

ANTONIO (SEVI) GÓMEZ BOHÓRQUEZ

Peruvian Andes 2011-12

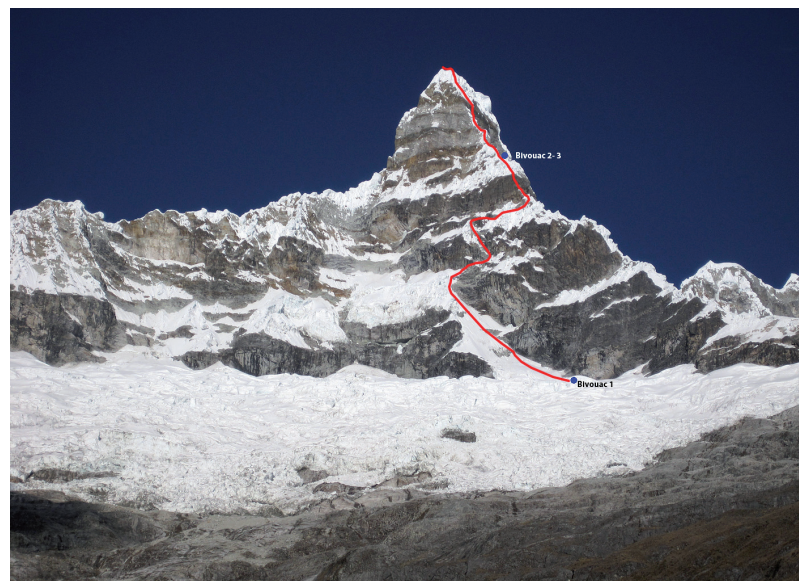
Translated by Paul Knott

Cordillera Blanca 2011

Enrico Rosso, Paolo Stoppini and Fabrizio Manoni attempted the east ridge of **Nevado Santa Cruz** (6359m). From a base camp north-east of Santa Cruz and south-west of laguna Jankarurish, they departed on 7 June towards the triangle of rock and ice at whose vertex begins the ENE ridge of Santa Cruz Grande. They ascended from c5100m by a couloir and two hanging glaciers to an advanced base camp. From this camp, on 9 June they overcame a difficult passage to reach the top of the triangle, and followed a 30m-wide meringue of ice to approximately 5800m on the ridge. From here, they considered it infeasible to continue either along the unstable corniced crest or below it. The Italian trio decided to rappel toward base-camp, calling the triangle 'Grand Gendarme Nord Est del Nevado Santa Cruz' and naming its peak 'Punta Luciano Colombo' (the latter died while descending from Denali Pass in 2011). Both names are inadmissible for the Peruvian geographic authorities.

On 16 June the three mountaineers turned their attention to the east face of **Santa Cruz Chico** (5800m). They set off from a tent at 5200m and climbed the central gully directly up to a huge sérac, which they avoided by traversing right to another gully leading to the summit. During the climb, they found steep ice mushrooms, inconsistent snow, temperatures close to -15°C, strong winds, and visibility reduced by cloud cover. After 12 hours from the camp, they arrived at a summit meringue 10m high and stopped immediately below, as it was too unstable to climb. They abseiled the same route. They had some troublesome moments, overcoming difficulties estimated at ED with sections of 80°-90° ice, in a route close to 600m with 500m of ascent. They dedicated the ascent to the Italian guide Marco Forcatura, who died in February 2008.

Also in June, Jordi Corominas and Oriol Baró climbed a new route on the north-east face – north-east ridge of **Chacaraju Este** (6001m). They approached through the Ranincuray gorge to laguna Tintacocha and camped at c5100m. They had to navigate through awkward terrain with no path. The next day, they ascended the same funnel of snow as the Slovenians Kozjek and Kresal in 1993, followed by broken rock on the north-east face. In the middle of the face, they moved right to join the 1962 *French route*, and followed it along the NE ridge by snow and a pitch of rock with pitons in place. They continued by snow and icefalls to a bivouac at 5600-5700m on the ridge. On 22 June, they followed this snow ridge. As they



North-east face of Chacaraju Este (6001m) with the line of the Corominas-Baró ascent. (Jordi Corominas)

could not clearly see the second traverse leftwards on the *French route* in the upper part of the face, they decided to go directly up on virgin territory. With a short passage of A2 on poor rock, followed by two pitches of ice, they reached the summit. They had climbed in Alpine style 900m at ED, A2/6a (Spanish), bad rock and typical Peruvian ice. They descended by rappel to the bivouac tent, and continued the next day to base camp.

The two Catalan mountaineers then turned to the south-west face of **Taulliraju** (5830m), where they climbed more than half of the central part of the face, exceeding the high points of former American and Russian attempts. They abandoned the climb because the ice was very thin and detached from the wall. The team then decided on the variant of the Chamonix guides (Fabre-Balmat-Monaci-Thivierge 1978) on the *Japanese route* (SSE ridge, Mizobuchi-Nagashino-Yoda 1976), which they climbed to within 20m of the summit.

On 25 July, Spanish climber Carlos Cabeza and Peruvian Diego Fernández climbed the hitherto virgin rocky north ridge of the little-frequented **Cashán West** (5686m). Due to transport delays, Fernández arrived in Huaraz two days later than expected, leaving only four days to go to the Cashán, open the route in alpine style and get off. On the morning of 24 July, they travelled with two porters to quebrada Rajucolta. They climbed steep slopes up to a base camp, and after resting went up the moraine with climbing gear to a point near the base of the ridge, left the gear and returned to the camp. At dawn, they returned to climb. They climbed about 460m in seven pitches from the beginning of the difficulties,

with an overall grade of TD+ 6a+. They rappelled slightly right of the line of ascent, taking 14 hours in all to climb and descend.

In the **Cordillera Central**, on 18 October, Beto Pinto Toledo and Rolando Morales Evangelist reached the central summit (5560m) of **Nevado Tunshu** by a new route on the south face. This is the summit reached in June 1967 by a DAV (German Alpine Club) expedition 44 years before, which they named Tunshu Mittelgipfel. The two Peruvian climbers camped at about 4400m next to Azulcocha, a lake in the Nor Yauyos Cochash landscape reserve. On the morning of 18 October, they crossed the crevassed south glacier and climbed the centre of the face by a steep couloir of up to 90° at the beginning, and mixed terrain. Then they climbed several pitches of hard, stable ice until the final stretch of soft snow took them to the top. They descended by the south-west ridge and arrived at basecamp in the afternoon. They named the route *Chinita*, about 450m, TD, 60°-90°.

In the **Cordillera Carabaya**, on 22 August British climbers Tom Ripley and Hamish Dunn climbed a new direct route in the centre of the south face of **Nevado Chichicapac** (5617m). They approached via Macusani (4315m) to a base camp at laguna Chambiñe. On the face, they avoided what would otherwise have been the most obvious route due to a threatening sérac. They climbed unstable mixed terrain of sustained difficulty, with powder snow on rock, until forced to traverse left at the upper wall. A short broken chimney and broken ground with sparse protection led to snow and the summit plateau. After 10 hours of climbing, they descended by the west ridge, with a final rappel to the small glacier where they made their bivouac. They graded the route at TD, 700m, sustained Scottish IV/V with a couple of crux pitches of VI.

In the **Cordillera Oriental**, British climbers Matt Balmer, James Wake and Daniel Fitzgerald, who departed from the town of Huachón (Pasco), saw as they walked toward their base camp an attractive-looking gully on the south face of **Huarancayo Sur** (c5200m). On 5 June, they climbed up to the foot of the small glacier below the cirque that forms the south face. The next day they crossed the glacier towards the bottom of the gully, to climb it. Balmer reported, 'For 350m we climbed some of the finest icy gully climbing any of us has ever done. The climbing was sustained and full of interest. In particular, the last pitch exiting the gully provided some exciting climbing on steep ground, with loose snow and poor gear. We perched on the top in the late afternoon, and then watched with a sinking feeling in our stomachs as we saw the cloud rolling in towards the mountain.'

After rappelling from the top with visibility reduced by mist, the trio had to bivouac for 11 hours without a sleeping bag. In the morning, after five and a half hours of descent they reached the first bivouac, ate, and returned to base camp. They named their route *Boys don't cry*, 350m, Scottish V, 4. A week later, Balmer, Fitzgerald and Wake attempted the unclimbed south face of **Huaguruncho Chico** (c5400m), but retreated 150m from the summit because of bad weather and dangerous snow conditions.



Huamashraju (Wamashraju 5434m) west face and SW-NW ridge with the 2012 route line. Rappel line shown in yellow. (Jared Vagy)

Cordillera Blanca 2012

From 18-21 July, Jared Vagy, Cory Harelson (USA), María Isabel Ramírez and Katty Guzman (Colombia) climbed on the left side of the west face of **Huamashraju** (Wamashraju, 5434m), almost in the same place as Sims and Jackson 12 years earlier, towards an indentation visible on the SW-NW ridge. However, whereas the latter pair climbed to the notch and descended, the 2012 foursome continued along the SW-NW ridge to the summit. From a base camp at c4725m, they carried their equipment to the bottom of the face. Their packs, with double boots, ice gear, and water, probably weighed more than 11 kilos. Early on 20 July, they climbed back up to where they left their backpacks. They had no topo and couldn't find the start of an existing route, so ended up climbing a likely new route on rock up to 5.8. They climbed a total of six pitches by a system of discontinuous cracks, which led to the spectacular SW-NW ridge, by which they reached the summit.



From left to right: the two summits of Uruashraju Chico (5360m), the summits of the south-east ridge of Pumahuacanca Chico (c5350m), Nevado Pumahuacanca (5563m), and the so-called Cerro Pumahuagangan (5138m) in the official Peruvian cartography. View from the north-west. (Sevi Bohórquez 1998)

The question remains as to whether this was a new route. Ken Sims and Chris Barlow wrote in *AAJ* 2005 that they had completed several climbs on the shorter walls on the left side of the cirque seen during the approach to the west face. These one- and two-pitch climbs, on a rock feature that resembles a ship's prow, included a superb 5.9+ finger-to-hand crack up the prominent arête. Jared Vagy writes: 'it is difficult to see the Sims-Jackson line in the *AAJ* 2005 photo. Our group climbed a similar line, with a variation to the right on the first pitch that I climbed with Cory, which I doubt they climbed. María and Katty climbed the most aesthetic line by the fissure above the first pitch. On the question of whether our route is new, I am partial to the ethics of traditional alpine climbing: a complete line is a complete first ascent.' For other climbs on the west face of Huamashraju (with and without summit), see *AAJ* 2002 p301 and *AJ* 2006 p321.

On 16 October, Beto Pinto Toledo, Angel Morales, Jhonny Rosales Huerta and Marco Lliulla climbed **Pumahuacanca Main** (5563m) by two new routes on the north-west face. Pinto and Rosales also reached the summit of **Chico** (c5350m), which was perhaps virgin until then. They approached from a base camp at about 4400m, 500m north of laguna Tararhua, via the Tararhua lagoon along the west shore. The wall is basically rock, and they ended up using only rock gear on the route. Pinto and Rosales chose a direct logical path to the top in the centre of the face. They

Jirishanca (6126m) east face and north-east spur, showing 2012 route line. (Hans Hornberger; route line Michi Wohlleben)



started with 30m pitches due to the poor quality of the rock. They overcame difficulties of 5c+ (French). At most stances, they relied on belaying to the body only, with no anchors to the wall. They reached the summit in three and a half hours. They continued by the north-east face as far as the col with **Pumahuacanca Chico** (c5350m), ascended its south-west ridge and reached all the summits. On one of these, they left a cairn, because they found no trace of earlier ascents. They descended the north-west face by the new route of Angel Morales and Marco Lliulla, at about TD+. Pinto and Rosales named their route *The sixth teletubbies*, about 320m of climbing, general difficulty MD+.

Cordillera Huayhuash 2012

In June, Michi Wohlleben, Arne Bergau and Johannes Jähn, accompanied by photographer Hans Hornberger, made an ascent of the east face and north-east spur of **Jirishanca** (6094m, 6126m DAV). They installed camps at c4500m above Carhuacocha and at 4950m above laguna Chacian. They began the east face of Jirishanca by the route attempted by Luca-Piccini-Stoppini in 2003, and continued by the *Egger-Jungmair route* (from 1957)

on the north-east spur. They had to descend from 100m before the summit because of soft snow. Although they felt it might have been feasible to climb this ground, getting down again would have been a problem due to the lack of any belay or anchor. During the 10 days of their attempt, snow and hail transformed the limestone wall into mixed terrain. The team fixed ropes to the Italian bivouac in the middle of the face, and above overcame mixed sections with difficulty from 6a, 6c+, A1/WI5+ and 6-.

In July, Saskia van der Smeede, Elly van der Plas, Vincent van Beek, Bas Visscher, and Bas van der Smeede climbed a new route on the north face of **Puscanturpa Este** (5410m). They were inspired by the ascent of Pavle Kozjek and Grega Kresal (see *AJ* 2008, 338-339). On 15 July, they installed base camp under the south face of Puscanturpa Este. For a few days they climbed nearby 5000m peaks to acclimatise, among them **Puscanturpa Sur** (5500m) by a possible new route at UIAA IV+ on good rock on the east face. They had planned to climb the east face of Puscanturpa East, but found unstable snow accumulated on the steep access wall and hence decided on the imposing north face. The first 100m were difficult crackless columns, so they began by climbing the first pitch of the Slovenian route on the north-east spur. On the second pitch, they traversed onto the north face. In the middle of the face, they descended because of wind. On 30 July they returned, but Saskia and Elly again descended because of the icy wind. The remaining three climbed the steep columns with freezing hands. Higher on the face, a white wall forced them to move left to a broken edge, by which they reached the summit. This was a new route, the third ascent of the mountain and first on the north side. They named the route *Poco Loco* (TD, UIAA VI+) due to its generous sections of broken rock. Saskia and Elly returned and climbed the route on 3 August, in 16 hours out and back.

Correction:

In *AJ* 2010 / 2011, p.306, (Mariposa, Cordillera Vilcanota), please delete 'who died later on Huascarán'.

Main sources consulted:

Alpinist; *Desnivel*; *Mountain World (MW)* 1958-1959; *The Alpine Journal (AJ)*; *The American Alpine Journal (AAJ)*; *Ulcumayo Hoja 22-I, Instituto Geográfico Nacional del Perú*; *Report by Matt Balmer of the Cordillera Oriental Range Expedition*; *Libro de anotaciones de la Casa de Guías de Huaraz*; *Libro de anotaciones de la Casa de Zarela de Huaraz*.

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MARCELO SCANU

Argentine Andes 2012-13



Jabi Txikon reaching the summit of Cerro Bonete (6759m) for its winter ascent. (Arkaitz Ibarra)

Northern Andes

In early 2012, several parties made traverses in the **Ojos del Salado** (6879m) massif in Catamarca, on the border with Chile. This is the world's highest volcano and the second highest summit in the Americas. Basque climbers Jabi Txikon, Juan Noguera and Arkaitz Ibarra made a 200km traverse from Ojos del Salado to Nevado San Francisco. After acclimatising in Las Grutas, on 6 February they travelled by car to Puertas de Aguas Calientes. Over four days, despite snowfall they reached Agua de las Vicuñas, then El Arenal and finally camp I on Ojos del Salado at 5750m. They reached the plateau at 6280m early the next day, struggling through soft snow. Juan retreated, while the others finally summited at 2pm in bad conditions. On 12 February, they walked the usually snow-free terrain towards **Volcán El Muerto** (6488m). On the 13th, they ascended the snow and ice-covered south face to the crater at 6120m. All three climbers reached the summit, after which they descended the normal route and traversed around the volcano to reach basecamp. Two days later, they summited **El Fraile** (6062m) via a new route on a steep snow face, calling it *Maddi* (girl, in French Basque), AD+, 55° ice canals, 400m height gain. They descended by scree. On the 17th, they summited **Volcán Incahuasi** (6638m) by the steep south ridge, again with much snow. On the 19th they climbed **Volcán**