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Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash 2005

Translated by Erik Monasterio

This review of climbing in the Andes summarizes first ascents and significant repeats in the Peruvian Blanca and Huayhuash ranges between June and September 2005. The information is drawn from: written records held at the Casa de Guías (guide headquarters) and the Casa de Zarela in Huaraz, the AndesInfo archives, *The Alpine Journal* 2004 and 2005, *The American Alpine Journal* 2005, *The American Alpine E-News* November 2005, the *Alpenvereinskarte* (Cordillera Blanca 0/3a, 0/3b, Huayhuash 0/3c); Peruvian National Institute of Geography Maps (Instituto Geográfico Nacional Peruano); discussions with locals in Ancash and from the correspondence provided by Alcides Ames, Aritza Monasterio, Benoît Montfort, Hugo Sifuentes, Kepa Escribano, Lenin Alvarado, Pavle Kozjek, Ramón Pérez de Ayala and Wayne Crill.

According to NASA, 2005 was the warmest year since the end of the 19th century. These magnificent conditions permitted fast climbing in the Huayhuash and Blanca ranges. However, the extreme drought conditions led to significant rockfall on the north face of Huascarán Norte, heavy crevassing and avalanches on the normal route on Huascarán Sur, unstable cornices on the summit of Alpamayo and a lack of ice on the SW face of Taulliraju.

Cordillera Blanca

Cerro Parón (La Esfinge, 5325m)

On 7 July, N American climbers Josh Wharton and Brian McMahon free climbed the previously aided sections of *Riddle of the Cordillera Blanca*, on the E face of the Esfinge. This route (VI 5.10 A3) was first climbed by Davis and Offenbacher (USA) in June 2000. Wharton and McMahon have named the free route *King of Tebas* and graded it 5.12. They also repeated *Cruz del Sur*, which they graded 5.12a (7a+) and the *Bohórquez-García*, graded 5.11 (6c). The last route was climbed by Wharton in one hour 50 minutes. This is the fastest recorded ascent of the E face.

On 8 July the Basque climbers Kepa Escribano and Fernando Ferreras repeated the E face's *Killa Quillay* (*AJ* 2005 p.340), which they mostly free-climbed and graded 7a+/ 7b. Escribano provided the following description of the route: 'It is a beautiful line, the final pitches took in some of the

original 1985 route and the initial sections of the climb were difficult to protect during the fast ascent.'

Arkadiusz Grzadziel, Boguslaw Kowalski and Jerzy Stefanski climbed the S face by a new route named *Salida desde la oscuridad*, graded VI, 6b+ A2+ and 680m. From 29 June to 1 July they climbed and fixed 170m. After a rest day they continued until they reached the summit on 4 July. They found rotten rock with cracks full of loose stones. This Polish route is to the left of the line climbed by Canadians Beaulieu and Légaré in 2003.

Chopiraju (Andavite, 5513m)

On 28 July the Germans Lochbühler and Moritz Wälde climbed the S face via a possible new route *Fight Club* (800m, WI4, M5, 85° 50-70°), in seven hours. It is difficult to know whether this is a repeat of the route climbed in 2000 by the Peruvian guide José A Castañeda Queda and his Swiss client Catherine Bertui. The Germans descended the route with a single abseil down the S ridge. The route has a two-hour approach from the Cayesh valley.

Chugllaraju (5575m)

On 24 June British climbers Anthony Barton and John Pearson climbed nine pitches (350m, TD-, 50°-85° ice/mixed), of a direct line on the W face, but were unable to overcome the summit schrund. They approached the climb from the Ulta valley, where they reached a bivouac cave in a 24-hour round trip. They state that the cave is to the left of an obvious rock wall and 40 minutes from the glacier. Barton stated that 'once the foot of the face is reached, an obvious rannel is followed over numerous bulges of ice to a mixed rib. A rightwards slanting gully was avoided in favour of a direct finish, this final section being mainly mixed ground containing the crux eventually led to the summit ridge.'

Hatun Ulloc (Ulloc Grande, c4800m)

Please refer to Ulloc Grande in *AJ* 2005, p.342. The reference to the route *Ulloc Grande* should instead be *Karma de los Cóndores*. In the Quechua language, 'Hatun' means 'immense', 'of large size'. 'Ulloc' (according to elders from Huaraz) could mean 'protruding', 'something that sticks out' or 'something that sticks in'. This peak remains unclimbed. Wayne Crill and Kevin Gallagher (USA) returned to the Ishinca Valley to finish and free-climb their route *Karma de los Cóndores*, c350m, A3, 5.12. After nine pitches they reached the first of three rock ledges. On 18 June they completed the route, which they gave IV, 5.11+. They recommend leaving a fixed line on the sixth pitch, which can later be used to abseil the main roof. The seventh, eighth and ninth pitch can be abseiled with a single 60m rope. According to Crill, the route 'is entirely naturally gear protected with a bolted belay'. The route was repeated a week later, probably on 2 July.

James Wood and Andy Wellman (USA) climbed it in a long day and graded it IV, 5.11d. These two climbed beyond the second main step, but excessive dirt in the cracks made it difficult to protect and they rappelled off 60m below the summit. Crill believes that Wood and Wellman deviated to the easier, but less protectable, E face.

Various websites that reprint information from the *Gaceta* magazine of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México claim that Carlos Macotela, Marco Iván Serra and José B Guerrero reached the summit of Hatun Ulloc via a new route, *Lawak*, meaning 'flag' in the Quechua language. However, the Mexican trio's own written accounts at the Casa de Guías in Huaraz seem to indicate that they reached another summit to the right and near a rock tower. They struggled with loose rock, vegetation and dirt and graded the route 5.11, A1. They wrote on their route topo: 'Lawak, Pa'la bandera, Hatun Ulloc/Q. Ishinca, Junio 23, 24, 25'. This is confusing because they call the route *Pa'la bandera* (for the flag), and they name the rock tower 'Lawak' and seem to believe this forms part of the rock wall 'Hatun Ulloc'. It is worth pointing out that in the Quechua language of Huaraz, flag is 'Lapapa' and 'Lawak' means 'corn soup with pork ribs'!

Huamashraju (5434m)

In July, Peruvians Jorge Gálvez and Manuel Urquiz climbed four pitches on the rocky NW face, to c.4900m just below the N ridge. They called the route *Directa Monodedo*, 230m, 6b/6b+. On 14 July, Basque climbers Kepa Escribano and Fernando Ferreras climbed a new nine-pitch rock route on the NW face. They then followed the N ridge to the summit. They called the route *Matxinsalto*, ED-. Escribano comments, 'This was a fast climb, with some risks on poorly protected granite slabs up to 6b and with steep cracks.'

Itsoc huanca (c.4800m)

From 12-23 July Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Jorge Barrachina, Daniel Gutiérrez, Jorge Ferrero and María López opened *Dominguerismo vertical* (650m-675m, ED- 6b A2) on the NW face. They descended by abseiling the entire route. They took 13 days; ten and a half of climbing, with five bivouacs of which four were on consecutive days. This is the first ascent of the crag group called 'Risco Ayudin' (4650-4700m) by a Spanish group of that name. However, this name is out of keeping with the geographic naming conventions used by the Peruvian authorities. The original name of the crag is 'Itsoc huanca' derived from the Quechua *itsoc* 'left' and *huanka* 'big rock'. The crag is found on the right (south) side of the Rurec Valley. This granite 'big rock' is L of another crag locally known as 'Chopi Huanca' (refer to P. 4800m in *AJ* 2003, p.287), which has dirt choked cracks (map *Cordillera Blanca, Süd*, No.0/3b German Alpine Club 1939).



159. West face of Nevado Cayesh (5721m). (Antonio Gómez-Bohórquez, 1999)

On 18 August, Italians Roberto Iannilli and Giulio Canti climbed a new route *Libertad es partezipacion* (c600m+c1000m easy rock, A1 6c+), with a single bivouac to the right of the Spanish route. The Italian team was joined by Enzo Arciuoli, and over the course of several days equipped and climbed the NW face of the **Pumahuagangan** peak. On 12 August they completed *Pietrorrago Vaffanculo* (440m, 6a). This route is on the right-hand rock wall at the entry point of the Rurec Valley.

Nevado Cayesh (5721m)

On 10 July, USA climber Steve House and his Slovenian partner Marko Prezelj approached the peak via the Cayesh valley and climbed a new rock and ice route on the W face. The route took 15 hours and required 11 pitches with a technical grade of M8, 5.10 (6a).

Nevado Huascarán Norte (6654m)

In June, Jordi Corominas solo-climbed the NE face by the 1973 *French route* pioneered by Barrard, Desrivières, Narbaud and Ricouard. The Catalan climber took a direct (variant) approach to the route and added a further variant (single pitch, M5) to exit the wall on the E ridge close to the final rock headwall. He reported good snow conditions along the entire

route, which he climbed in 12 hours' round trip, and graded the route MD. **Pirámide de Garcilaso (5885m)**

The SW face route climbed on 18 July and recorded in the Casa de Guías de Huaraz by the German team of Tobi Lochbühler and Moritz Wälde (*Marilyn*, 300 m, 70°-80°, UIAA IV) appears to take the same line as that climbed by the British team of Wolf and Clark in Aug 1996. The British team gave the grade TD+ (V 90°). The German team were forced to cut left below the summit séracs to descend via the *Renshaw-Wilkinson route*.

Nevado Rataquenua 5336m (Nevado Portachuelo, 5340m)

In July the Peruvian team of Eleazar Blas Blas and Edegar Laveriano López climbed a route they christened *Vía de los Cóndores*. This is a possible new route, located E of Portachuelo between the Illauro and Honda Valleys. Page 19-i of the Peruvian National Institute Map classifies this as P.5536m. The German Map names this peak 'Nevado Portachuelo' (5340m). The *Revista Peruana de Andinismo y Glaciología* 1978-1979 states that the name Rataquenua means 'hidden flower' in Quechua.

Nevado Santa Cruz (6259m)

In June, Jordi Corominas solo-climbed the NE face route originally climbed by Ecuadoreans Navarrete and Suárez in 1984. The ascent took 6 hours, and the descent 3 hours via the 1977 *German route* of Gloggnier, Janner and Müller.

Shacsha Sur (5697m)

In June four members of a team of ten, César Rosales, Miguel Martínez, Elías Flores (Perú) and Tiziano Orio (Italy), climbed a new route on the SE face (350m, D+ 70°-75°). They took eight hours' round trip, from a camp on the N side of the Rurec Valley.

Nevado Ulta (5875m)

On 14 August, French climbers Pierre Labbré and Benoît Montfort climbed the NNE ridge, which they christened *Toy's band* (600m, TD+ V+ 90°). Montfort reports that they climbed from the eastern slopes and reached the summit from a high camp on the col (c4900m) near the **Punta Olimpica** (AKA Pasaje de Ulta). According to their description, the col appears to have been between Alco (**Alco, 5375m**) and Ulta. It may be a variation of the NE summit ridge, climbed in 1961 by the Germans Bogner, Kämpfe, Hechtel and the N American Liska. This same summit ridge was also climbed by Earl and Cordes (USA) in August 2003.

Cordillera de Huayhuash

Puscanturpa Norte (5652m)

On 25 June from the head of the Huanacpatay (Huanacupatay) valley, Basque climbers Kepa Escribano and Fernando Ferreras climbed the NW face by the French route *Macanacota*. They made small variations toward the 1984 *Italian route*. They reached a high point an easy rope length beneath the summit and the overall grade was ED+. This may be the fourth repeat of the route and the first time it has been climbed in a day.

Puscanturpa Sur (5550m)

From 17-20 July, the Catalan climber Oriol Anglada and Mexican Marisol Monterrubio climbed 16 pitches (670m, 7c/6c+) which they called *El guardián de la Pachamana*. They approached their route from camps at c4650m on the Huanacpatay Valley and at the foot of the basalt N face at c4800m. They reached a high point at 5300m before abseiling the entire route. According to the tourist map of Felipe Diaz *Cordilleras Blanca & Huayhuash* and the Martin Gamache Topographic Map (1:50,000) *Cordillera Huayhuash* (2004, 2nd Edition) this ascent may be of **Cuyoc**. The new Gamache map gives the summit the name of Cuyoc with an altitude of 5550m. The 1939 Alpenvereinskarte Nr: 0/3c, *Cordillera Huayhuash*, calls it Puscanturpa Sur.

Nevado Sarapo (6143m)

In June, Jordi Corominas solo-climbed the NW face via the 1979 *Gocking and Sisson* (USA) route. The route, graded MD- took 3 hours and the 2-hour descent followed the 1984 *Dutch route* of van Sprang and Veen.

Trapeccio (5653m)

On 10 July, Slovenians Pavle Kozjek, Miha Lampreht, Branko Ivanek and Huaraz resident Basque climber Aritza Monasterio repeated Jeff Lowe's (USA) unfinished route on the SE face. They managed to complete the final 250m to the summit. The total length of the route was 800m and the grade given was ED+ (AI6 M5 A2). Following his 1985 ascent, Lowe graded the route V WI6+ VS. It appears to have had significantly more snow cover at that time. On the lower section, the Europeans found overhanging rock and ice-steps at A2 and M5. The middle section of the climb was easier and then they reached a vertical headwall (AI5-6 80°-90°). Kozjek comments that 'Due to bad ice conditions in the last steep pitch we traversed 30m to the right and climbed an overhanging rock chimney (VI-) that opened the way to the upper snowfields. With two more steep pitches (AI 4-5, 60-75°) we reached almost directly the top of Trapecio at 5pm. We descended down the N face using headlamps and reached base camp at 2.30am.'



160. South-east face of Nevado Trapecio (5653m) showing the line of the Lowe route to the blue point, followed by the Slovene-Basque line to the top.
 (Antonio Gómez-Bohórquez)

Yerupaja Sur (6515m)

French climbers Julien Laurent, Benoît Montfort, Pierre Labbré and Françoise Nadal climbed a new route *Furieux mais romantiques* (1200m, ED-55°-90°), following the left side of the S spur, the left side of the S face, and finally the SW ridge. From Sarapococha they fixed the route to 5500m. The final assault and descent took place from 1-3 August. On day one, they bivouacked at c5600m above the SSW spur. On the second day they reached the SW ridge 300m below the summit, which they finally reached by climbing ice-flutes, 14 hours after setting off. They bivouacked during their descent of the July 1981 *Italian route* of Arcari, Fedeli, Bramati, Besana, Simonetto and Fumagalli.