



## AAC Publications

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### **Picos del Barroso, South Face to Chilean Summit**

Argentina-Chile, Central Andes

**In mid-September, Damir Mandakovic, José Vial, and I, members of Club Andino Universitario, opened what may be the first route up the southern side of the southernmost 5,000m peak in Chile, the Picos del Barroso (34°17'17.2"S, 70°1'52.4"W).**

This large massif is in the O'Higgins Region, southwest of the well-known Volcán Maipo (5,264m), and has four distinct tops: the west summit (5,113m), Chilean summit (5,135m), central or main summit (5,174), and Argentinian summit (5,165m). More than 5km separate the west summit from the Argentinian (eastern) summit, while the central summit is binational. The Chilean summit (center-west) is wholly in Chile and approximately 2km from the central summit. The central summit was first climbed from the north (Foerster-Meier-Niehaus, 1948) and all subsequent ascents are believed to have been from the north, starting either from the Maipo or Paredones rivers (see AAJ 1963 and AndesHandbook.org).

We departed for our nine-day trip on September 14. Prior to leaving, the Club Andino Rancagua and other local climbers informed us of one prior but unsuccessful attempt on our goal, the south face of Picos del Barroso. Our three-day approach began from Puma Lodge (1,300m). We trekked east along the Cachapoal River (at first with mules) and eventually north for 30km to reach our base camp (3,200m). From our camp in the southwest cirque, we could look up the nearly 2,000m slope of rock, snow, and glacial ice.

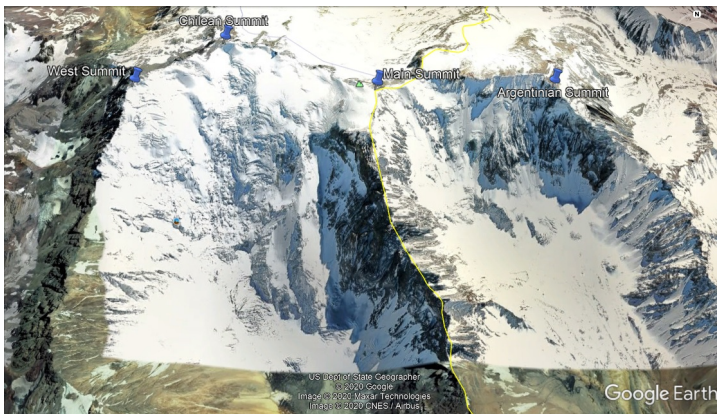
Over September 18–19, José and I chose a path of snow and ice ramps up the south face between the west and Chilean summits, while Damir stayed at base camp due to the high level of exposure and physical demands of our route. We made a high camp at 4,800m below the summit ridge, and on day two we reached the Chilean summit. The route was not very technical, with the steepest section around 65°, but exposure was high due to numerous crevasses and seracs hanging from the wall. We descended the same route.

– Roberto Mayol Brierley, Chile

## Images



The September 2020 route up the south side of Picos del Barroso to the Chilean summit (5,135m).



## An overview of the four summits of Picos del Barroso.



An overview of the approach to the south side of Picos del Barroso.





Roberto Mayol on the left and José Vial on the right on the 30km exit from the Picos del Barroso, with the Cachapoal River below.



José Vial breaks trail through deep snow on Picos del Barroso with the Chilean summit still a way to go.



Damir Mandakovic (front) and José Vial (back) approach the massive southwest cirque of the Picos del Barroso. The 2020 route climbed the glacial ramp partially visible on the left. The impressive west-southwest facing walls on the right form the southern ramparts of the central summit and are believed to be unclimbed. (The main summit is hidden behind the ridge in the center of the picture). The walls rise over 2,000m from the valley floor and may be composed of granite and at least one other rock type. Brierley writes, "We didn't get close enough to tell the [rock] quality but it looks to be good. We didn't see much rock fall. It looks like there are good cracks for big wall climbing, which

would be the most direct route to the main summit.”



A panoramic view of the southwest cirque of Picos del Barroso, showing the glacial ramp (left) climbed in 2020. The rocky southwest wall of the central summit is believed to be unclimbed. The Chilean summit (5,135m) of Picos del Barroso highlighted.



José Vial dressed in blue and Roberto Mayol in orange on the Chilean summit (5,135m) of Picos del Barroso.

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