

REPORT FOR THE:

THE SCOTTISH CORDILLERA HUAYHUASH
EXPEDITION



PERU 2004 7/08/04 – 4/09/04

MEF REFERENCE 04/37

The overall aim of the expedition was to complete first ascents of new routes in the Cordillera Huayhuash as well as first British ascents of existing routes.

The report was compiled by Iain Rudkin

iainrudkin@hotmail.com

5, The Nursery,
Beach Rd.,
Hartford, Northwich,
Cheshire,
CW8 4UH

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Abstract

The primary aim of the expedition was to climb challenging ice faces in the Cordillera Huayhuash region of Peru, namely the first ascent of the West face of Rondoy and the first British ascent of a route on the south face of Siula Grande called Southern Discomfort.

After an initial recce trip into the Huayhuash region by two members of the expedition, the south face of Rondoy was deemed to be unclimbable condition, being fairly bare of snow or ice as well as objectively dangerous with frequent serac collapse.

As a result the expedition moved to climb in the Cordillera Blanca region where conditions were more favorable. Three separate trips were made into the Blanca massif up different valleys and by the end of the expedition every member of the team managed to get on a route with most reaching a summit. Added to this was the first ascent of a route on the west face of Paron Sur, though we are awaiting confirmation that this route was indeed unclimbed.

Introduction

The expedition comprised of six members based in Scotland. All had plenty of experience of climbing in the UK, particularly Scottish winter, and all had done some climbing in the Alps. However, only one had climbed in the greater ranges before, so the main motivation behind going to Peru was to gain experience climbing in the greater ranges, with the view to building on this experience in years to come.

Expectations ranged before we went out as we all desired to do something technically challenging, but having never been at altitudes higher than four to five thousand meters we were realistic as to the dangers of pushing ourselves at higher altitudes. We all knew that this would be new and difficult to us, so safety was our main priority.

Expedition members

Iain Rudkin, 24, Scottish, PhD student. Expedition role: Leader and climber
Ex-president of Glasgow University Mountaineering Club. Rock climb up to E2, winter climb up to VI. 5 alpine trips. Completed Munros aged 19.

Dr. Neil Stewart, 26 Scottish, Senior House Officer. Expedition role: Doctor and climber
Ex-president of Glasgow University Mountaineering Club. Rock climb up to E1, winter climb up to V. 4 alpine trips. Expedition to Svalbard with six weeks glacier travel/ski-touring.

Andrew McIntyre, 24, Scottish, Engineering consultant. Expedition role: Climber
Current member of Lomond Mountaineering Club. Rock climb up to E3, winter climb up to VI. 3 alpine trips. Austrian WI5.

Gareth Hughes, 25, British, Research Assistant. Expedition role: Climber and Spanish speaker.
SMC member. Rock climb up to E3, winter climb up to VI. 11 alpine trips. Has also climbed in the Canadian Rockies.

Alasdair Buchanan, 23, Scottish, Student. Expedition role: Climber and Spanish speaker.
SMC member. Rock climb up to E3, winter climb up to V. 4 alpine trips. Has also climbed in North America including classic big walls in Yosemite.

Kevin Neal, 30, British, Computer consultant. Expedition role: Climber
Rock climb up to E3, winter climb up to VII. 5 alpine seasons. The only member of the trip to have climbed in the Peruvian Andes previously.

Diary of expedition's key activities:

- 7/8/04 Depart Edinburgh airport in the morning, arriving Lima late at night
- 8/8/04 Arrive Huaraz (~3000m) in the evening
- 9/8/04 Rest day in Huaraz
- 10/8/04 Rest day in Huaraz
- 11/8/04 Rest day in Huaraz
- 12/8/04 Iain Rudkin, Andrew McIntyre, Gareth Hughes and Alasdair Buchanan walked into Ishinca base camp (~4200m)
- 13/8/04 Iain Rudkin, Andrew McIntyre, Gareth Hughes and Alasdair Buchanan had a rest day at base camp
Neil Stewart and Kevin Neal left Huaraz for the town of Chiquian near to the Cordillera Huayhuash
- 14/8/04 Successful ascent of Urus Este (5420m) via the east ridge, (PD-) made by Iain Rudkin, Andrew McIntyre and Gareth Hughes. Snow trail was well consolidated, as this peak sees many ascents due to its being a good acclimatisation peak. Weather was excellent. We got excellent views towards Ranrapalca (6162m), another of our objectives, but were disappointed to see that the classic north face route was predominately rock
Neil Stewart and Kevin Neal traveled to Llamac
- 15/8/04 Iain Rudkin, Andrew McIntyre, Gareth Hughes and Alasdair Buchanan had a rest day at base camp
Neil Stewart and Kevin Neal walked to Laguna Jahuacocha via Pocpa and minapunta pass (4800m) and gained close up views for the first time of our intended objectives; the West face of Rondoy and Jirishanca. It was apparent from early on that this flank was in much leaner condition than in our photos, and as time went on Neil and Kevin realised that hanging seracs, actively falling ice and blank rock sections made our proposed lines unjustifiable
- 16/8/04 Iain Rudkin, Andrew McIntyre, Gareth Hughes and Alasdair Buchanan climbed to advance base camp (~5200m) of Tocllaraju. Snow conditions good underfoot and weather perfect
Neil Stewart and Kevin Neal went up to the moraine above laguna jahucocca to recce the approach to the glacier and found it too to be extremely badly crevassed and actively collapsing. We continued on an acclimatization foray to 5000m
- 17/8/04 Near successful ascent of Tocllaraju (6032m) via the northwest ridge, (D) made by Iain Rudkin, Gareth Hughes and Alasdair Buchanan. Turned back less than 100m from the summit due to altitude sickness in one of the team members. Snow conditions were once again excellent on the ridge, however the ice was somewhat softer climbing through the bergschrund to access the ridge. Descent involved only two abseils. Weather was clear higher up though cloudier at the start of the day; very high winds were also

- encountered making for a very cold ascent with wind chill. Returned to base camp the same day
Neil Sewart and Kevin Neal walked out of from the Jahuacocha valley to Llamac
- 18/8/04 Successful ascent of Ishinca (5530m) via the northwest slopes, (PD-) made by Iain Rudkin, Andrew McIntyre and Gareth Hughes. Snow conditions generally good, though a bit thin in places. Weather started out good, but it began to snow as we reached the top and remained cloudy during the descent.
Neil Stewart and Kevin Neal returned from Llamac to Huaraz
- 19/8/04 Walked out from Ishinca base camp
- 20/8/04 Rest day in Huaraz
- 21/8/04 Rest day in Huaraz
- 22/8/04 Iain Rudkin, Neil Stewart, Andrew McIntyre, Gareth Hughes, Alasdair Buchanan, and Kevin Neal walked into base camp in the Paron Valley
- 23/8/04 Walked up to advance base camp (4800m) for Artesonraju and Paron Sur
- 24/8/04 Near successful attempt on Artesonraju (6025m) via the southeast face, (D) made by Iain Rudkin and Gareth Hughes. Turned back less than 100m from the summit due to time limitations and also helping two Americans down the face. The snow conditions on the face were excellent, and there were also a number of in-situ snow stakes on the route providing you could find them - easier in descent as it turned out
Successful ascent on a potentially new route on the west face of Paron Sur (~5600m) made by Neil Stewart, Andrew McIntyre and Kevin Neal. Excellent ice conditions were reported with a grade of AD+ given for the route. The bergschrund proved to be impassable at the top
Weather was excellent and there was no wind
- 25/8/04 Walked out from Paron valley base camp
- 26/8/04 Rest day in Huaraz
- 27/8/04 Rest day in Huaraz
- 28/8/04 Rest day in Huaraz
- 29/8/04 Weather started to deteriorate
- 30/8/04 Weather bad, summits continually covered in cloud and fresh snow falling
- 31/8/04 Gareth Hughes and Alasdair Buchanan head up to Pisco moraine camp (~4900m) from the Llanganuco valley
- 1/9/04 Tent bound at Pisco moraine camp
- 2/9/04 Successful attempt on Pisco (5752m) via the southwest slopes (PD) made by Gareth Hughes and Alasdair Buchanan. Ascent was made in excellent snow and ice conditions with the aid of a full moon in still weather
- 3/9/04 Flew out from Lima in the evening

Administration and logistics

Research materials:

The map for the Cordillera Blanca south appears to be out of print as we could not obtain a copy of it either in South America or the UK. We found that Brad Johnson's book "Classic climbs of the Cordillera Blanc" to be an invaluable aid for our preparation before going and whilst out there.

Training:

We trained a lot in Scotland, going out every weekend winter climbing and hill walking, and as the summer came along we undertook longer expeditions such as the completion of the Cuillin ridge in a day.

Permission and Permits:

We had to buy park permits for the Huascarán national park at 65 soles per person for a seven day pass.

Fund-raising:

We applied for funding from a number of different bodies and were successful with the following: BMC, MEF, Austrian Alpine Club (AAC), Liam Elliot, and the MC of S.

Finances:

We contributed a large part of our funds from personal sources.

Insurance:

All of us used BMC insurance.

Travel:

Air travel to Lima, followed by bus travel to Huaraz was easy to do and reliable. We hired colectivos and taxis to get around the town of Huaraz and to the road heads at reasonable rates and with reliable drivers. Arreiros were hired at a cost of approximately \$10 per day, donkeys at a cost of approximately \$5 per day and porters at a cost of approximately \$20 per day. However we found that costs could vary significantly between guiding shops and it was best to get a definite amount from a number of shops.

Food and Accommodation:

We bought all food from the local markets in Huaraz, and stayed in a local hostel.

Specialist equipment:

Before traveling to Peru, we ensured that we all had adequate equipment to deal with the terrain we anticipated being on whilst there. In Huaraz, there are a number of climbing shops and we obtained snow stakes cheaply and easily in them.

Risks and Hazards:

Other than the obvious mountaineering dangers, we had to be wary in both Lima and Huaraz as they were quite bad for petty crime such as pickpockets and muggings.

Medical arrangements:

We all had the appropriate injections before travel, but also had Dr Neil Stewart on the team as much for his climbing abilities as for his experience as a doctor.

Environmental and social impact assessment:

All the refuse we produced whilst in the mountains was removed by us afterwards. Human waste was all buried well away from the nearest water sources with toilet paper being burnt.

Photography, sounds-recordings, video and film:

We all took a number of slide photos as well as prints whilst out in Peru. Additionally, we used a camcorder to film some of the trip, though filming at high altitude proved to be more laborious than expected so we might not get much more than five minutes worthwhile footage from the tapes.

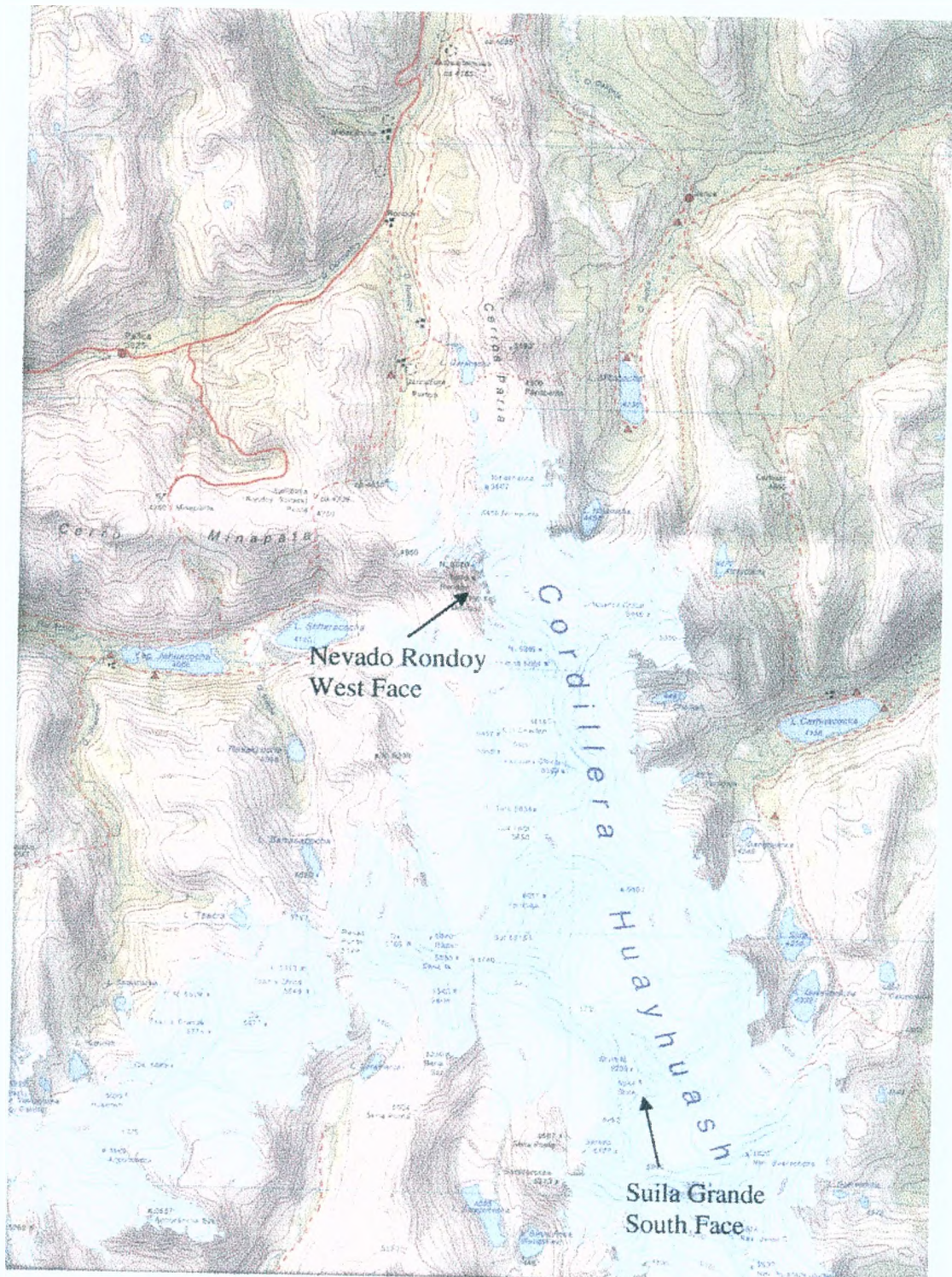
Conclusion

In short the trip was ultimately successful. Whilst we did not achieve or indeed set foot on any of our objectives, the expedition did manage to get onto new ground on the west face of Paron Sur. In this way we did attempt a new ice route in the greater ranges, and were successful. More importantly, we climbed well as a team with surprisingly no disputes whilst out there, gained a lot of experience for what is required in the greater ranges and most importantly returned home safely eager to return.

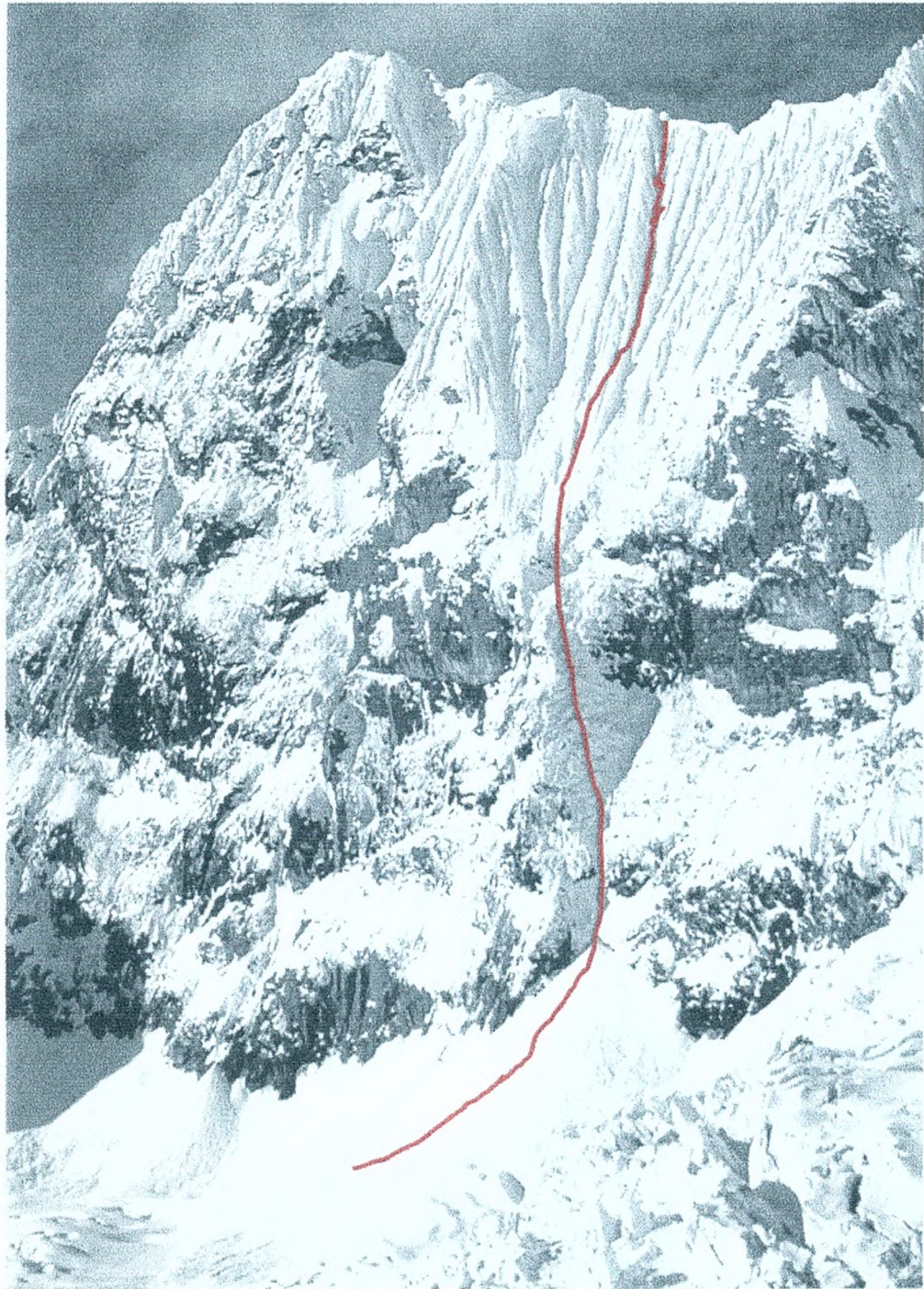
The compilers of this report and the members of the expedition agree that any or all of this report may be copied for the purposes of private research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Rudkin', written in a cursive style.

Iain Rudkin, Manchester, Dec. 2004



West Face of Nevado Rondoy (left) with Mituraju (right)
Proposed line illustrated in red.

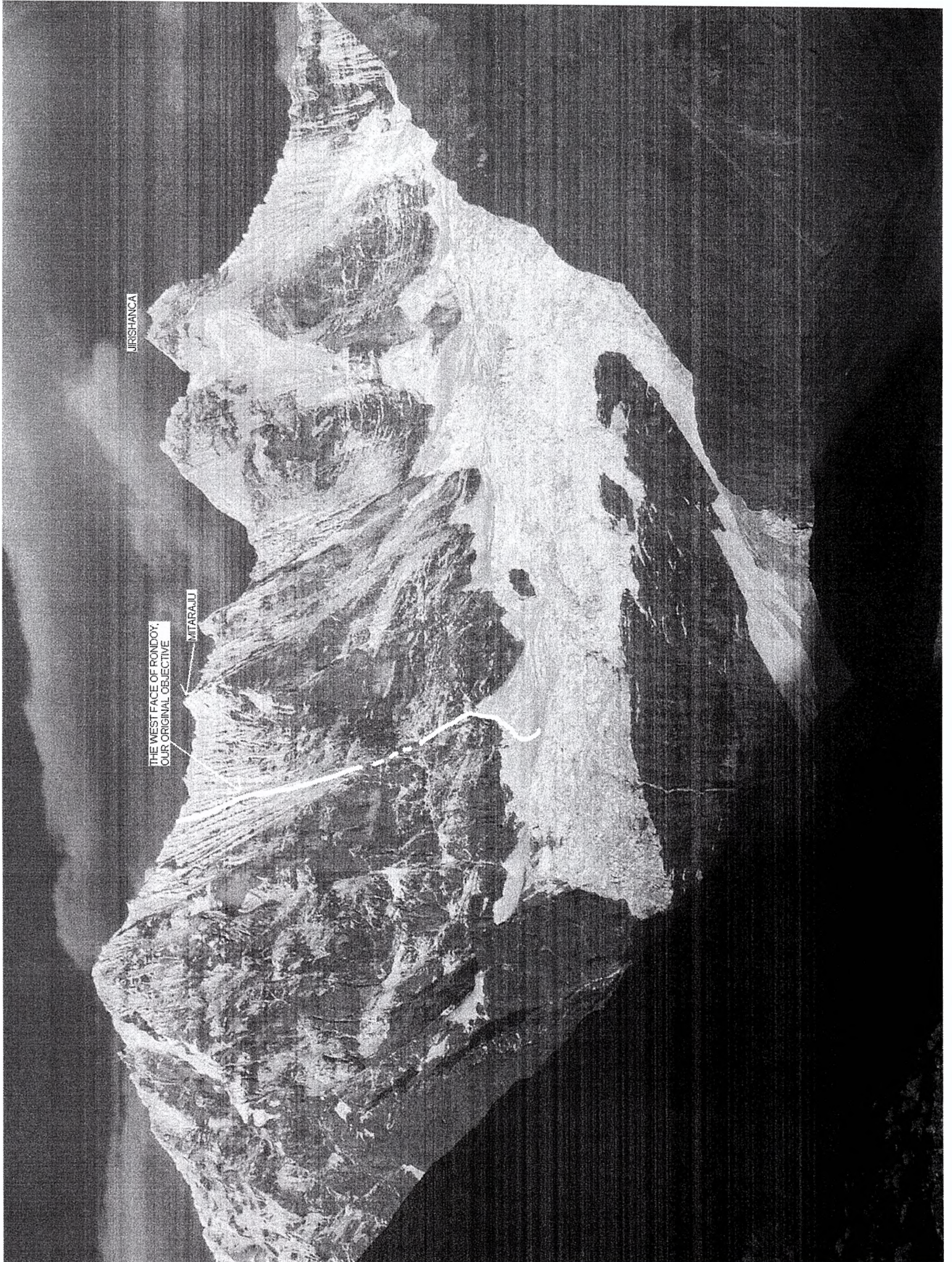


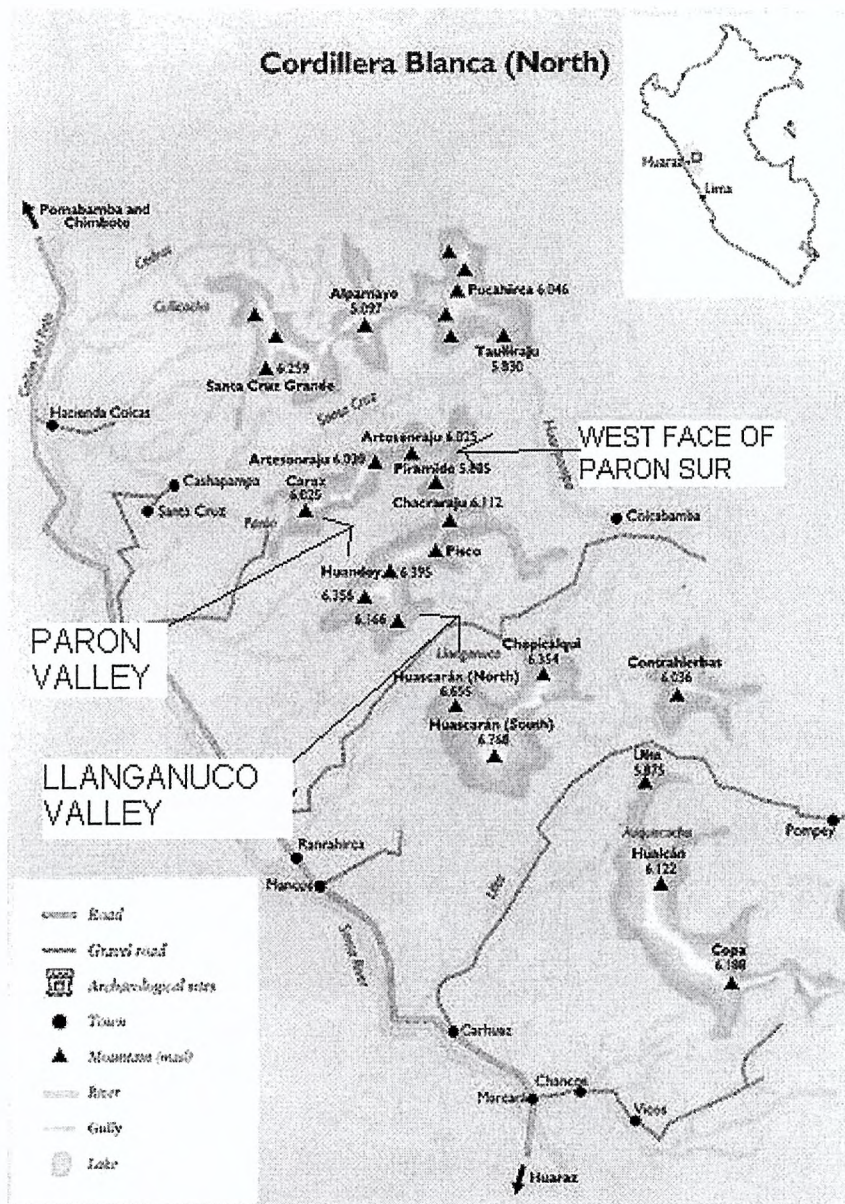


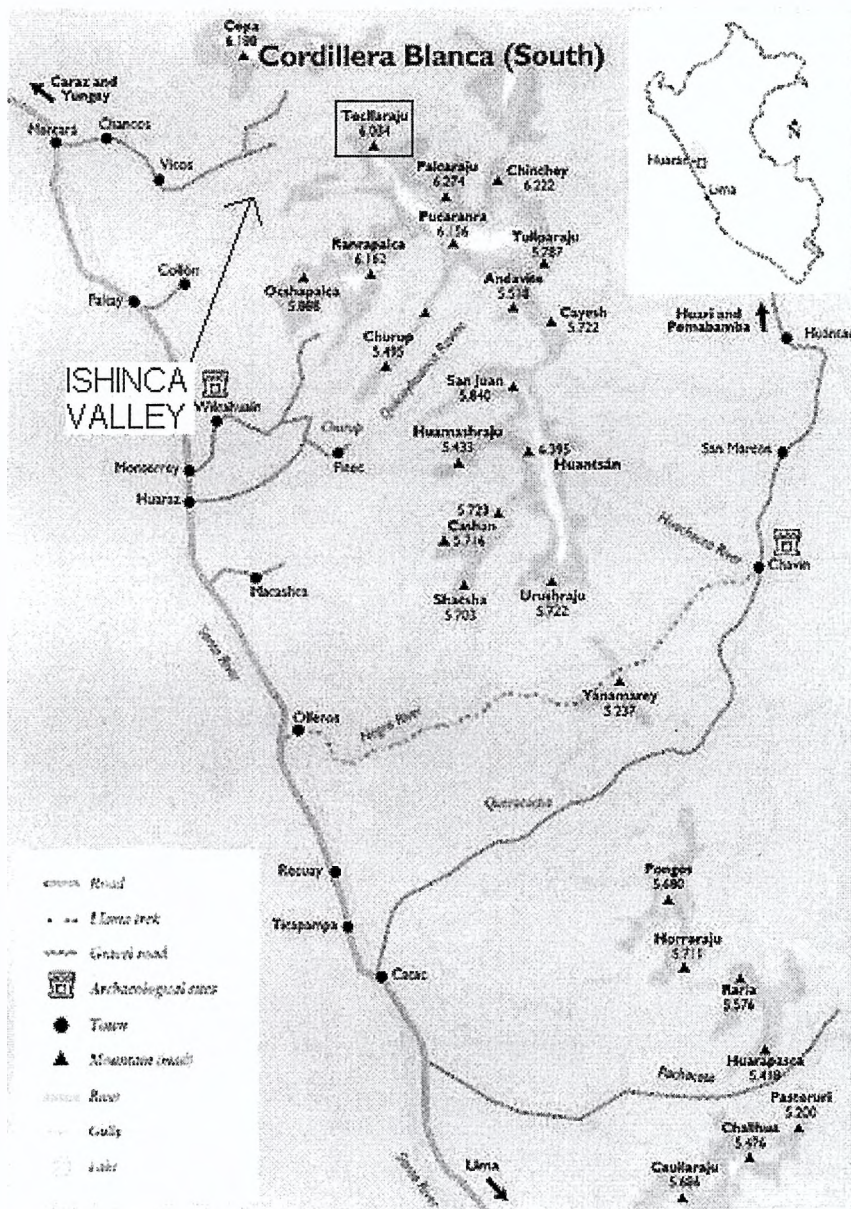
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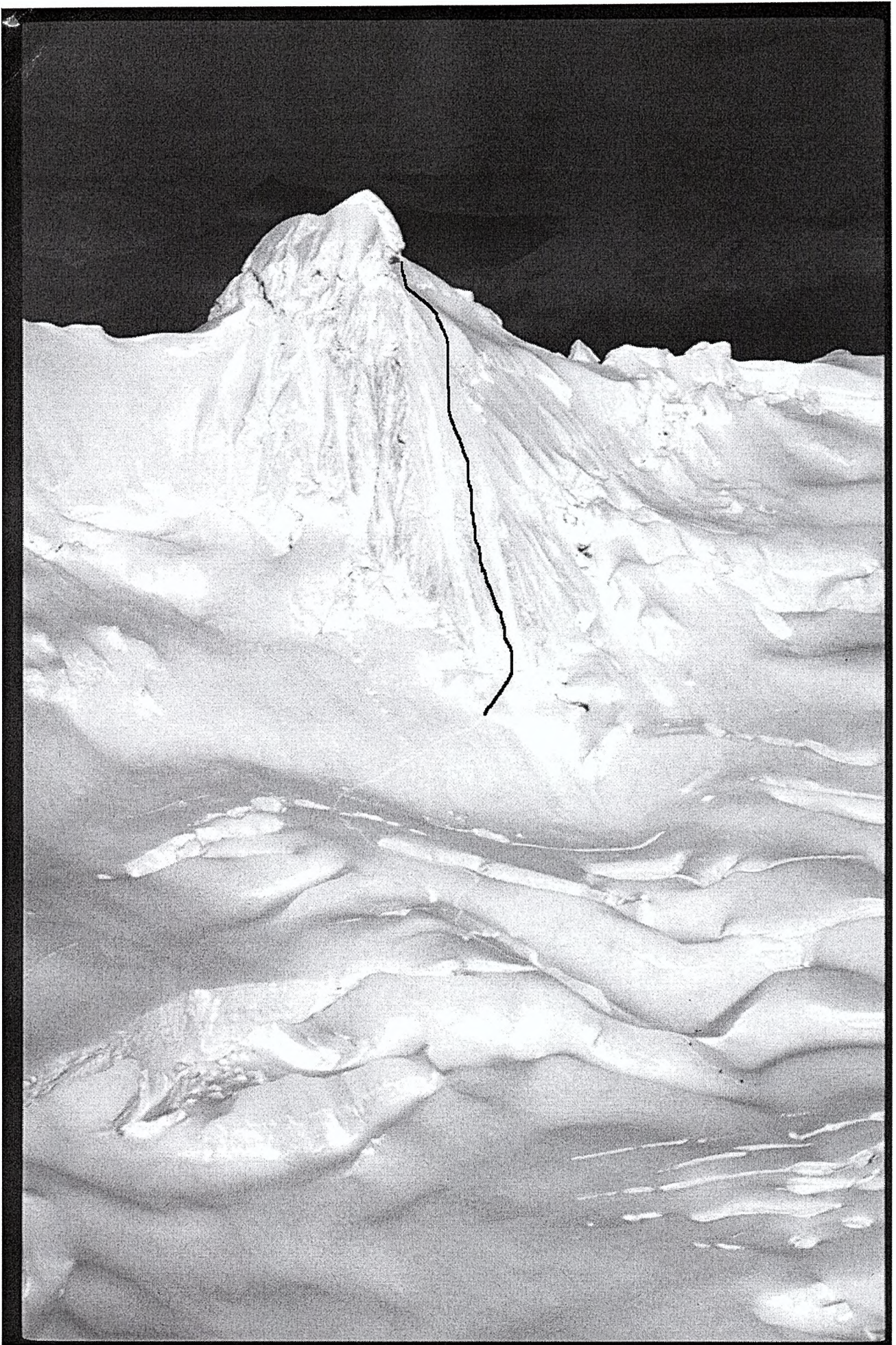
THE WEST FACE OF RONDOLY;
OUR ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE

MITARAJU









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