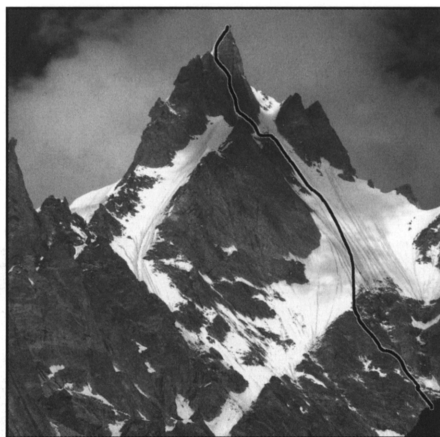


Tasty Talking (11 pitches, 5.10+, House-Prezelj-Swensen, 2004), which climbs the upper crest.

On August 23 Terres and Simon Elias climbed Little Karim Brakk (ca 6,150m), at the head of the Atoshar Valley (a side valley flowing west into the Gondokoro, north of the Charakusa, and two valleys south of the one containing ca 5,860m Cholon). Their 22-hour ascent of the 900m south face involved difficulties up to WI5+ and M4+.

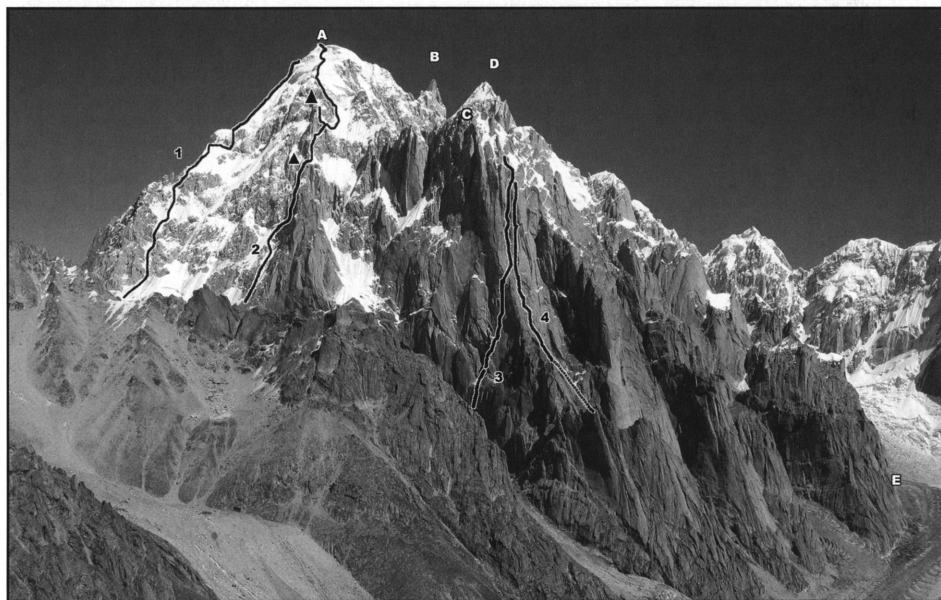
FROM INFORMATION PROVIDED BY FRANCESC ESTORACH, *Director de Comunicaci3n, FEDME, and SIMON ELIAS, Spain, translated by Alex Horner.*



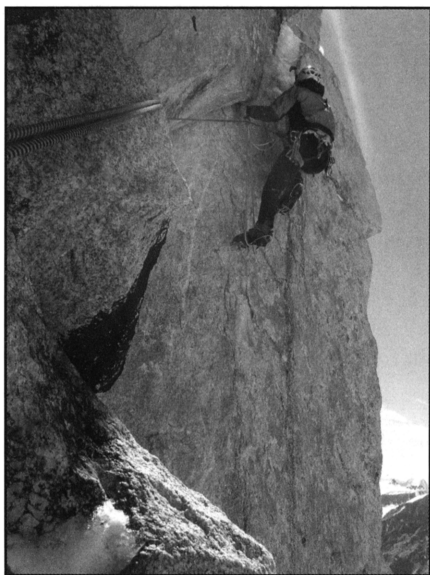
South face of Little Karim Brakk showing Elias-Terres route. Provided by Francesc Estorach

Charakusa Valley, K7 West (6,615m), northwest face, Dreamers of Golden Caves. You never forget your first Himalayan experience. Charakusa was mine. Our first problem was visas. We were unable to obtain these in Slovenia and eventually were forced to go to Rome. Driving home with our visas, which we received on the last possible day before the flight, I wondered if this 20-hour ordeal might be the biggest adventure of the expedition. Instead it turned into one good story in a series of many.

During the dark morning of September 6, Nejc Marcic and I heard our cook say “chapattis”



(A) K7 West. (B) K7 Middle. (C) South West Summit. (D) K7 Main. (1) 1980 British attempt and high point on unclimbed northwest ridge. (2) Dreamers of Golden Caves, with bivouacs. (3) 2007 Belgian-Polish attempt (Badal). (4) 2009 Italian attempt (Children of Hushe). (E) Around to right of this buttress is approximate start of Steve House's 2004 solo ascent of K7 Main and monumental southwest ridge integral (ca 2,400m, upper right skyline arête), attempted in 1990, 1993 and 2006. Kelly Cordes



Luka Strazar on short A2 section high on K7 West.
Nejc Marcic

during the day. We traversed under the huge serac, and as we approached the ridge, an easy passage revealed itself. We shouted joyfully. Heavy breathing and slow walking took us up the final slopes, and we were smiling again. It started snowing during the descent. On the fourth day we returned to base camp.

and later “Inshallah,” as we left base camp at 4,200m on the Charakusa Glacier. But the ascent did not begin well. Due to darkness and inattention, we lost an hour finding our way to the glacier. That made us even more nervous, until firm snow and speed restored some of our confidence. Higher up the wall steepened, and we started belaying. Searching for passages, climbing steep ice and rock, and lugging heavy packs defined our first day on the mountain. Shortly after sunset we reached the ridge and a good bivouac spot. Exhausted we quickly fell asleep.

The second day wasn’t much fun. We climbed many annoying icefields, with hard ice separated by steep rock. A strong sun and dehydration slowed us, so that we only accomplished about 300m. But we found a good bivouac spot, where we melted a lot of water and prepared for the next day’s push to the summit.

As we left our bivouac, we worried whether the final serac would be climbable. The weather was still good, but the forecast was for it to worsen

LUKA STRAZAR, Slovenia

Editor’s note: Marcic and Strazar, traveling with minimal equipment, initially climbed ice runnels and mixed terrain left of the monolithic, lower central spur. From their second bivouac they realized that a direct ascent of the headwall above would be too difficult, so they descended some distance and outflanked it on the right, traversing below part of the large serac barrier that threatens the faces on each side of the spur. They reached the summit at 7 a.m. on day three. They named the route Dreamers of Golden Caves (1,600m, VI/5 M5 A2), because, being young and having little money, they are always dreaming of a way to finance themselves. This is only the second route to the summit of K7 West and the third ascent of the mountain. It was awarded a 2012 Piolet d’Or. The four-man Slovenian team also climbed many other routes in the valley, including a 300m variant (at the top) to the southwest ridge of Naisa Brakk (900m of climbing, 5.11-, Anderson-House-Prezelj 2007) by Marcic and Urban Novak, and a possible new route up the lefthand dihedral on Iqbal’s Wall (David Debeljak and Urban Novak).

Charakusa Valley, Nafees Cap, west face. What was going on? Odd-Roar was awakened by the sound of a slide coming from above. When the first ice blocks hit the portaledge, he threw himself into the wall, half on top of Ole, covering his head as best he could. A few anxious seconds later it was quiet again. A large block of ice had come through the fabric. Later he heard the story of “the last kiss” from Henki, 100m below. He and Sigurd had thought their last hour had come, and in the chaos made an intimate farewell. Before long they were all laughing, but the camp that they felt so sure was safe no longer seemed comfortable. They’d placed it at the lowest ledge on Nafees Cap, the large granite tower below K7. It