



## AAC Publications

---

### **Jebel Misht, Bayan Massir**

Oman, Western Hajar

**In 2010, I attempted a new route on the southeast face of the incredible Jebel Misht.** During the ascent, I was hit by rockfall, leaving me with debilitating injuries to my face and foot. My climbing partner, Hamza Zidoum, and I began a self-rescue that involved hundreds of meters of rappelling into the unknown. Then I crawled for hours through the desert until I was unable to continue. We sought help and I was eventually picked up by a military helicopter and airlifted to Ibri hospital.

I made a full recovery, minus an ankle that has since refused to bend up or down very much and a crescent scar across my left cheek, a constant reminder to live life to the fullest. Not being someone who gives up easily, I always dreamed that one day I would return to Oman and complete the route that had beaten me. In November 2017, I decided it was time to put my demons to rest. This time it would be with Sergio "Tiny" Almada, a climber with whom I've spent hundreds of days questing into the unknown on big walls.

The route we established started how we'd planned, but higher up it blanked out near the overhanging headwall on the right side of the face. Given our desire to complete the route in the purest trad style, we were forced to rappel and downclimb several hundred meters to a large ledge, where we spent a cold night. Having slept maybe two hours and shivered many more, we faced a difficult decision. After our retreat, we had only half our rack, plus some snack bars and half a liter of water each, with more than 700 meters of climbing to go. If we had to bail higher up, I didn't know if we could make it down with so little equipment.

One thing we did know was that in 2013 an Italian team had established a new route just a few meters to the left of our planned line (Physical Graffiti, Migliano-Schiera, AAJ 2016). With our options now limited, we decided we would cross their route, get around the roof that had forced us down, and rejoin our planned line higher up. We topped out just as the sun was setting, some 40 hours after starting, with no food or water. After another very cold night at the top, we walked down the back of the mountain in the morning. Our route shared a couple of pitches with the Italian line, but most of the way we deliberately climbed 5m to 10m away, following other crack features to keep it independent. Mainly, my goal was to complete the line that bested me, and I'm happy we succeeded.

The new route was named Bayan Massir ("Manifest Destiny," 1,045m, 5.11b X or E5 6a).

– Gareth "Gaz" Leah

## Images



Gareth Leah completing the new route Bayan Massir in late 2017, seven years after an attempt left him badly injured by rockfall.



Jebel Misht showing the line of Bayan Massir (white line), the attempted direct route (green line), and Physical Graffiti (red line, Migliano-Schiera, 2013).

## Article Details

|                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Author         | Gareth Leah            |
| Publication    | AAJ                    |
| Volume         | 60                     |
| Issue          | 92                     |
| Page           | 108                    |
| Copyright Date | 2018                   |
| Article Type   | Climbs and expeditions |