



AAC Publications

Tasermiut Fjord, Nalumasortoq, Central Pillar, South Face, La Cura

Greenland, Cape Farewell – Tasermiut Fjord

Nalumasortoq from the south-southwest, showing La Cura up the middle of the south face of the Central Pillar. For more routes on the various faces see AAJ 2004. Photo by Federica Mingolla

Tasermiut is a paradise, not only for rock climbing but also because it is possible to experience what it's like to live in the real wilderness. On July 19, Edoardo Saccaro and I disembarked at the fjord just two days after having left Italy. We had passed through amazing countryside, tiny hamlets, immense open spaces, and very little civilization; some villages we encountered were comprised of a mere 10 houses, a few boats, and, occasionally, a football field.

We quickly set our sights on routes that would provide a warm-up. Our plan was to explore the area and understand the potential before attempting to establish something new. We got a feel for the granite, at first on Nalumasortoq and then on Ulamertorssuaq. We found that it is not quite as solid or clean as we'd imagined. Actually, it can be somewhat treacherous, especially on the slabby areas; the cracks tend to be far more solid, albeit sometimes covered in thick lichen.

One day, I went for a reconnaissance of a formation dubbed Half Dome and saw the "other side" of Nalumasortoq: the south face. Only the west face is really visible from base camp. I took photos of what seemed to me an obvious line on the south face of the Central Pillar, zigzagging through the center of the wall before topping out to the right. It was such a plumb line that I was sure someone must have climbed it. After carefully examining all our topos, and those of other climbers at base camp, we came to the conclusion that, fortunately, I was wrong. A new route would need to be established: ours! This is how La Cura came to life.

[Editor's note: This new route climbs the previously virgin face on the right side of the Central Pillar, between Cheese Finger at Three O'Clock (6b A3, Berthet-Brambati-Dalphin-Flugi-Vitali, 1996) on the western aspect and Conspiracy Planet (VII A3+, Fluder-Golab-Piecuch-Tomaszewski, 2000) on the neighboring Righthand Pillar.]

At the start we had no idea what to expect. Would the rock be solid or crumbly? And were those black marks streaks of water or simply darker shades of rock? And would the weather hold? By now it was the start of August, and fellow climbers warned us about how quickly the weather could change, forcing us off the wall.

Fortunately, it held. After eight days on the wall, split into four attempts, with countless hours spent hauling gear, we managed to complete our route, admittedly with the use of aid on some sections. On our final push we started up the climb on August 14 and reached the top of the south face on the 17th. As we stood there, we could feel the air becoming crisper: Bad weather was on its way. Our 525m route had 14 pitches, but we had been unable to free climb four of these.

Our plan at this point was simple: We'd wait for the storm to pass and then return to the face and give it all we had. Unfortunately, when we finally returned to the peak, after having waited in base camp almost a week, we were met by radical changes. The temperature had dropped, conditions were more akin to winter, and there was three hours less sun on the face. The rock failed to warm, even though the sun was still sky-high and there was not a cloud in sight. It was depressing: We couldn't even take

off our two duvet jackets and woolly socks to try to free the pitches.

After one day and two freezing nights on the portaledge trying the line, we were forced to accept defeat. It was now late August and we were in Greenland, damn it! The decision was correct.

La Cura (7b+ A2) will still be there. Maybe we'll return; maybe we won't. I hope that someone will climb the route. It's not so important whether it's by myself or by someone else; what is important is that it's climbed free, because it is a true work of art—a masterpiece of superbly beautiful cracks, arches, and corners. So, big-wall climbers, give it a go!

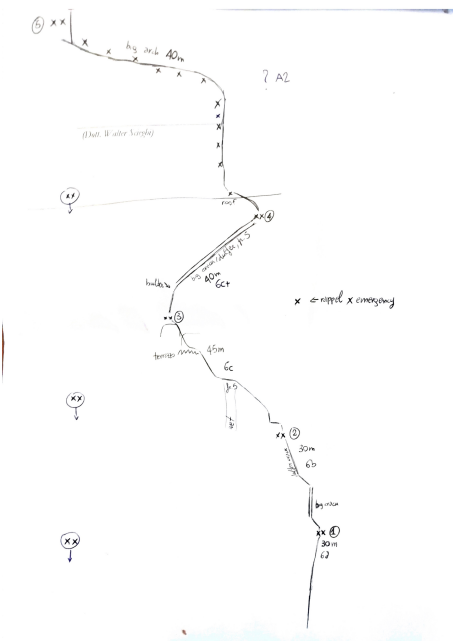
Greenland is a place to which I'd love to return. In the meantime, I'll train to complete La Cura and will fondly remember Tasermit and the peace and quiet there.

– Federica Mingolla, Italy

Images



Nalumasortoq from the south-southwest, showing La Cura up the middle of the south face of the Central Pillar. For more routes on the various faces see AAJ 2004.



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La Cura on the south face of the Central Pillar of Nalumasortoq, as seen from the approach. The Righthand Pillar, to the right, features routes such as Conspiracy Planet (VII A3+) and Non c'e Due senza Tre (5.11+).



Edoardo Saccaro high on the south face of Nalumasortoq Central Pillar during the first ascent of La Cura.



The west side of Nalumasortoq as seen on the approach from base camp and Tasermiut Fjord. La Cura climbs the right-facing wall of the Central Pillar, as seen here in profile.



Federica Mongolla starting pitch seven (7b+) of La Cura on the south face of Nalumasortoq Central Pillar. Edoardo Saccaro



Federica Mingolla on La Cura's sixth pitch—The Arch—not free climbed during the first ascent.



Federica Mingolla follows a difficult pitch on the lower wall of La Cura, south face of the Central Pillar of Nalumasortoq.

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