

the 21st I tried the mountain, but could only reach a lower summit, at 3 p.m., which I called "Cerro Pilar Pequeño" (ca. 4,820m, S28°23'48.8" W68°50'12.4"). It had no previous ascents. Later, I learned that an archeologist had ascended three peaks around Laguna Brava: Cerro Pilar (5,075m), Cerro Fandango (5,612m), and a secondary summit of Cerro Morado o Tambero (5,230m). He found Inca remains on the top of these, but no modern evidence. The major peaks around the lake have now been ascended.

After our February expedition to the same area, we met a Swede, Janne Corax, and his girlfriend Nadine on bikes. They went to Laguna Brava. Corax ascended, solo, Bonete (6,759m) by its southwest face (first solo of the route and possibly its second ascent). They continued north to the little-visited slopes of Pissis, which, at 6,882m, is the second highest summit in the hemisphere and the highest volcano on earth. They found a lot of snow but managed to reach a summit 2 km south of the higher summit. They named it Pissis II or Pissis East (6,811m, S27°46,137 W68° 46,800) and found no traces of other ascents. This summit can be found on the official map. They then went north and ascended main Pissis and other summits in Catamarca.

Another first ascent in the Pissis region was made by Rafael Solana Plaza on April 10, 2004 (www.andeshandbook.cl). He ascended a virgin peak that he christened "Cerro Peña Vieja del Pissis" (S27°47'16" W68°44'00"). On the new Argentine maps, these coordinates roughly match those of Pk. 6,195m.

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Cordon Cachi-Palermo, first complete traverse. Cachi-Palermo is an isolated range located in the Argentine province of Salta. Its two main summits, Cachi-Libertador (6,380m) and Palermo (6,184m), are linked by a long and previously unexplored ridge, and surrounded by a number of 6,000m peaks.

In October, we (both Argentine) made the first complete traverse of the entire range in a 10-day, self-sustained effort. After four days of acclimatization, which included the approach to the range from Liquín de las Pailas (3,050m) and the ascent of Pelicelli Peak, we reached the main ridge at La Hoyada Peak (6,012m). Then we traveled north for about 26 km, never dropping under 5,470m, climbing the 6,000ers Hoygaard, Cachi-Libertador, Palermo, Quemado, Guanaco, and Ciénaga Grande peaks (the three last just by Vitry). We descended the beautiful and partially unexplored gorge of the Salado River.

Beyond mountaineering, we had two other two goals. First, as no good local cartography is available (the only map is IGM's 1:250,000, which shows no details), we did a preliminary geographical exploration, measuring all the passes and summits with GPS and clinometer. We found that Cachi-Libertador and Palermo are the only peaks in the range with more than 400m of prominence, that the highest point of the flat Ciénaga Grande Peak is its western summit, and that Pelicelli Peak, traditionally considered to be higher than 6,000m, measured just 5,831m. The complete set of gathered info is available via email: chvitry@yahoo.com, dariobracali@yahoo.com.ar

Our other purpose was a brief archeological study of these mountains, as Vitry is an archeologist. The Incas climbed La Hoyada, Cachi-Libertador, and three minor summits between 1480 and 1532 AD; on top of the first are little ceremonial centers. At La Hoyada's feet are two more archeological sites, and clear traces of an Inca trail still can be seen heading up it. We also found two historical mines and a forgotten arriero pass across the ridge.

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