



Negruni Range: Katatani, Southwest Face and Southeast Ridge; Purapurani Thojó, South Face

Bolivia, Cordillera Real

During the second weekend in March, Daniele Assolari, Louise Aucquier, and I, from a camp near Laguna Khuna Kkota in the Negruni Range of the central Cordillera Real, climbed the glaciated southwest face and southeast ridge of Katatani. Named Cerro Catatani on the Bolivian IGM map (Lago Khara Kkota 5945-IV), this 5,468m peak, at 16.106522°S, 68.305871°W, lies immediately east of the northern end of Lago Khotia. It is an attractive mountain, and it is surprising it's not visited by more climbers, though in the normal climbing season much of the Negruni is now probably too dry to warrant much attention.

Our climb was interesting, with a very nice final ridge (PD+). More difficult ascents could be made by climbing the southwest face directly, but early in the season we were still wary of avalanches. We descended the same way in a respectable storm, to be welcomed by local people with hot potatoes and fresh cheese.

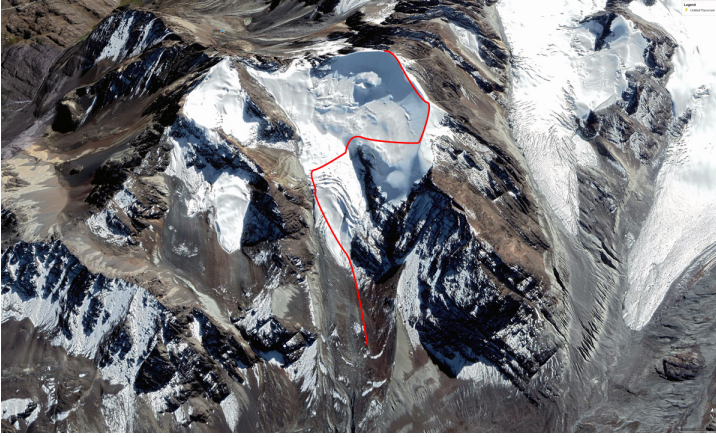
As with many of the lesser-known peaks in Bolivia, it is not clear who made the first ascent of Katatani. It does not appear to have been climbed by the prolific 1969 Bavarian expedition, which made many first ascents in the Negruni Range, but it was certainly climbed in 1984, via the southeast ridge integral, by the Germans Anton and Rita Putz.

The following weekend, with Peñas Adventure School students Reyna Paye, Danitza Mamani, Ever Mamani, Nelson Layme, Efrain Layme, Ever Huanca, and Tito Llusco, Daniele Assolari and I climbed Purapurani Thojó (5,440m, 16.135217°S, 68.293211°W). This lies immediately northwest of the Palcoco mine and Alka Khota Valley. We climbed the south face, which is reasonably steep (50°) and clearly visible from the Altiplano. The climb is comparable to Pacokeuta's south face, but with a longer approach over scree.

Again, the first ascent of this peak is unknown, but the south face was certainly climbed in November 1979 by Michael Betcher and the legendary Stanley Shepard. The latter was an American diplomat in La Paz, and at that time probably Bolivia's most prolific climber (in 1980, for example, he climbed 12 new routes). Sadly, Shepard's route descriptions always carried a certain "mystique," so details of many of his lines remain unclear.

– Davide Vitale, Bolivia, with additional information from Lindsay Griffin

Images



The southwest face and southeast ridge of Katatani (5,468m) in the Negruni Range.

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