



## AAC Publications

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### **Tetnuldi, West Face, New Route**

Georgia, Central Caucasus Mountains

**Tetnuldi (4,858m, 43°01'52"N, 42°59'35"E), in the Svaneti region, is considered one of the most beautiful, pyramid-shaped mountains of the Caucasus.** Situated south of the main frontier ridge, it offers a spectacular panorama, especially of the highest mountains of the Caucasus: Shkhara, Janga, Ushba, and others. Its neighbors are Gestola and Katyn, both a little under 5,000m.

Tetnuldi has played a key role in the evolution of Caucasus mountaineering. Almost a century ago, in 1929, a small group led by Giorgi Nikoladze met with tragedy, when two out of a three-man party fell to their deaths. Simon Djaparidze and Pimen Dvali were the first victims of Georgian mountaineering. A year later, Simon's brother, Alexandre Djaparidze, made a bold solo push on Tetnuldi. From Adishi village he climbed 2,800m to the summit and back in a day. This ascent was the starting point of the Golden Age of the Caucasus. Alexandre, together with his sister Alexandra, became leading climbers of the 1930s and '40s, setting new standards in Soviet mountaineering.

Tetnuldi's climbs are mostly on snow and ice. The mountain was first climbed in 1887 by the British pioneer Douglas Freshfield, with his guides, Francois and Michel Dévouassoud, and Joseph Désailoud, via the southwest ridge—this route has become a classic (2B). The dangerous north face holds the hardest ice routes (5B), while the west face formerly had just two, both climbed in the last decade: the first in 2011 by Georgians at 3B and the second in June 2013 by Czechs Tomas Horsky and Petr Novosad, at 4A. On October 16, a young Georgian mountaineer, Temur Qurdiani, added another route to the west face, a hard solo ascent that he graded 5A.

Qurdiani and three friends made their first camp on the 15th at 3,600m, and early the following morning all of them crossed the relatively complex glacier to the foot of the face. While the other climbers headed for the classic route, Qurdiani crossed the bergschrund at around 4,000m and climbed directly through ice and mixed terrain to reach the southwest ridge at 4,700m. The first ice section was around seven to eight pitches, with short, steep sections. Above came the crux: a 200m granite wall with snow-covered slabs and ice-filled cracks. There were also short, tricky overhanging sections. From the top of this wall, a steep snow slope in poor condition led to the southwest ridge. Qurdiani reached the summit after four hours of free soloing, then descended the southwest ridge. He was thankful to his friends and the mountain, saying that the latter, despite being in hard conditions, was still kind to him.

— Archil Badriashvili, from information provided by Temur Qurdiani, Georgia

## Images



Temur Qurdiani soloing a new route on the west face of Tetnuldi.



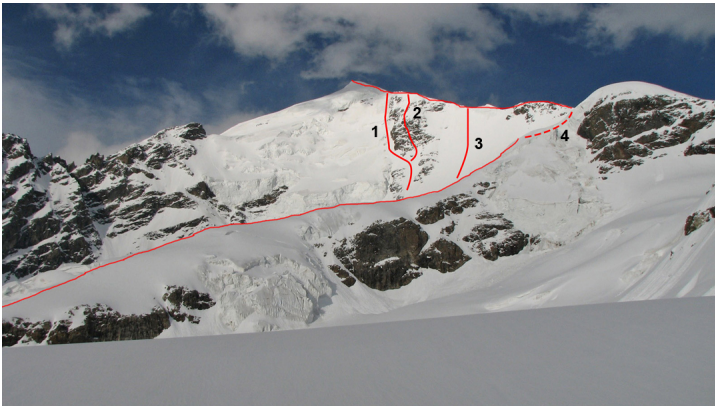
Temur Qurdiani at the top of the ice, about to start on the 200m rock/mixed section of the west face of Tetnuldi.



Temur Qurdiani soloing a new route on the west face of Tetnuldi.



Temur Qurdiani in front of the west face of Tetnaldi, with his solo new route marked. The earlier Czech Route climbs ice to the left of the rocky buttress, while the Georgian Route climbs the ice slope to the right.



The west face of Tetnaldi. (1) Czech Route (4A). This has been repeated four or five times, the last two ascents in 2020. (2) Qurdiani Route (5A). (3) Georgian Route (3B). (4) Original Freshfield Route (2B).

## Article Details

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