



## AAC Publications

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### **Antachaire III, Southwest Face, Waiting for Axelle**

Peru, Cordillera Central

**In May, Malu Espinoza (Peru), Beto Pinto Toledo (Peru), and I climbed the southwest face of Antachaire III (11°54'5.95"S, 76° 2'59.00"W).** There are three Antachaire peaks—I (5,700m), II (5,650m), III (ca 5,670m)—that form a west to east chain. Antachaire III was first climbed in 1966 during the first DAV expedition to the Cordillera Central. The Germans referred to the Antachaire peaks as Yarumaria and approached from the north side (AAJ 1967). No further ascents of Antachaire III have since been reported. The striking southwest face of Antachaire III, with its distinctly shaped summit ridge, remained unclimbed, in spite of several attempts in recent years.

Looking north from the summit of Suricocha (from a 2018 ascent) to the south faces of Antachaire III, II, and I (left to right).

For Beto and me, it was our third attempt. In September 2015, dry conditions prevented access to the wall, and in May 2018 we retreated halfway up the face. Now, as in 2018, we were accompanied by our friend and porter Hector Alejo to help us with logistics.

On May 4, Beto, Malu, and Hector traveled from Huaraz to Lima, where I had arrived the night before. The same day we traveled to the city of San Mateo (3,100m). On May 6, we left San Mateo towards the Quebrada Yuracmayo, where we made camp at the entrance of the valley (4,100m). The next day we headed into the valley and decided to make an intermediate camping spot (4,300m). In the afternoon, we walked higher up to scout a possible descent route from the col between Sullcon (5,650m) and Pico Americo (5,600m). On the 8th, we continued toward Laguna Rinconada (4,600m), which is the common base camp for summit attempts in this area.

On May 9, we left at 11 a.m., walking and wading along the right side of the lake to reach the glacial tongue. We installed our tents on the flat glacier plateau (4,900m). Shortly after, intense afternoon storms settled in, followed by whiteout conditions, with warm temperatures persisting overnight. Since seracs threaten our route, we decided to wait and observe for an extra day.

On May 10, we started our summit attempt at 11:30 p.m., approaching by the second from left-most mixed gully. We then traversed under the serac avalanche zone between Antachaire and Pico Americo (5,600m) and arrived at the base of the face after about 40 minutes.

As expected, the crux of the route was the first pitch (a mixed and unconsolidated snow runnel to 90°). After this, we climbed rapidly for the next four pitches (70°) in order to escape the looming serac left of us. The sixth pitch, which passes along the rock band high up on the wall, contained more ice. After this, we trended up and left for the next three and a half rope lengths, which ended with gradual snow climbing (45°) to the summit. We were on top around 8 a.m. with a GPS reading on the summit of 5,677m.

We descended the north-facing slopes of Antachaire III in two rappels followed by downclimbing. From the glacial basin beneath, we plodded up the snow slope between Sullcon and Pico Americo. From that col, we continued our descent in three rappels down the west side of Pico Americo. An additional hour of walking got us off the glacier around 1 p.m. In the afternoon, we continued to walk for three more hours through the Yuracmayo Valley and returned to San Mateo.

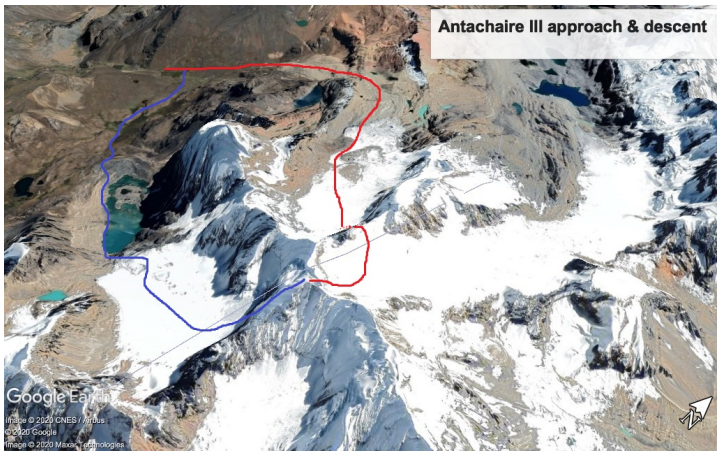
The route was named for my (at that time) expected daughter: Waiting for Axelle (630m, D+).

– **Guy Fonck, Belgium**

## Images



Pico Americo (left) and the southwest face of Antachaire III (right), showing the route Waiting for Axelle (630m, D+).



The 2019 route on Antachaire III with ascent (blue) and descent (red) shown.



Looking north from the summit of Suricocha (from a 2018 ascent) to the south faces of Antachaire III, II, and I (left to right).

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