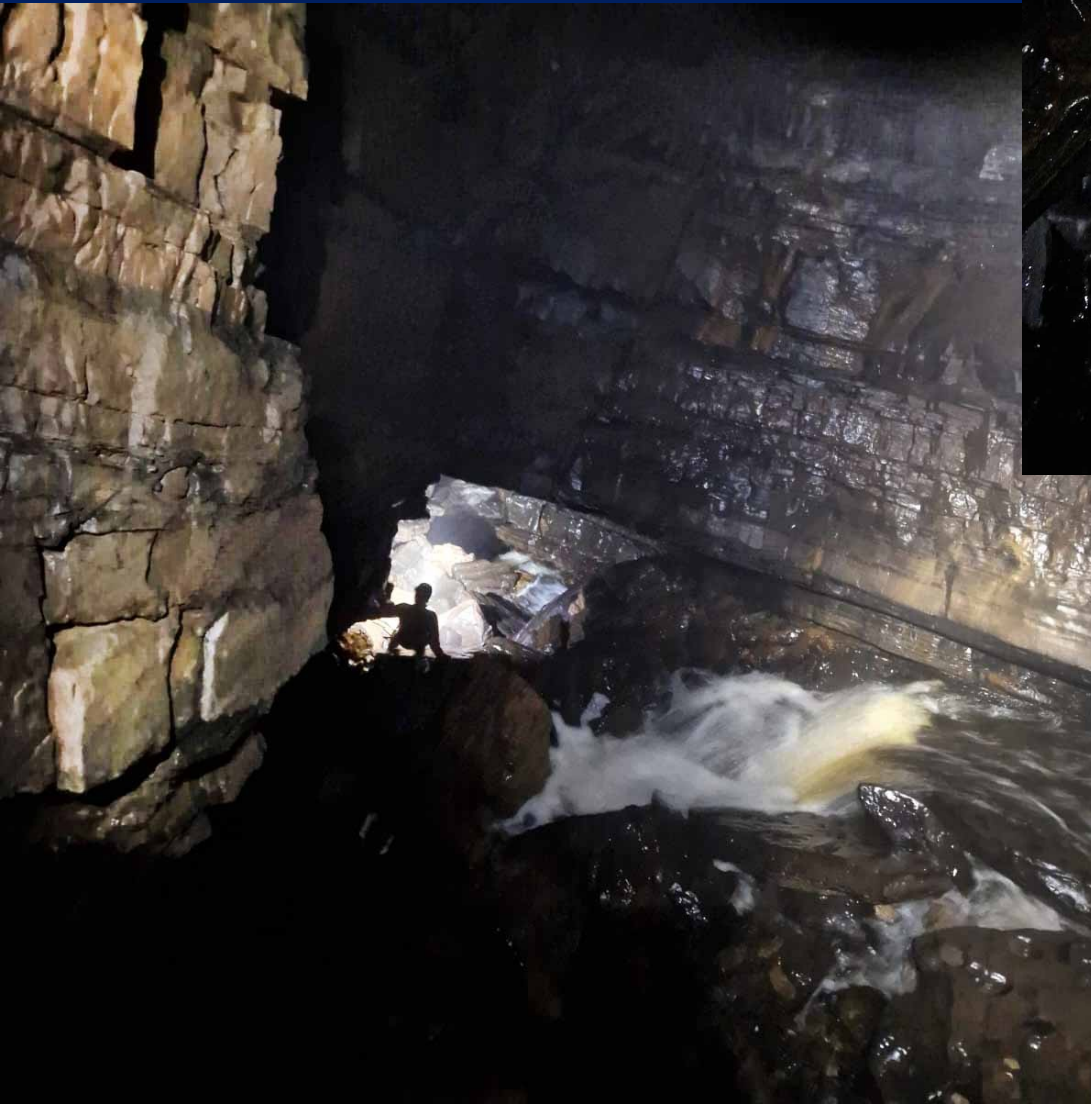
8 – Tragadero Olvidado

Certainly, it can flow strongly in the galleries,
but we do not see any water.
Everything seems pretty dry.



But maybe that's just
an impression...

9 – Tragadero Olvidado



Lower down, the roofs of the ducts become wetter.

It's raining in the galleries...

A siphon forces us to take an upper gallery.

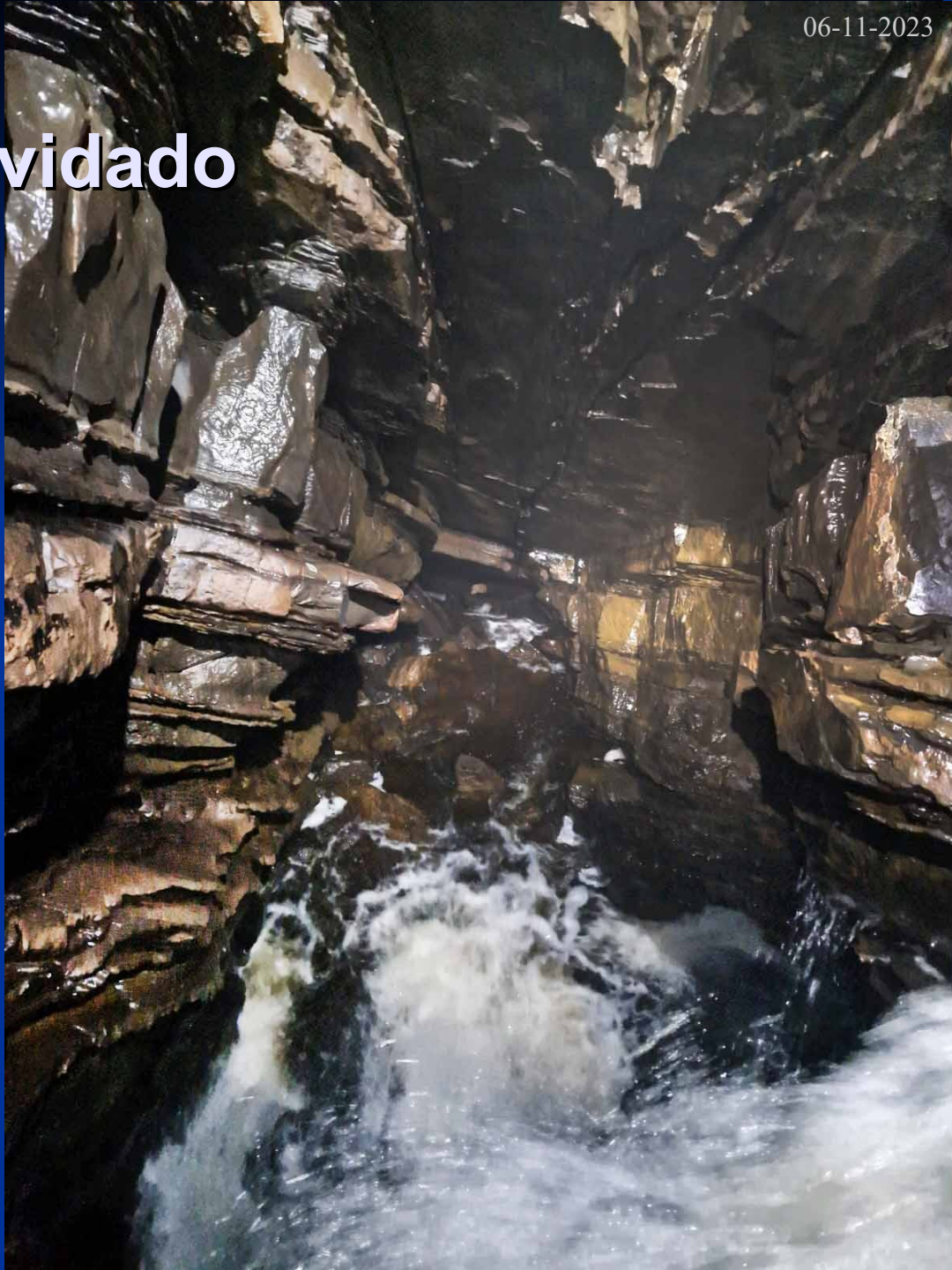
10 – Tragadero Olvidado

We pass near a strange hole shaped like a porthole through which we can hear the water flowing.

Then, the noise of a flooded river invades the space.

The flow of the river is estimated at $1 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ and there is no question of going down the waterfall.

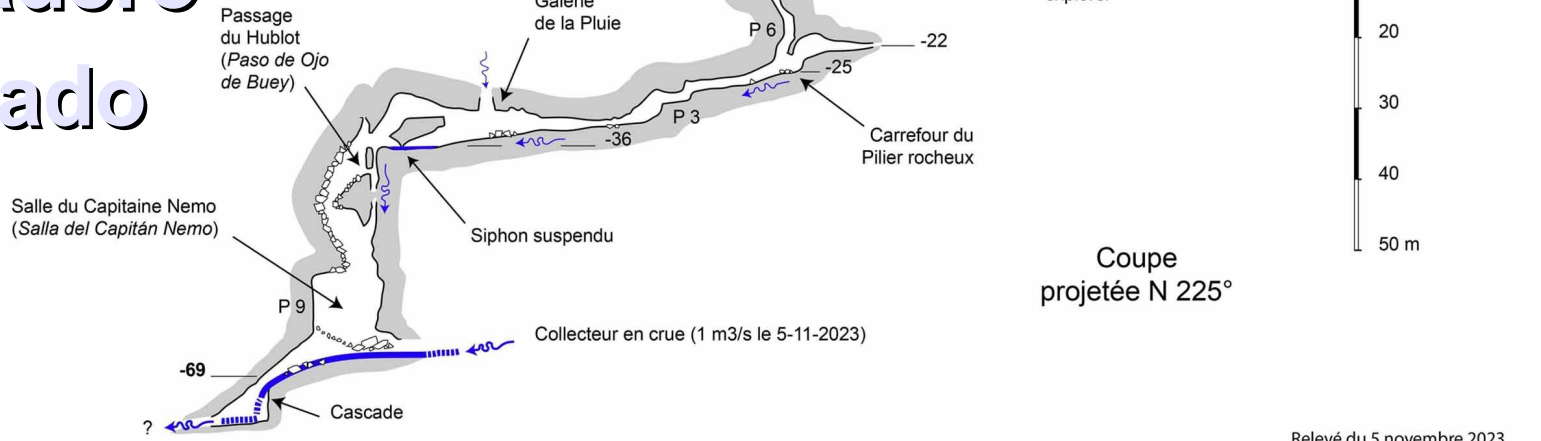
The exploration stops there for us, but it's already a great discovery.



11 – Tragadero Olvidado

TRAGADERO OLVIDADO (Toclon 50)
Soloco, Chachapoyas, Amazonas, Pérou

Développement : 300 m
Dénivellation : 69 m



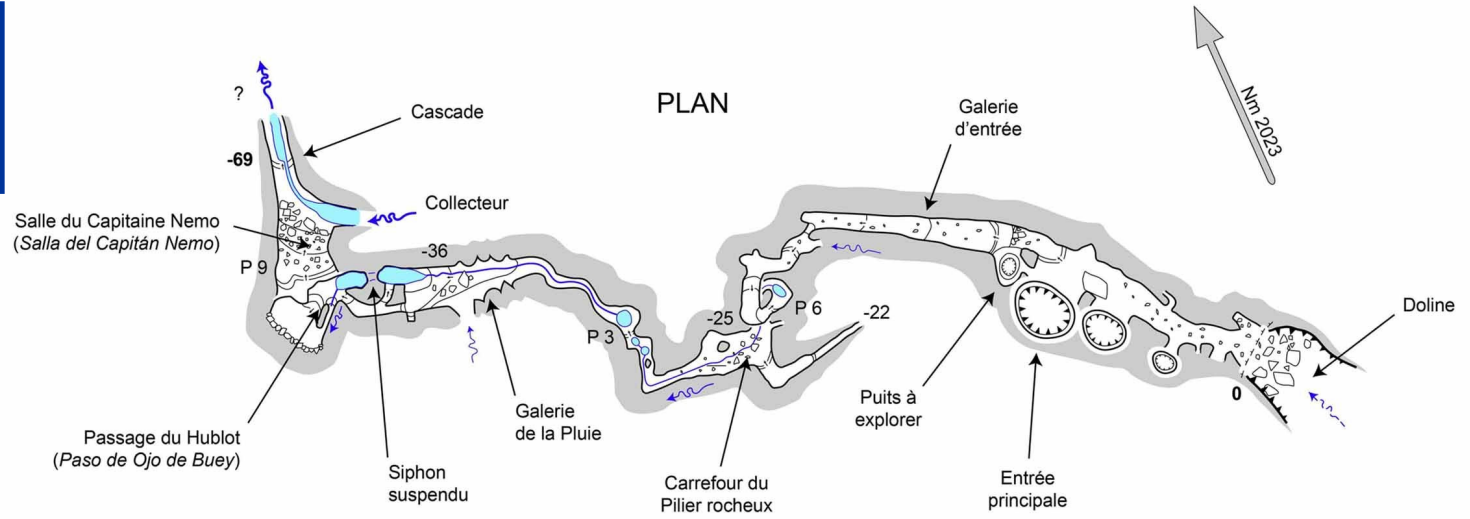
Coupe projetée N 225°

Relevé du 5 novembre 2023,
Jean Loup Guyot &
Jean-Yves Bigot (GSBM)
Disto X. Report : J.-Y. Bigot

Coordonnées :
Lat. = -6.31270
Long. = -77.77412



Survey of the Tragadero Olvidado.



12 – Search for X04 sinkhole

Traveling through the Toclón region, we see that there are many witnesses of human presence.



We most often find rock shelters, caves, sometimes sepulchral, and the bottoms of cabins on high sites..

13 – Search for X04 sinkhole

06-11-2023



We are still looking for access to X04 sinkhole, but no path leads there...

You will have to cross the ridge (on the left) to find a path,
then a pass overgrown with vegetation.

14 – Sinkhole X04

A passage is discovered and sinkhole X04 is finally reached.



The river flows over sandstone, then over a carpet of sediments.

She ends up getting lost in a hole that remains to be explored (stop at a shaft).

15 – The hanging pond

06-11-2023



While searching for sinkhole X04, we passed near a pond, almost suspended, which dominates a closed depression by around ten meters...

Which is rather unusual in karst terrain.

16 – The hanging pond



The dike retaining the water.



Back in front of the hanging pond, an examination of the site reveals a dike retaining the water; as well as some sandstone objects (batán, etc.).

The pond is artificial and the site was formerly developed by the Chachapoyas.

17 – Back to Santa Maria



After several years of absence, we return to the Santa Maria site recognized in 2004.

18 – Santa Maria



The Tragadero of Santa Maria was explored in September 2023 by our colleagues (Liz, Julien and Tonio) and we decided to continue its reconnaissance.

For this, we sit under the porch of a cave near the sinkhole.

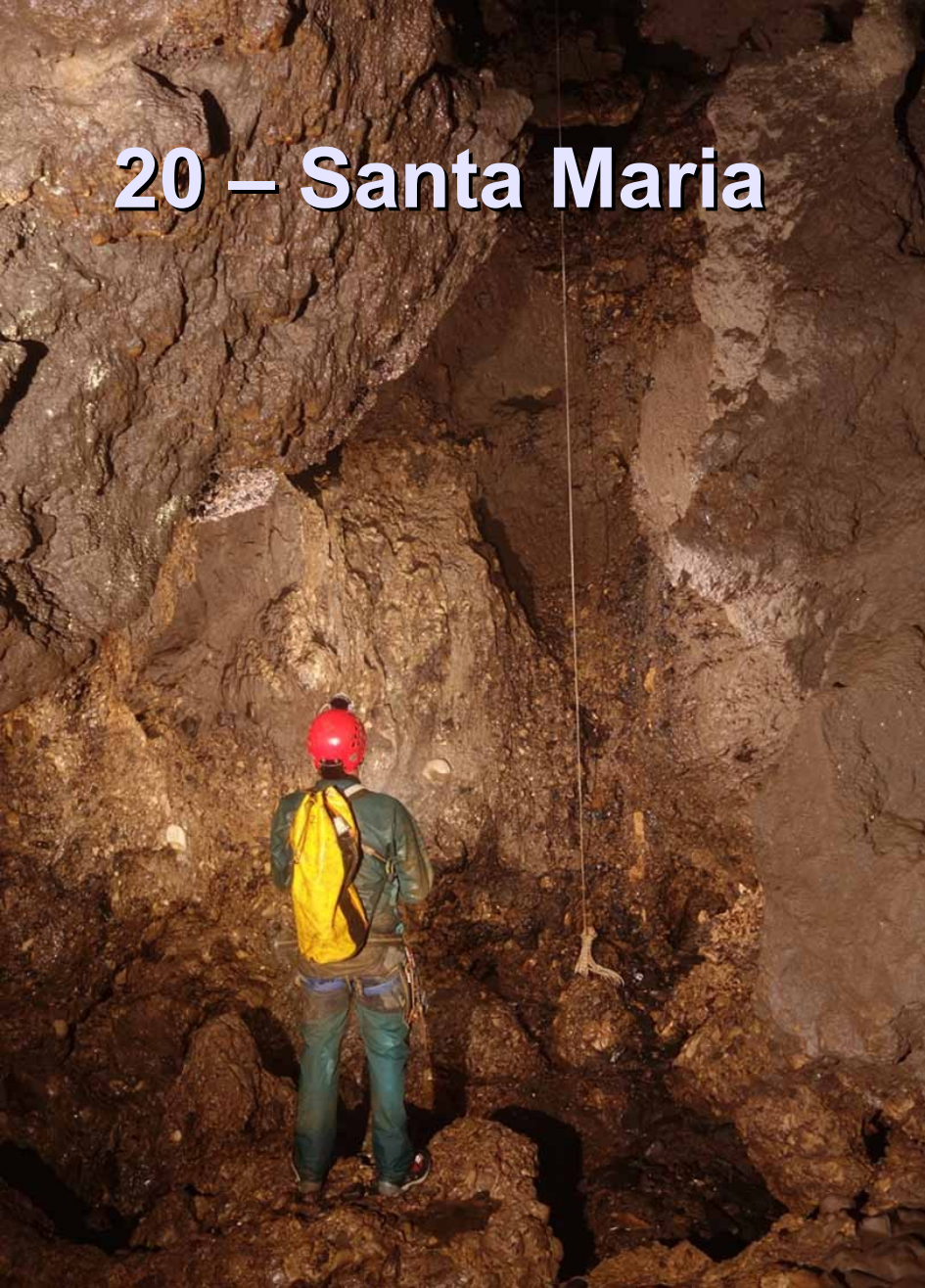
19 – Santa Maria

We are ready to fight...



But there is still
a little water
flowing in the
Tragadero...

20 – Santa Maria



The galleries of the Tragadero are dug in brecciated limestone.



21 – Santa Maria

09-11-2023



The shafts are very watered and we take a day to recover from the descent into the Tragadero. It's the rainy season and we took on the water.

22 – Santa Maria



Too much water, not enough ropes,
bad form...

We are unable to get past the terminus.
However, the equipment is completed
and some ropes are left behind.

We return to Soloco before the
scheduled end of the camp.

23 – Toclón 9

A large, partially cleared sinkhole is pierced with a small hole requiring the use of a rope.



Large quantities of clay are remobilized and disappear in the Tragadero T 9 (Tragadero de las Moscas), which does not bode well.

24 – Toclón 9

Tonio rigs the equipment in the cave,
soon followed by Pierre.



There are many flies
circling around a punctured
“*cuy*” (guinea pig) with a
belly full of maggots.

25 – Discovery of Toclón 10



Bad luck, we don't have enough ropes to complete the exploration of T 9.

We decide to explore the surrounding sinkholes, and we soon find a new sinkhole: the Tragadero of Copiachucla (T 10).

12-11-2023

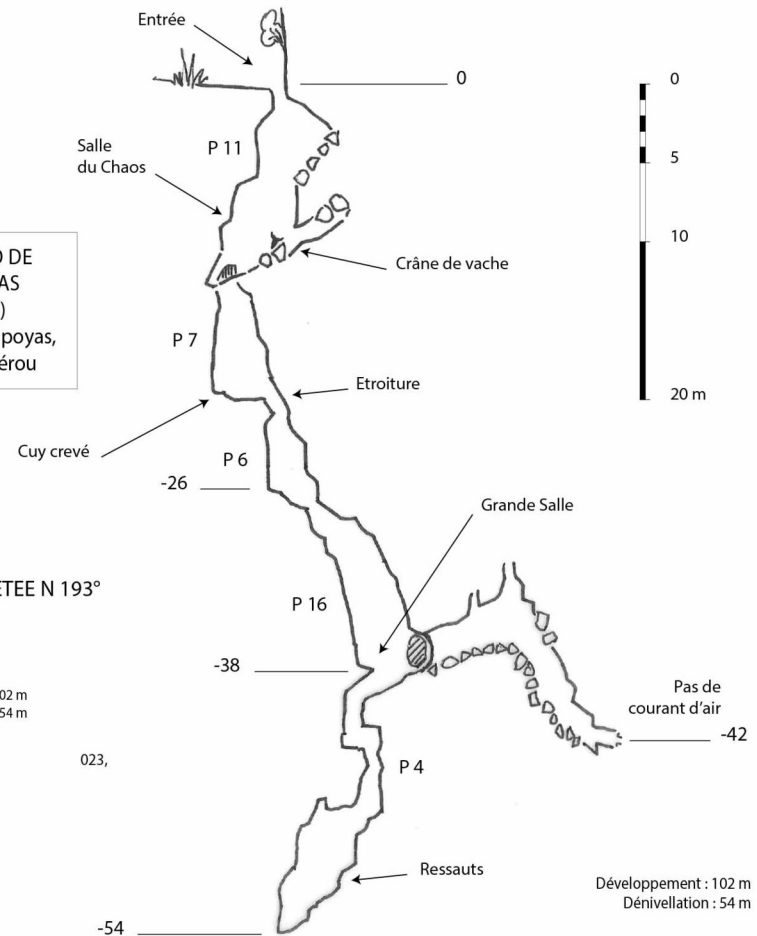
This is a vertical shaft, we will have to come back there too.



26 – Tragadero de las Moscas (T 9)

The next day, the exploration of Tragadero de las Moscas (T 9) ends at level -54.

TRAGADERO DE LAS MOSCAS (Toclon 9)
Soloco, Chachapoyas, Amazonas, Pérou

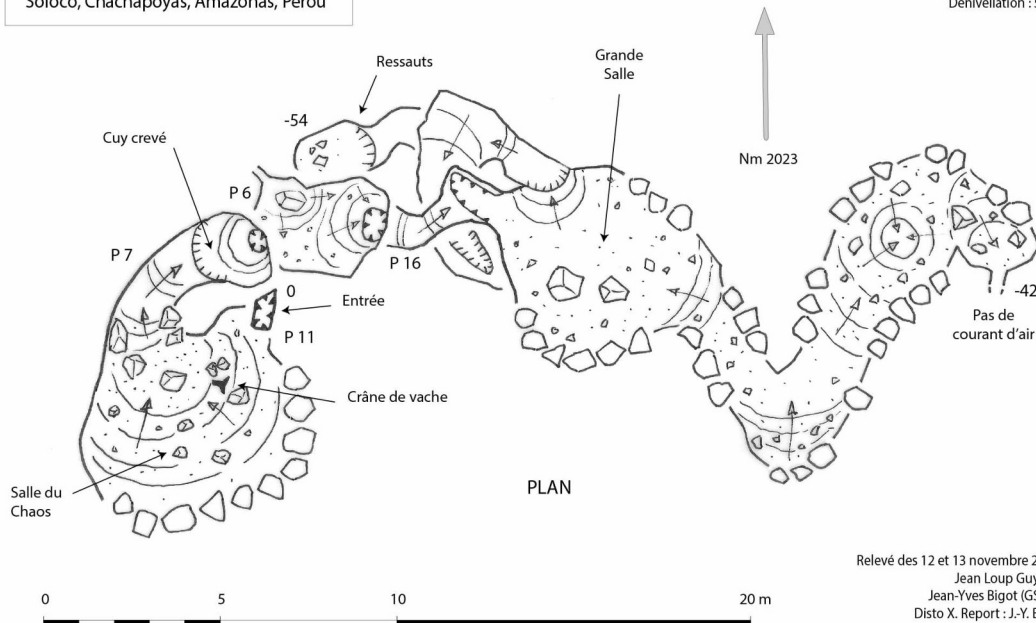


COUPE PROJETEE N 193°

Développement : 102 m
Dénivellation : 54 m

Développement : 102 m
Dénivellation : 54 m

TRAGADERO DE LAS MOSCAS (Toclon 9)
Soloco, Chachapoyas, Amazonas, Pérou



PLAN

Relevé des 12 et 13 novembre 2023,
Jean Loup Guyot &
Jean-Yves Bigot (GSBM)
Disto X. Report : J.-Y. Bigot

The bottom of this Tragadero is blocked, and there is no continuation.

We decide to explore the T 10 shaft recognized the day before.

27 – Tragadero de Copiachuclla (T 10)

The Tragadero is overall very vertical...



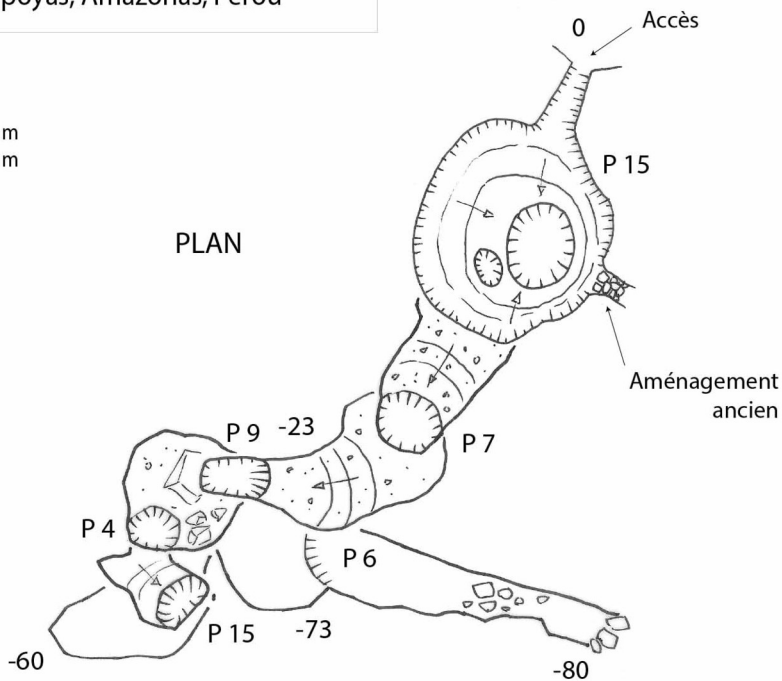
The shafts follow one another, but end at level -80.

28 – Tragadero de Copiachucla (T 10)

TRAGADERO DE COPIACHUCLLA (Toclon 10)
Soloco, Chachapoyas, Amazonas, Pérou

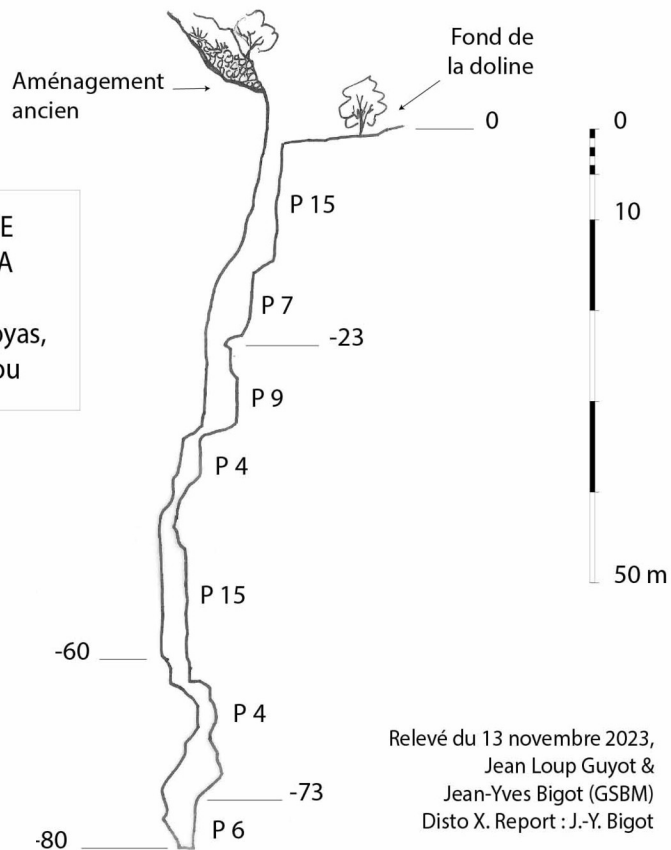
Développement : 102 m
Dénivellation : 80 m

PLAN



Relevé du 13 novembre 2023,
Jean Loup Guyot &
Jean-Yves Bigot (GSBM)
Disto X. Report : J.-Y. Bigot

TRAGADERO DE
COPIACHUCLLA
(Toclon 10)
Soloco, Chachapoyas,
Amazonas, Pérou

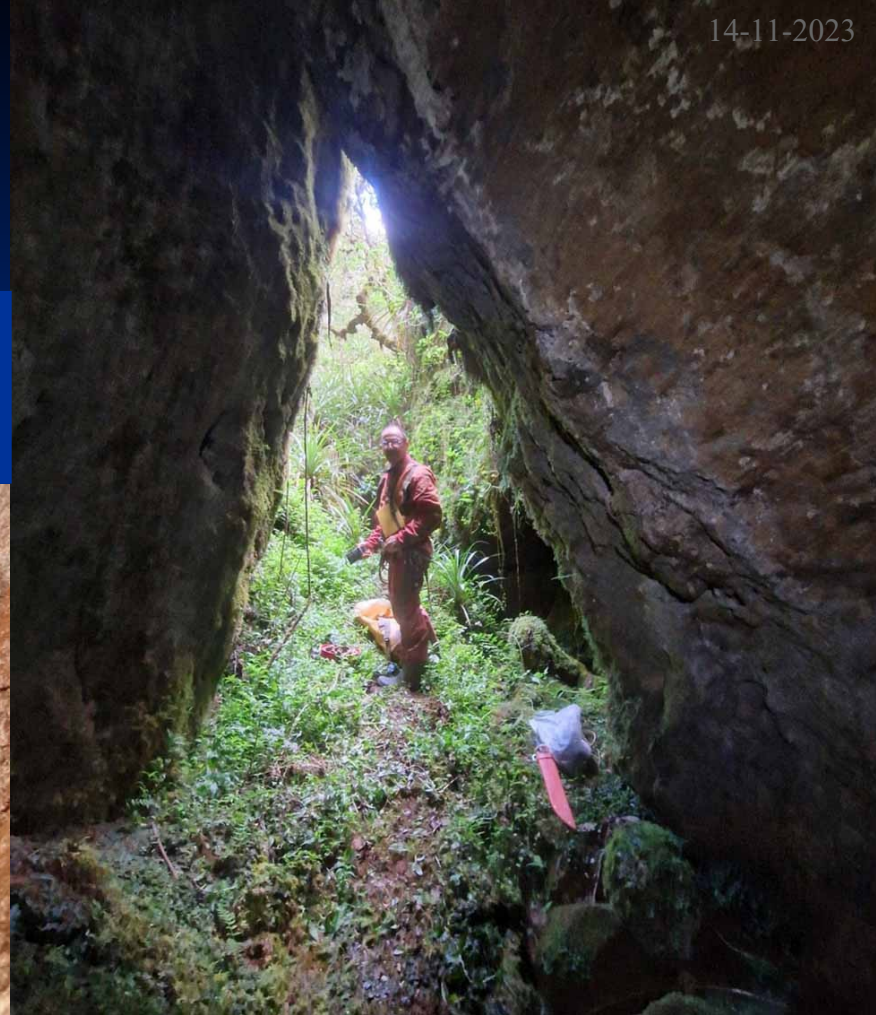
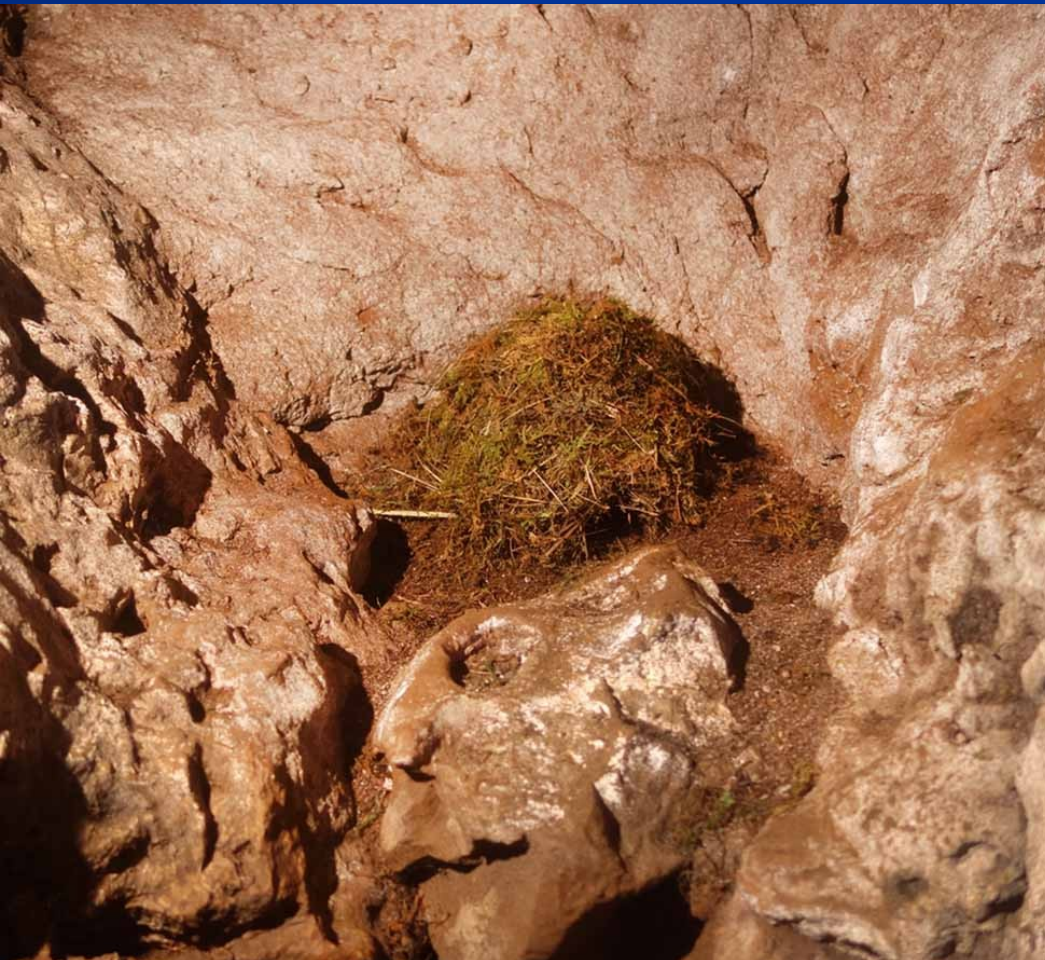


Relevé du 13 novembre 2023,
Jean Loup Guyot &
Jean-Yves Bigot (GSBM)
Disto X. Report : J.-Y. Bigot

Survey of the Tragadero
de Copiachucla (or
Toclón 10).

29 – Toclón 11

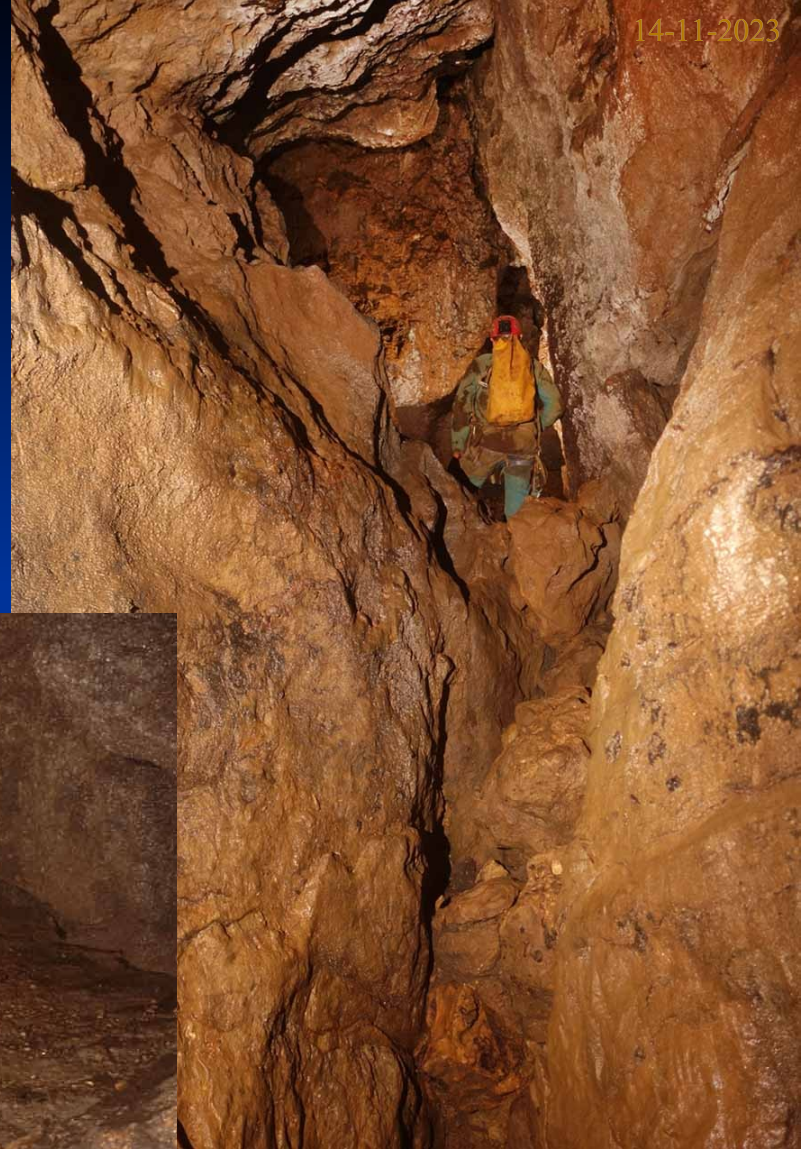
The Toclón 11 sinkhole (Tragadero de los Rellenos negros) lies very close to the impermeable sandstone slope.



Safe from predators, life is peaceful for rodents who have built a cozy moss nest.

30 – Toclón 11

The sinkhole (T 11) contains black fillings reminiscent of the acidic soils covering the sandstone slopes.



In the Black Room, the adventure could have ended there, with the fillings...

31 – Toclón 11

The black fillings, trapped during a rainy episode (flooding), contain ceramic shards.



The deposit of these fillings probably dates from the historic period of the Chachapoyas.

Thanks to a soutirage, we still overcome the obstacle.

32 – Toclón 11

14-11-2023



But at -46, a new obstacle puts an end to the adventure of the Tragadero de los Rellenos negros (T 11).

At the bottom, a dark fill is capped by a lighter one.

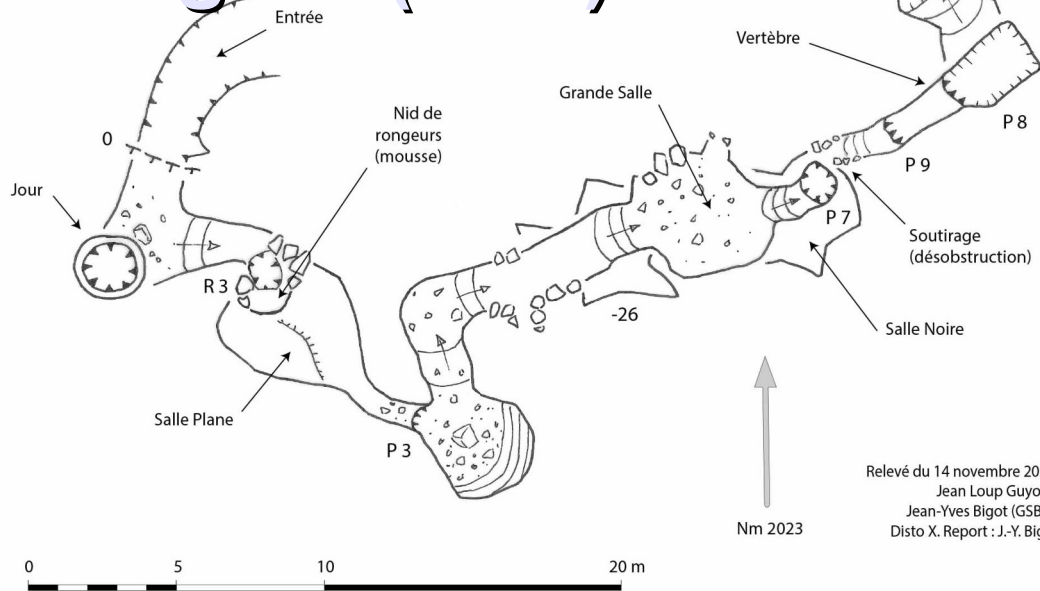
The black fillings are therefore relatively old and could correspond to the clearing of the sandstone slopes (erosion) by the first Chachapoya settlers.

TRAGADERO DE LOS RELLENOS NEGROS (Toclon 11)

Solotví, Cerro Chapoyas, Ambaró, Pinar del Río

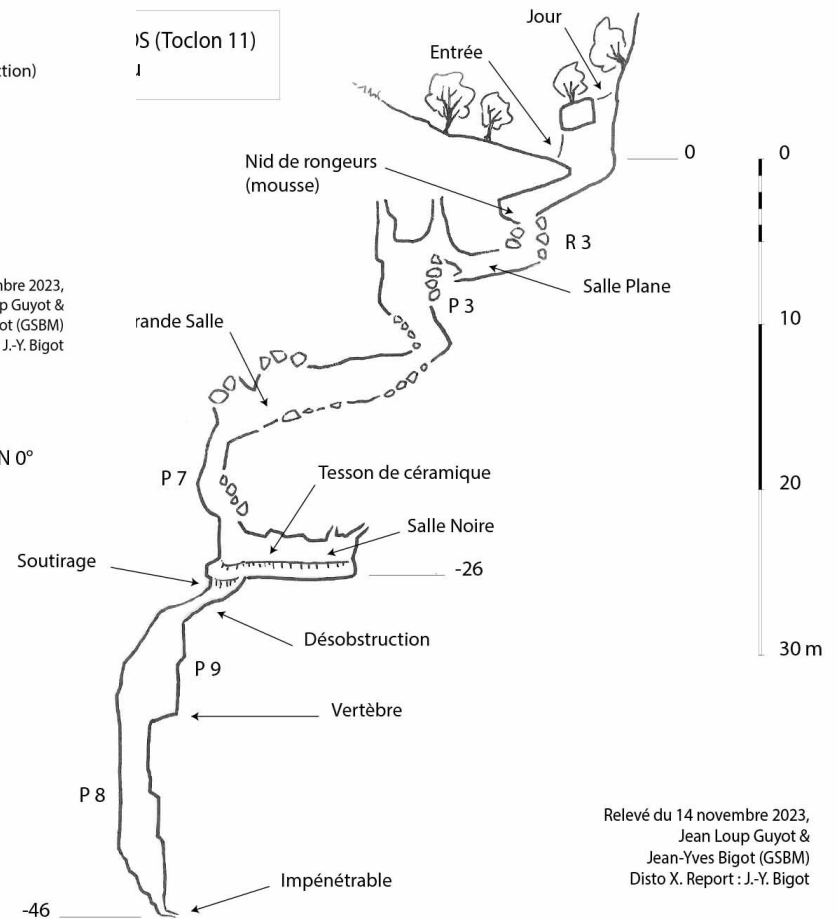
33 – Rellenos negros (T 11)

Développement : 87 m
Dénivellation : 46 m



Relevé du 14 novembre 2023,
Jean Loup Guyot &
Jean-Yves Bigot (GSBM)
Disto X. Report : J.-Y. Bigot

COUPE PROJETEE N 0°



Relevé du 14 novembre 2023,
Jean Loup Guyot &
Jean-Yves Bigot (GSBM)
Disto X. Report : J.-Y. Bigot

Survey of the
Tragadero de los
Rellenos negros (T 11).

34 – In search of the “Cathedral”

15-11-2023



“Cathedral” is the word that comes up in the description of a huge sinkhole engulfing a river located in the mountains known as “Cerro Tragadero”.

The word *cathedral* describes the size of the entrance, comparable to a church or cathedral.

But for the moment, no one has been there and it’s more a myth than a reality...

Today is one of the worst days of our stay: pouring rain accompanies us on the difficult trails of the puna.

35 – In search of the “Cathedral”

Our guide, Ulices from Mito, has only a vague memory of the situation of the cavity he visited when he was 15 years old...

Our GPS clearly noted the “drift” of the route. According to our calculations, the “Cathedral” would be approximately 10 km away as the crow flies...



It's mission impossible and the objective is abandoned.

We set up camp not far from the Río Tilacancha catchment for the night and will retrace our steps tomorrow.

36 – Back to Soloco



16-11-2023

We recognized terrain that is not karst (sandstone), but relatively wild on the borders of Soloco, Levanto and Chachapoyas.

A sector fiercely contested by the settlers of these localities where cattle thefts are legion.



37 – Back to Soloco



We are welcomed in Mito by the wife of Ulices who prepares us a good coffee.

38 – At the sources of Shocol River

A new track
has been
opened
between
Mendoza and
La Jalca,
it will allow
us to go up
the course of
the Shocol
River.



Shocol River, Mendoza, Amazonas.

If we have not
found the
“Cathedral”, a
sinkhole feeding
the source of the
Shocol River,
we decide to go
back up it.



39 – At the sources of Shocol River



The weather is rainy.

At Nueva Union, we ask the settlers, newcomers from La Jalca, if the trail is good.

However, the sources of the Shocol River are still quite far from the trail.

It is rather in the village of La Jalca that we will have to look for guides to take us there, but that will be for another time.

40 – Prospecting in the Toclón area



Our mission:
to explore and
research in the
Toclón area.

The Toclón 26 and 27
sinkholes, spotted in
2022, are blocked.

A (unexplored)
Tragadero, Toclón 28,
is discovered.



18-11-2023

41 – Exploration of T 23

We decide to continue prospecting and exploration in the Toclón area.



After recognizing a P15 (Pozo de Chota) indicated by a young farmer, we equip the Toclón 23 Cave which opens at the edge of the recently opened track.

42 – Exploration of T 23



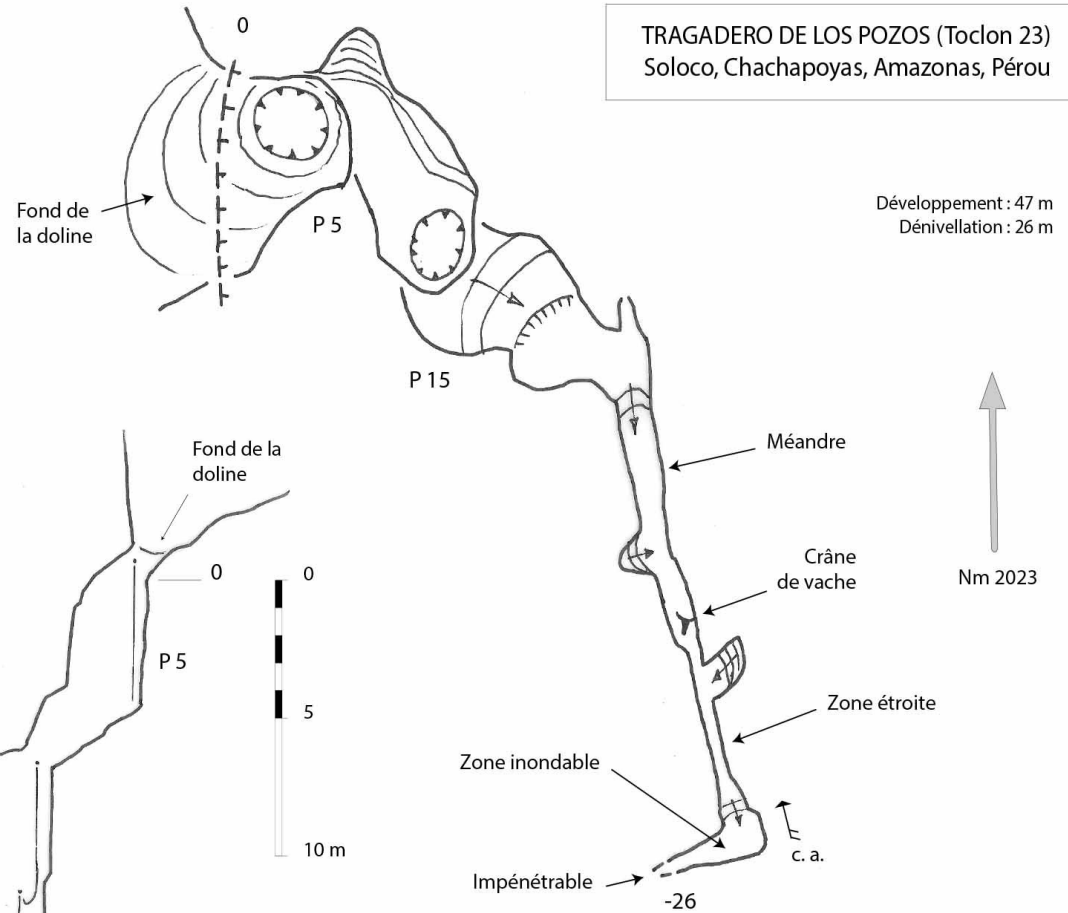
The shafts are beautiful, but the cave ends very quickly at -26 in a narrow area which floods from time to time.

There is an air flow, but we leave the rest to future generations.



43 – Toclón 23

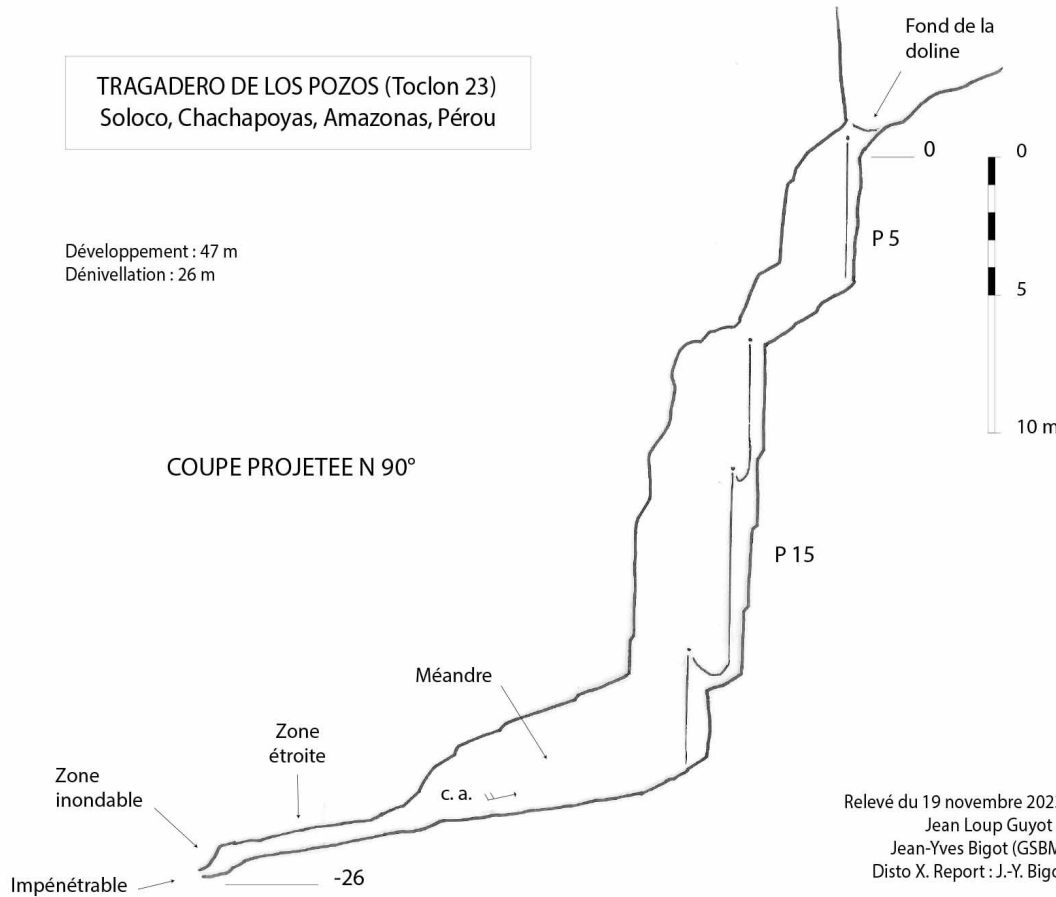
TRAGADERO DE LOS POZOS (Toclon 23)
Soloco, Chachapoyas, Amazonas, Pérou



TRAGADERO DE LOS POZOS (Toclon 23)
Soloco, Chachapoyas, Amazonas, Pérou

Développement : 47 m
Dénivellation : 26 m

COUPE PROJETEE N 90°



Relevé du 19 novembre 2023,
Jean Loup Guyot &
Jean-Yves Bigot (GSBM)
Disto X. Report : J.-Y. Bigot

Survey of the Tragadero
de los Pozos (T 23)

44 – Time of reckoning

It's time to clean up the equipment and settle the scores with Josefa.

19-11-2023



45 – Chachapoyas



The day is busy putting away the equipment to drop off some of it for Luya at Liz's mother's house.

In the evening, we sleep at Chachapoyas. It's a party and we indulge in ice creams, after a week of deprivation.

46 – Change of mission

At Chachapoyas airport, Elisa gets off the plane, while Olivier boards for Lima.



There are 4 of us on a hydrological mission in northern Peru (Amazonas, Loreto and San Martín).

We travel from Chacha to Bagua, where we find an average hotel and a trendy bar.

47 – The Bagua - Saramiriza trail

22-11-2023



It's drought: we see the pebbles in the bed of the Marañón River.

48 – The Bagua - Saramiriza trail



One last mountain
to cross, and we
will see the
Amazonian plain.



49 – The Bagua - Saramiriza trail



The Amazonas - Loreto checkpoint in Nueva Santa Rosa.

22-11-2023

Having left very early, we arrived at the end of the day in Saramiriza on the banks of the Marañón River.



50 – Saramiriza - Borja



Boarding in the rain at the river port of Saramiriza.

The goal is to reach Borja, a village located on the Marañón River at the exit from the rapids called *Pongo de Manseriche*.



51 – Coveted shores



On the banks of the Marañón River, you can see barges equipped with pumps...



52 – The gold of Marañón



This is gold prospector equipment that directly pumps sediment from the river.

Passengers disembark with their provisions on the barge.



53 – Borja



Port of Borja, Loreto.

Nous finissons par atteindre Borja, où nous remettons à notre correspondant de petites bouteilles nécessaires aux prélèvements réguliers des échantillons d'eau.



Gold prospecting barges on the Río Marañón.

54 – A long road



Just after disembarking in Saramiriza,
we take the road towards Bagua: a
very long day.

The next day, we leave for Alto Mayo
(San Martín) stopping in Palestina to
admire Lazaro's new creations.



55 – Soritor



The goal is to recognize the route that leads to Valle Andino (Vista Alegre, Amazonas), where caves have been reported to us for a long time.



We recognize the start of the track which seems quite good, then we find a hotel in Soritor (San Martín).



56 – Valle Andino

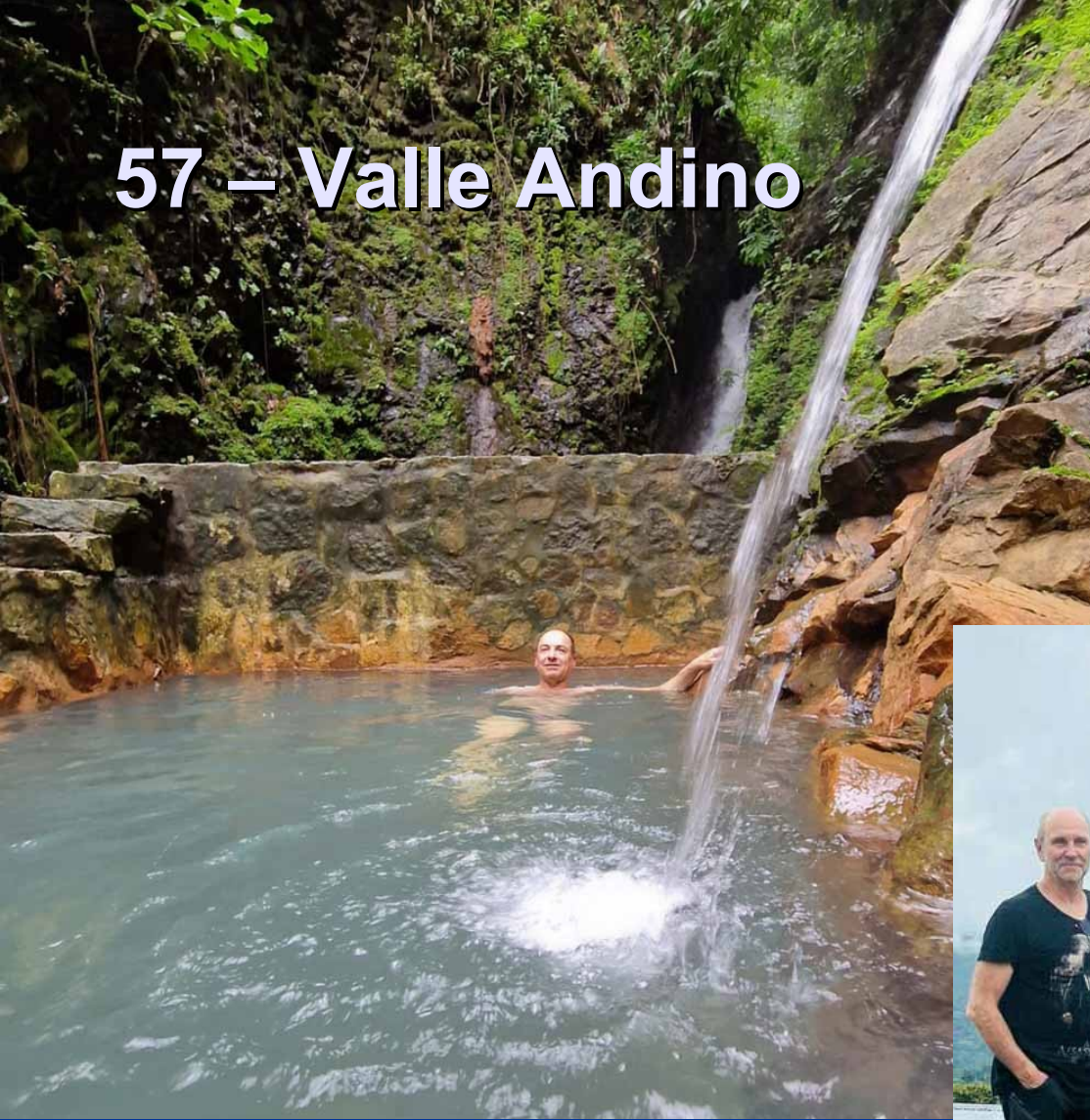
Valle Andino is a site where there are caves that we heard a lot about in Vista Alegre.



To achieve this, we follow the track which goes up the course of the Salas River.



57 – Valle Andino



We will not go further than the sign indicating the caves.

This is a simple reconnaissance: the caves do exist.

We will have to explore them later...

25-11-2023



On the way back, we stop on the track to take the waters at Aguas Calientes.

58 – Tarapoto

25-11-2023



Our ultimate destination is the town of Tarapoto, where we end the day at the “El Mirador” bar.

59 – Chazuta



River port of Chazuta, San Martin.

Jean Loup and Pierre are ill due to poisoning in a *chifa*, a local Chinese restaurant.

Raining cats and dogs, and there are a lot of stones on the road...

For Jean Loup, there was no question of going to Chazuta to collect samples.

Elisa and Jean-Yves take a taxi and go to Chazuta on the banks of the Huallaga River.



60 – Back to Lima

27-11-2023



Return to Lima by Tingo Maria along the Huallaga River, and stop at Huanuco for the night.

The Huallaga River in Tocache, San Martin.

Continuation of the journey through the Andes.



28-11-2023

Valley near Pariamarca, Yanacancha, Pasco.

61 – Back to Lima



Herds of alpacas (*Vicugna pacos*), near Hauroncocha Lake.



Hauroncocha Lake, near Huallay, Pasco.

62 – Farewell

Farewell evening at Clémentine and Jhan Carlo in Lima.

29-11-2023



63 – The end

THE END