

## KARAKORAM

## BATURA MUZTAGH

*Baden Sar (5,455m), first ascent; Constanzia Sar (5,902m), first ascent; Har Sar (6,082m), attempt.* As coleader of the Baden-Saxon Pamir-Karakoram Expedition 2007, which was supported by the DAV, I had the opportunity to spend time in the region where the Karakoram, Hindu Kush, and Pamir meet, an area whose exploratory history has fascinated me for years. After traveling from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to Kashgar, China, then over Khunjerab Pass into Pakistan, we journeyed through the upper Hunza Valley and into the wild and romantic Chapursan Valley as far as Baba Gundi, the starting point of our expedition.



Constanzia Sar (5,902m) is the easternmost peak in the Sakar Sar group. The expedition climbed the southern slopes and east ridge from a camp near the head of the East Sakar Sherab Glacier. The peaks on the right comprise the ridgeline north of Dehli Sang-i-Sar (6,225m). *Peter Metzger*

From here we trekked in one long day to our base camp in Buatar, located in the upper Chapursan at ca 4,000m, at the foot of the Chillinji Glacier and the entrance to the Har Valley, adjacent to the Afghan border. Our campsite was surrounded by many unclimbed 5,000m and 6,000m peaks. During the preparation for our expedition we had earmarked elegant 6,082m Har Sar as our first target. (Har Sar is also known Lupsuk Sar, but it is not the same peak as the Lupsuk Sar near Karambar Lake in the Hindu Raj.) Five of my teammates applied themselves to this task, but none was able to climb above 5,300m.

Meanwhile, I devoted myself to my personal goal, the reconnaissance of the practically unknown mountain regions of the Pamir-I-Wakhan. For acclimatization I made dayhikes from base camp to the Chillinji and Koz Yaz glaciers. Favorable conditions presented us at rather short notice with the opportunity to cross into the Wakhan Corridor in Afghanistan by the Irshad Uwin, a 4,963m border pass, which we planned to do in a small group composed of Martin Thaler, a guide, a cook, five porters, two horses with their horseman, and me.

At this time five of our teammates were trying an unnamed 5,455m peak in the extreme northwest corner of Pakistan, at the upper end of the Chapursan Valley. On August 13 Bernd Kern, Peter Metzger, Dr. Andreas Wegener, and Hans Wölcken reached the previously unclimbed summit and named the mountain after their homeland, Baden Sar.

On the 15th our small reconnaissance group left base camp in Buatar to head toward Afghanistan. In optimal weather we crossed the Irshad Uwin and descended the north side of the pass into the Lupsuk Valley. Our guide related to me how in 1935 his grandfather Isabad

Shah had accompanied R.C.F. Schomberg on the same route. The steep cliffs of the Karakoram changed gradually to the gentle slopes of the Pamir. Our route led us farther north to the Wakhan Darya, and then continued, always on the orographic left of the river, as far as Bozai Gumbaz. The first descriptions of these mountainous regions were provided by Chinese pilgrims in the fifth and eighth centuries, on their way to India with the aim of bringing Buddhist knowledge back to China. Marco Polo passed this way, and Britain and Russia squared off here in the Great Game at the end of the 19th century. From a mountaineering standpoint, the Pamir-I-Wakhan is almost virgin territory. Almost nothing has been climbed here since the 1970s.

We had fixed the 23rd of August as the time to rejoin the other members of the expedition in Baba Gundi, a deadline that precluded an extensive exploration of the Wakhan side valleys. In the interim our mountaineers had been active in the Sakar Sar region. On August 19, the Baden Sar team, plus Norbert Schaible, made the first ascent of the most easterly peak in the Sakar Sar group, at the head of the East Sakar Sherab Glacier. They climbed to the east ridge and followed it to the summit, which they named Constanzia Sar (5,902m), after their hometown of Constance.

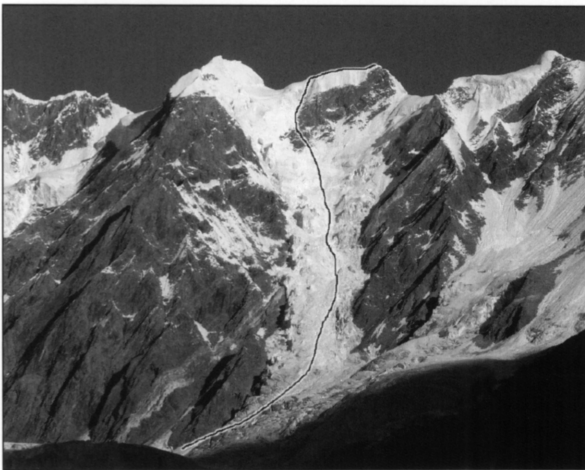
WOLFGANG HEICHEL, *Germany*

*Beka Brakai Chhok, attempt; Wahine (5,820m), first ascent.* In June and July 2007, Lydia Bradey and I attempted the first ascent of Beka Brakai Chhok (6,940m) in the Batura massif. Arriving in Pakistan in early June, we spent four days walking into our base camp, situated at the head of the Baltar Glacier. We were accompanied by a cook (Javed), liaison officer/guide (Shulkar Allah Baig), and 35 porters.

By June 25 we had established three camps on Beka Brakai Chhok's south face, the highest on a col at 5,200m. This entailed a lot of moraine bashing and at times less than ideal snow. On June 28 Lydia and I left for our summit attempt. On July 3, after establishing two more camps, we reached a high point at ca 6,000m on a ridgeline beneath a 250m rock buttress. The

climbing to that point had involved stretches of deep, unconsolidated snow, steep rock, and ice. We pitched most of the ground between camps 3 and 5, at times hauling the packs. Tent sites for camps 3 and 4 were on steep snow arêtes requiring some digging, but Camp 5 was atop a spacious ice blob attached to the main southeast ridge. At this point we realized we did not have the resources to reach the summit, so we descended to base camp over the next three days.

We were fortunate to share base camp with Italian climbers Lorenzo and Giampaolo Corona,



Lydia Bradey and Pat Deavoll teamed up with brothers Giampaolo and Lorenzo Corona to make a one-day ascent of Wahine (ca 5,820m) from a camp on the West Baltar Glacier. *Giampaolo Corona*