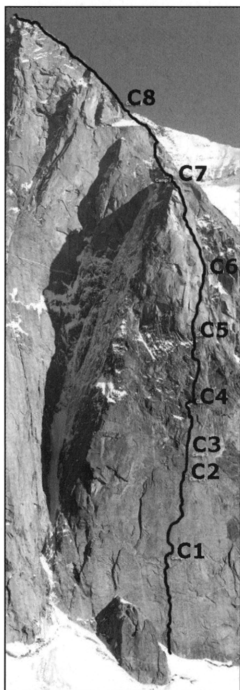


The new Polish line, Opposite to Asan (6a, 700m), on the east face of a ca 4,000m rock formation on the opposite side of the Kara-su valley to Asan. *Lukasz Depta*



The new Ukrainian route up the right side of the north face of Rocky Ak-su (a.k.a. Aksu North, 5,217m). *Anna Piunova collection*

finding easier once we were on the wall, and with this topo of a nonexistent route and some aid gear we set off at daybreak.

From the start we were pleasantly surprised by the quality of the granite and hoped it would continue. We climbed the great corner by a system of elegant cracks. A little roof appeared above, and it seemed likely we would need to use aid, but we found that it went free. The pitch above, however, turned out to be the hardest of the route, though perfect Friend placements assured good protection for this 40m dihedral.

By now the sun was leaving the wall. We exited the great corner and followed a system of shallow chimneys, while watching shadows creep slowly up the west face of Asan. Chasing darkness but still on excellent rock, we came to the end of the difficulties and avoided an unpleasant bivouac on the

harsh vertical wall, reaching the summit at twilight.

Although it was a frosty night, it seemed better to stay than lose our way in the dark. The sparkling lights of the other climbers on Asan disappeared, to be replaced by familiar constellations appearing from behind the ridge. Cuddled inside a rescue blanket, we fell into a restless slumber. Next day we returned to the valley and paid our respects to shepherds in a wooden shelter, before making our way back to base camp. We named our route, logically, Opposite to Asan (700m, 17 pitches, French 6a, sustained at V and V+, 150m of easier II-IV). We also repeated the classic Alperien Route (Russian 5B) on the west face of Asan, taking one-and-a-half days to make a redpoint ascent at 6c+.

LUKASZ DEPTA, *Poland*

Liayliak Valley, Rocky Ak-su, north face, Odessa Route. In July and August Ukrainians V. Cheban, A. Lavrinenko, T. Tsushko, and V. Mogila (leader) climbed a new 6A route up the right side of the north face of Rocky Ak-su (a.k.a. Aksu North, 5,217m). The route starts on the steep wall between the original line on Aksu, the 1982 Troshchenko route (6A), and, to the right, the 1988 Pershin route (6B) and its more direct variant, the Klenov route (6B, 1996). After broken ground above the first buttress, the new route cuts through the Pershin route to take a line more toward the right edge of the second pillar. Above, it follows the Pershin and then the Troshchenko up the long but easier

ridge above to the summit.

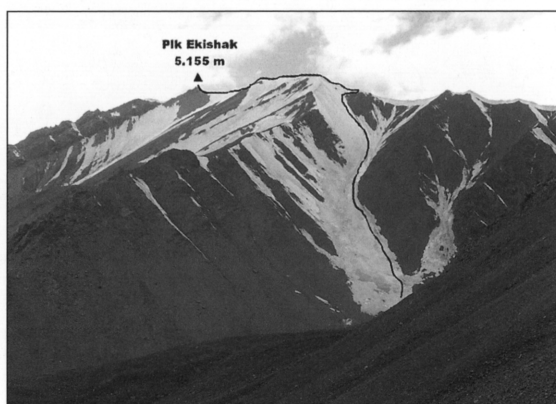
The Odessa Route is 1,700m long, with technical difficulties up to A4. Eight camps were required on the face. With the exception of a 30m section below Camp 4 (at the top of the first buttress), the first 20 pitches (as far as Camp 6, midway up the second pillar) were new. The remaining 22 pitches to the summit coincided with the Pershin and/or Troshchenko. The climbers left all pitons in place, and the ascent was awarded second place in the Alpinism category of the CIS championships.

PAUL KNOTT, *New Zealand*, and ANNA PIUNOVA, *www.mountain.ru, Russia*

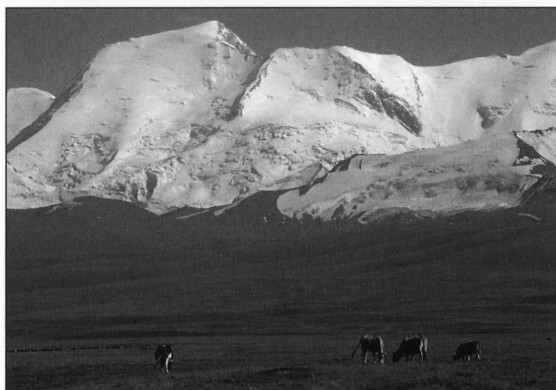
PAMIR

Zaalayskiy Range, Pik Ekishak, first ascent; Pik Molly, northwest ridge; Zarya Vostoka and Kurumdy West, attempts. Our Madteam/X-plore Expedition of Raúl Andrés, Olga Ariño, Irene Artuñedo, Enric Canosa, Albert Falcó, Daniel Guimaraens, Julio Masip David Oliveras, Jordi Sidera, David Taurà, Quim Valentí, and Gerard Van der Berg visited the eastern Zaalayskiy Khrebet, close to the borders with Tajikistan and China.

This is a rarely visited region of the Pamir, the northern flanks of which have been explored by only four or five expeditions to date. There were no other climbers in the range while we were there, and we found the solitude and vast potential for exploration amazing. However, we were not able to make major ascents, due to the poor weather and poor mountaineering conditions. Summer 2006 featured rain every afternoon and high temperatures (a minimum of -1°C at 4,200m). There was no frost at night, the snow was always soft, there were avalanches and rock-fall day and night, and the rock we encountered was of poor quality. We established base camp at 3,550m, an



Ekishak (5,155m) showing the route of the first ascent up the south-east couloir to northeast ridge (PD+). *David Taurà*



The north face of Zarya Vostoka (a.k.a. Eastern Sunrise Peak, 6,349m) in the Zaalayskiy Range of the eastern Pamir. The line of the first ascent by a four-person Kyrgyz team in 2000 follows a hidden ridge to gain the snow rib in the center of the lower face. It then climbs straight up the uniform snow face above to reach the summit ridge left of the highest point. The lower, flat-topped peak to the right contains two summits both marked as 5,998m. *David Taurà*