



AAC Publications

Mythics Cirque, Complete Traverse; Ataatap, The Mental Breakdown; and Other Ascents

Greenland, East Greenland, Kangertivatsiaq Fjord, Mythics Cirque

In every part of Felix Bub's and my expedition to the Mythics Cirque, we placed the "how" above the "what." Our journey to East Greenland from Innsbruck was made by train and yacht. This resulted in a direct carbon cost of only 280kg per person, roughly the equivalent of a single-person car journey from Munich to Chamonix and back. All of our completed objectives were climbed free and emphatically without bolts. We climbed more than 3,000m of new ground in alpine style up to 7b+.

Arriving in the Mythics Cirque at the end of July, Felix and I spent August 1 to 3 making the first complete traverse of the Mythics. As seen from the shore, we climbed from left to right, creating a route we called Circus Maximus (39 hours of climbing, 6c). The route was comparable to the Peuterey Integrale on Mont Blanc, but looser. We belayed 22 pitches (2,130m of climbing), rappelled 14 times, and climbed 16 peaks and gendarmes, half of which were probably first ascents.

We began with the strangely named No Tower 1 East, then followed the rim of the cirque west, north, and then northeast to the last summit, Damocles, from which we descended southeast back to the valley. The new routes included a 270m 6a climb up Ganja Tower (a.k.a. the Squid), a long 6a/b route up Gendarme de Papi and Ataatap Tower, and Sirens of Change (6c) on Siren Tower. [See below for a full list of the summits and a description of the routes climbed on the Circus Maximus traverse.]

From August 6–9, Felix and I made the second ascent of Forum (840m, 7c, 2021; see AAJ 2022) on Siren Tower. We took a portaledge and two haulbags. Every pitch was redpointed by the leader and climbed without falls by the second; both of us led the crux pitch free.

Low on the route, we climbed a four-pitch variant, taking a path of least resistance somewhere between Forum and The Wall of Planck (also established in 2021). On pitch nine I avoided the second bolt on Forum by a hard traverse right and a devious line back left via hollow flakes. [This variation was climbed by the first ascensionists on their way down after climbing the route.] It took four attempts to lead this. Near the top, we also diverged from the original line, probably following parts of The Wall of Planck before moving farther left. From the summit, we descended the wall following an almost fully equipped rappel piste.

Back in base camp, Michelle Dvorak and Fay Manners, whom we knew from before, turned up unexpectedly at the tent door. Over the 13th and 14th, the four of us attempted a new route on Siren Tower, right of The Wall of Planck. We turned around after completing seven pitches (245m of climbing), up to 7b onsight and with two pitches that were not redpointed, probably in the French 8th grade. We retreated having reached an unprotected section. I was simply too weak mentally after a demanding first day on the wall, immediately after climbing Forum, to decipher the remaining five meters of free climbing above a micro-cam.

It would have been easy to place a bolt that would have allowed us to continue and probably complete the whole line. However, we strongly criticize the current development in the Mythics Cirque, and elsewhere in Greenland, regarding the use of bolts. Justifying bolts purely for safety or convenience reasons is not sustainable.

Later, while climbing a new route on Ataatap Tower, we were disturbed by the awful roar of a power drill used by a Spanish women's team that had arrived in the area. They placed bolted anchors on their route to aid a rappel descent of the face. In my opinion, given that the rock here is so easily protectable, this shouldn't be an argument made by an elite national alpine team. It will relegate Ataatap Tower, which is strategically very difficult to access and descend, to a one-day undertaking.

To keep the adventurous character of climbing in Greenland and leave space for future parties, there must be a rethink toward less egoism when putting up new routes and toward a much greater acceptance of failure among the climbing community. [The author's new route on the northeast face of Ataatap Tower, climbed with Dvorak and Manners (Bub had injured his shoulder and was unable to climb) is described in a separate report found [here](#).]

– Martin Feistl, Germany

Looking southwest at the Mythics cirque from the last summit, Damocles, in the three-day Circus Maximus traverse. (A) No Tower I East. (B) No Tower I West. (C) No Tower II. (D) Ganja Tower. (E) Gendarme de Papi. (F) Ataatap. (G) Hidden Gendarme I. (H) Hidden Tower. (I) Hidden Gendarme II. (J) Siren Tower. (K) Zula Peak. (L) Aurora Tower. (M) Prometheus. (N) Tantalus. (O) Sysiphus. Photo by Martin Feistl.

Compete Mythics Traverse, August 1–3, 2023

First complete traverse of the Mythics Cirque, from left to right, including all gendarmes: Circus Maximus (39 hours of climbing spread over three days; maximum 6c). Comparable to the Peuterey Integral on Mont Blanc, but looser, without bolts, helicopters, bivouac shelters, or high altitude, and mostly new. We roped up for 22 pitches (over 2,130m) with difficulties mostly up to 6a, with a few more difficult passages up to 6c. We made 14 abseils; additionally, several times we downclimbed with rope protection. In total, 16 peaks and gendarmes were climbed, eight of which were probably first ascents.

A. No Tower I East

First ascent via north flank and east ridge (grade 1-2)

B. No Tower I West

First ascent via east ridge (hiking terrain)

C. No tower II

First ascent via east ridge (4a)

D. Ganja Tower a.k.a. The Squid

First ascent via "Hanfparade" (270m, 4 pitches, 6a)

E. Gendarme de Papi

First ascent via "Time to Say I'm Sorry," (190m, 3 pitches, 6a/b to the Gendarme)

F. Ataatap Tower (a.k.a. Father Tower)

First ascent of the second part of "Time to Say I'm Sorry" (total of 400m, 5 pitches, 6a/b, until meeting

the last 250m/2 pitches of "Coronis" (Bunn- Royer, 2012)

G. Hidden Gendarme I

First ascent via "Wind of Change," (80m, 1 pitch, 6a)

H. Hidden Tower

Mostly probably via the upper part of "Assembling the Tupilak" (Bunn- Royer, 2012, 190m, 2 pitches, 6a)

I. Hidden Gendarme II

First ascent via "Hidden Sand Box" (130m, 2 pitches 6a)

J. Siren Tower

First ascent of "Sirens of Change" (160m, 3 pitches, 6c)

K. Zula Peak

First ascent via "Vertreibung der letzten Egoisten," (400m, 2 pitches, 6a)

L. Aurora Tower

Via upper part of Southwest Ridge (Irving-Kenchenten-Marazzi-McSorley-Percival-Weldon, 2016, 250m, 2 pitches, 4a)

M. Prometheus

N. Tantalus

O. Sisyphus

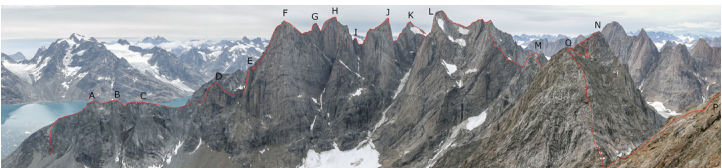
P. Damocles

Via the "Tortures Traverse" (Bunn-Royer, 2012)

Images



Martin Feistl on the last pitches of Coronis (2012) before reaching the summit of Ataatap Tower at the end the first day of Circus Maximus.



Looking southwest at the Mythics cirque from the last summit, Damocles, in the Circus Maximus traverse. (A) No Tower I East. (B) No Tower I West. (C) No Tower II. (D) Ganja Tower. (E) Gendarme de Papi. (F) Ataatap. (G) Hidden Gendarme I. (H) Hidden Tower. (I) Hidden Gendarme II. (J) Siren Tower. (K) Zula Peak. (L) Aurora Tower. (M) Prometheus. (N) Tantalus. (O) Sysiphus. (P) Damocles.



The Mythics Cirque from the east showing the complete Circus Maximus traverse (from left to right). (A) No Tower I East. (F) Ataatap. (J) Siren Tower. (L) Aurora Tower. (M) Prometheus. (N) Tantalus. (O) Sysiphus. (P) Damocles.



Felix Bub on the ninth pitch (7b) of Forum, avoiding the bolt used for the aided variant.



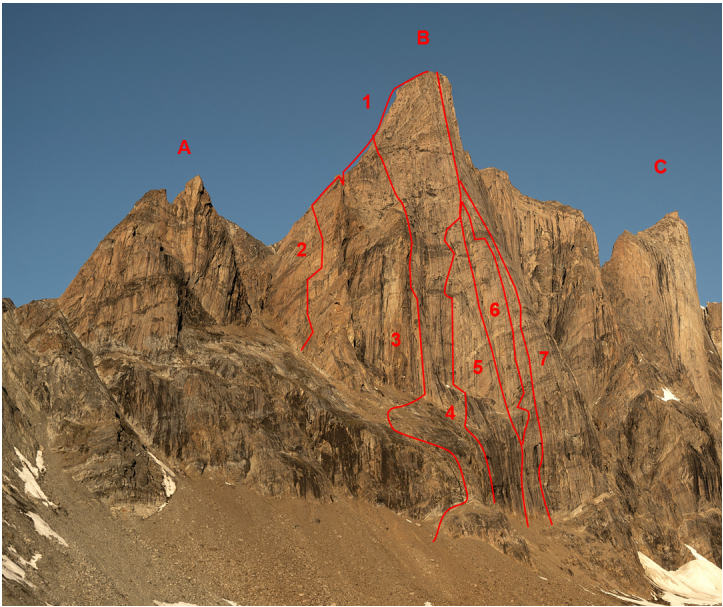
Martin Feistl on pitch 11 (7a) of Forum. On the first ascent this was linked with the crux pitch.



Felix Bub on pitch 13 (6b) of Forum.



Fay Manners on pitch three (7b) of the new route attempted, and subsequently aborted, on Siren Tower.



Ataatap Tower (Father Tower) and neighbors in the Mythics Cirque. (A) Ganja Tower. (B) Ataatap Tower. (C) Siren Tower. (1) Coronis (2012). (2) Rostoll Verbenero (2023). (3) The Mental Breakdown (2023). (4) Daddy's Sweet Tooth (2021). (5) Built Fjord Tough (2012). (6) Jubi (2023). (7) Northeast Face (French Route, 2018).

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