



Marc Kuhn climbing excellent rough limestone on fifth pitch of Lulu. *Pascal Trividic*

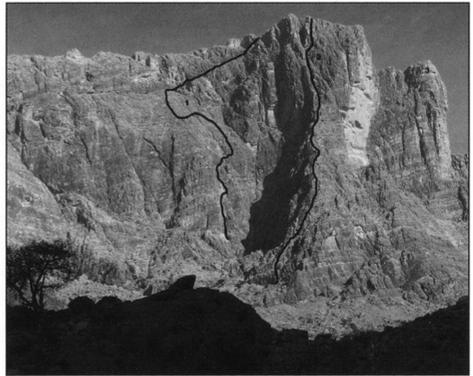
*Jabal Kawr, M'Seeb Rappers, Anhydrous Living; Jabal Misht, Vultures' Keep; Amqah Tower; Jabal Nakhus, Hand Grater.* During late December 2009 and early January 2010, Graham Rowbotham and I completed five new routes on the exotic limestone of the Western Hajar. Starting on the southwest face of Jabal Kawr near M'Seeb hamlet, we climbed an old watercourse on the shallow buttress immediately left of the Kawr Tower. Some sources record this as the line of the 1984 route National Day Climb (500m, D-), but I had concluded after a visit in 2007 that that route likely took an easier line much farther left (*AAJ 2008*, p.283). Nevertheless we found several rusty pitons on the opening pitches, and immediately below a capping overhang a hawser-laid cord around a tree and another peg with an old Joe Brown carabiner. An awkward, cam-protected traverse on friable rock allowed us to continue, and we found no further signs of passage. We named the route *The M'Seeb Rappers* (463m of climbing, TD- VI-).

Farther northwest on the same face lies the Kawr Pillar and its slightly more laid-back twin, which we named *Mabos Pillar*, after one of the nearby villages. We approached the *Mabos Pillar* by scrambling up a dry water-slide gully to bivouac in the hanging valley above. The crucial passage on the climb was an orange buttress at half-height. With careful

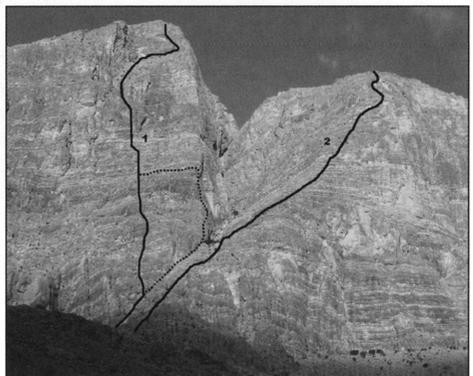
and TD, only the first 250m are difficult. The main five pitches have excellent rough rock with lovely *gouttes d'eau* [pockets common in limestone].

PASCAL TRIVIDIC, *France*

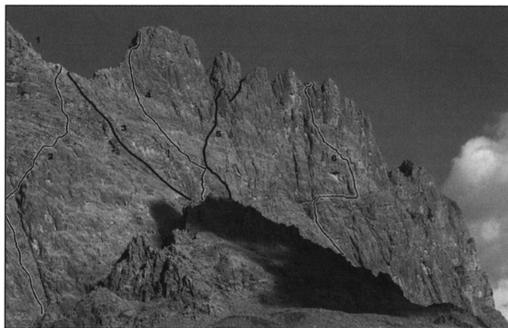
*Editor's note: Lulu appears to follow similar ground to (though perhaps left of) Sigi Brachmeyer and Albert Precht's 2001 North Pillar (TD), before moving left, crossing Rock Fascination (TD, UIAA VII-, Brachmeyer-Precht, 2001), and eventually slanting right to finish on the top section of North Pillar.*



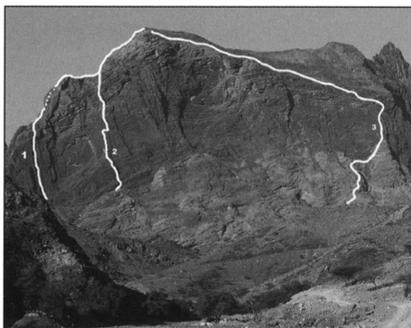
Right-hand end of southwest face of Jabal Kawr, showing (1) *M'Seeb Rappers*, and (2) *Queen of Sheba* (British E1 5a, Hornby-Ramsden, 1999). *Wadi Girls* (TD, Barlow-Nonis, 1999) takes front face of tower marked (3). *Paul Knott*



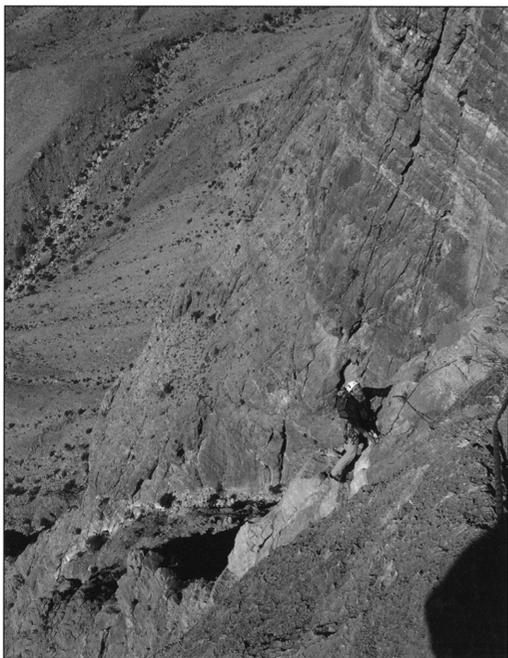
Southwest face of Jabal Kawr showing (1) *The Full Qaboos* (Chaudry-Hornby, 1999, solid line; Eastwood-Ramsden, 1999, dotted line) on *Kawr Pillar*, and (2) *Anhydrous Living* on *Mabos Pillar*. *Paul Knott*



Left end of Jabal Mishf's south face. (1) West ridge (Eastwood-Ramsden, 2000). (2) Mishts of Time (V, Hornby-Knott, 2004). (3) West col (AD+, Davies-King-Searle, 1982). (4) Vultures' Keep. (5) Rock Vulture (VI, Knott-Simpson, 2008). (6) Madam Butterfly (VI, Chaudry-Hornby, 2000). *Paul Knott*



500m east face of Jabal Nakhus. (1) F-Sharp (5.10, Gough-Sambataro, 2009). (2) Hand Grater. (3) Descent route. *Joe Sambataro*



Graham Rowbotham on orange buttress of pitch 11 of Anhydrous Living. Kaur Pillar visible behind. *Paul Knott*

we found superlative climbing, finishing near the main arête on the left side of the first tower. We named the route Vultures' Keep (456m of climbing, D+ V+) in honor of the residents of the tower. After this we drove north to seek out Jabal Murri, a mysterious rocky massif visible from high on Jabal Misht. We ascended Amqah Tower, the westernmost of Jabal Murri's distinctive set of towers, taking the best orange rock but finding only one pitch of IV in reaching this excellent viewpoint.

route finding, we avoided other steeper walls. As we returned by torchlight to the bivouac site, we passed a remote hamlet, far from any apparent water source. The inhabitants greeted us enthusiastically and plied us with dates and coffee. This encounter and our own water-constrained days led to the route name Anhydrous Living (924m of climbing, TD- V).

Also on the southwest side of Jabal Kawr, the newly completed but already blocked road to Nadan helped us access the main western arête of the Nadan Pillar. We completed 315m of climbing up to V+ on variable rock. At a prominent steep step on the arête, we could see no way to continue and retreated by rappel. We felt fortunate that the ropes pulled cleanly, as the stiff breeze threatened to snag them on endless spikes and flakes.

We were keen to include a route on Jabal Misht, so on January 3 we walked in moonlight to the far left end of the south face. Starting 100m left of Rock Vulture,

Finally, we took the main highway via Wadi Hawasinah to investigate the alluring east face of Jabal Nakhus, first climbed in January 2009 by Ian Gough and Joe Sambataro. Wary of the numerous off-width corners, we took a narrower crack line up the center of the main face. This provided solid, well-protected climbing, but the sharp rock bloodied our hands mercilessly. We continued to the ridge to complete Hand Grater (338m of climbing, VI or British HVS 5a+) and descended by rappel close to the Gough-Sambataro descent. Although the local villagers seemed concerned about our antics, the inaccessible summit ridge featured a pair of large, expertly constructed cairns.

After this, we took a much-needed soak in the Nakhl hot springs before returning to Muscat. In contrast to my previous visits, the weather on this trip was persistently cool with frequent afternoon clouds. Otherwise nothing had changed: the people remain as hospitable as ever, and we saw no other visitors except at well-known attractions.

PAUL KNOTT, *New Zealand*

## *Yemen*

*Socotra Island, Mashanig Towers.* Several years ago I explored the eastern islands off the coast of Papua New Guinea, looking for steep rock formations that had yet to see humans on their summits. I found amazing spires. There I met an ornithologist who was also following his passion. I gave him my contact and asked that if he ever saw big, steep walls or towers on his travels, could he please send details. A year later he sent me information about Socotra Island off the coast of Yemen, saying there were big rocks in the mountains. That was enough for me; I had to go. There was little information about these mountains; this was perfect. I first planned



Twin towers of Mashanig, Yemen, looking from southwest: Daddy and Daughter. Rock bridge is visible in notch.  
Mike Libeck