



AAC Publications

Peak 6,094m, West-Southwest Face and North Ridge

Afganistan, Wakhan Corridor, Little Pamir

In 2008, Kathrin Münzel and I reached the eastern end of the Wakhan Corridor and Oxus Snow Lake (AAJ 2009), and subsequently several expeditions followed this pioneering trip; Alan Halewood's parties (AAJ 2011 and AAJ 2014), Bartek Tofel's Polish groups (AAJ 2010 and AAJ 2011), and Chris Nettekoven's German team (AAJ 2013). Two of these parties had hoped to attempt the dominant summit of the Little Pamir, Peak 6,094m, known to some by the working title of Qara Jilga I. This peak was also attempted before the Soviet invasion by Germans, in 1964, and by Poles, 1974.

I co-opted Christine Fischer, Kristina Kunze, and Matthias Müller to accompany me for a second visit. We chose late May to early July, with the aims of attempting Peak 6,094m, linking the Big and Little Pamir via Shaur Pass, and continuing research into the source of the Oxus (Amu Darya). Since our first visit the Wakhan has regrettably adopted more conservative Islam; more women are covered and Ramadan is strictly enforced. The Taliban is only two hours away at Warduj. In addition, charges by local service providers have risen severely. However, the Wakhan still seems a safe and friendly place. We hired Wakhi horsemen from the road head at Goz Khun (2,810m, 37°01.706'N, 72°40.975'E) for our onward journey to the Big Pamir, but once we reached the Pamir Plateau and the first Kyrgyz settlement, the Wakhis were allowed to go no further, and the "Kyrgyz system" meant we had to travel from village to village, arranging new pack animals every day.

From Lake Sorkul we were not able to cross the Shaur Pass due to heavy snow, so retreated to Goz Khun and then drove to Sarad-e-Boroghil. From here, on foot, we crossed the 4,257m Daliz Pass to Bozai Gumbaz in the Little Pamir. Christine and Kristina headed east to explore the Oxus source, while Matthias and I, with only a little time left, due to all the delays, decided to focus on the west and northwest aspects of Peak 6,094m. (Previous teams had tried from the northeast.) We reached an old hunters' camp at 4,186m (37°01.96'N, 74°03.67'E), left our horseman there for our return, continued to a glacier at 4,589m (36°59.51'N, 74°04.49'E), which we named Qara Jilga Glacier after the river valley, and snowshoed to the site of a high camp at 5,130m (36°56.76'N, 74°03.68'E) on June 23. Surrounding us were dozens of unclimbed peaks over 5,500m.

On June 25 we began at 5 a.m. and headed toward the ca 900m west-southwest face of Peak 6,094m. Spring avalanches had wiped all loose rock and snow from the face, allowing us to progress on good 40–45° névé. Climbing a 50–55° narrow ice gully, we reached the summit ridge at 5,852m and continued up it on unconsolidated snow, at worst waist deep. We reached the north summit (6,080m Russian map; 36°57.58'N, 74°05.42'E), which we called Greta Sar, at 1:30 p.m. Another summit loomed in the near distance, and we trudged across to this, arriving one hour later. Although our GPS had read higher on Greta Sar, Russian maps and our own eyes indicated this to be the highest point (Peak 6,094m). There was no higher summit in a radius of 20km, and we thought it appropriate to give the peak the name Koh-e-Wakhan. [Note: This name is not to be confused with the mountain range in the Big Pamir given the same name, entirely inappropriately, in AAJ 2013 and 2014, nor a summit of 6,505m at the head of the east branch of the Qala Panja Glacier, elsewhere in the Wakhan, that was similarly named in 1968 by Henri Agresti (AAJ 1970), though he did not climb it. That peak was climbed in 1969, and since then all cartographers and historians have referred to it as Rahozon Zom North, the name given by the first ascensionists.] **Our ascent route had been about AD+ and we descended the same way, reaching our camp at 10 p.m. Fifty-two years after the first attempt, the highest summit in the Little Pamir had been climbed. For high-resolution panoramas and other photos**

visit www.wakhan-expedition.de.

Steffen Graupner, Germany

Wakhan Access Update

A short decade of an open and relatively easy-to-access Wakhan Corridor appears to be drawing to an end because of Taliban advances near the west end of the corridor. However, one option that might keep the area open is a long-proposed border post at the Langar Bridge. This crosses the Oxus (Amu Darya) from Tajikistan to Afghanistan just upstream from Goz Khun, midway along the Wakhan Corridor. When the German team (report above) was in this area, construction activity on the Tajik side of the bridge was clearly visible, and this might point toward a formal border post. A crossing here would be a much safer and cheaper way to enter the Wakhan. In addition, rumors abound of Tajikistan opening a border post at the eastern end of the Little Pamir, near the far east end of the Corridor. This could be accessed quickly, reliably and cheaply by car from Khorog.

An earlier initiative to standardize tourist prices in the area for food, accommodation, pack animals, etc., has now disappeared. The German climbers managed to reach some of their goals, but found it very much harder than during their previous visit in 2008. Apart from the expedition below, a team of 12 Russians climbers was supposed to be entering the Wakhan in mid-July but no details have been forthcoming.

Lindsay Griffin, from information supplied by Steffen Graupner, Germany

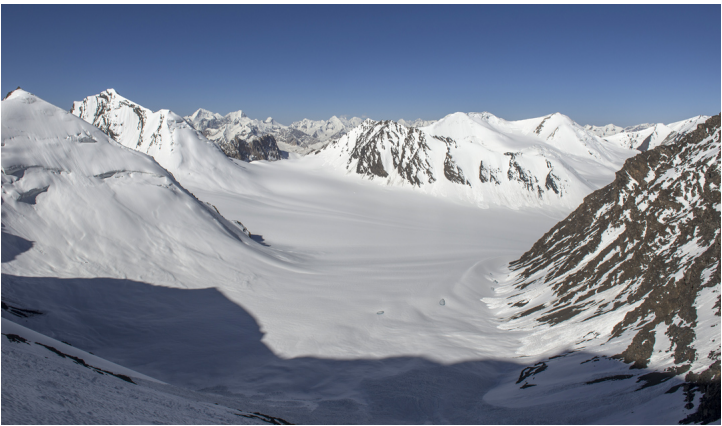
Images



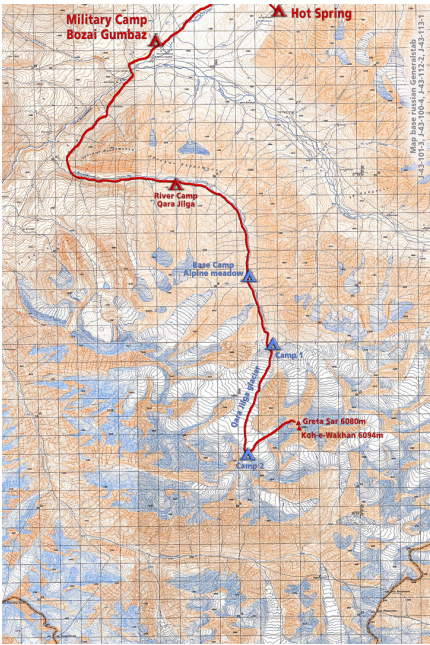
The west-southwest face of Koh-e-Wakhan and the line of the first ascent via the north ridge and north foresummit (Greta Sar).



Looking up the Qara Jilga Glacier with Koh-e-Wakhan right of center. All other peaks are unclimbed.



Looking across the upper Qara Jilga Glacier to entirely untrampled terrain from halfway up the west-southwest face of Koh-e-Wakhan.



Soviet map showing the route of approach to the summit of Koh-e-Wakhan.



Walking up the Qara Jilga Valley. Greta Sar is the highest summit at the back (second peak from left). Koh-e-Wakhan is just beyond. In 2013 a British-South African team attempted the first summit from the left via the ridge that diagonals down to the left (northeast). They abandoned the attempt when one member was hit badly on the head by falling rock (AAJ 2014).



The view southeast from Greta Sar, the north foresummit of Koh-e-Wakhan, looking toward the distant Sakar Sar Massif.

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