



AAC Publications

Huayna Potosi, South Summit, West Face, Via del Triangulo (Variant)

Bolivia, Cordillera Real

On August 25, Pacifico Machaca and I drove to the west side of Huayna Potosi and then walked two hours to the lake below the west face. Here, we examined possibilities for a new mixed route on this stunning wall. Carrying neither tent nor sleeping bag, we sought shelter for the night among the rocks. A strong wind blew and we didn't sleep a wink.

At 3 a.m. we set out for the face, but since the line we had in mind began with a rock section, we had to wait for sunrise at 6:30 a.m. in order to start. The first pitch, with delicate climbing and thin cracks, took longer than anticipated. The third pitch, which had only small holds, was badly protected. We continued up another slab with thin cracks, and then a delicate ice-covered wall, where screws penetrated no more than 4cm—the best protection we could get. Higher, I reached a couloir and managed to place a good anchor in soft ice. The climbing now became more mixed, with loose rock. We were not even halfway up the face when the sun began to disappear. We continued into another couloir, where there was a strenuous 90° icefall. Determined to complete the route, and above all safely, we continued climbing through the night on sustained 75–80° snow and ice, interspersed with sections of delicate rock.

By the time the sun rose again we were exhausted, but at 10 a.m. on August 27 we reached the south summit (ca 5,960m). We descended southeast to pick up the normal route. The avalanche risk was high and we saw evidence of three wind-slab avalanches. At 2 p.m. we finally arrived at the standard base camp. We named our line Andinismo Creativo Boliviano (800m, ED VI/5+ M5 6a+, see photo on page 211 for route line).

Editor's note: The new Bolivian route begins well to the right of the 1971 Via del Triangulo, attributed to Hans Hatzler and Alain Mesili. It slants up left then climbs ground close to but right of the 1971 line before joining it for the upper section of the face and then finishing directly to the summit. In the 1970s this right-hand section of the west face was mostly snow and ice; Mesili graded his route D- (70°) and noted it became steeper and harder near the top. An ascent was made very early in the 2004 season by Pierre Bogino and Alexis Loireau, who found delicate ice and mixed terrain (IV/5 90°).

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Images



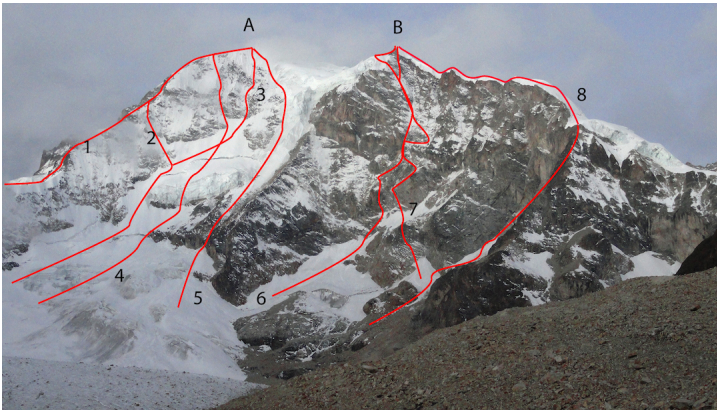
Delicate rock climbing in the lower part of the west face of Huayna Potosi.



Approaching the middle part of the face on the Bolivian variant to Via del Triangulo.



Difficult rock climbing in the lower part of the west face of Huayna Potosi.



The west face of Huayna Potosi in unusually snowy condition, the day before the Bolivian ascent in 2014. (A) Main summit. (B) South summit (ca 5,960m). (1) West ridge (900m, D+, Hudson- Laba, 1969). (2) Slovenian Route (900m, D+, Jereb-Pogacar, 1983). (3) American Route (900m, D-, Harthorne-Harvard-Janney-Thompson, 1970). (4) Primorska Route (900m, TD+, Cernilogar-Humar-Sveticic-Trusnovec, 1983). (5) French Route (900m, D, Afanassieff-Afanassieff, 1978). (6) Via del Triangulo (800m, IV/5, Haztler-Mesili, 1971). (7) Andinismo Creativo Boliviano (800m, ED1 IV/M4 6a+, Condori-Machaca, 2014). (8) Argentinian-Spanish Route (800m, D+ 80°, Enriquez-Godo-Godo- Pagani, 1990). The older west-face routes are now considerably harder than their original grades due to lack of snow and ice, and although (4) was feasible in the 1980s, the state of the large serac today makes crossing it highly inadvisable.

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