



AAC Publications

Shafat Valley, Various Routes; Z2, East Ridge

India, Zanskar

In 2014, Sidarta Gallego and I visited Zanskar and climbed a number of new routes (AAJ 2015). I realized the potential of the area, mainly for rock climbs, though there are possibilities for mixed, and returned in July with José Castanera, Alvaro “Tasio” Ortiz, and Lluc Pellissa. The result was seven new routes, on peaks up to 6,175m, with maximum difficulties of 7a and M5.

We based ourselves at 3,900m in the Shafat Valley, a side valley of the Suru and home to the Shafat Fortress (see AAJ 2008), where we first climbed established routes on Golden Sentinel (ca 5,200m) and Punta Georgio (ca 5,135m), put up by Italians (AAJ 2006 and 2009). The view from these tops gave us many ideas. Lluc and I first climbed Aguja Tunlup via the route Sangui (500m, 6c), then all four of us climbed Aguja Pomo Yan Le (ca 5,000m) by the route Tasio i es Desgraciats (500m, 6c).

Our next target was a bold pillar leading to the east summit of Shafat Fortress. We climbed this via Incertidumbre (700m, 6b A0 55° snow). The hand cracks were excellent, and just where we needed it, a tunnel led through rock, snow, and ice to the top. Luca and I next turned to the 5,700m west summit of Shafat Fortress and climbed the Estética Goulotte (900m, V/5+ M5). We also climbed shorter routes on the slabby rock buttress below the Golden Sentinel–Shafat Fortress north ridge.

After 20 days at this base camp we used horses to transfer all our equipment to the other side of the river, installing a tyrolean to make things easier. Next day we climbed two new routes: the Superestético Espolon (Lluc and José) and Mas Arrogante, Desplomada y Ordesina (Tasio and me) on the Pilares de la Tierra (600m, 7a A0; 500m, 6b). We also climbed a rock route at the entrance to the valley leading up to Nun Kun: 700m, mainly 6a but with a section of 6c.

After our visit to the Shafat, José and Tasio went to climb one of Sergio Ricart’s routes near Padam, and Lluc and I traveled up the road as far as the Pensi La, walked up the Rumdum (Rangdum) or Z2 valley, and climbed the east ridge of Z2 (6,175m, map height but possibly higher, 33°49’7.42”N, 76°9’56.65”E Google Earth) via a 900m route of ED 6b M4+ 80°. From a camp at the base of the route, at ca 5,400m, we climbed the ridge on July 29 in a 23-hour round trip. On the 30th we descended to the Pensi La, and on the following day all four of us were reunited and relaxing over beers.

– Oriol Baró, Spain

Editor’s note: Z2 was claimed in 1977 by Italians Gino and Silvia Buscaini, who climbed the south ridge in a five-day round trip from the Pensi La. However, Z2 has north and south summits, and it is not certain which peak was climbed or attempted in past accounts. In 1982, Italians attempted the south ridge of the “lower summit (6,080m),” retreated, and climbed the southeast face, a difficult mixed climb. One member of this expedition, the accomplished skier Stefano De Benedetti, soloed the south face of the “main summit” and made a ski descent. In 2014, Baro and Gallego also attempted the south ridge of the “lower summit.”

Images



Z2 from the upper Rumdum (Rangdum) Glacier to the east. This photo shows both summits. Marked is the line of the Spanish route up the east ridge of the northern top.



Pomo Yan Le and the line of Tasio i es Desgraciats.



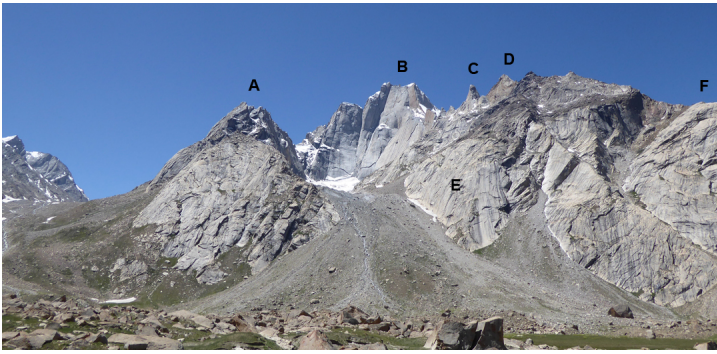
The east ridge of the east summit of Shafat Fortress and line of Incertidumbre.



Estética Goulotte on the northwest face of the west summit of Shafat Fortress.



On the upper section of the east ridge of Z2, above 6,000m.



A general view of the Shafat Valley. (A) Tunlup. (B) Shafat Fortress. (C) Punta Giorgio. (D) Golden Sentinel. (E) The Spanish party climbed two routes on this slabby buttress. (F) This 700m slabby formation was climbed and dubbed the Chessboard by Italians in 2007.

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