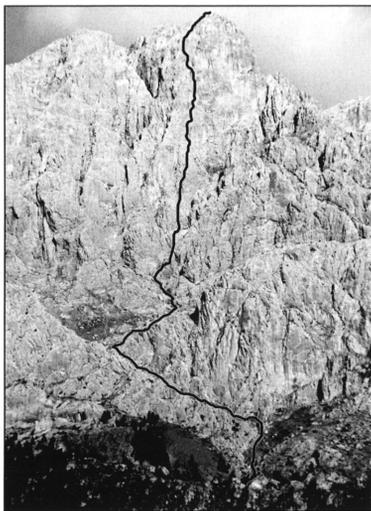


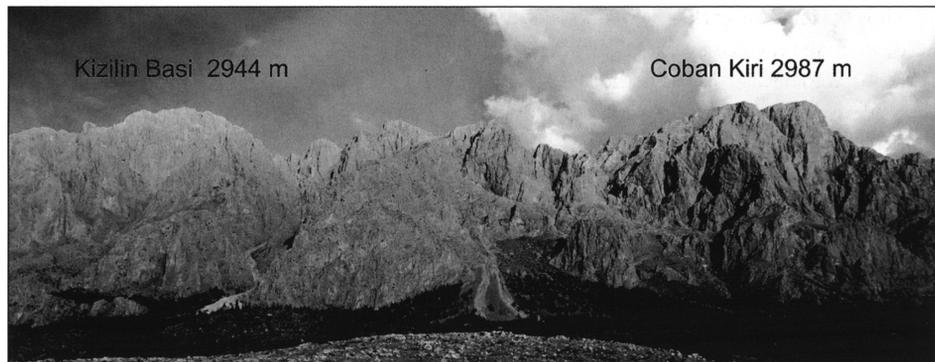
Turkey

Ala Daglar, Coban Kiri (2,987m), west face, Top Secret. In September, Recep Ince (Turkey), Plinio Botterini, Massimo Sacchi, and I (all from Italy) completed the first ascent of the west face of Coban Kiri by a route we named Top Secret. This was my fourth visit in three years to Ala Daglar to climb new routes. This time I wanted to open a route using only traditional protection. I tried the line in June, carrying a hand drill and a few 8mm bolts, just in case the route blanked out or we needed to strengthen the belays. We reached a point where we had several options: either out right on a steep slab that would require bolts or up left on rock that was somewhat looser. In the end we retreated. We came back in September carrying only pitons and completed the route in 11 pitches, taking the option on the left. To reach the climb we traveled by road to the village of Elekgolu via Adana, and turned right on a gravel road above Kizilin Baci, taking the left fork. From where we parked the car, it was 1,000m of ascent (three hours) to the base of the route, the last 200m up a gully (two sections of UIAA III and IV). We arrived at a large yellow niche, a good bivouac spot, at the start of the major difficulties. From this point 560m of climbing on generally good rock—except for pitches seven (VII) and nine (VII, dangerous)—took us to the top. We used 32 pitons for protection and 28 for belay anchors. On pitch five we used three pitons for aid. From the summit we descended north for three hours to Sarimemedin Yurdu (1,750m) at the start of the Emly Valley. We needed another three hours to reach the car. The west face of Coban Kiri is 650m high and reminiscent of the famous Dolomite formation, Saas Maor (Pale). We graded the route VII A1.

MARCO STERNI, *Italy*



The 650m west face of Coban Kiri, showing the line of Top Secret. *Marco Sterni*



Part of Turkey's Ala Daglar Range, seen from the west. There is still enormous scope for long rock climbs: this side of Coban Kiri has only one route to date. *Marco Sterni*