



## AAC Publications

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### **Kondus Glaicer: Alison Peak, East Ridge; Peak 6,000m, Attempt**

Pakistan, Karakoram, Tagas Mountains

**In spring 2019, inspired by a photo taken two years earlier by our friend Marcello Sanguineti (AAJ 2018), Maurizio Giordani asked me to join him, Massimo Faletti, and David Hall on an expedition to the Kondus Valley.** Our goal was to climb some of the beautiful untouched rock towers near the head of the K6 Glacier, between Link Sar and the east face of K6. As far as we knew, not only had no one tried to climb these formations, no one had explored the area, and the biggest question mark was how we would reach the base of these mysterious towers.

In late June we established base camp (ca 3,600m) at the end of the military road in the Kondus Valley, at the same place as the American team that later made the first ascent of Link Sar (AAJ 2020). We had planned only 17 days at or above base camp, and we spent the whole of the first week trying to work out how to approach the towers. After getting lost on the glaciers and trying to negotiate scary crevasses and steep couloirs, we realized our objectives were out of reach in the limited time we had available.

For Plan B, we turned to Alison Peak (ca 5,150m), named in 2017 by Tom Ballard and Daniele Nardi. This summit, rising directly above the west side of the Kondus Glacier, is still unclimbed. On July 2 and 3, Massimo Faletti and I climbed the east ridge but stopped below the summit. Avoiding the unattractive lower southeast face, we started from a big grassy terrace that was very easy to reach from the right in 1.5 to 2 hours from the glacier. The climbing on the pillar was varied and more difficult than initially expected, with steep cracks, very technical slabs, and ice or snow ramps. The rock was solid and enjoyable, but not excellent. We reached the end of the steep section, at around 5,000m, after 22 pitches, and then continued along the gently angled ridge (II-III) for a couple of hours. At this point, lack of food and fatigue prompted us to descend. We made 20 adventurous single-point rappels through the night down the southeast face to regain the grassy terrace.

While we didn't reach the summit, we thought our efforts deserved a name: Ma-ma Natura (about 835m of climbing, 7b A2, climbed clean). While we were climbing, Maurizio and David had moved left from the grassy terrace and attempted a line up the center of the southeast face, climbing 11 relatively short pitches until forced down by bad rock.

A few days later, David, Massimo, and I tried to climb the peak (ca 6,000m) immediately above and southeast of base camp. On our first day, the route-finding was tricky due to the many different couloirs and subsidiary summits on the northwest flank of the peak. Eventually, we reached a nice flat area at about 5,400m and bivouacked. That night, Massimo and I set off for the summit. After several hours in deep, inconsistent snow, we had reached around 5,600m when Massimo started to feel sick. I continued for another hour on easy terrain, but at about 5,800m (and after 2,200m of ascent), when it began to get steeper and technical, I also turned around.

— Matteo Della Bordella, Italy

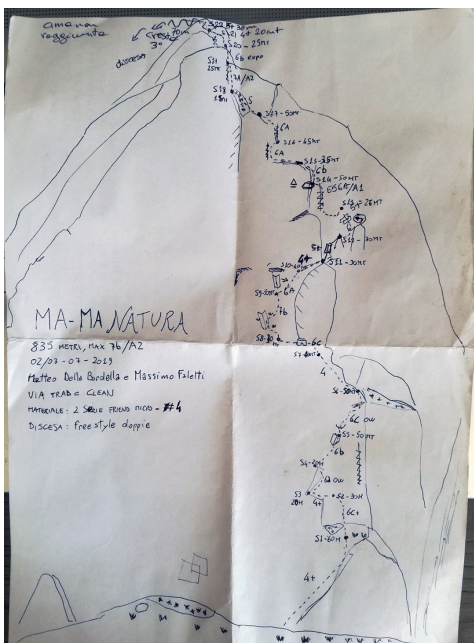
## Images



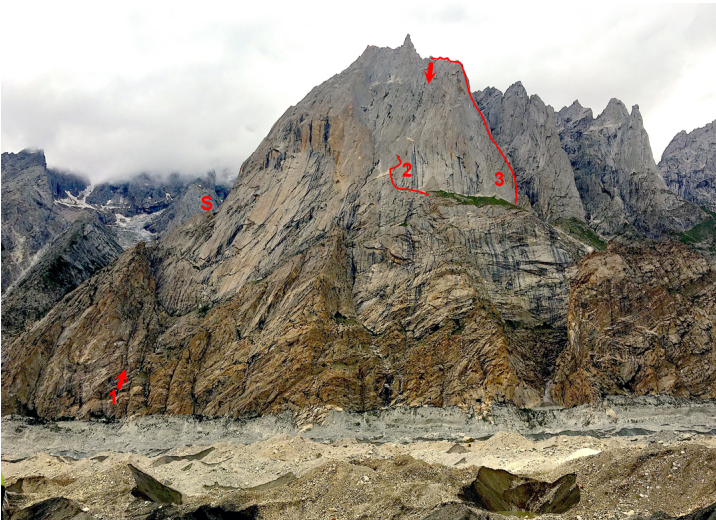
Ma-ma Natura on the east pillar of Alison Peak, as seen above the large grass terrace. The summit is further back and hidden in this picture.



The peak of about 6,000m, attempted in 2019, seen from a bivouac below Alison Peak on the far side of the Kondus Glacier. Base camp was quite close to the start of the route.



Topo of Ma-ma Natura on the east pillar of Alison Peak.



Seen from the southeast, Alison Peak is estimated to be more than 5,100m, the glacier being at around 3,600m. (S) The Scimitar Rosso at an estimated 4,400m. (1) Start of Welcome to the Jungle (Ballard-Focchi-Nardi, 2017), which terminates at the Scimitar Rosso. (2) Giordani-Hall attempt on the southeast face (2019). (3) Ma-ma Natura on the east ridge (Della Bordella–Faletti. The pair did not continue to the summit and rappelled directly down the southeast face from their high point.

Article Details

Author	Matteo Della Bordella
Publication	AAJ
Volume	63
Issue	95
Page	183
Copyright Date	2021
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions