



AAC Publications

Great Trango Tower, northwest face, Out of Reality, not to summit; various other ascents.

Pakistan, Karakoram, Baltoro Muztagh

Looking for somewhere to spend a nice summer holiday, I didn't think I would once again be going to the Trango Glacier. But if you ask me now, "Why again?" my answer would be simply that I love this place.

Martin Krasnansky and Michal Sabovnik had never been to the Karakoram and were hungry for rock, as was I. While Martin discovered the effects of altitude in base camp, Michal and I explored new ground on the south face of Great Trango. To the right of my 2005 route, Assalam Alaikum, we climbed ca 500m up to UIAA VII+ on super-runout slabs, until we got lost somewhere on this huge face and retreated.

We then decided to climb the northwest face in alpine style, without bolts and a portaledge. The northwest face has two parts: entry slabs and the steep headwall. We wanted to try the deep, icy slot on the right side of the pillar climbed originally by Ukrainians, the obvious steep couloir between **Parallelniy Mir and Lost Butterfly**. [Editor's note: This great pillar was climbed by a team from the Ukraine in 2003, but above, on the final wall leading to the southwest summit, they retreated. The line was completed in 2007 by a team from Krasnoyarsk, and in 2011 another line on the pillar, Parallelniy Mir, to the right of the 2003/2007 line, was climbed by an all-female Russian-Ukraine team, which finished up the Krasnoyarsk route from the top of the pillar].

On our first day Michal and I climbed a series of amazing slabs and corners, sharing a few bolt belays with the Ukraine/Krasnoyarsk route. We stopped below a V-shaped crack streaming with water, making our bivouacs separately, five meters apart. Next morning the crack was dry. We climbed it and continued up a long section of offwidths. In a long day we reached the headwall.

Our third day started with another steep offwidth, followed by a technical traverse to reach the snowfield where I was nearly killed in 2005. By midday we had reached the start of an overhanging mixed section with free-hanging ice. We dubbed this "the Illuminati," after a well-known mixed route (M11+ WI6+) in an Italian Dolomite valley. Climbing this at 5,200m, on loose rock with no bolts, was incredible. We didn't get to bed until 2 a.m., Michal in the haulbag, me on a tiny ledge only fit for sparrows.

After an awful night and a terrible day climbing icy chimneys in falling snow, we reached the top of the pillar and a junction with the Ukraine/Krasnoyarsk route. At this point, 400m from the main summit (6,286m) in poor weather, we settled down to bivouac, thirsty like never before. Then our stove was gone, dropped. Without water we'd be fucked. Sitting on a small ledge I contemplated my existence, and next day chose life. We retreated without the summit but with a beautiful line, which we have named **Out of Reality** (ca 1,500m, 7a WI6 M7 A3). A big disappointment was the discovery of abandoned trash at various places on the northwest face. By the contents it was very obvious which party had dumped it. Leaving rubbish on the walls is something I just don't understand.

Later, Martin, Michal, and I climbed a line to the left of Nilam Najang on Uli Biaho Gallery, joining this route at the top of pitch nine. We did this in one day at 7b and C2, naming it **Paradise Circus**. Michal and I also climbed the standard route up Great Trango in a 14-hour round trip from base camp.

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Images



Northwest face of Great Trango seen from the Uli Biaho Gallery. (1) Krasnoyarsk Route (2007). (2) Out of Reality (2012). (3) Parallel Worlds (1999). (4) Azeem Ridge (2004). Assalam Alaikum climbs the face right of (4). For other routes on the northwest face see AAJ 2012.



Michal Sabovnik settles down for a comfortable bivouac in the haulbag on the third night of Out of Reality.



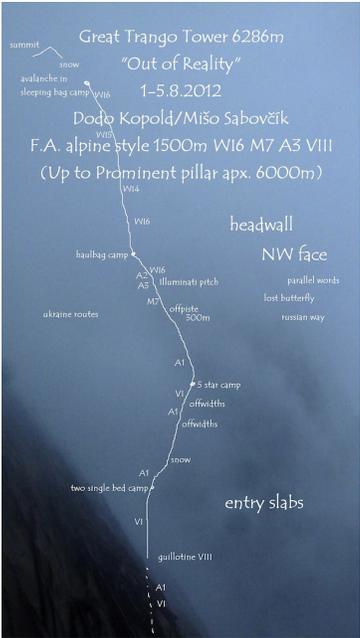
On the upper entry slabs in the rain, heading for the couloir between the Ukraine pillar (left) and the headwall taken by the 1999 American and Russian routes.



Rappelling (with haul bag) the roof of the Illuminati pitch.



On the lower part of the pillar, where their route shares ground with the various Russian/Ukrainian routes, the Slovaks found this collection of trash.



Out of Reality topo.

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