



AAC Publications

Shaqsha, North Face; Huascarán Sur, Agua En Marte

Peru, Cordillera Blanca

In early July 2022, Juan Benevides and Ignacio Vasquez Palominos climbed the first recorded route up the north face of Shaqsha (5,703m) in the southern Cordillera Blanca. Shaqsha is typically climbed via the broken glacier on the southwest side, leading to the west-facing summit slopes.

On July 9, the climbers approached from the west, rounding the rocky base and then ascending the glacier directly to reach the north face. They climbed the center-left side of the face on a mixture of snow and rock. From the summit, they descended the upper west ridge on snow and then down rock on its northwest side. They called their route Juanito y la Luna (350m, MD+ M4 6a).

Later in the month, Vasquez and Martín Contreras Ries climbed the lower east-southeast face and upper southeast ridge of Huascarán Sur (6,746m). They first bivouacked below the route at 4,980m on the 22nd. On the 23rd, they began by climbing a crux passage (WI4 M4) to gain the snow and ice face above (80° max). They continued over the southeast subsummit and along the upper southeast ridge to another bivouac at 6,500m. On the 24th, they summited and then descended via the north side. They called their climb Agua en Marte ("Water on Mars," MD+ WI4 M4 80°).

It is likely their line on the east-southeast face (which is about 1,200m high) was previously unclimbed. Climbs on this portion of Huascarán Sur are not well documented, but in 1971 an international team climbed the east ridge to the southeast top and then followed the southeast ridge to the summit. Two teams reported ascents on or near the southwest ridge, in 1968 and 1973, but neither continued to Huascarán Sur's summit. In 1995, Slovenian climbers started from the village of Shilla, southwest of the mountain, and climbed a route called Alpos (1,650m, TD IV+ 85°, AAJ 1996), but the exact location is not known.

— Erik Rieger, with information published by Ignacio Vasquez Palominos, Chile

Images



The line of the first recorded route up the north face of Shagsha is shown in red. The descent is in blue.



Agua en Marte on the east-southeast face of Huascarán Sur.



Agua en Marte on the east-southeast face of Huascarán Sur, showing the continuation along the upper southeast ridge to the summit.

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