



# DANS LES COULISSES D'UN PROJET DE RECHERCHE EN ARCHÉOLOGIE SUBAQUATIQUE AU LAC TITICACA (BOLIVIE, PÉROU)

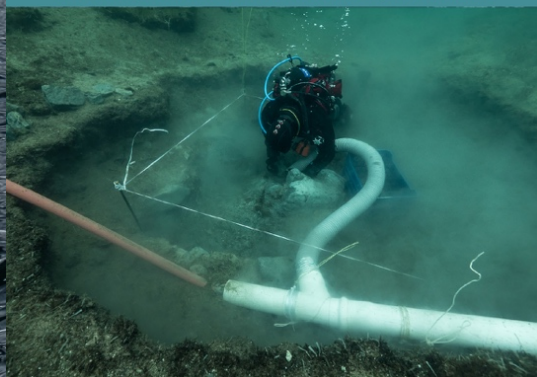
CHRISTOPHE DELAERE (PH.D)

UNIVERSITÉ LIBRE DE BRUXELLES - ULB | 4 DÉCEMBRE 2025



# UNDERWATER AND COASTAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN LATIN AMERICA

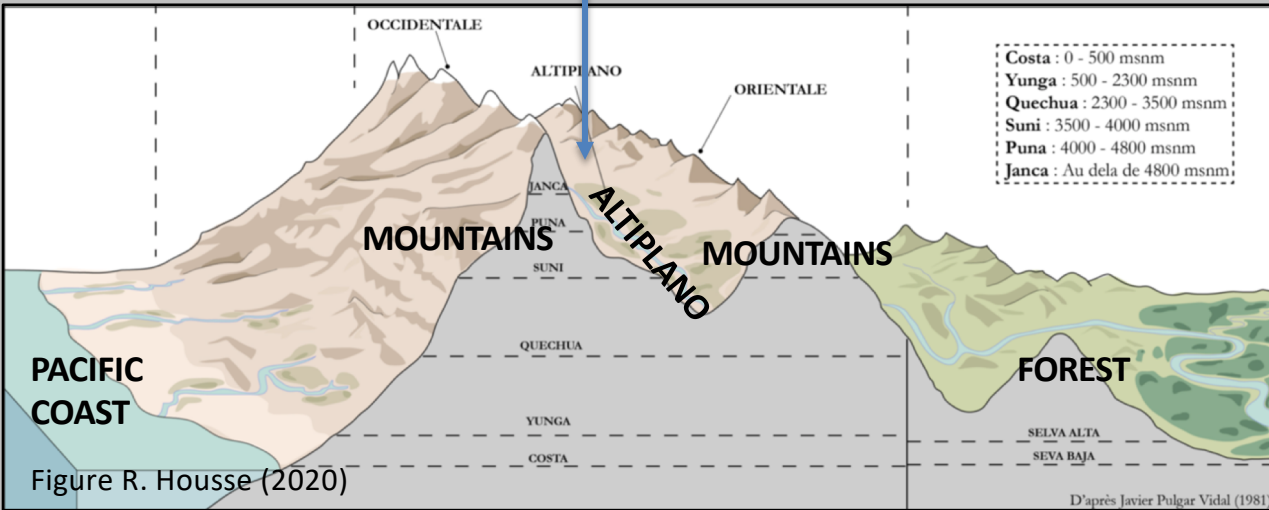
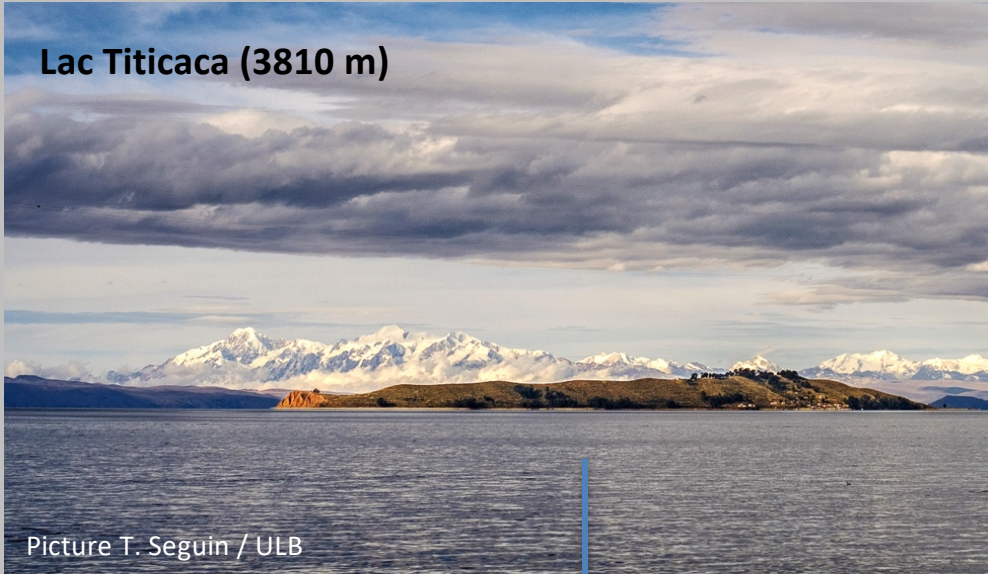
Edited by Dolores Elkin and Christophe Delaere













**INCA (1400-1530 AD)**



Picture C. Delaere (2010)





**TIWANAKU (500-1150 AD)**



Picture C. Delaere (2007)





1954

Chicago Daily Tribune  
Friday, February 4, 1954  
F★ Part 1—Page 5

## CHICAGO DIVER DISCOVERS CITY IN LAKE OF SKY

LA PAZ, Bolivia, Feb. 3 (AP)—A Chicago deep sea diver said today he has discovered the ruins of a submerged city in Lake Titicaca—the world's highest large lake.

William Mardorf, 29, who said he learned diving with the United States marine corps, explored the bottom of the lake mainly in search of fabled Inca gold and other treasures.

So far he has found no gold, but his report on the ruins and stone implements he brought to the surface have excited Bolivian archeologists.

### Down 200 Feet

Mardorf descended as far as 200 feet in the waters of the Sacred lake, as it was called by the Incas. Its waters are frigid since the lake, altho only



15 degrees from the equator, is 12,000 feet above sea level.

The ruins and stone walls of the submerged city were discovered near the mouth of the Escoma river, near what is known as the Enchanted island. Mardorf worked from a launch and wore a diving suit that protected him from the cold. He said he took photographs of the ruins with an underwater camera.

### Built Metropolis

The Island of the Sun, the largest on the lake, is believed to be the cradle of the Inca civilization. However, the submerged city may have been built by the Aymaras, whose civilization had disappeared by the time the Incas emerged an estimated five centuries before the discovery of America.

The Aymaras built a metropolis known as Tiahuanaco on

the east shore of Lake Titicaca. Some of its ruins remain.

Some archeologists guess that the submerged city of Lake Titicaca was originally built on a large island which disappeared below the surface during an earthquake. The ruins were found at a depth of 95 feet, Mardorf said.

The diver said he would continue his exploration of the lake bottom.

1966

# TITICACA, VIAJE AL FONDO

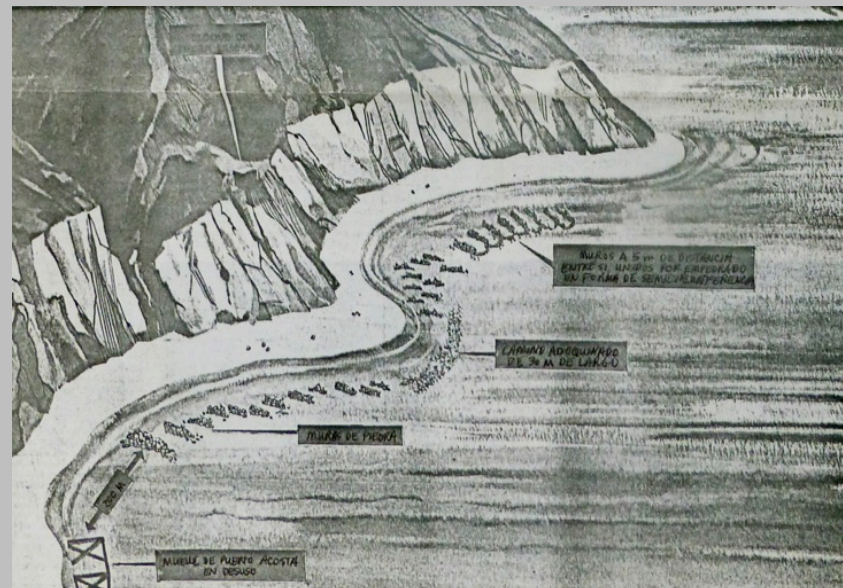


Un experto argentino en las profundidades del lago sagrado. El espectáculo de las ruinas de piedra fue dividido después de una difícil y arriesgada travesía lago adentro.

Plácidez y belleza en la superficie del lago; los técnicos nuestros partieron del batallón Almirante —donde se alistan por gentileza del gobierno boliviano— hacia el misterio y la aventura.

### NOTA I

CLARIN PUBLICA EN EXCLUSIVIDAD EL FASCINANTE RELATO DE RAMON AVELLANEDA SOBRE SU RECIENTE EXPEDICION AL ALTIPLANO. ACOMPAÑADO POR LEON BRUNNER Y LUIS VILLAYERDE, EL AUTOR DE ESTAS PAGINAS DOCUMENTA UNA DE LAS MAS FABULOSAS Y APASIONANTES AVENTURAS SOBRE INVESTIGACIONES SUBMARINAS. TRES EXPERTOS ARGENTINOS REVELAN LA EXISTENCIA DE MISTERIOSAS RUINAS EN PLENO CORAZON DEL LAGO TITICACA. EL DESCUBRIMIENTO CONFIRMARIA LA LEYENDA DE LA CIUDAD SUMERGIDA.





# DEL ENIGMA

SOBRE EL LAGO SAGRADO  
FLOTA EL FANTASMA  
DE LA CIUDAD PERDIDA





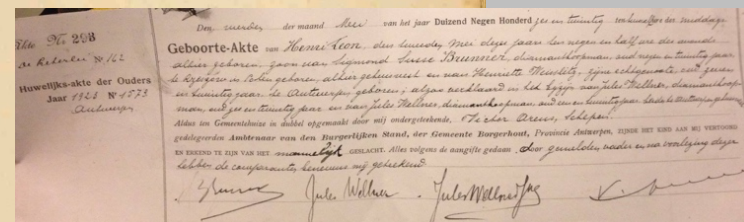


LAC

- Layonist Guyane
- AURAND Jean Pierre
- Delmotte
- Cell
- Roux
- Roux : Austin
- Deloire
- Agostini
- Demus
- Simone
- Garret Yeye
- Bernard Michel
- Tarry
- Mael Thac

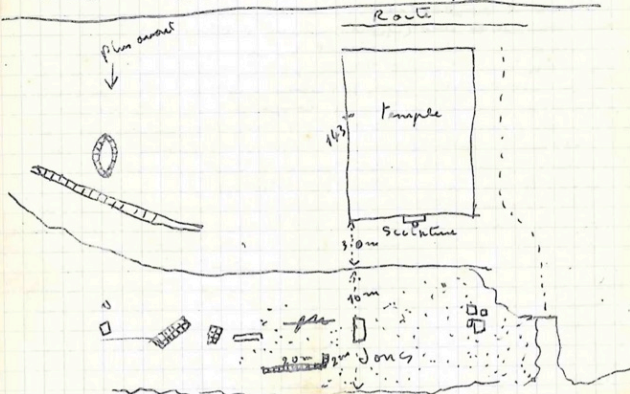
DEM AI  
Jean Michel  
BERT  
FRANCE

ROGER DEMAY  
Ramon AVELLANEDA  
Luis VILLAVERDE (Argentina)  
LEON BRUNNER (Belge)  
FLIP SCHULKE





~~10~~ - 1\$ = 12 pesos / Puis à 2 heures, repartir, les  
indiens sont deux, gentils, persistent à chercher d'or  
de temps en temps. un autre se gâter veut 100 pesos mais on  
ne donne pas ça, il faut aller de un village, de l'autre  
village. c'est dit bien au delà de Tequima.



DEVD: 17

Aparcillage 6.30. avec amorce naturelle,  
 2 ou 3 plongeurs munies anguitas m. M. Llanera de punt avec  
 Ponce pour la Pura, achetés barbas au passage.  
 - Brunes nées au dent; et te à l'Hotel. Vient pour 2 jours.  
 Vent assez léger mais glau d.

Ces jumbelles achetées à La Pura 6x50, sont des oracles!  
 On arrive à la plage sous le bryantisme pour défendre  
 La langue partie en amure pour explorer à un vrai de  
 bloc, cables mais reflexion faite c'est tout naturel.

Mais m'embarque avec Yelgi et moi au point d'arrivée  
 les uns en portant des éléments d'équipement, je suis  
 tous en et porte sac de plume et lunette. 3 plons  
 plus vent 3 heures. de la cord à 4 h. un FLIP Schulte  
 a commandé une bougie que nous avons vu de la  
 rivère de Sud pour passer la nuit (l'hôte Edgerton)  
 avec Edy. et photographier de l'eau de soleil.

A 5.30. pas de bougie, notre ponton va à la  
 place en face, insérée. J'ai chargé 2 bo  
 de branchettes seches, on ai fait charger ma  
 - N's ont ebes de ponton eux. 1 du nos 2 u  
 petite pèche de petit casilou à Pt en a  
 comprenant pour machinerie et canots,  
 pèche est bordée de jets, stable pour é  
 de paumes de tina puis, bouffes bleues seches  
 ours pour dormir. On laisse. Le ponton b  
 ces jours. Nos entous aux des Provis. D'une a  
 d'alors par la plage. A la nuit nous  
 un bon feu, j'ai allumé avec un petit voi  
 tant posés de trucs d'alors. La bouffe  
 puis le persimmon. Si un vent bizarre qu  
 un le ponton, Yelgi regle, cela, cette un



« carnet de fouilles » de la mission COUSTEAU au lac Titicaca, F. Dumas, 1968



Informe Misión Costeau.

000016

La Paz 28 de octubre de 1968

Señor

Prof. Carlos Ponce Sanginés

DIRECTOR DEL "CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES ARQUEOLÓGICAS EN TIICACACA" **Nº 131**

Presente.-

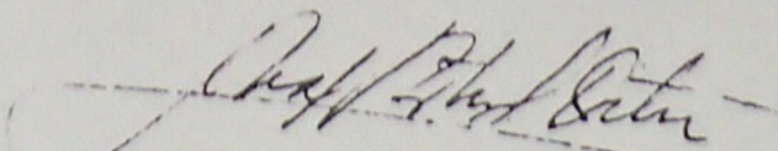
De mi consideración:

El objeto de la presente es el de informar a su autoridad de los resultados alcanzados después de supervisar los trabajos de la Misión COSTEAU DE FRANCIA, que según lo entendido, debe realizar trabajos de investigación "especialmente de la flora y fauna acuática existente en el lago Titicaca". El mencionado trabajo de supervigilancia y representación del Ministerio de Cultura los realicé del 19 al 26 de octubre del año en curso, habiendo sido mi campo de trabajo el lago Titicaca, comprendiendo como base la población de Copacabana y como extensión máxima, la zona norte del lago con Puerto Acosta.

Fundamentalmente el objeto de mi presencia junto a la citada Misión COSTEAU, obedece al cumplimiento de instrucciones superiores de su despacho y a la Resolución Ministerial Núm. 163, a la cual se deberá ajustar la misión arriba notrada.

Pasaré a detallar mi informe diario de trabajo:

1968



MAX PORTUGAL ORTIZ  
D. LEGADO DEL MINISTERIO DE CULTURA













KHOA REEF (1977 / 1988-1992 / 2013)









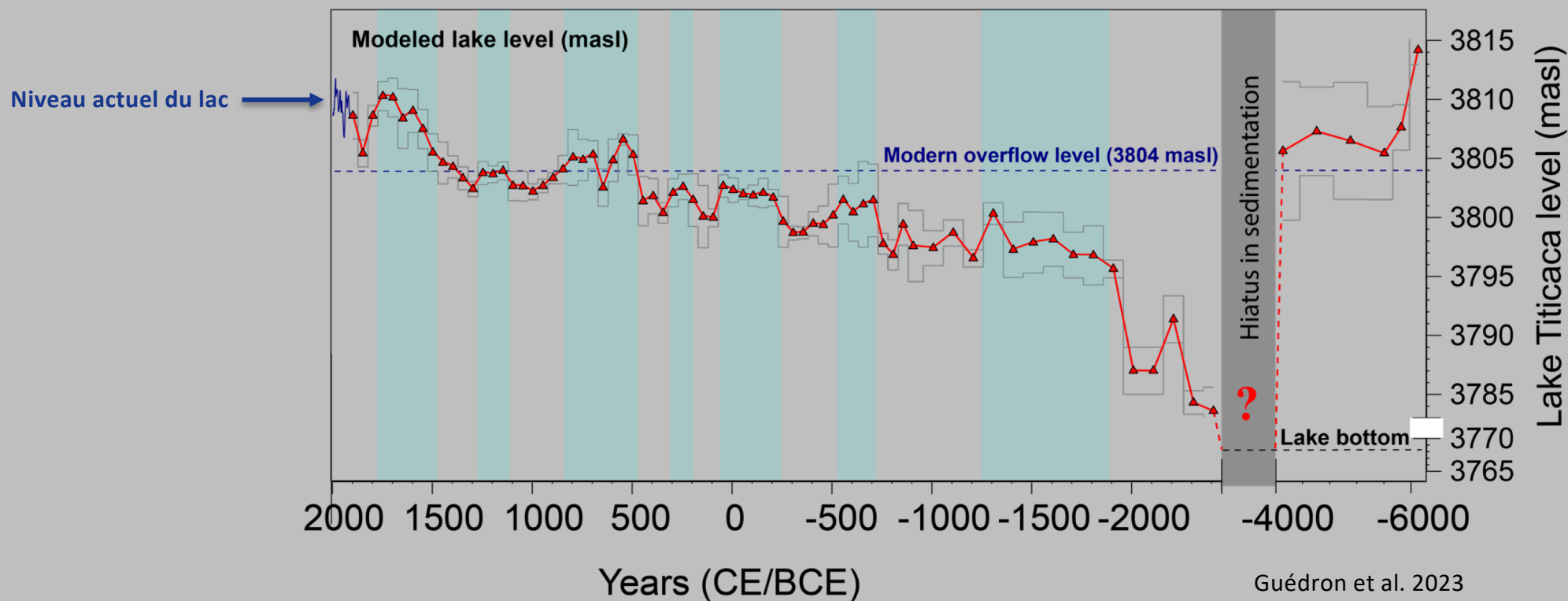


Plate XVII. Fig. 6, a 1927 photograph taken on the Renis River, Puno, documenting the feasibility of water transport of heavy loads. Photograph courtesy of Manuel Chávez Ballón.



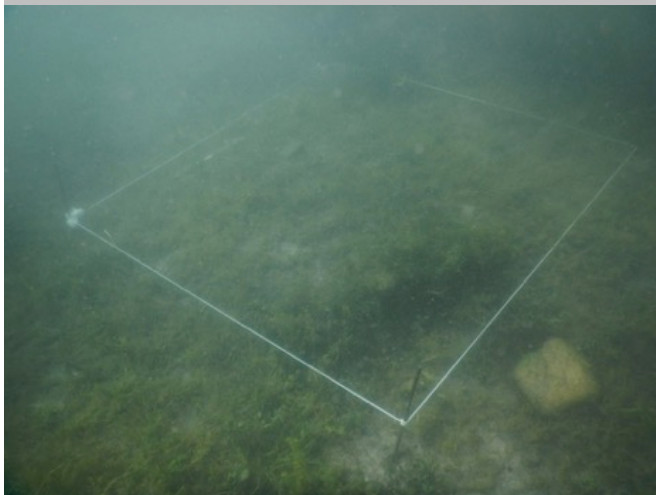


La question des fluctuations du lac est un élément clé pour la compréhension du patrimoine culturel du bassin lacustre : les sites côtiers préhispaniques sont aujourd'hui sous l'eau.

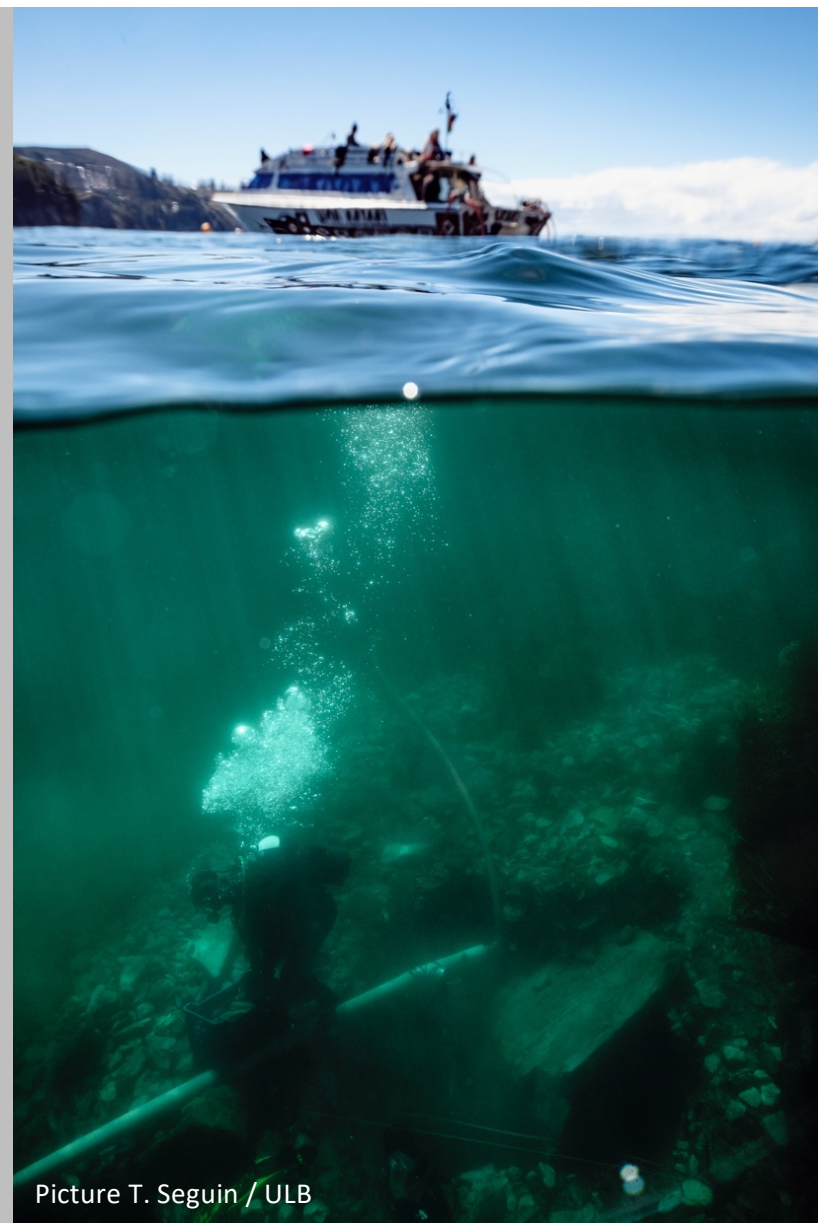
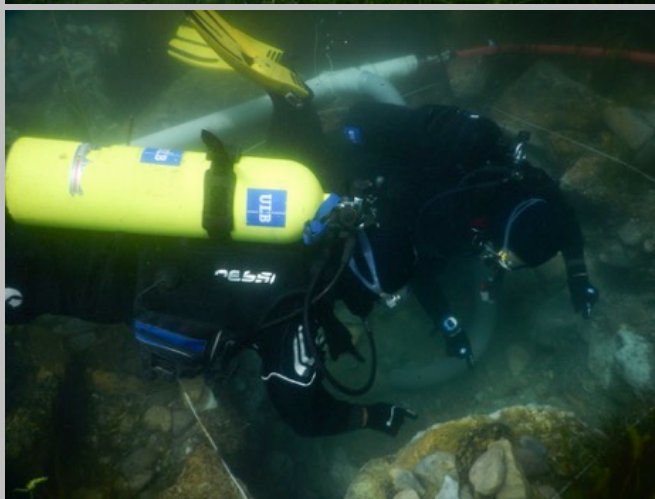




Il est donc également nécessaire d'inventorier les sites archéologiques submergés par le biais de la plongée archéologique.



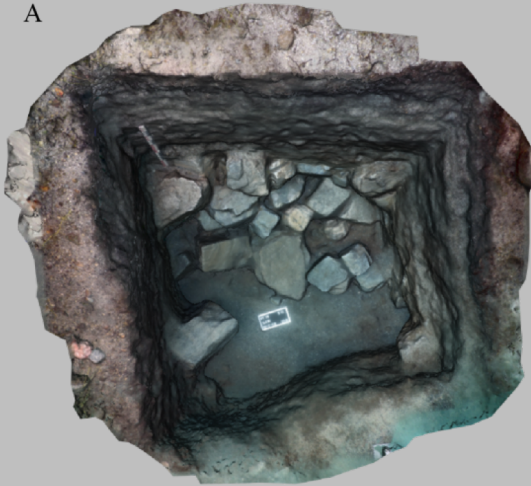
Picture T. Seguin / ULB



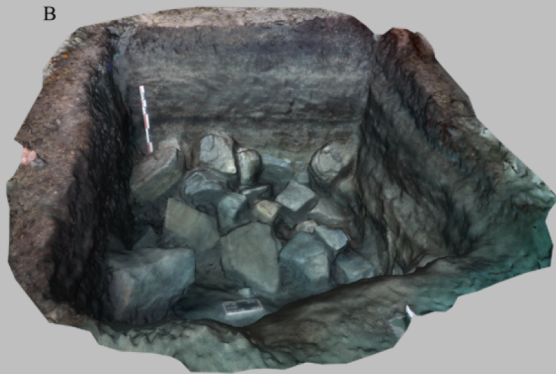
Picture T. Seguin / ULB



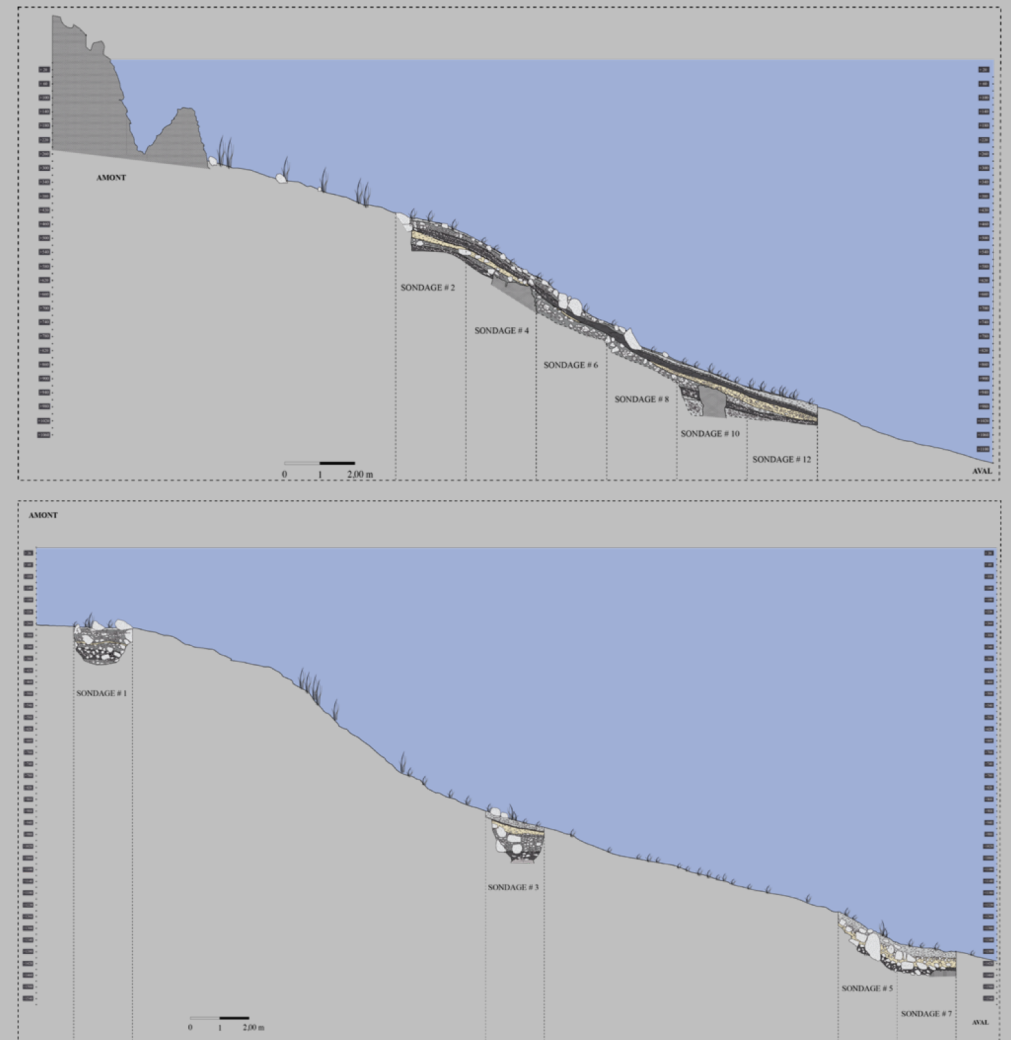
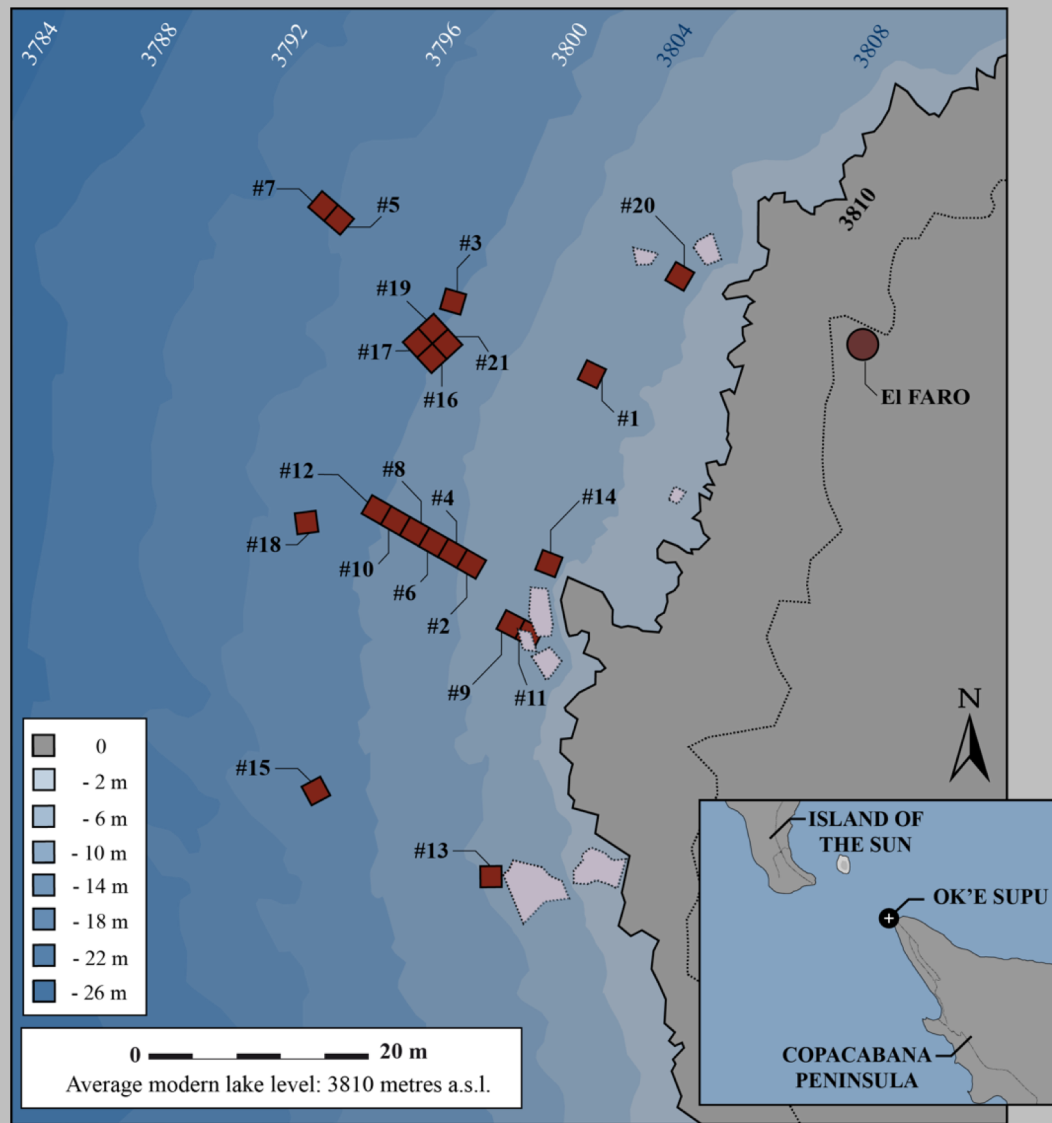
A



B











Exemple de matériel  
archéologique découvert  
sous l'eau du côté  
bolivien du lac (Projet  
Titicaca 2012-2022).







Pictures T. Seguin / ULB



Entre 1954 y 2012

PEROU

BOLIVIE



0 50 Km





De 2012 à 2022

PEROU

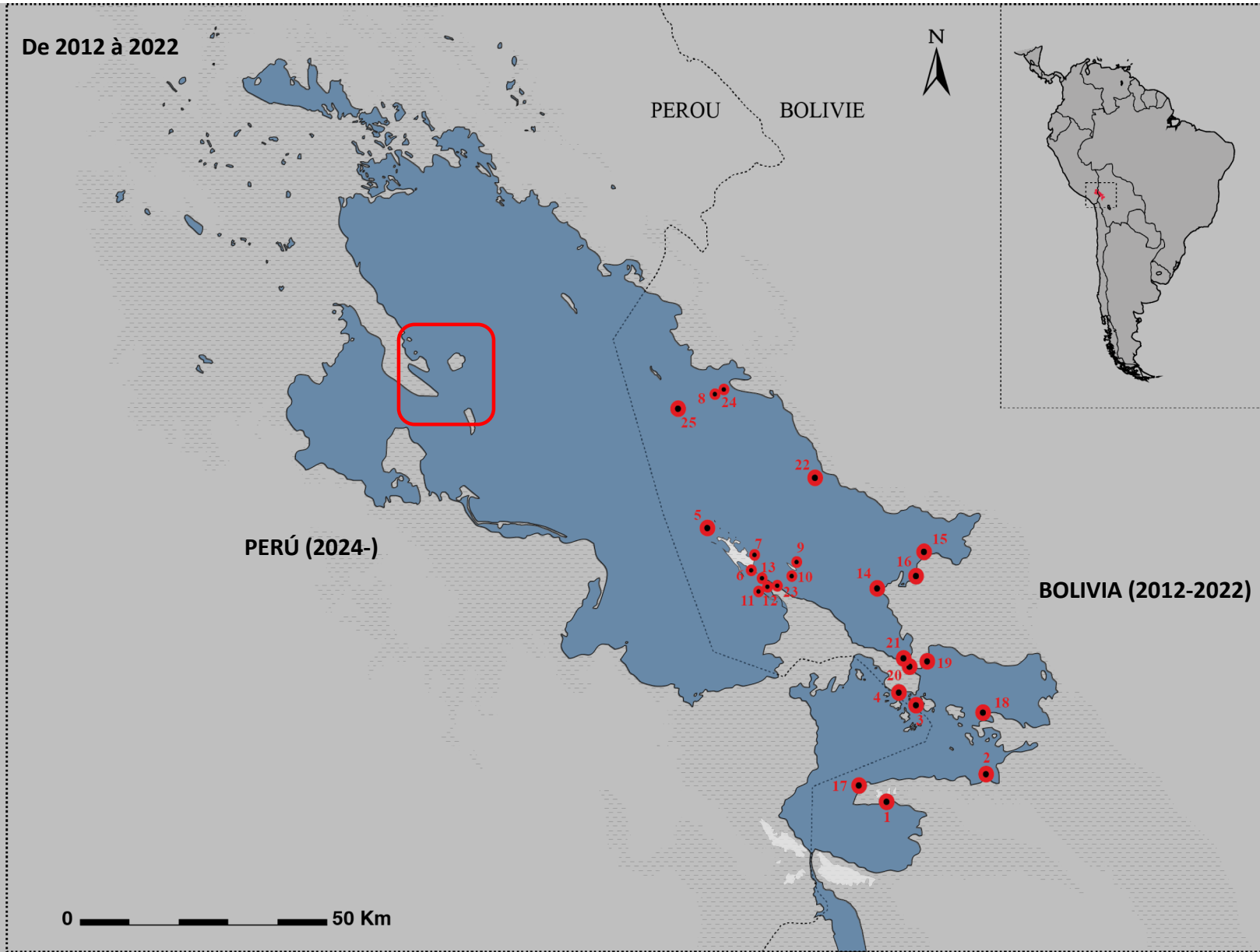
BOLIVIE



PERÚ (2024-)

BOLIVIA (2012-2022)

0 50 Km





## Planet Solar II (PSII)





1% = shipwreck



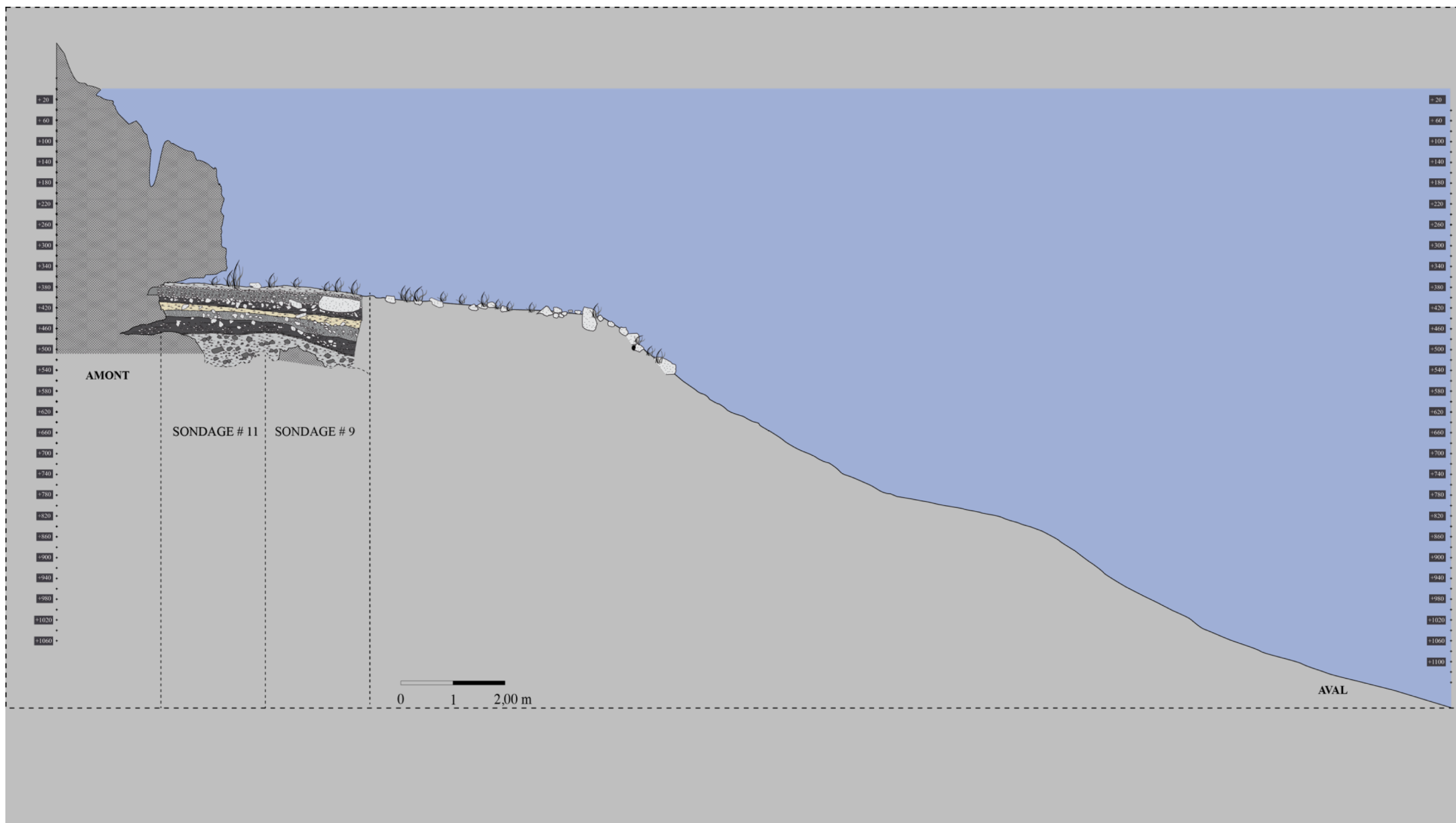
9% = Offerings



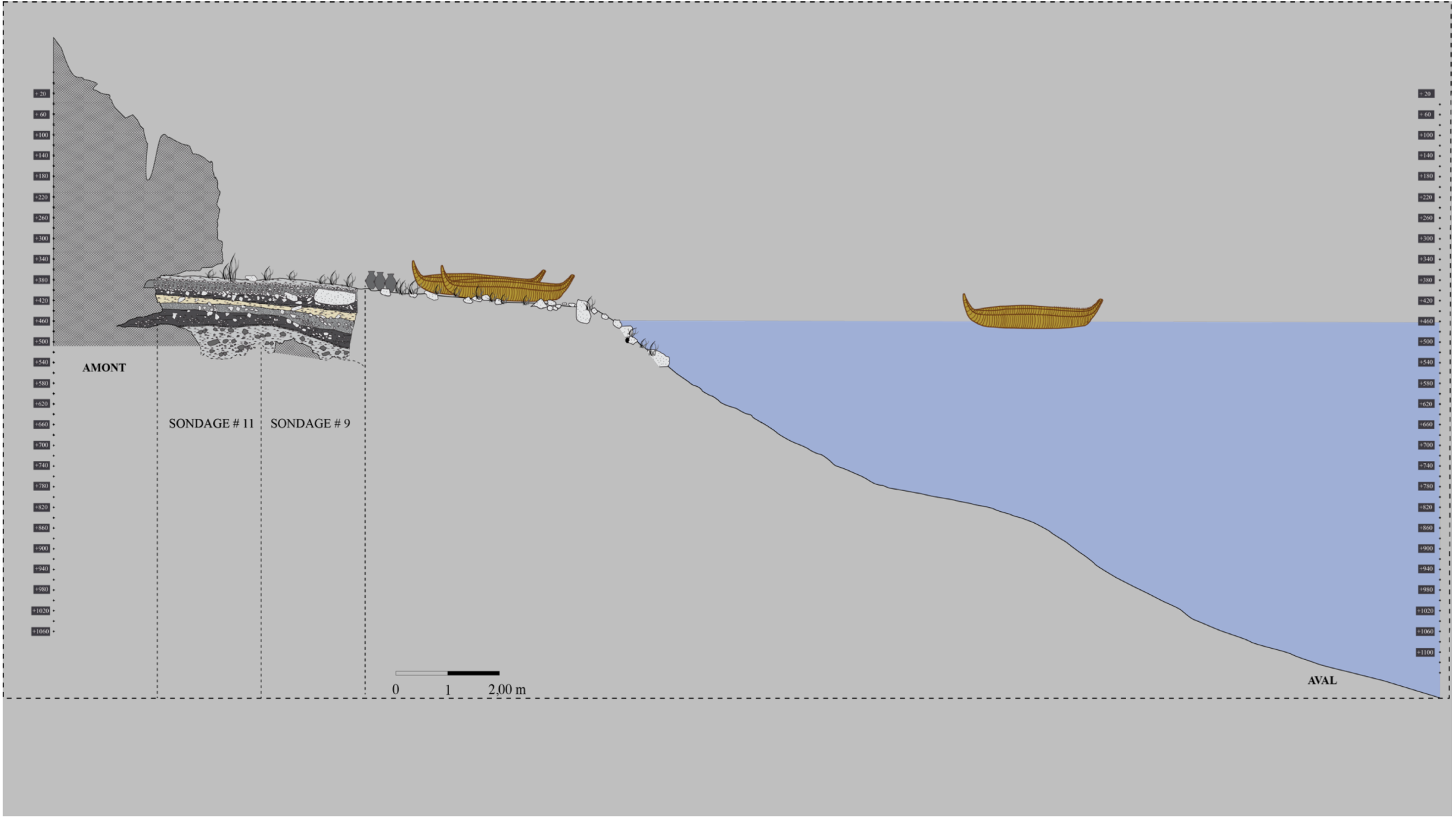
90% = inundated cultural landscapes











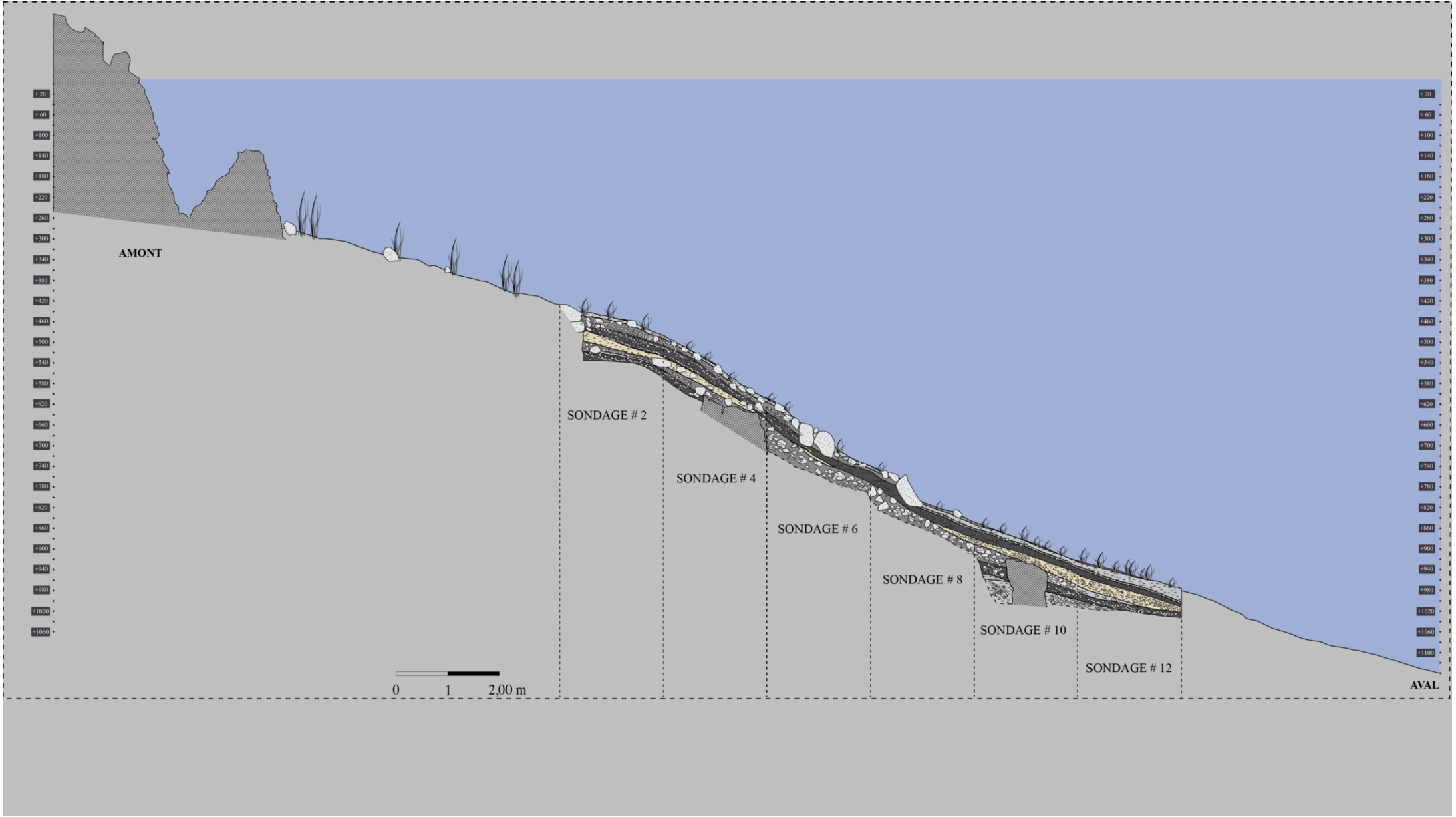


Paleo-soil (no water) at a depth of 6 metres → fireplace

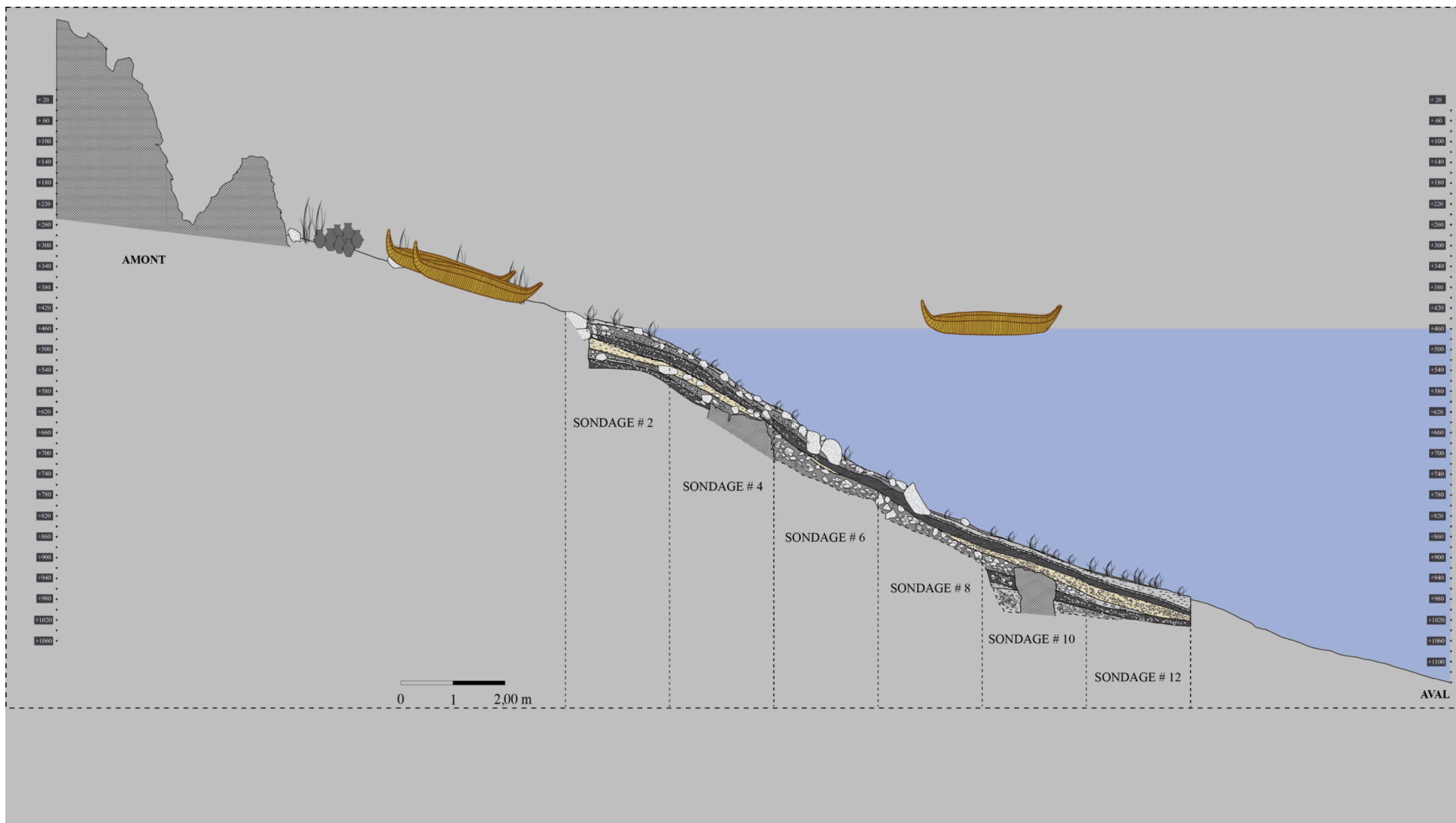


Picture T. Seguin / ULB

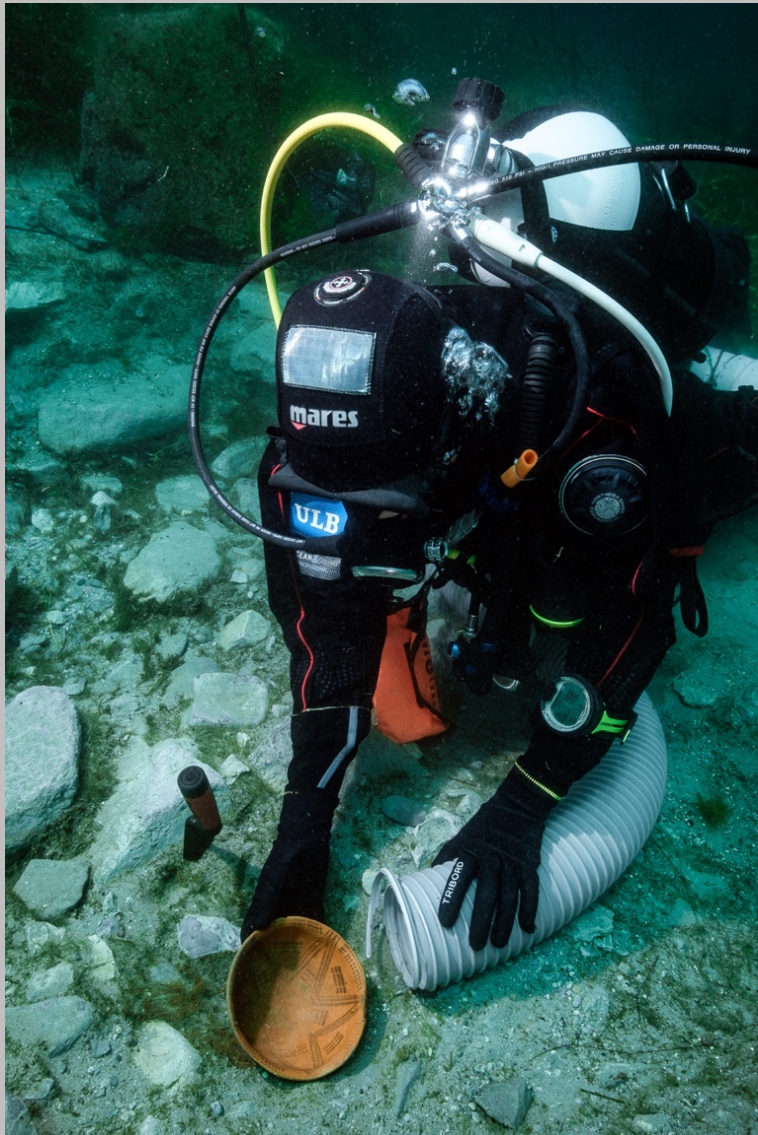












Pictures T. Seguin / ULB

Picture  
C. Delaere 2022

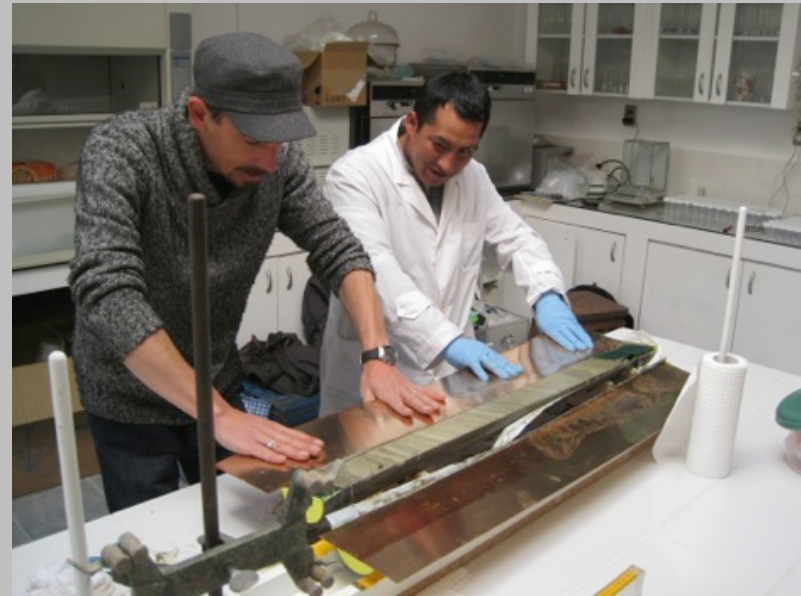
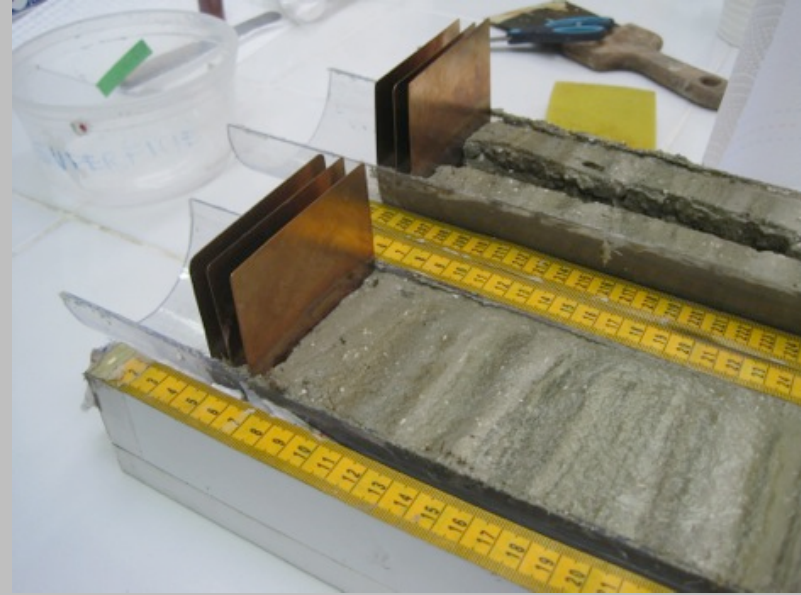


1180-1125 AD  
(883±21 BP)

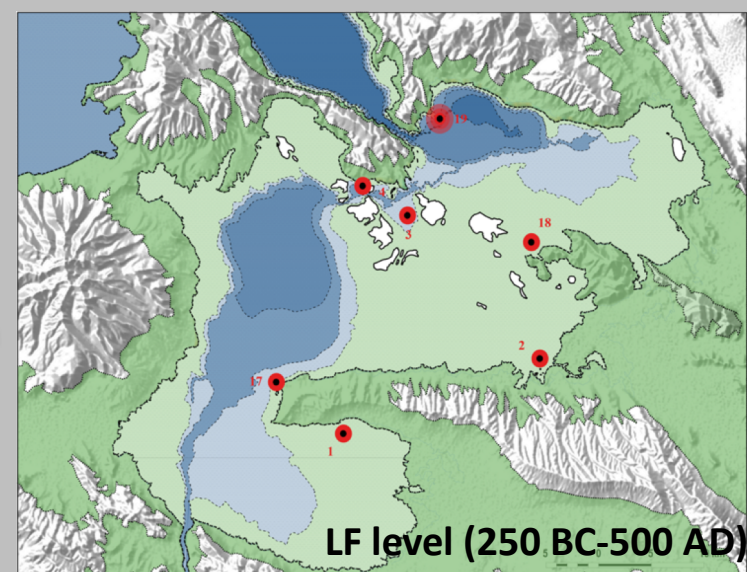
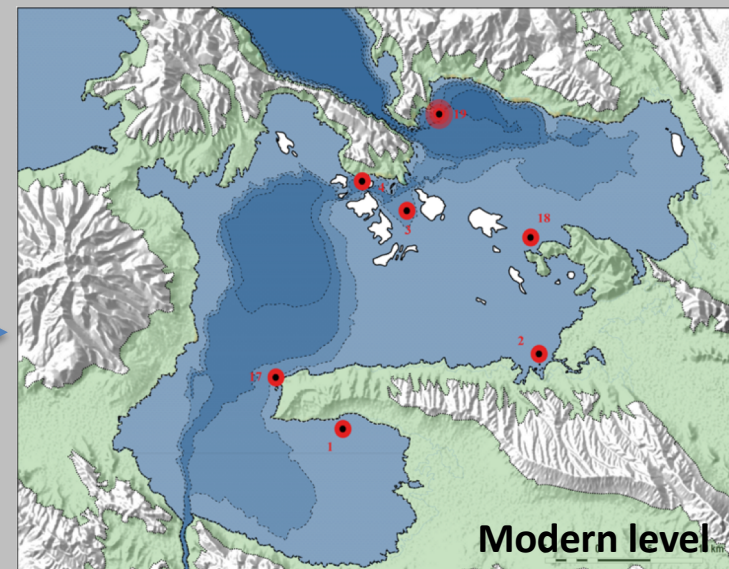
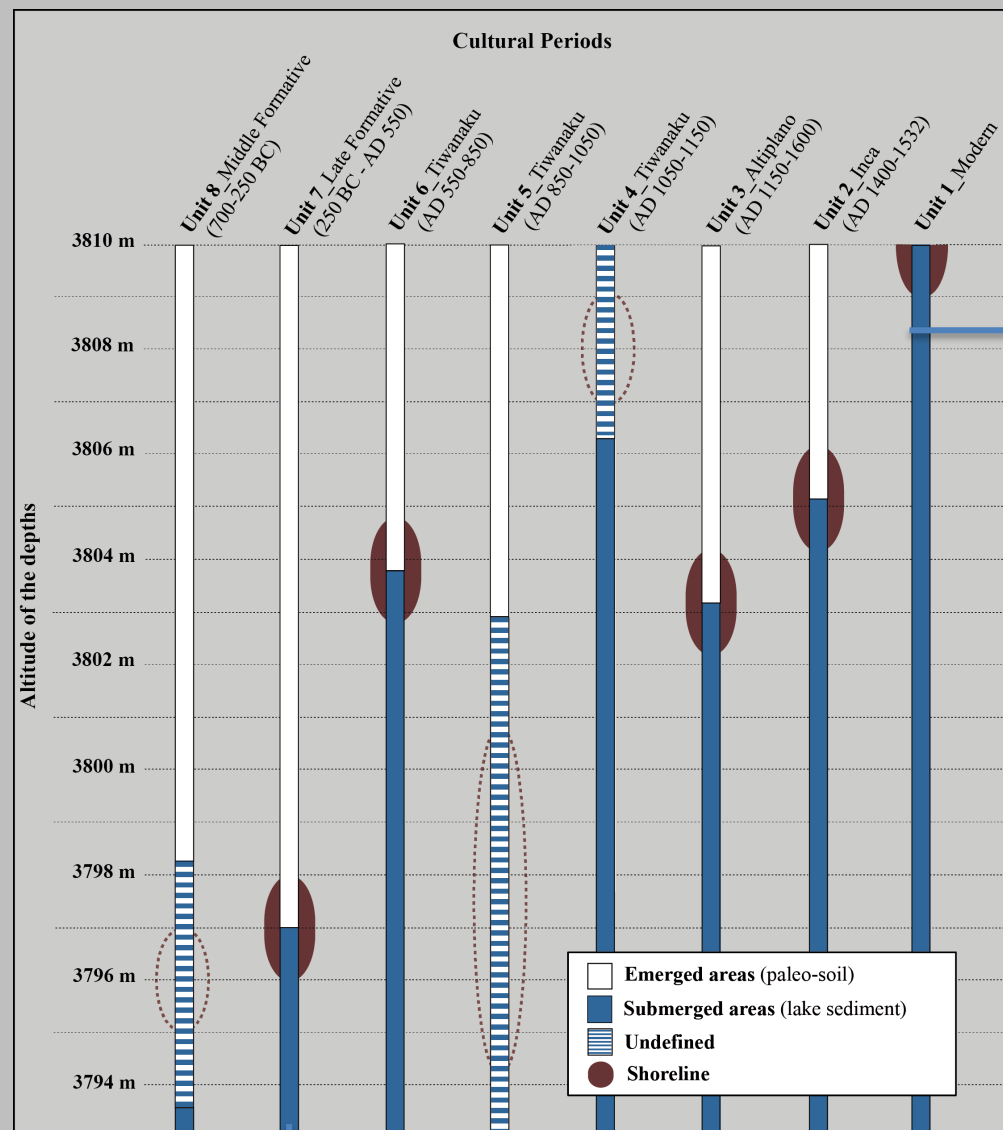














300-500 AD



500-1150 AD



1400-1532 AD

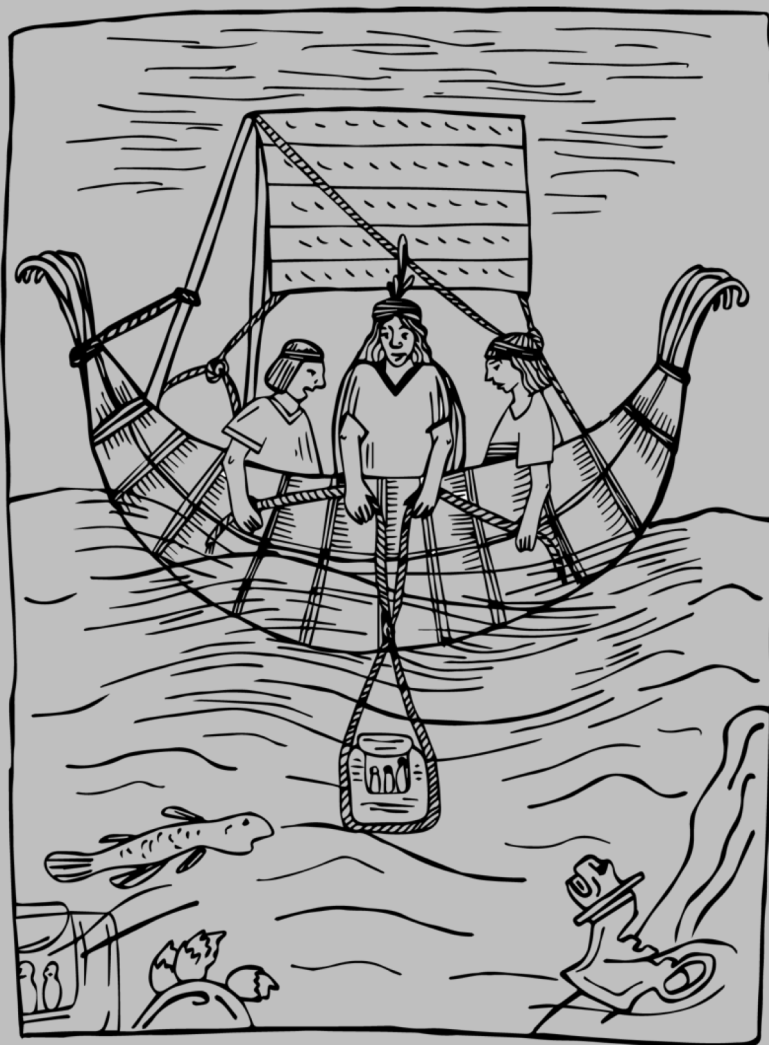


1532-1950 AD



Pictures T. Seguin / ULB



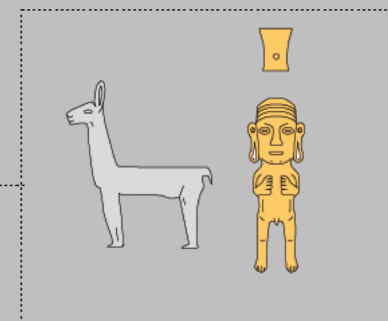


*Margot*

© Margot / TSVP T. Marchand & P. Eeckhout



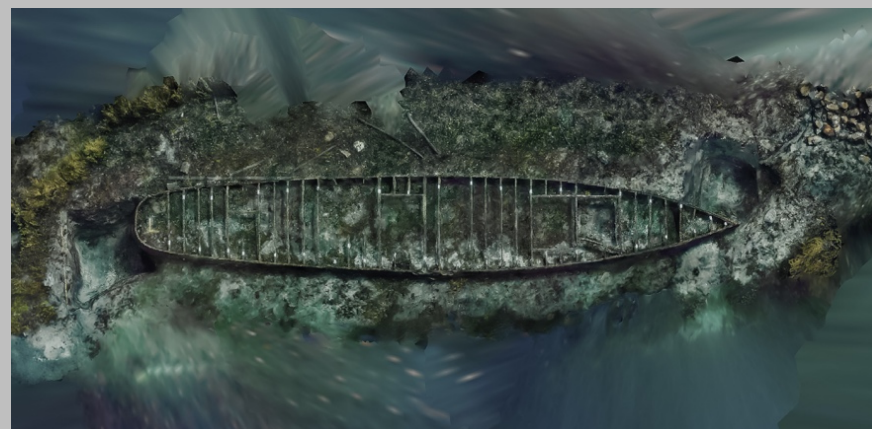
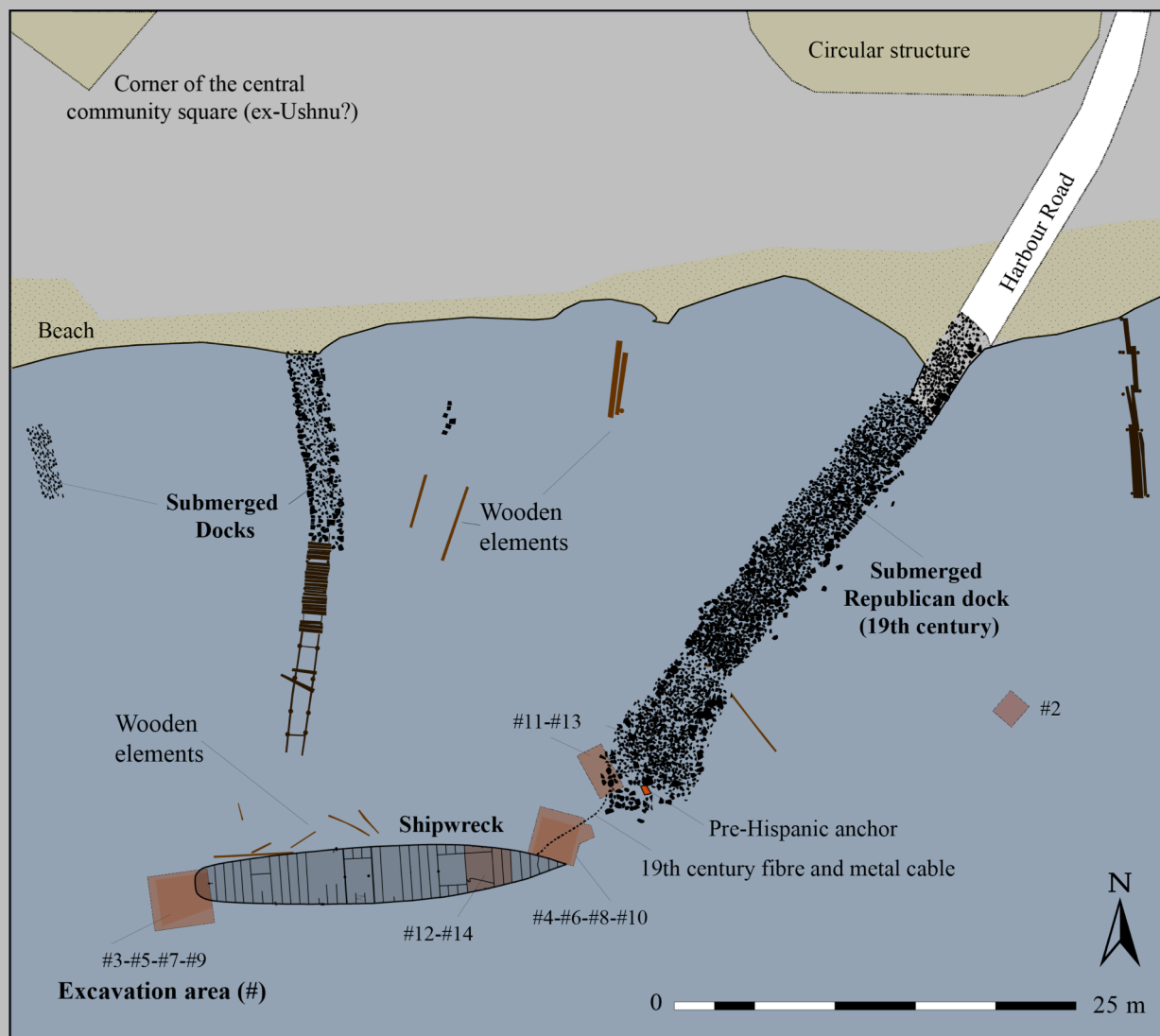
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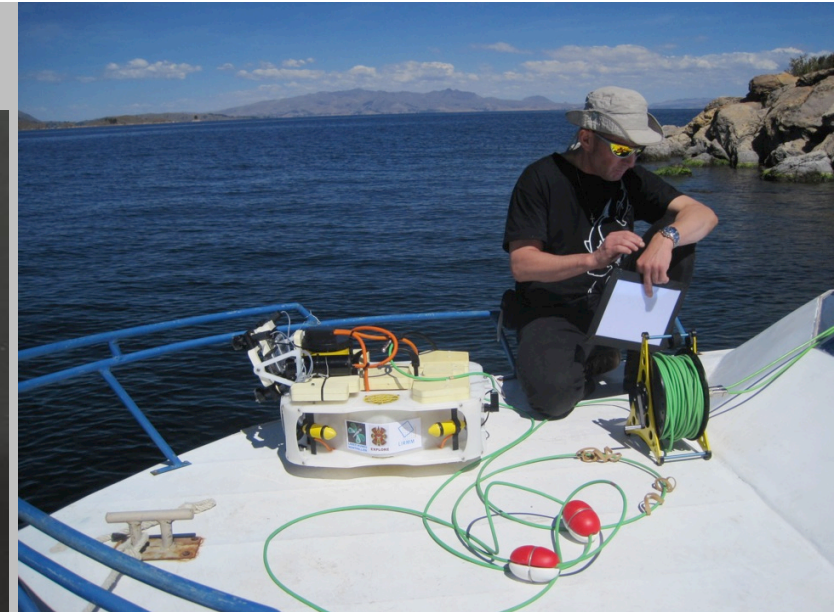








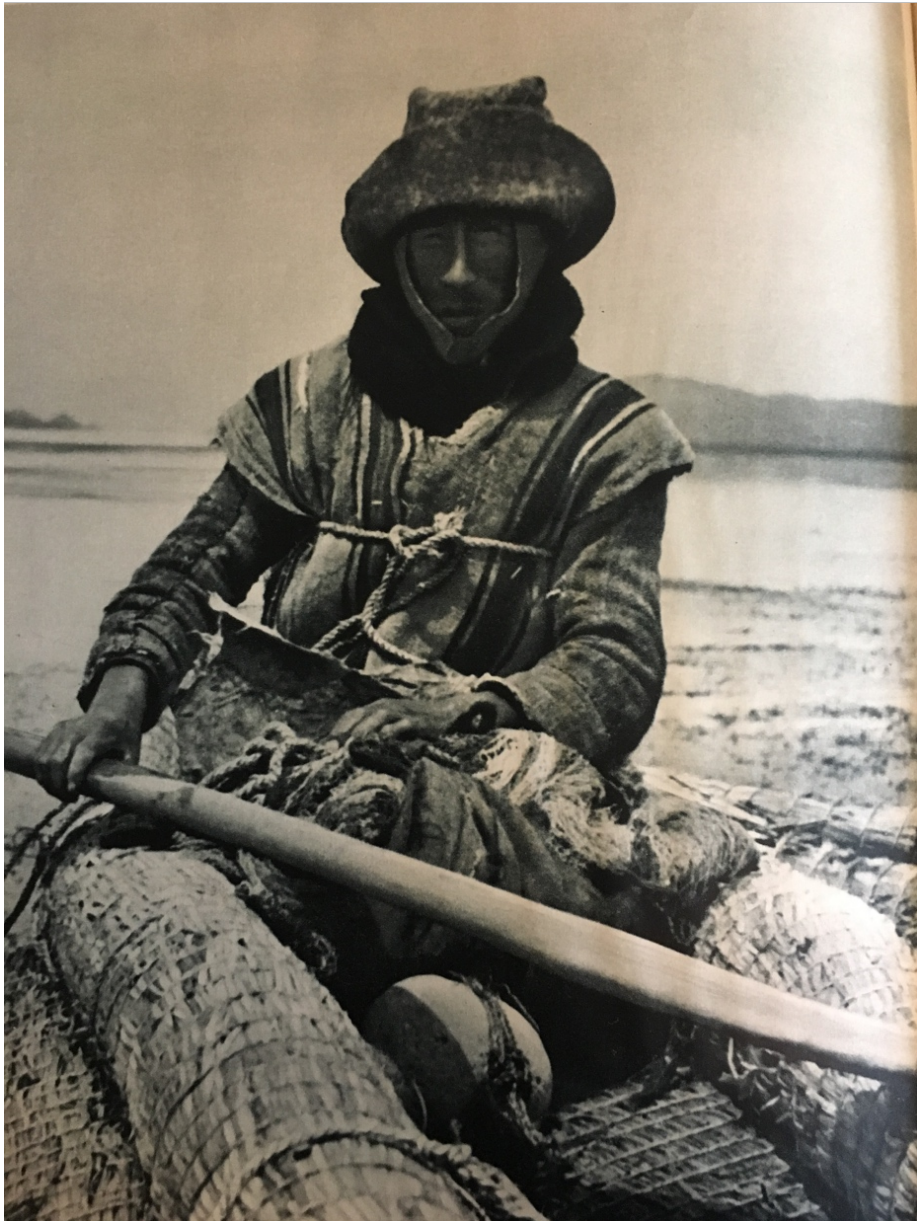




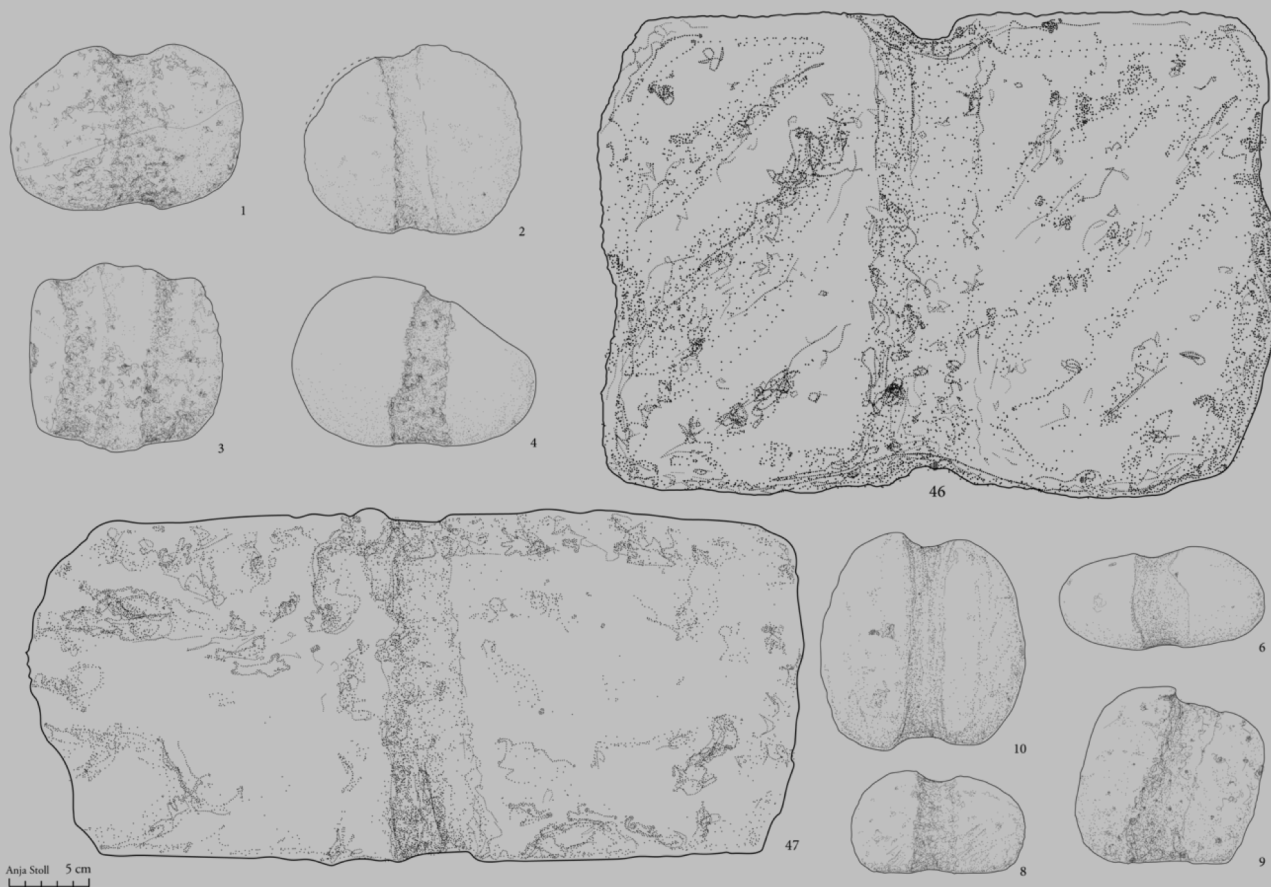




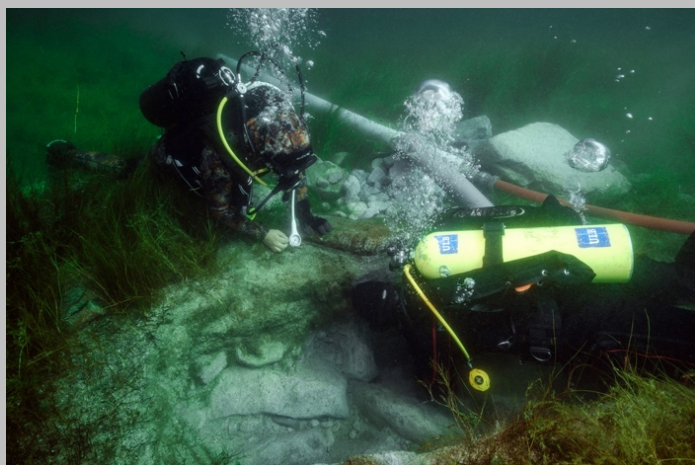














MERCI !

