



*Jürg Neidhardt & Matthias Braun*

*Climbing in*  
**Damascus**

Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Damascus 2006

# Preface to the 2006 edition

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

I started climbing when I met Matthias nine years ago in the Netherlands – a somewhat of a paradox spot for somebody who has been brought up in Switzerland. From the first time when he took me for a climbing weekend to the cliffs in the Belgian Ardennes, I was completely hooked with the sport: the combination of being outdoors, the need for physical power, athletic technique and concentrated mental dedication embodied the very thing I had been looking for all my previous life.

When I had the chance to move to Syria with work in 2004, where Matthias had started the sport of rock climbing from scratch, I could not resist the temptation. This country, with its warm-hearted people, a pleasant and dry climate and the possibility to reach excellent sports climbing cliffs within less than half an hour after finishing work was just too attractive.

After Matthias' departure in September 2004, we continued drilling more routes. Various people have helped me in developing new sectors and routes. I would like to send my special thanks to Scott Appelboom, Markus Gschwind and Mike Mack for moral and physical support and for spending numerous splendid times together on the rocks. Then to the French connection; in particular Claude Gout, who brought a touch of *savoir vivre* in the form of wine, cheese and smiles into our sometimes somewhat stern and Spartan climbing sessions. Not to forget Nidal Touma and Oussama Jarousse who helped me to get hold of things I could not find myself in Damascus and just for being good friends. Finally, thanks to Malcolm Dransfield who revised most of the texts.

I have completely re-edited the 2004 guide and tried to focus the guide more on the description of sectors and routes. So some sections about the history of Syria and general matters of tourism have been left out because travel guides such as the *Lonely Planet* of Syria embody a much more thorough source on these matters. Also, some of the more boulder type of sectors were omitted now that they are covered by a dedicated boulder guide by Matthias, Angelica, Linzey and Scott. On the other side, Markus Gschwind's Klettergarten in the Valley of figs as well as all new lines and sectors at the three original sites are enclosed. Some of the texts and pictures from the previous guide book were maintained albeit slightly rearranged.

Enjoy...

Jürg Neidhardt, Damascus November 2006

# *Preface to the 2003 edition*

## **This Guide - Climbing in Damascus** *By Matthias Braun*

Ever since our arrival in Damascus in September 2001, we have been busy developing the climbing sites around Damascus. Discovering Syria and the climbing sites has been very memorable for us. We are continuing to develop climbing sites around Damascus; in this guide we are describing the two largest and most mature climbing and bouldering areas — the further potential for climbing and especially bouldering is huge, we are already thinking about a dedicated bouldering guide. We hope that with the help of this guide, other people will be able to discover the pleasures of climbing in Damascus.

We would like to thank our regular climbing colleagues, especially Linzey Cartwright, Paul Reijnen and Scott Appelboom, who helped with the development of the climbing sites. All climbs in this guide have been opened by Angelica Hug, Matthias Braun, Linzey Cartwright and Scott Appelboom. Thanks to Pascale Cartwright for help with printing this guide.

A visit to Damascus and Syria is like taking a time-jump back 25 years, not because classic cars and even donkey carts are a familiar sight on the roads, but because people have kept many of the values we have unfortunately lost in Europe.

The same time-jump is experienced while climbing in Syria. Here there is no full car-park at the climbing site and nobody is throwing their backpacks on your gear or blocking climbs for hours. Here, you can climb on your own, hear the birds singing, enjoy the nice weather and watch the sheep grazing. All climbing areas described are located on cliffs featuring perfect limestone, the protection is excellent and there are enough climbs and boulder problems for a few days of pleasure.

Enjoy.....

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# Disclaimer & Rules

## Disclaimer

- It is the purpose of this guide to help climbers to find the climbing areas and routes. The authors of this book can take no responsibility for any false or inaccurate information presented, especially (but not limited to) information about: protection reliability, grading, special dangers, location or existence of the sites and routes, equipment use, faulty safety advice... etc or for any omitted information.
- Climbing accidents can seriously damage your health or even cause death. It is indispensable you get properly instructed and have built up sufficient rock climbing experience prior to venturing out to climb on your own. Although some safety advice might be given in this book, the authors can by no means take any responsibility for accidents that might occur on the Syrian cliffs.
- The reliability of belays and bolts of climbing routes is undergoing natural deteriorating processes. Under no circumstances should it be assumed that any protection will hold the weight of a climber. It is the climber's own responsibility to check the reliability of bolts and belays. If in doubt, our advice is NOT to climb a route.
- Although the rock cliffs described in this book seem reasonably stable, evidence of occasional rock falls and partial collapses are omnipresent. Especially after rainfalls and large temperature changes, the chances for such events are increased. It is the climber's own responsibility to check if there is any danger. If in doubt, don't get close to the rock cliffs. It is recommended to wear a climbing helmet.

## Behavioral rules

- Although it is common practice in Syria to chuck waste into the landscape without a second thought, we suggest you do not take over this bad habit. Take your waste back with you including cigarette butts. So far we have managed to keep the climbing sites clean – let's keep it like that.
- If you have to follow some basic human needs please walk away a safe distance from climbing walls and boulders. There is nothing amusing about peeling off from a nice block and landing in human remains.
- Be polite to local people you meet at the sites. A "sallam alleicum", a smile and a wave/handshake is the bare minimum. Should you speak some Arabic, do invest a few minutes to tell them who you are and what you do. It is their home, you are the guest, hence it is up to you to be forthcoming. Without exception people we met have been amiable and inviting.
- Although the most modern Damascene people do not adhere to traditional clothing rules, in the countryside the population is generally much more conservative. Do wear decent, inconspicuously colored sports clothes, covering knees, belly and shoulders.
- Due to the close distance to the Lebanese border and some military structures, it is quite likely -especially in Sabbourah- you will meet soldiers from time to time. Foreigners do have a special status in Syria, hence it is advisable to make sure they immediately realize if you come from abroad. Be polite, but also a bit more firm than with the locals. Normally, common soldiers do not speak English and will call an officer to explain what they want. If they ask you to leave e.g. because they are running military manoeuvres, **do** follow their instructions. Having said all that, almost all our encounters with the green folks have been pleasant enough and by no means threatening. Always bring your passport.

# Equipment

## Bolts

The vast majority of climbs we have put up in Syria are bolted, such that, with the exception of quick-draws, no additional protective equipment (friends, hex, nuts, etc.) is necessary. The climbs are bolted in “southern European” style. The first routes in Syria have been equipped with bolts and belays imported from Europe. As the number of routes increased however, importing all materials became too much of a logistical problem and a more “local” solution had to be found. In place of single bolt protection, we started to use 10mm wire U-bolts which were custom made in the Damascus souq. These bolts are glued double approximately 8cm into the rock with professional two component rock cement (see figure on the right).

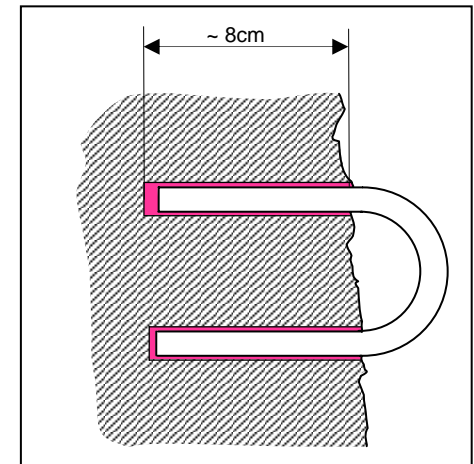
## Belays

Almost all climbs lead to an equipped belay, mostly 2 U-bolts, sometimes connected by a chain with an iron karabiner. The chains and karabiners are local products and therefore not made of stainless steel. They quickly have a rusty appearance and sometimes need to be checked. After some of the chains and karabiners disappeared, the belays were positioned such that they can not be reached from the top of the cliffs. Where there is no chain, it is recommended to pull the rope through both bolts to abseil and top-rope the routes.

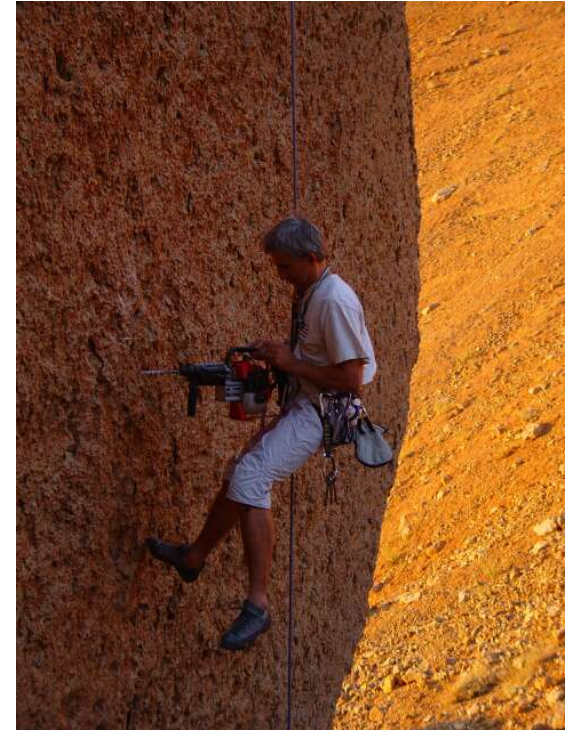
## Climbing Equipment

There are several climbs where 10-12 quick draws are needed for protection. Although there are many short climbs in the Damascus climbing areas, some of the climbs in our climbing areas reach almost 30 metres, hence a 60 m rope is handy for the climbs. Multi-pitch climbs exist in Wadi Manchura and the Valley of Figs.

**Warning:** Although lot of care was taken placing the equipment, bad placement, rust, rock erosion, aging etc can make anchors and belays useless and unsafe!



# Equipment



Everybody who has ever done it knows that installing protection for rock climbing routes can be fun, but in the first place it is pretty hard work. Quite a number of weekends and holidays had to be sacrificed to create the routes in Syria.

This page shows the core drilling team: Matthias Braun (upper left), Jürg Neidhardt (middle), Linzey Cartwright (right) and Scott Appelboom (lower left).

# Climate

You can climb in Syria throughout the year. The climbing areas are all located relatively “high” up in the Anti-Lebanon mountains. Due to the altitude of the climbing sites and the intensity of the sun in all seasons, the temperature differences during a day can be very significant. Temperatures range widely from very hot summer highs to snow laden winter lows.

The best time to go climbing in Syria stretches from April to June and from the end of September to November. Temperatures during those months usually range between 20 and 35 degrees Celsius. Rainfall, outside the period of December-March, is limited to short showers. Between March and November, Damascus often experiences drought conditions.

In summer it can get very hot, temperatures can reach 35 degrees Celsius daily average in Damascus and midday highs can reach above 40 degrees Celsius. Although it is somewhat cooler up in the climbing areas, the intense sun radiation makes it impossible to climb between 11am and 3pm. During early morning and late afternoon climbing is however very enjoyable.

In winter temperatures can go below the freezing point in the hills and if there is enough precipitation, there is a permanent snow cover in the mountains. Enjoyable climbing temperatures can only be found on clear, calm and sunny days. However, in the dry Syrian climate, such days are quite common.

	Avg. Temperature [C°]	Avg. Low [C°]	Avg. High [C°]	Avg Precipitation [cm]	Highest rec. temp. [C°]	Lowest rec. temp [C°]	Avg # days > 32C°	Avg # days > 21C°	Avg # days < 0C°
JAN	6	0	11	3	23	-11	--	--	15
FEB	8	2	13	3	25	-11	---	2	10
MAR	11	4	17	2	29	-7	---	8	4
APR	15	7	23	1	36	-2	1	22	---
MAY	20	11	28	0	41	0	8	30	---
JUN	23	14	33	0	41	5	22	30	---
JUL	26	16	35	0	45	10	30	31	---
AUG	26	17	35	0	43	10	29	31	---
SEP	23	13	32	0	43	3	21	30	---
OCT	18	9	27	1	36	-1	4	29	---
NOV	12	4	19	2	29	-7	---	13	5
DEC	7	1	13	4	24	-8	---	1	12

According to [www.weatherbase.com](http://www.weatherbase.com)



Markus & Jacques ski-touring above Brudan in February

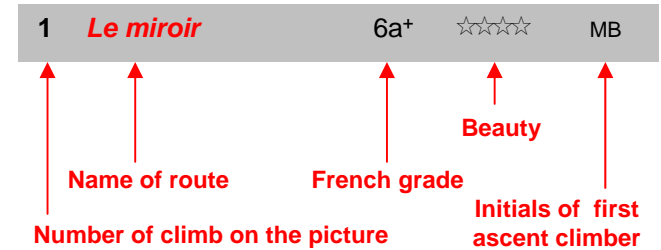
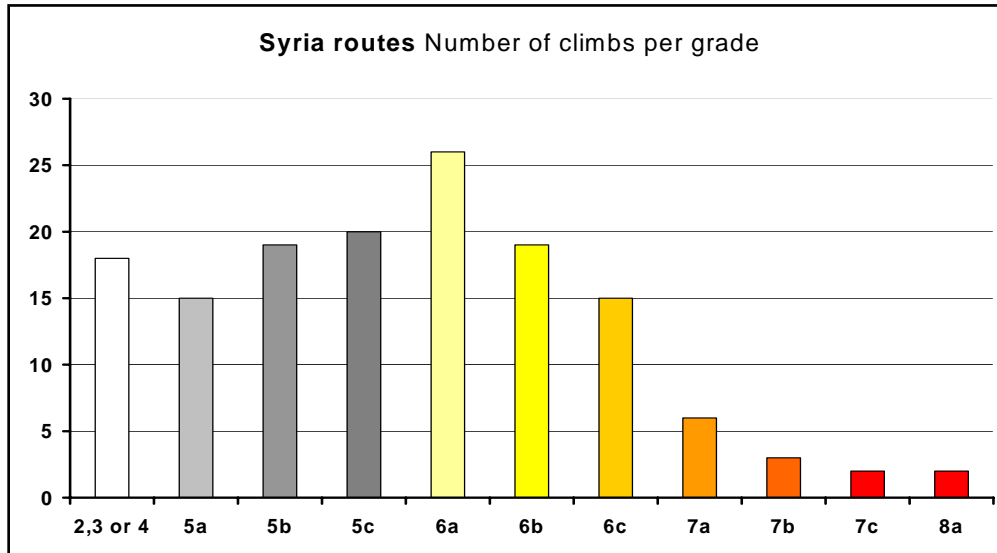
# Use and statistics

## Legend

In order to make it easy for climbers to find the sites, we have determined the WGS84 coordinates of most of the sectors in the guide book. The coordinates' format is dd°mm.mmm'. We photographed the sectors and marked the routes with numbered red lines on the pictures. The legend on the right of the picture contains the number of the route, its name, the French grading given by the person who did the first red point ascent, the beauty of the climb and the initials of the first ascent climber.

Visitors sometimes complain about our grading being somewhat on the hard side compared to modern Mediterranean climbing sites for the naked-torso hobbyist. The problem is that Matthias grew up in the Swiss *Basler Jura* where a 6a still represents a real test piece and has taken this scale with him to Syria. I was able to bargain some of the really ridiculous grades up a bit, but beware...

## Statistics



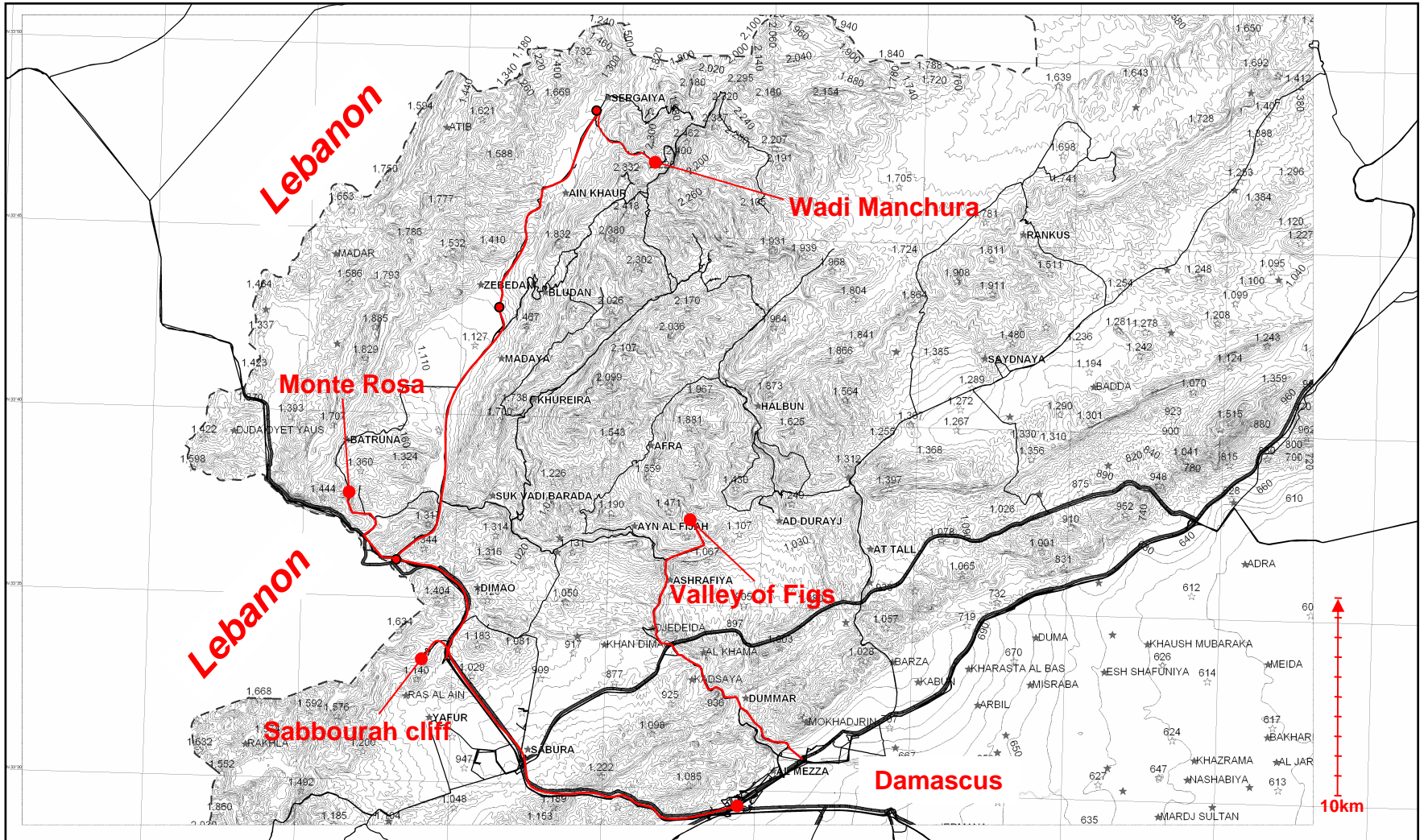
### List of first ascent climbers

MB: Matthias Braun  
 JN: Jürg Neidhardt  
 MG: Markus Gschwind  
 AH: Angelica Hug  
 LC: Linzey Cartwright  
 SA: Scott Appelboom  
 RP: Rüdiger Preiss  
 WG: Wolfgang Glabautschnig  
 UG: Unknown goat

### Beauty

- ☆☆☆☆☆ Route of consistent difficulty with some kind of 'magic', a must!
- ☆☆☆☆ Really beautiful line
- ☆☆☆ Nice line with minor discrepancies such as e.g. longer spaces between bolts, lesser consistency of difficulty etc...
- ☆☆ So lala route, to be climbed once you have done all the good ones already
- ☆ Routes where we screwed up a bit

# Overview map



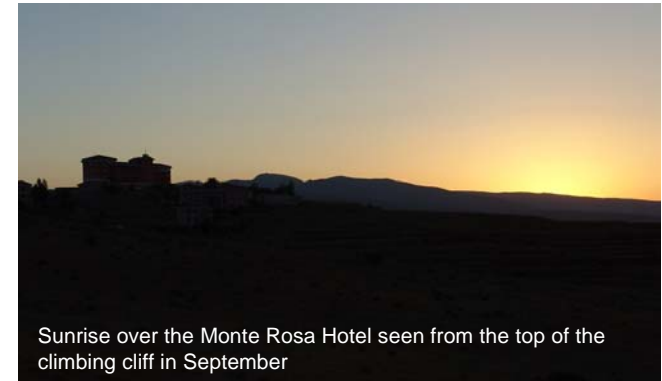
# Monte Rosa

## General remarks

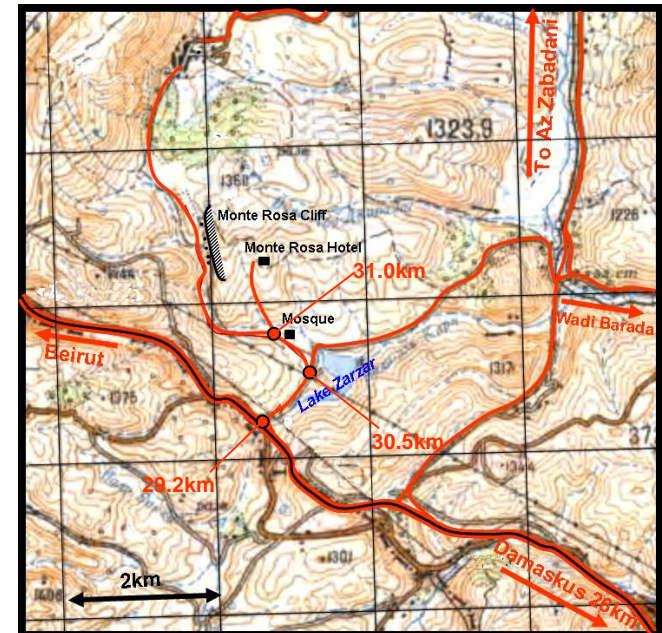
Monte Rosa is the most important climbing site around Damascus. It consists of an about 800m long and up to 30m high steep limestone cliff to the right of the road between lake *Zarzar* and the village of *Batruna/Rauda*. The cliff offers some 80 excellent sports climbs mainly on sub-vertical slabs of high quality limestone. "Monte Rosa" inherited its name from a large hotel complex on the next hill behind the cliff which tends to be pretty uninhabited during most of the year except the hottest summer months when flocks of tourists from the Gulf region invade the place. Both Lake *Zarzar* and the Monte Rosa Hotel are relatively well known picnic locations and a taxi driver can easily bring you there – make sure you also organize the trip back though.

## Directions

- 0km Start from the last traffic light in Mezzeh, in the direction of the highway to Beirut.
- 100m Take the right lane to enter the Beirut highway and follow it. After some 13km, pass the villages of Sabbourah and Yaffour. At kilometer 28, you pass the exit for Bloudan and Az Zabadani.
- 29.2km Take the exit for Lake Zarzar and then follow the road to the right. Lake Zarzar will appear on the right side (in spring and summer).
- 30.5km Take the first real road on the left towards Monte Rosa hotel. Pass the mosque on the right.
- 31.0km At the Y-junction, take the left road. The right road leads to the Monte Rosa hotel, which becomes visible on the hill ahead.
- 32.6km Monte Rosa's Eagle's Nest comes into sight on the right side. You can park the car anywhere along the road.



Sunrise over the Monte Rosa Hotel seen from the top of the climbing cliff in September



# Monte Rosa

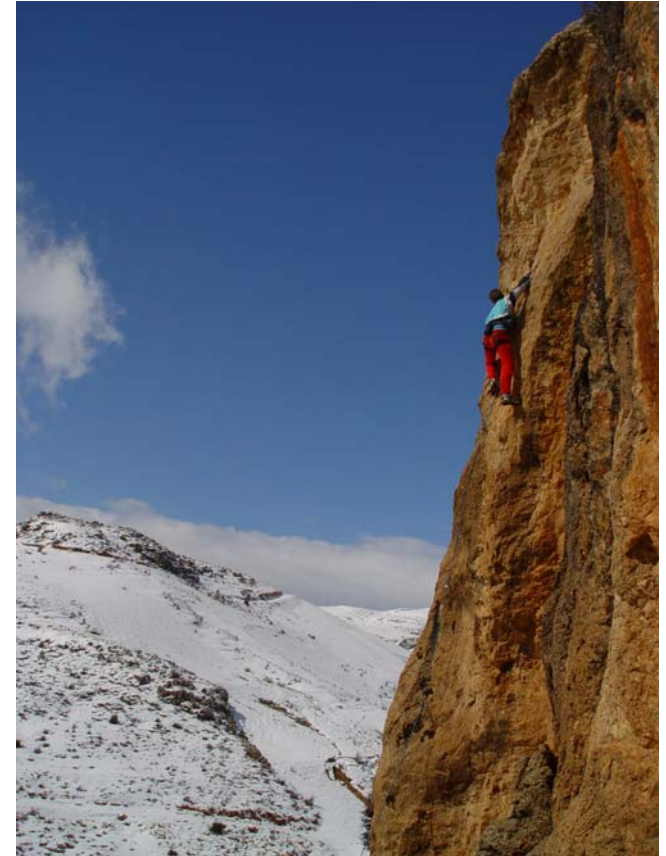
## Best time to climb there

Due to its western exposure, the cliff gets sun from about ten o'clock to sunset. Although the site is located at an altitude of more than 1200m, summer temperatures and sun radiation make it virtually impossible to climb there around midday. In the hot summer months, climbing in the morning from just after sunrise till around eleven o'clock and later in the afternoon from about four o'clock till just after sunset (around eight o'clock) is however very pleasant indeed.

In the winter (Dec – March) the area is normally covered with snow. On sunny days, temperatures on the rocks can be high enough to make climbing in T-shirts possible, long trousers are still recommended though. The best time to climb on winter days is from noon to sunset (around four o'clock).

Since most of the weather arrives from the west, the west-facing cliffs of Monte Rosa often get battered by high winds. If westerly winds are blowing in Damascus, it is wise to move e.g. to Sabbourah for climbing.

**Special remark:** In addition to the weather conditions, it should be mentioned here that the Monte Rosa site suffers a bit from a seasonal stinging fly invasion which normally takes place during a few weeks from the end of May into June. The flies are only 2mm long but turn up in swarms and have a nasty habit of stinging into your head skin and through T-shirts. Despite their small size, their stings are very itchy and will make you crawl up the walls for about a week. Wearing a hat and spraying your body with a strong insect repellent turned out to be reasonably effective.



Matthias Braun enjoying winter climbing in Monte Rosa  
*D'Kante kralle*, 6a+

# Monte Rosa Central



# Monte Rosa North



# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest



# Monte Rosa North



1 *Rève verdonesque* 6a+ ☆☆ MB

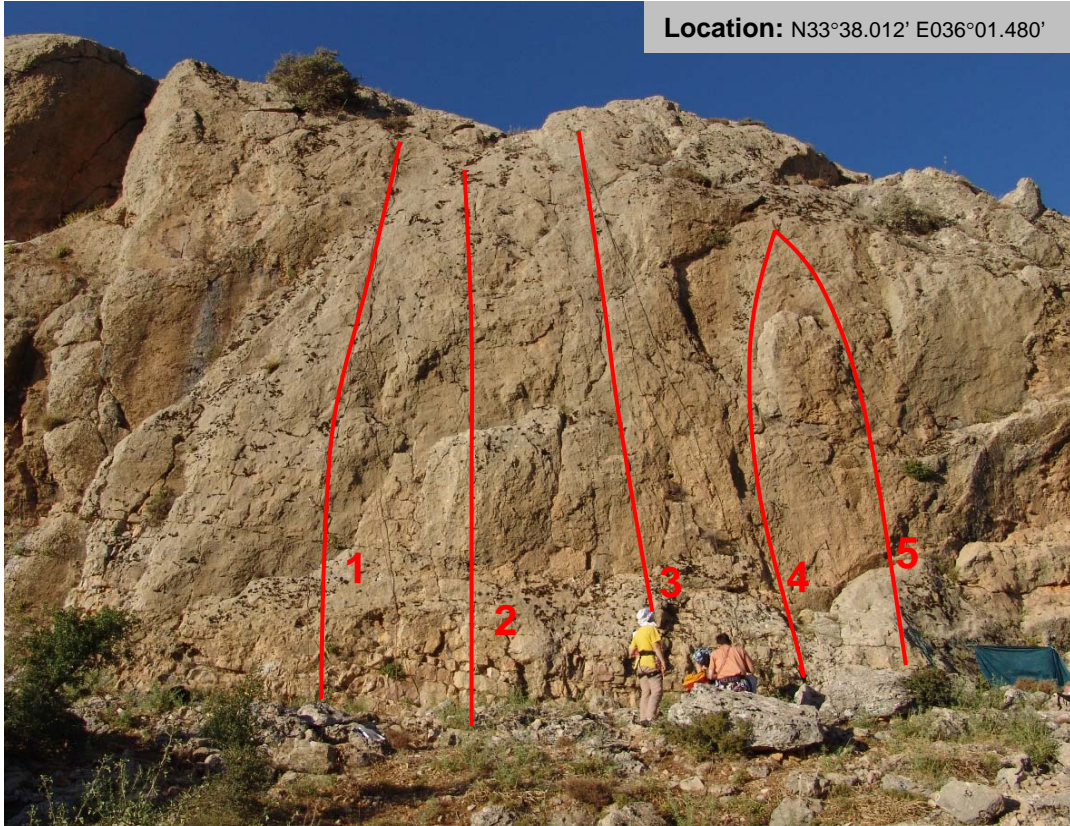
Monte Rosa North offers some of the best *plaisir* climbs in Syria, especially the routes on the ***Mur du cinq***. The three harder routes on the left side of this sector belong to the best sport climbing can offer: sub-vertical tight limestone, excellent protection and fine ledges and flakes as hand- and footholds.

# Monte Rosa North

## Mur du cinq



Location: N33°38.012' E036°01.480'



1	<i>Le paradis sur terre</i>	5c	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
2	<i>Total fatal</i>	6a	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
3	<i>Le couleur calcaire</i>	5c	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
4	<i>Too easy for Linzey</i>	5b	☆☆☆	MB
5	<i>Colle fromboise</i>	5c <sup>++</sup>	☆☆☆	LC

The fine structures of the rock in the **Mur du cinq** require a subtle foot technique. They are most appreciated by people who lack upper body strength but master the art of making the best out of tiny footholds. Both the name of the sector and the grading of the routes might be slightly misleading for newcomers to Syria climbing.

Angelica Hug on *Le Paradis sur terre*, 5c

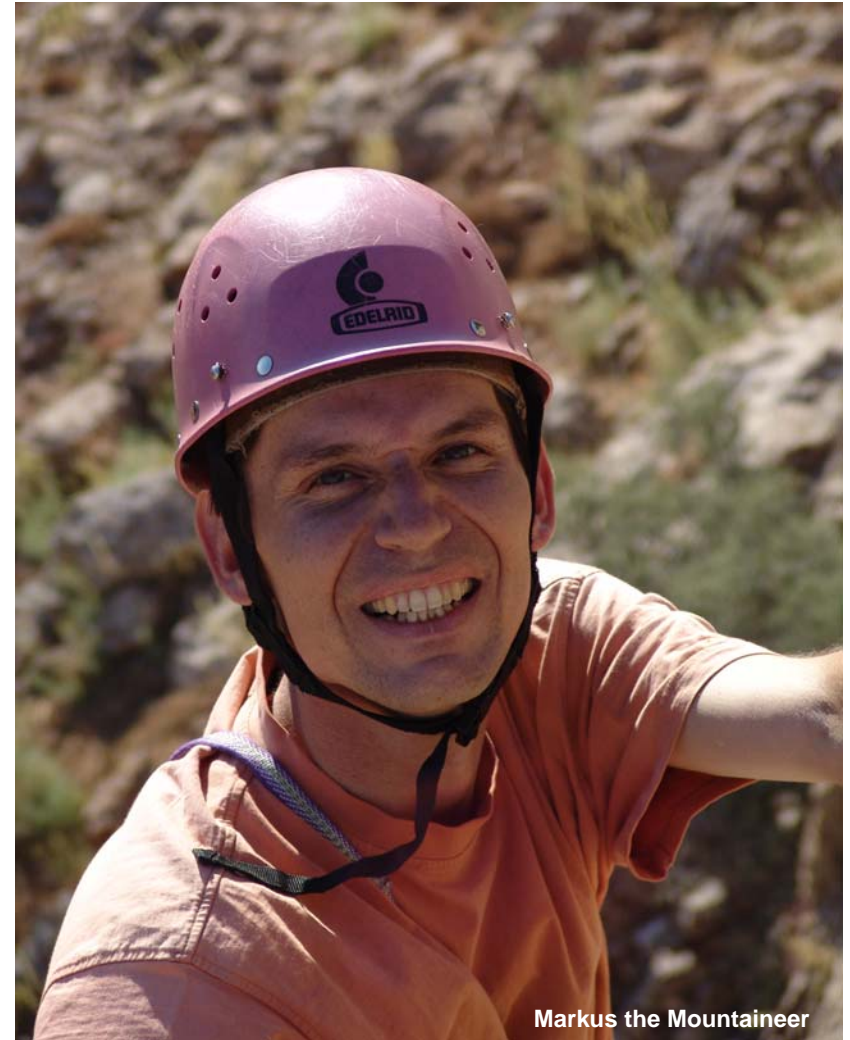


# Monte Rosa North

## Mur du cinq

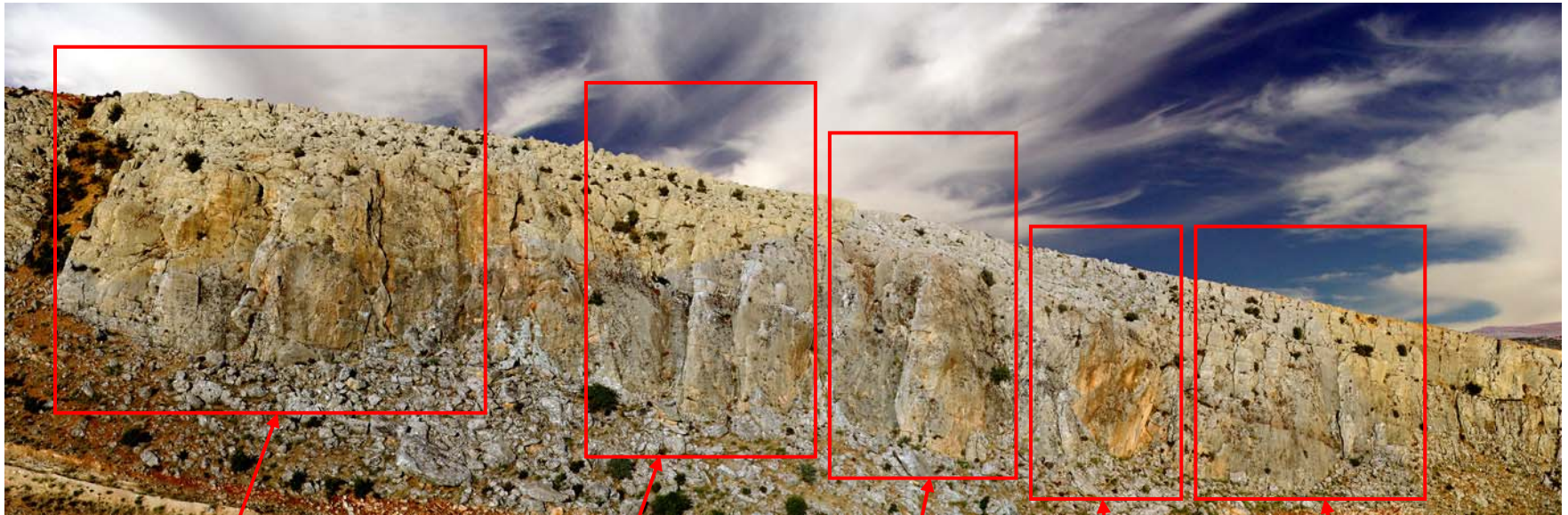
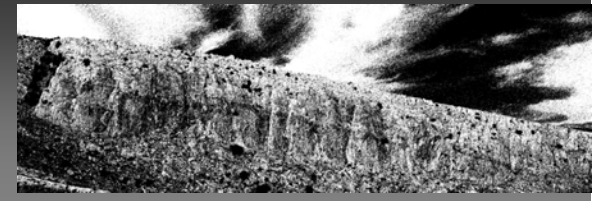


Markus Gschwind on *Le Paradis sur terre*, 5c



Markus the Mountaineer

# Monte Rosa Central



Alinghi

Linzey's

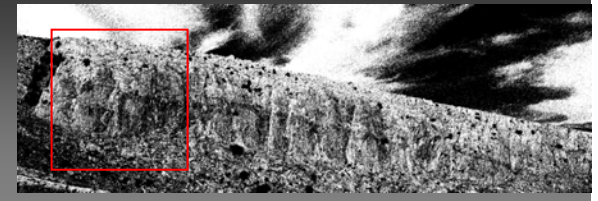
On the Edge

Overhangs

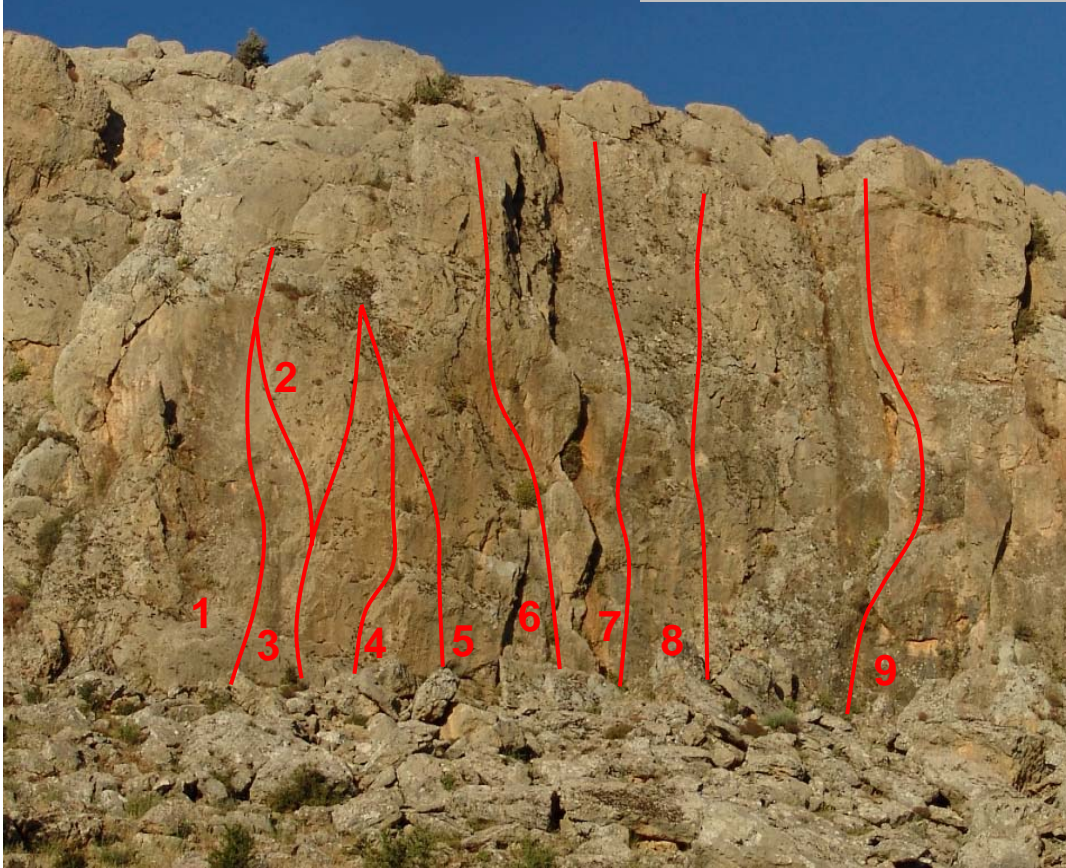
The Slabs

The central sections of Monte Rosa contains routes for everyone: the **Alinghi** sector with a bunch of more technical routes of plaisir character, **Linzey's** with a number of slightly easier routes, **On the edge** with some of the longest pitches combining technical and slightly more powerful sections, the **Overhangs** for the strong hard-mover and the **Slabs**, again with very delicate and somewhat more difficult lines.

# Monte Rosa Central Alinghi



Location: N33°37.935' E036 °01.505'



The **Alinghi** sector is named after the Swiss sailing yacht which won the America's Cup in 2003 and has established Switzerland as a world-class maritime nation. The route names **Suisse 64**, **Five-Nil!** and **Auckland** refer to the event and the way the Swiss crew slammed the New Zealanders into the ground.

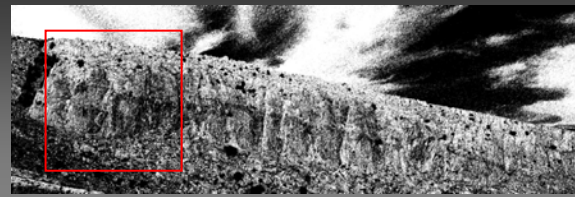
1	<b>Le miroir</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆	MB
2	<b>Ice palace</b>	5c+	☆☆☆	MB
3	<b>Suisse 64</b>	5c	☆☆☆☆	MB
4	<b>Five – Nil!</b>	5c	☆☆☆	MB
5	<b>Auckland</b>	5c	☆☆☆	MB
6	<b>The Uprooter</b>	5b	☆☆☆☆	JN
7	<b>Harakiri Hauriaki</b>	5c+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
8	<b>Experience does not count</b>	6b+	☆☆☆	MB
9	<b>The Blade</b>	6a/A <sub>0</sub>	☆☆☆	JN



The French connection having fun climbing in the December rain.

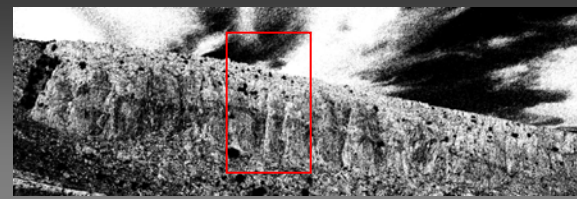
# Monte Rosa Central

# Alinghi

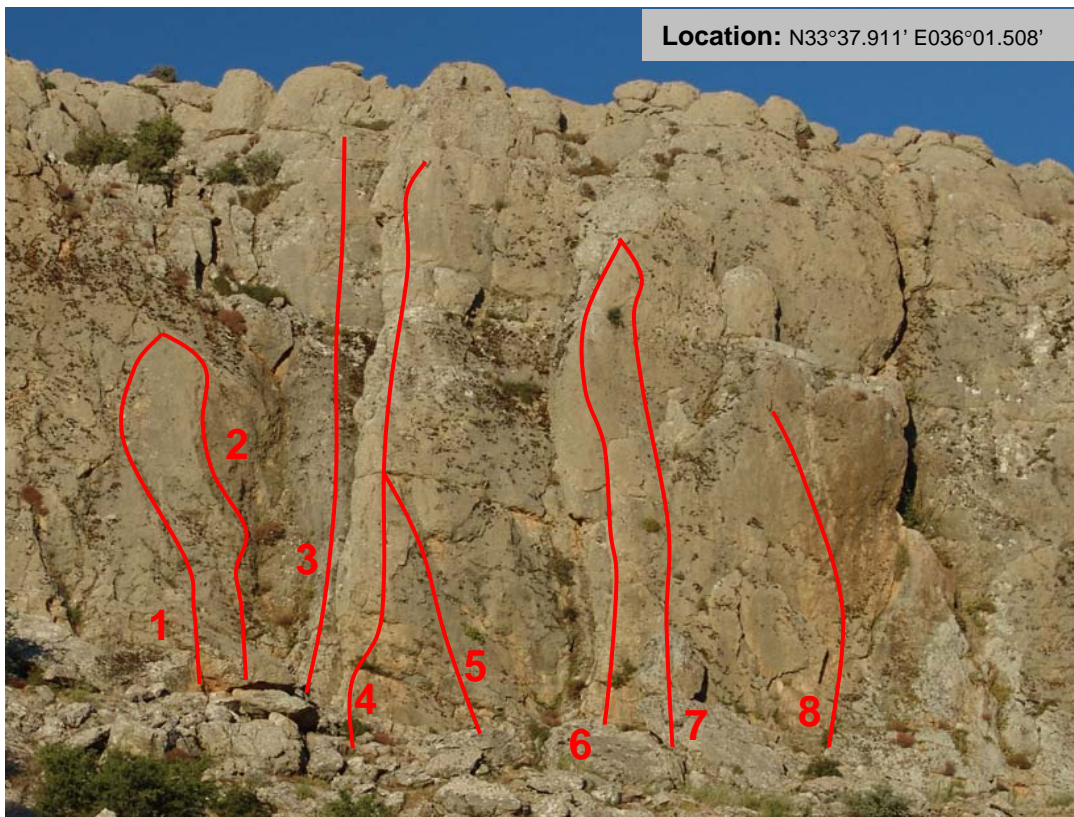


# Monte Rosa Central

## Linzey's



Location: N33°37.911' E036°01.508'



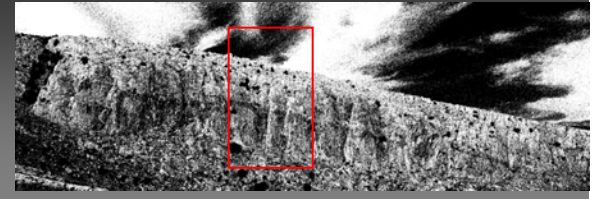
The slightly decreased difficulties in this sector has allowed some of the routes to become classics. While the big hand- and foot-holds of **Sacking** are ideal to introduce beginners to the beauties of climbing, the smooth rock surface and very subtle balance required to conquer **Technical failure** will instantly convince them that climbing does not necessarily require an inflated upper arm.

1	<b>Empty Batteries</b>	5a	☆☆☆	MB
2	<b>Technical failure</b>	5b	☆☆☆☆	MB
3	<b>Promenade in arms</b>	5b	☆☆☆☆	JN
4	<b>Sacking</b>	5a	☆☆☆☆☆	LC
5	<b>Blame culture</b>	5c+	☆☆☆	MB
6	<b>Blood on the rocks</b>	5b+	☆☆☆☆	MB
7	<b>Last Warning</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆	MB
8	<b>Gandertanz</b>	6b	☆☆☆☆	MB



# Monte Rosa Central

# Linzey's

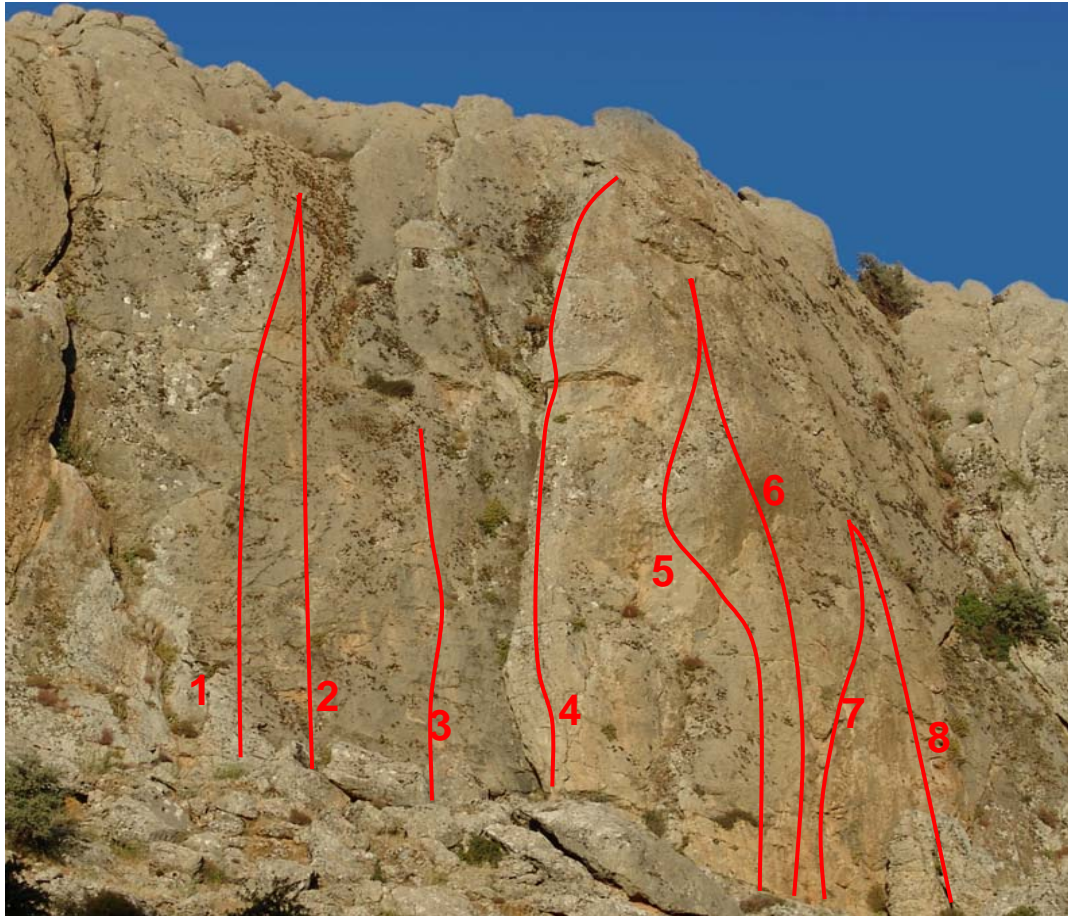


Markus Gschwind coming down from **Sacking**, 5a



The Uprooter swinging his terrible weapon

# Monte Rosa Central On the Edge

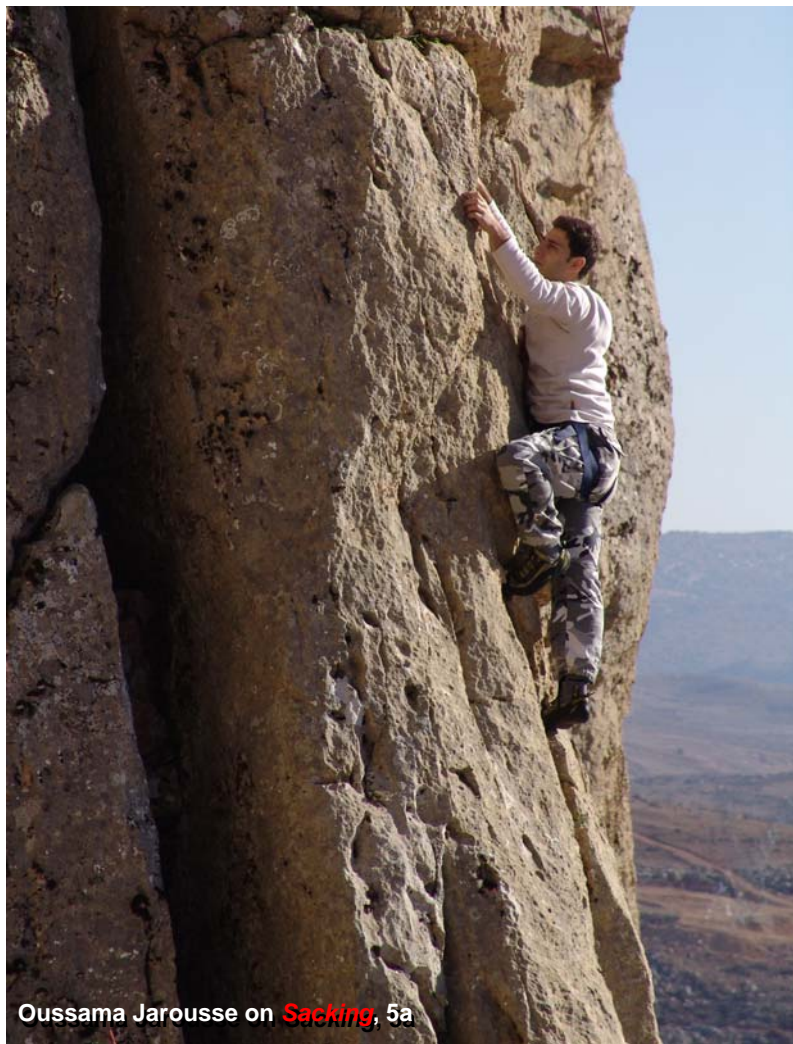
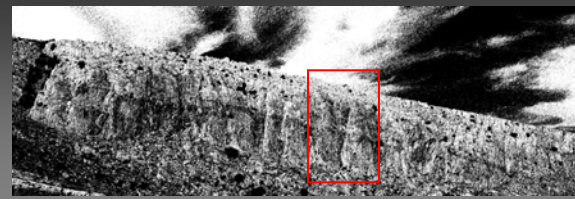


This sector hosts the densest collection of top *plaisir* climbs. The classic among the routes is – how surprising – **On the edge**, a 25m route with a slightly tricky crux at the small roof. For people who love sub-vertical technical slab climbing **Zenobia** and **Bagdad Café** are absolute musts!

1	<b>Zenobia</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
2	<b>Smoking Gun</b>	6b+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
3	<b>Drill Instructor</b>	6b	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
4	<b>On the Edge</b>	6a	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
5	<b>Prelude</b>	6c	☆☆☆☆	AH
6	<b>Bagdad Cafe</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
7	<b>Diä Schönscht</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆	MB
8	<b>Raging Bull</b>	6c	☆☆☆☆☆	MB



# Monte Rosa Central On the Edge

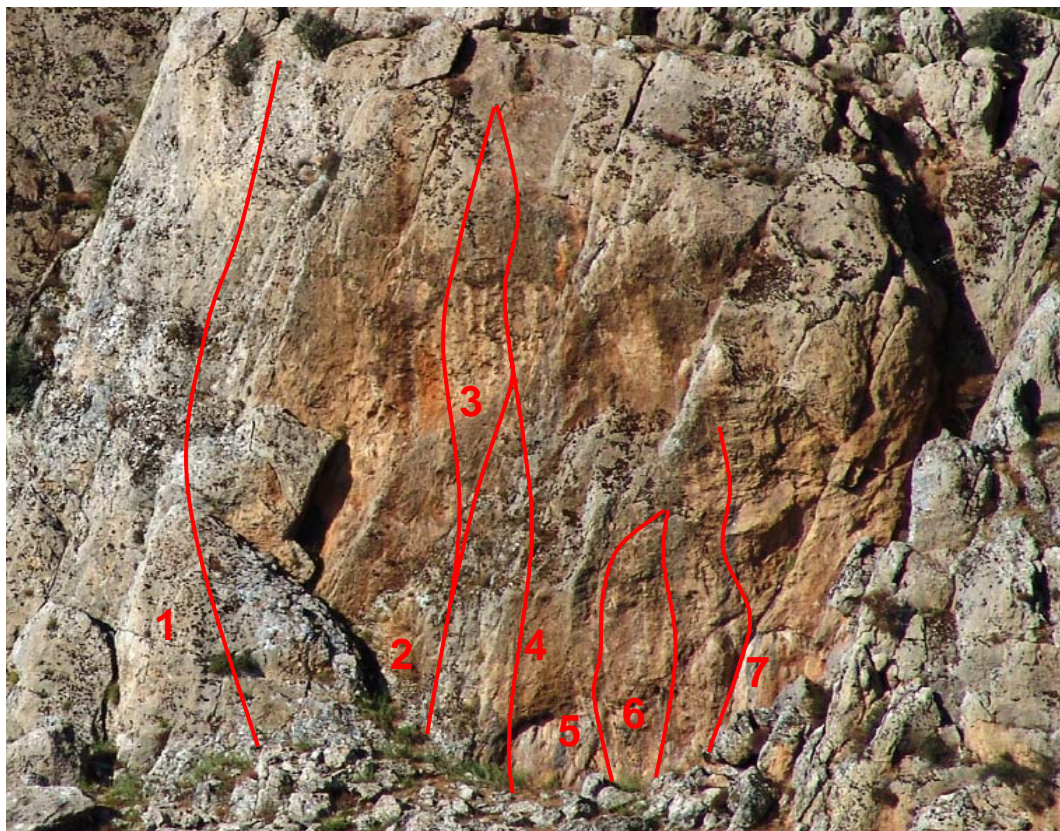


Oussama Jarousse on *Sacking*, 5a



Angelica Hug on *Prelude*, 6c

# Monte Rosa Central The Overhangs



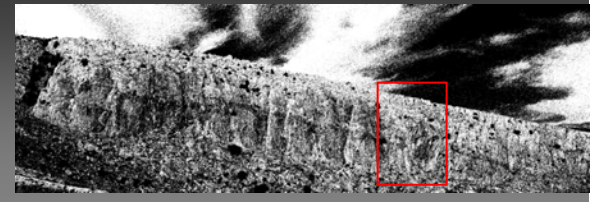
This overhanging sector is home to the hardest climbs in Monte Rosa. It should be mentioned that in particular the grading of **Ignorance** and **Arrogance** are seen as examples of Matthias' almost divine modesty. Nevertheless, for those gifted with mutant finger power and triple digit biceps circumference the routes are really worthwhile.

1	<b>Muck the Driller</b>	5a	☆	LC
2	<b>Arrogance</b>	6c+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
3	<b>Between Ignorance and Arrogance</b>	6b+	☆☆☆	MB
4	<b>Ignorance</b>	6c	☆☆☆☆	MB
5	<b>E pericoloso sporgersi</b>	7a+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
6	<b>Totentanz der Fingerspitzen</b>	7b	☆☆☆☆	MB
7	<b>Zwischen Traumtanz und Realität</b>	6b+	☆☆☆	MB



Matthias Braun on **Zw. Traumtanz & Realität**, 6b+

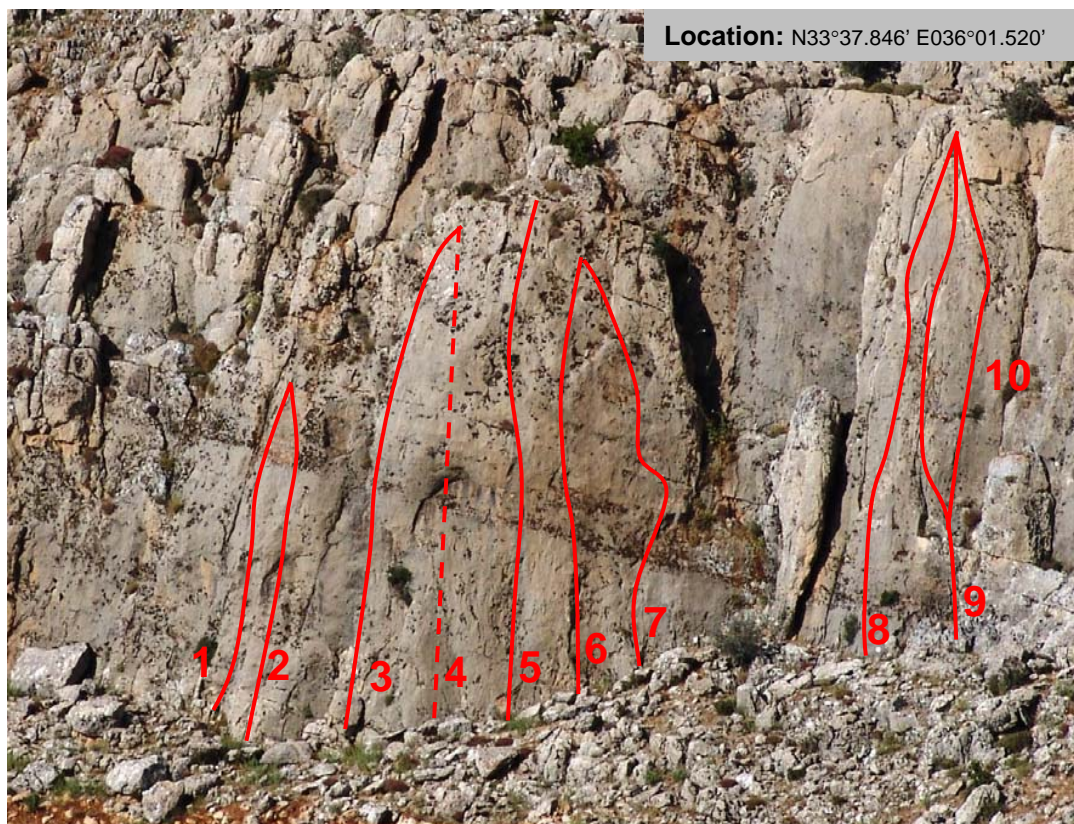
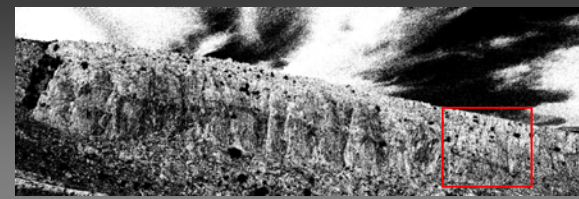
# Monte Rosa Central The Overhangs



Matthias Braun on *Nerventod der Fingerspitzen*, 7b, the hardest route in Monte Rosa



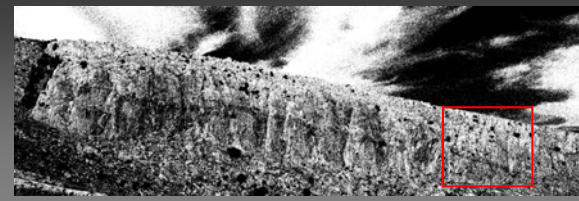
# Monte Rosa Central The Slabs



1	<i>Travel restrictions</i>	6a	☆☆☆	MB
2	<i>Carpet Hunter</i>	6a	☆☆☆	MB
3	<i>Sawdust</i>	6a+	☆☆☆☆	MB
4	<i>Victorinox</i> (toprope only)	7a	☆☆☆	MB
5	<i>Nit für Churzi</i>	6c	☆☆☆☆	MB
6	<i>Muro del Sole</i>	6b+	☆☆☆☆	MB
7	<i>Cäthig Schokig</i>	5c+	☆☆☆☆	MB
8	<i>Balcony</i>	5c	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
9	<i>Trainers</i>	5a	☆☆	MB
10	<i>Athletic</i>	6c	☆☆☆	MB

**The slabs** offer a nice collection of sub-vertical technical climbs. Foot- and hand-holds consist of small horizontal cracks and dark-brown chert nodules sticking out of the otherwise smooth limestone. The nodules have to be chosen carefully; small ones have a tendency to snap just when needed most desperately. Some of the routes (e.g. **Athletics**) might need a grade adjustment after many of the original chert knobs are reduced to their millimeter-wide stems.

# Monte Rosa Central The Slabs



Scott Appelboom on *Sawdust*, 6a+



# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest



Far Left

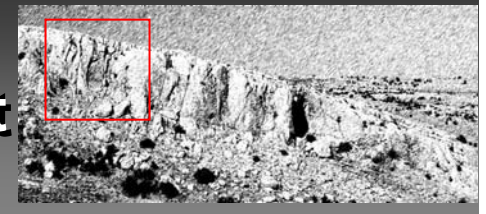
Left

Eagle's Nest

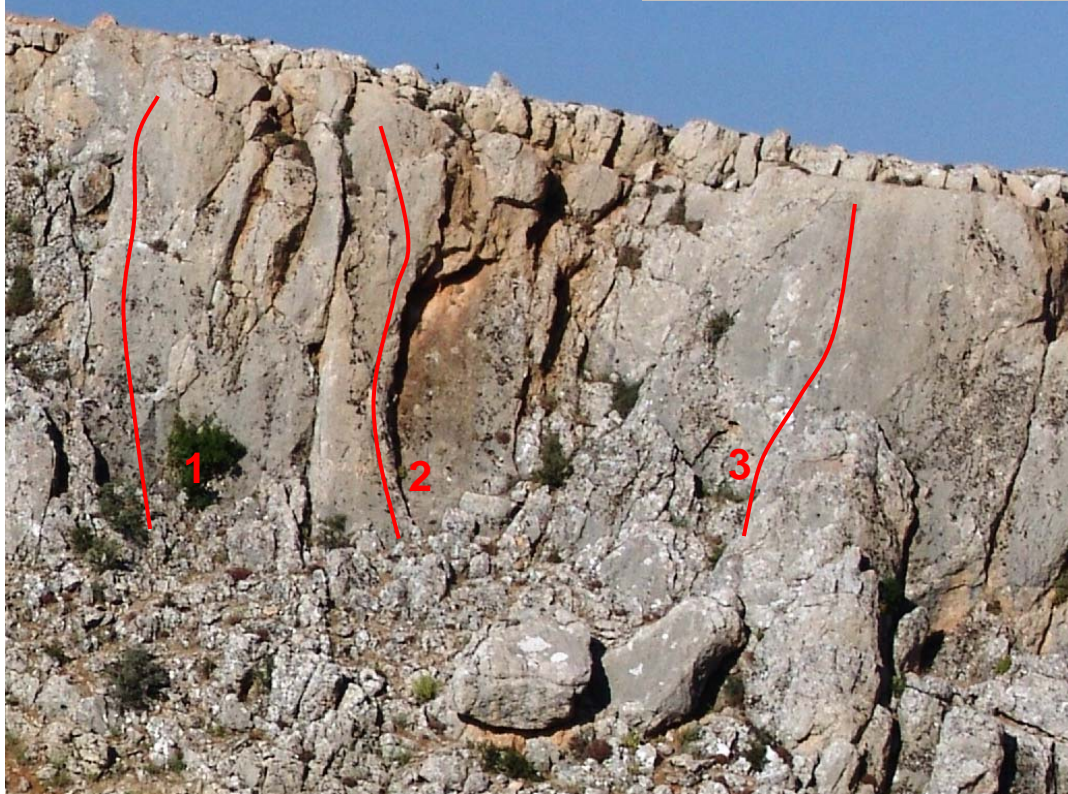
Footwall

The **Eagle's Nest** comprises a selection of routes of all difficulties, but with a main focus on easier routes. The platform of **Eagle's Nest Main** represents an ideal place for family picnic and BBQs because there is plenty of space for the kids to move about while their parents hang off the rocks. The close neighborhood of hard-mover lines and easy routes make it also a supreme site to train up new-comers.

# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Far Left



Location: N33°37.783' E036°01.525'



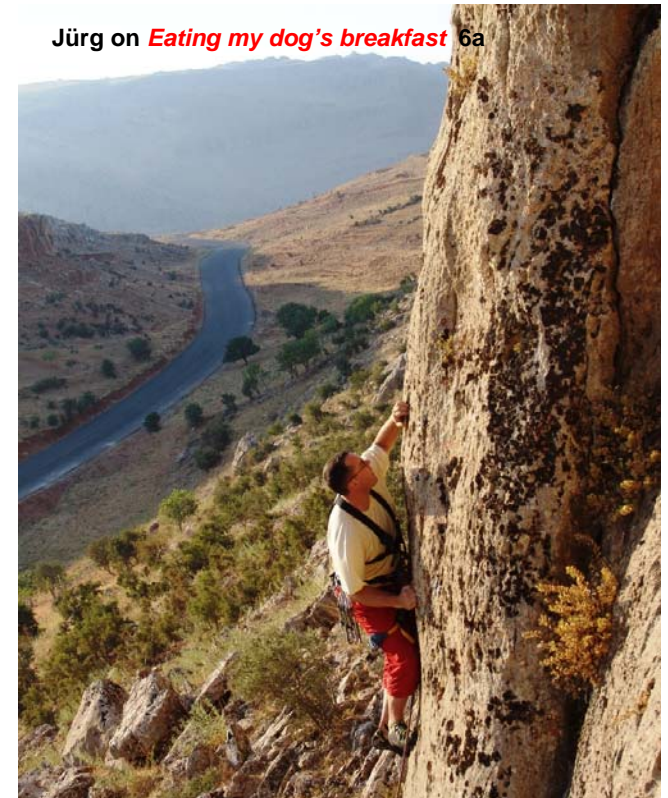
1 **Damocles' rock** 6a ☆☆☆ JN

2 **Eating my dog's breakfast** 6a ☆☆☆ JN

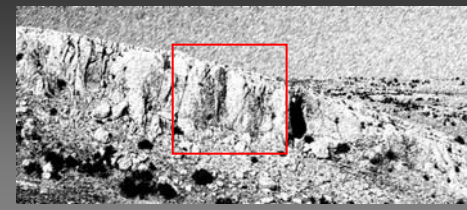
3 **Pancakes** 5b+ ☆☆☆ JN

The three routes in this sector cover quite a bit of variation in character. **Damocles' rock** is a line over a steep and pretty smooth rock slab. **Eating my dog's breakfast** contains sizeable handholds all pointing in the wrong direction and the climb feels like its name. **Pancakes** is a non-trivial friction climb. All three routes do not see a lot of activity.

Jürg on **Eating my dog's breakfast** 6a



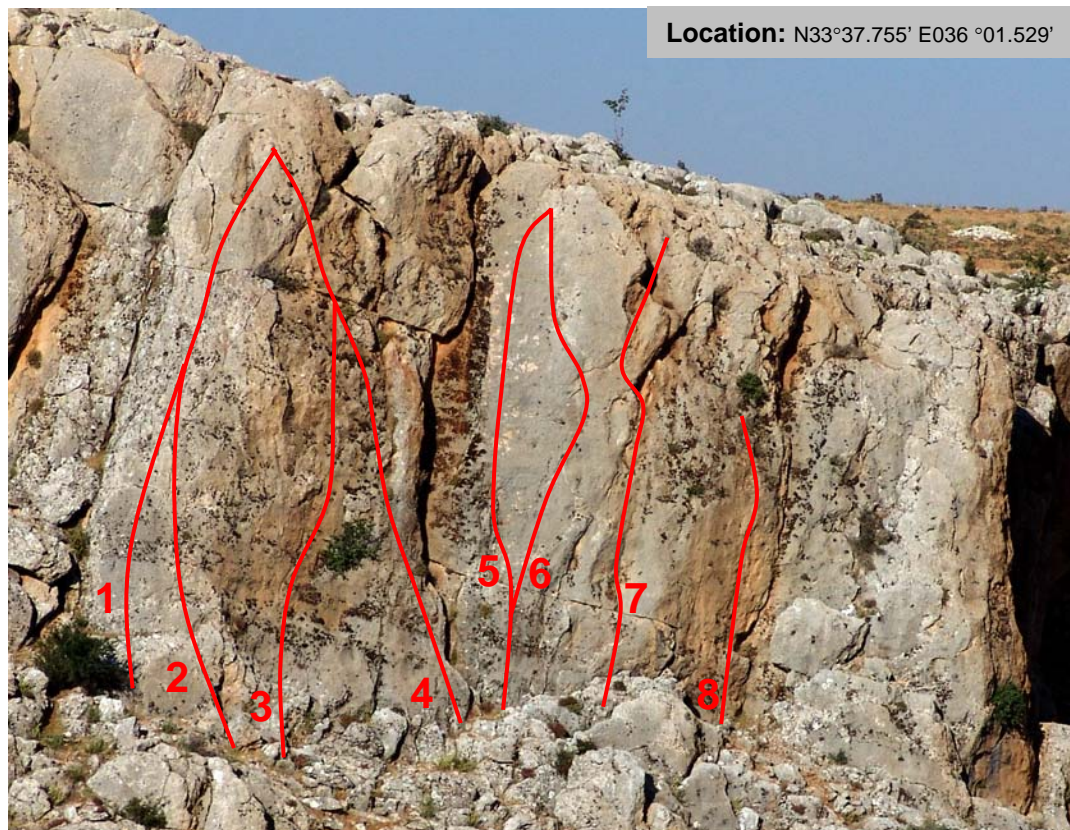
# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Left



Jürg Neidhardt on *Möslimörder*, 6b-



# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Left



Location: N33°37.755' E036 °01.529'

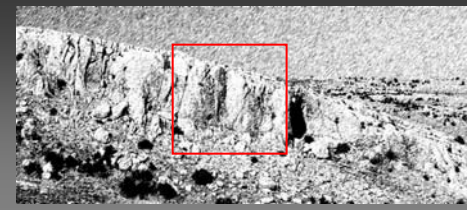
1	<b>Bolts are no Holds</b>	5c	☆☆☆	JN
2	<b>Question of honor</b>	4c	☆☆☆☆	JN
3	<b>Guillotine</b>	6a	☆☆	JN
4	<b>Temple of the returning wave</b>	5b+	☆☆☆☆☆	JN
5	<b>Möslimörder</b>	6b-	☆☆☆☆☆	JN
6	<b>Duschara</b>	6a	☆☆☆☆	MB
7	<b>Wie in de Alpe</b>	5b	☆☆☆☆	MB
8	<b>Weg mit dem Speck</b>	6c	☆☆☆☆☆	MB

The **Eagle's Nest left** sector is currently one of the most popular ones and offers climbs for everybody. **A question of honor** and **Temple of the returning wave** are two of the few easy but interesting lines in Monte Rosa. **Möslimörder** embodies one of the very few real friction routes in Syria (practically no hands needed) and **Weg mit dem Speck** has become the classic short but hard test piece for the more dedicated amateur.



TheFrench during an after work climbing session.

# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Left

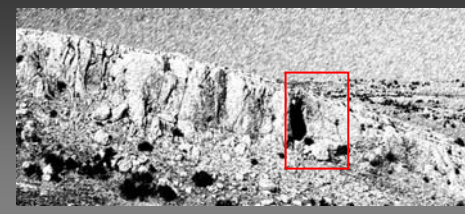


Nidal Tourma leading *Question of honor*, 4c

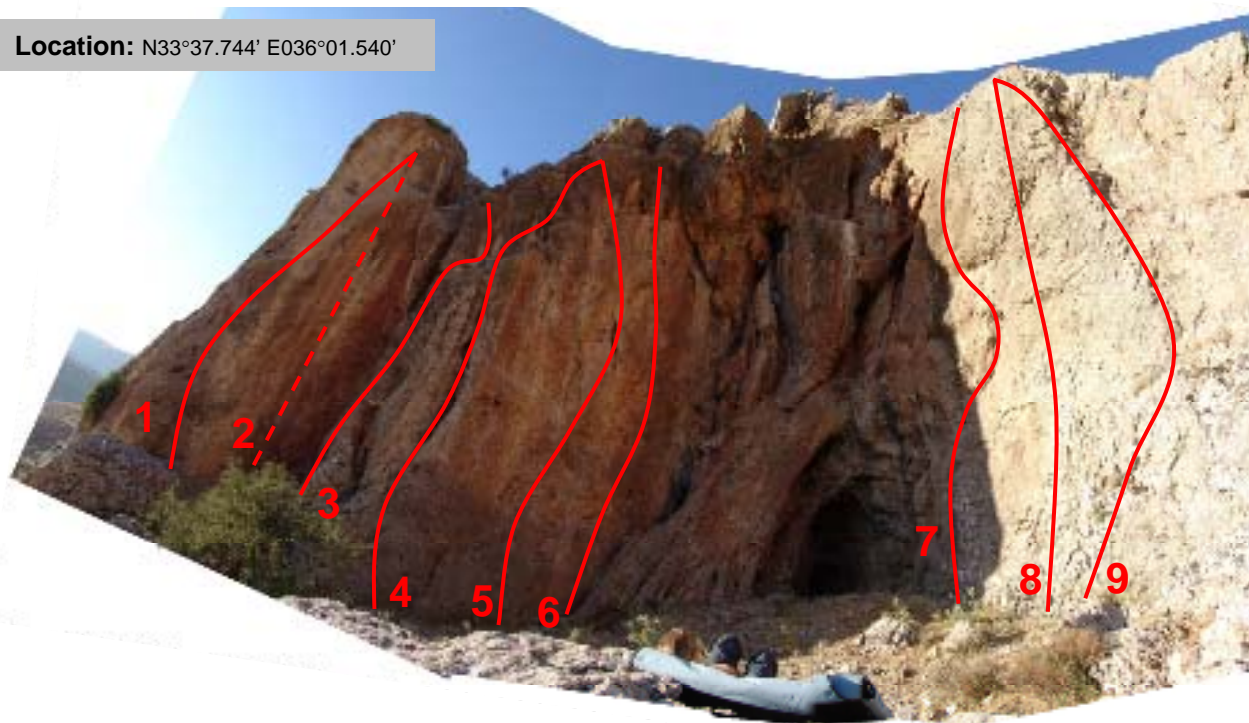


Annina Neidhardt on the same Route

# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Main



Location: N33°37.744' E036°01.540'



The **Eagle's Nest Main** sector consists of a natural terrace limited by two perpendicular, partly overhanging walls. **Parrot lady** and **Em Jügge si Fünfer** are decent climbs for beginners, but the really worthwhile lines are the harder routes. **Just for fame** is a true test piece for those with a knack for the tough stuff, with a short and hefty finger combination after a technically not too demanding but a bit tiring overhanging entrance bit. The 6a+ and the two 6b's are highly recommendable routes for the advanced *plaisir* climber. **Nit ganz liecht**, originally also a 6b, had to be upgraded after one of the crucial holds broke out. Its difficulty is now in the order of 6c/7a but only if you don't use the edge to the right.

1 **D'Kante chralle** 6a+ ☆☆☆☆ MB

2 **Impossibile** ??

3 **Parrot Lady** 4c ☆☆☆ MB

4 **Em Jügge si Fünfer** 5b ☆☆ MB

5 **Just for fame** 6c+ ☆☆☆☆☆ MB

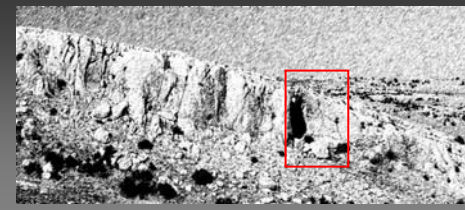
6 **Razors** 6b ☆☆☆☆ MB

7 **Les petits surplombs** 6b ☆☆☆☆ MB

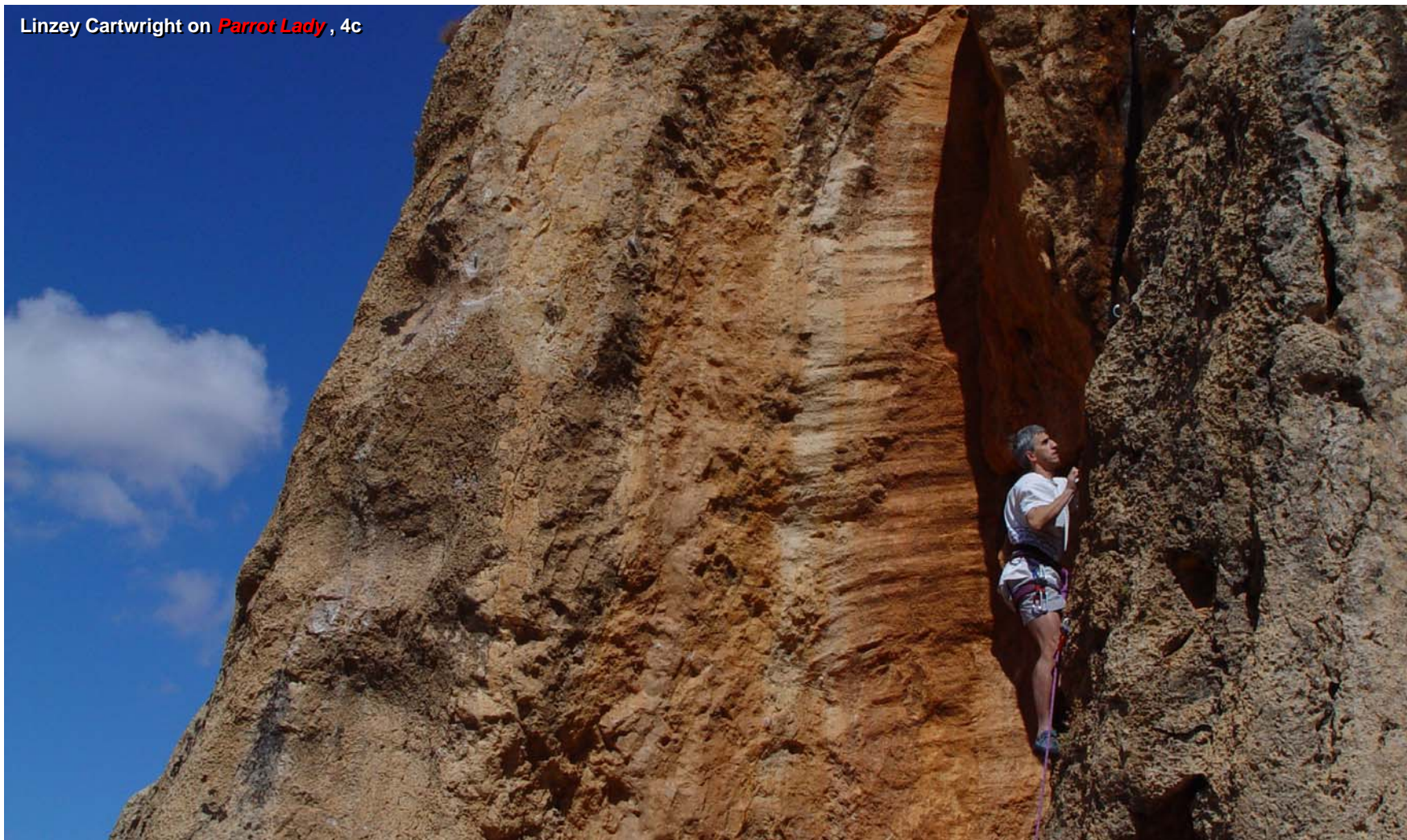
8 **Nit ganz liecht** 6c ☆☆☆ MB

9 **Desolatia** 3 ☆ MB

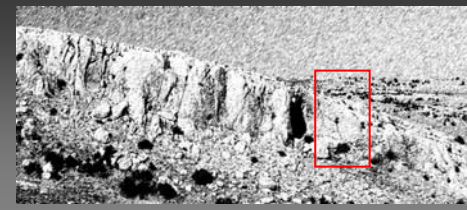
# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Main



Linzey Cartwright on *Parrot Lady*, 4c



# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Kids



This sector as the name suggests has been designed originally for the Braun and Cartwright kids. Although the 2003 edition of the climbing guide described them as 3's, it was decided to adjust the grades a bit. The routes are bolted very densely so they can be used for training beginners who want to start leading routes.

1 **Rémy** 4a ☆☆ MB

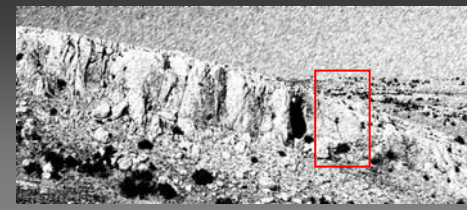
2 **Hugo** 4b ☆☆ MB

3 **Susi & Cäthi** 5a ☆☆ MB



Susi enjoying a swing

# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Kids



Family outing at Eagle's nest: Markus & Claude on **Wie I de Alpe**, 5b



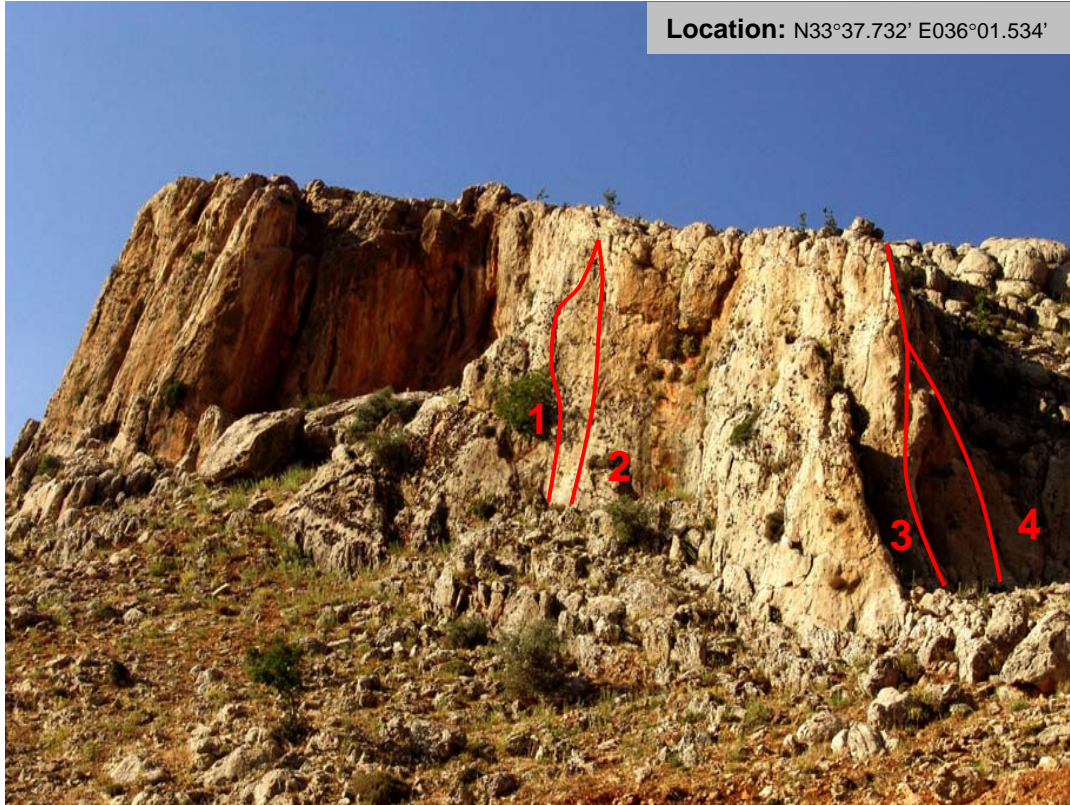
Claude does his best to encourage Souraya on **Rémy**, 4a



# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Footwall



Location: N33°37.732' E036°01.534'



1	<i>Symphonie Rocher</i>	5c	☆☆	MB
2	<i>Walk in the Park</i>	5a+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
3	<i>Markuskante</i>	4a	☆	JN
4	<i>Hilti Baaz</i>	4a	☆	JN

The **Footwall** contains four routes of relatively low difficulty three of which are nice for a change but not of utter importance. The true highlight is **Walk in the Park** probably the most beautiful route of its difficulty in this guide. Don't miss it, even if it is below your standards. The two 4a routes can be climbed by beginners, the abseil will however not be appreciated by first-timers.



Annina Neidhardt on **Walk in the Park** 5a+

# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest Footwall



Mike Mack on *Walk in the Park* , 5a+



Rachel Harris on *Walk in the Park* , 5a+

# Monte Rosa Eagle's Nest

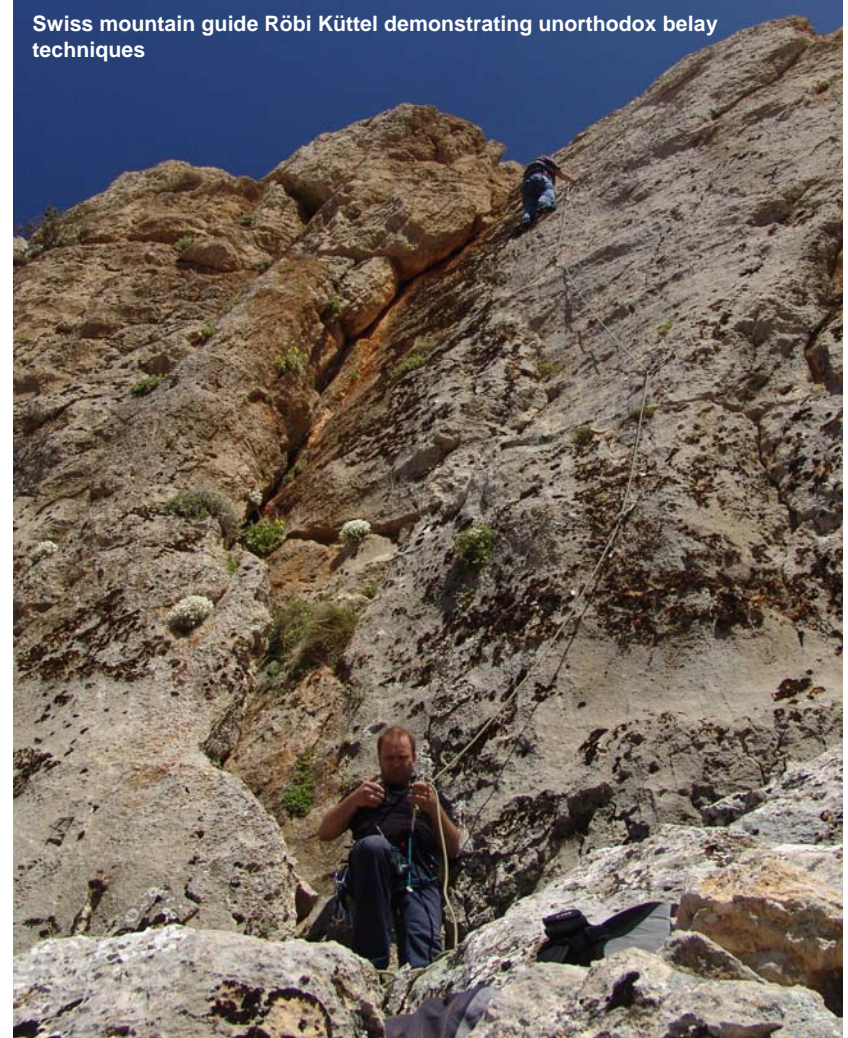


Location: N33°37.744' E036°01.540'



Bea Küttel on *Parrot Lady*, 4c

Swiss mountain guide Röbi Küttel demonstrating unorthodox belay techniques



# Animals & Plants



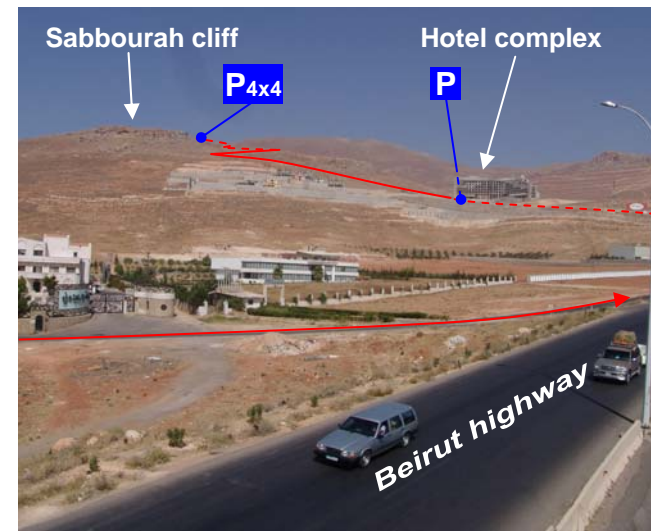
# Sabbourah

## General remarks

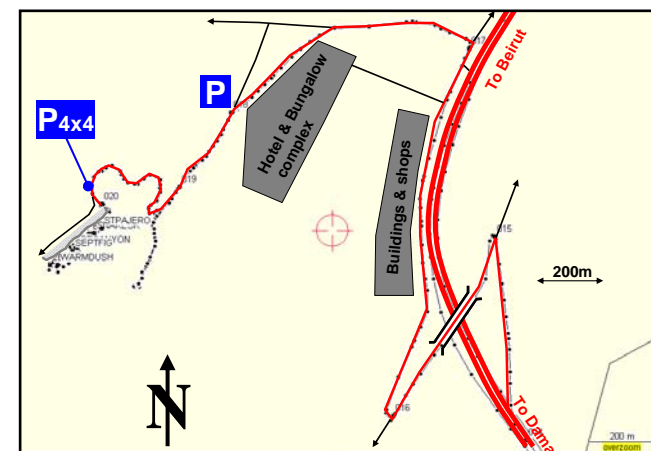
Sabbourah is the closest climbing site to Damascus and can be reached within 15 to 20 minutes by normal car followed by a 10 minute walk up the hill. By 4x4, you can drive all the way up to the cliff. The climbs are somewhat shorter than the ones in Monte Rosa, but the site offers a perfect alternative should climatic circumstances make climbing unattractive there. Facing south-east, the cliff offers a perfect wind-shade on days Monte Rosa is pounded with heavy westerly winds. On the hottest summer afternoons, its shade and elevation around 1200m produce a superbly cool micro-climate. In the winter, one can climb in the morning, but when there is a lot of snow, bouldering on the large number of blocks down-slope from the cliff is more fun. There is a military training camp just below the site and you might be asked by friendly soldiers to leave the area when they have maneuvers. It is wise to follow their instructions.

## Directions

- 0km Start from the last traffic light in Mezzeh, in the direction of the highway to Beirut. Enter the Beirut highway and follow it. After some 13km, you pass the villages of Sabbourah and Yaffour. At the end of the long straight stretch which separates the two villages, one can now see the big hotel/bungalow complex under construction on the left-hand side.
- 15km At the bridge just before the motorway starts to curve right, take the exit signed "Yaffour" and then turn to the left to cross over the motorway. After the bridge, you take the first to the right and follow the small road parallel to the motorway. You pass by the shops and the tarmac path that leads up to the hotel and take the dirt track that leads left into the little valley behind the hotel. After about 300m turn left again and follow the monstrous concrete wall up the hill. Normal cars park there, 4x4 can follow the winding path all the way up to the cliff.



Sabbourah cliff seen from the bridge over the Beirut highway



# Sabbourah



## Warmduscher & 2b or not 2b



September Figs

Grand Canyon

La Diagonale

Snakeskin

Stolen Pajero

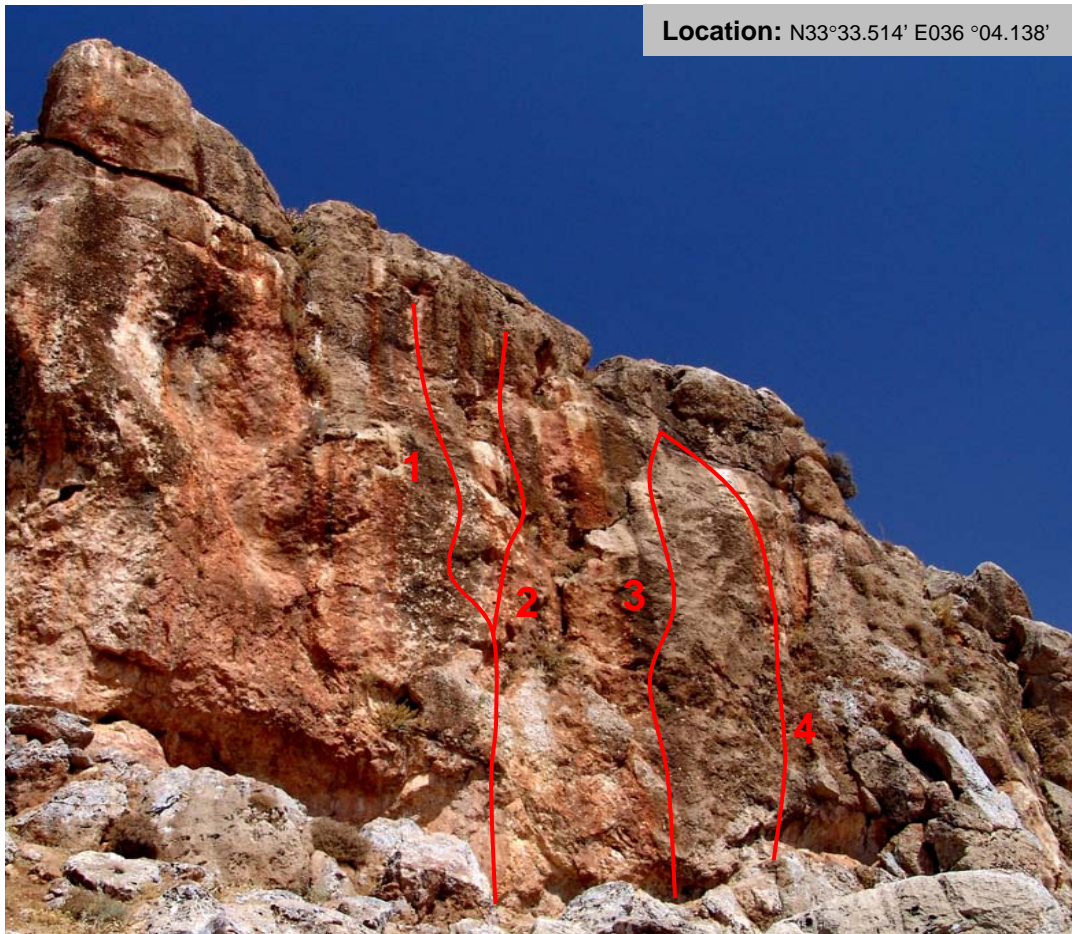
The Sabbourah rock face is between 8 and 20m high, beautifully located some 300m above the Yaffour and Sabbourah plane. Several terraces beneath the rock are inviting to have a pick nick. The rock in Sabbourah has an almost corroded appearance, a limestone with a lot of sharp edges, holes and pockets – not overly friendly to beginners' skin, thus. As in Monte Rosa, most of the routes are of medium difficulty, but the site is also home to the hardest opened route in Syria: **Snakeskin**, 8a. Once you have developed thick skin on your fingers to cope with the razorblade rock, many of the more moderate routes turn out to be stunning beauties: **Stolen Pajero** 6b+, **Arrivederci** 7a+, **Bottom-up** 6a+ and **Exit** 6a+ deserve a special recommendation.

# Sabbourah

## Stolen Pajero



Location: N33°33.514' E036 °04.138'



The routes in this sector contain a lot of small sharp ledges and holes of various sizes. The climbing is very technical, but particularly on **Stolen Pajero** the steepness and the small holds require some stamina as well.

1	<b>Stolen Pajero</b>	6b+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
2	<b>Jump start</b>	6b	☆☆	MB
3	<b>Sheperd's dream</b>	6a	☆☆☆	MB
4	<b>Jeep dreams</b>	5b	☆	LC

Angelica Hug on **Stolen Pajero**, 6b+



# Sabbourah

## Stolen Pajero



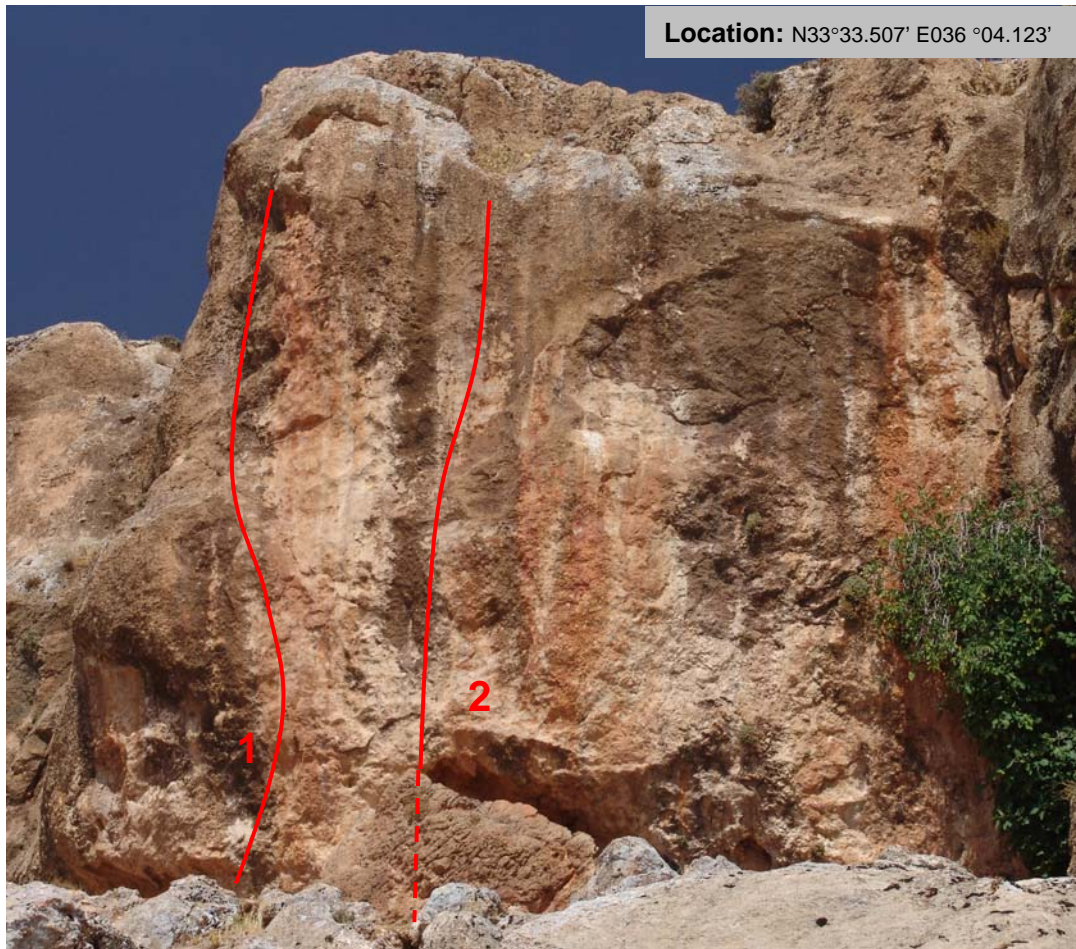
Her outstanding technique makes the crag looking like a piece of cake: Angelica on *Stolen Pajero* , 6b+

# Sabbourah

## Snakeskin



Location: N33°33.507' E036 °04.123'



Most People won't lift off on **Snakeskin** but for those who might do: according to Matthias it is a nice line. The other route is now open for anybody to try.

1 **Snakeskin**

8a ☆☆☆☆☆ MB

2 **Breakfast for Champions** project



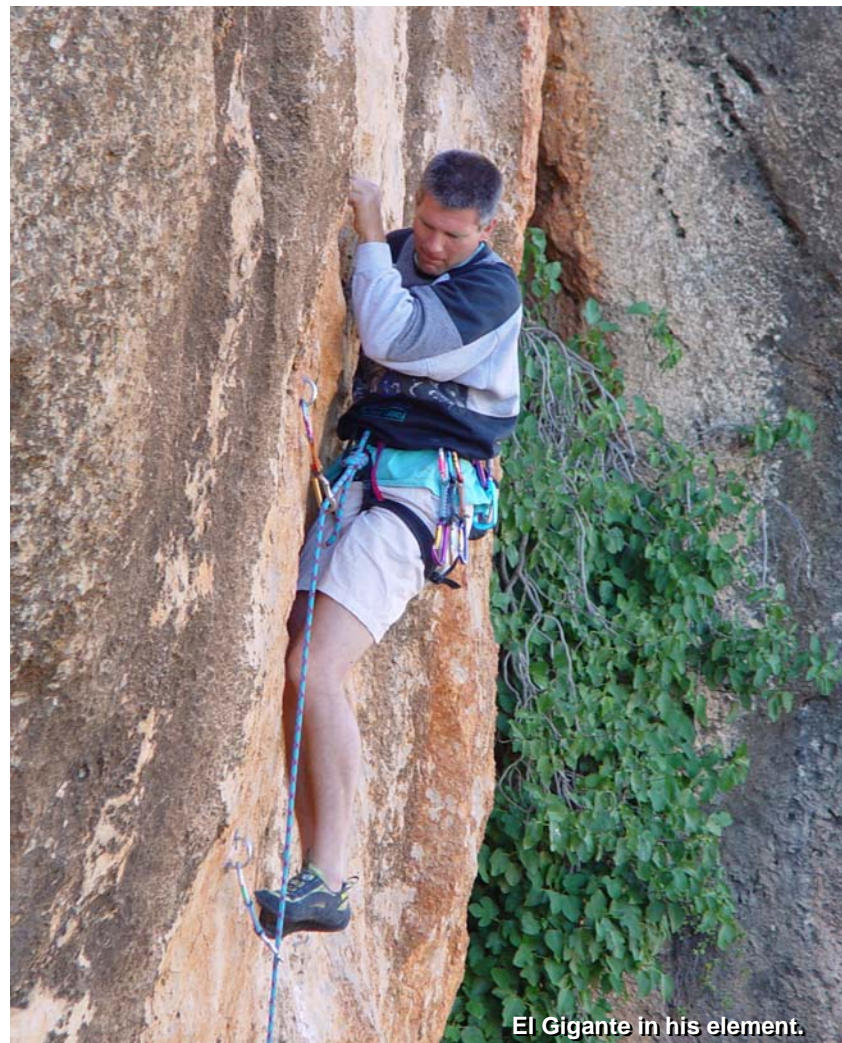
Matthias Braun close to the crux of **Snakeskin**, 8a.

# Sabbourah

# Snakeskin



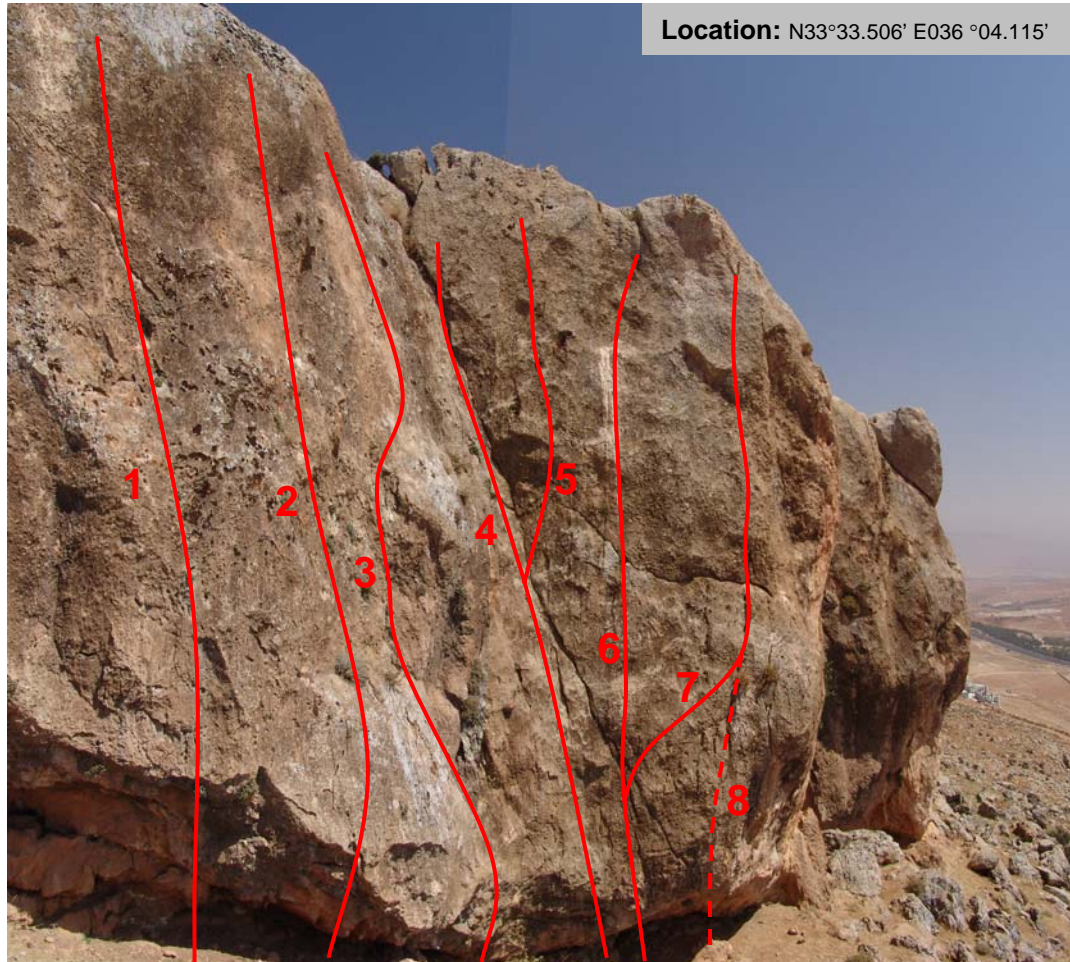
Matthias Braun on *Snakeskin*, 8a belayed by his wife Angelica.



El Gigante in his element.

# Sabbourah

## La Diagonale



Location: N33°33.506' E036 °04.115'

1	<b>Negative</b>	6c	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
2	<b>Double Dutch</b>	6a+	☆☆	MB
3	<b>Scott's first steps</b>	5c+	☆☆☆☆☆	SA
4	<b>La diagonale</b>	5a	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
5	<b>Famous last words</b>	6c+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
6	<b>Bottoms up</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
7	<b>Arrivederci</b>	7a+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
8	<b>Jallah Habibee!</b>	7a	☆☆☆☆☆	JN

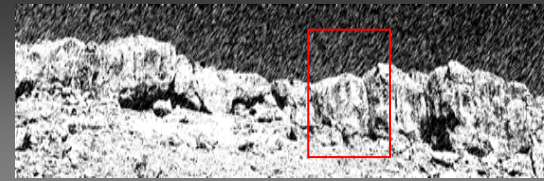
The most popular sector in Sabbourah with routes for everybody. The site where Scott Appelboom started climbing by performing a first ascent of **Scott's first steps**, 5c+. Try it, the crux is far from trivial.



Scott Appelboom, Sabbourah & Yaffour in the back

# Sabbourak

## La Diagonale

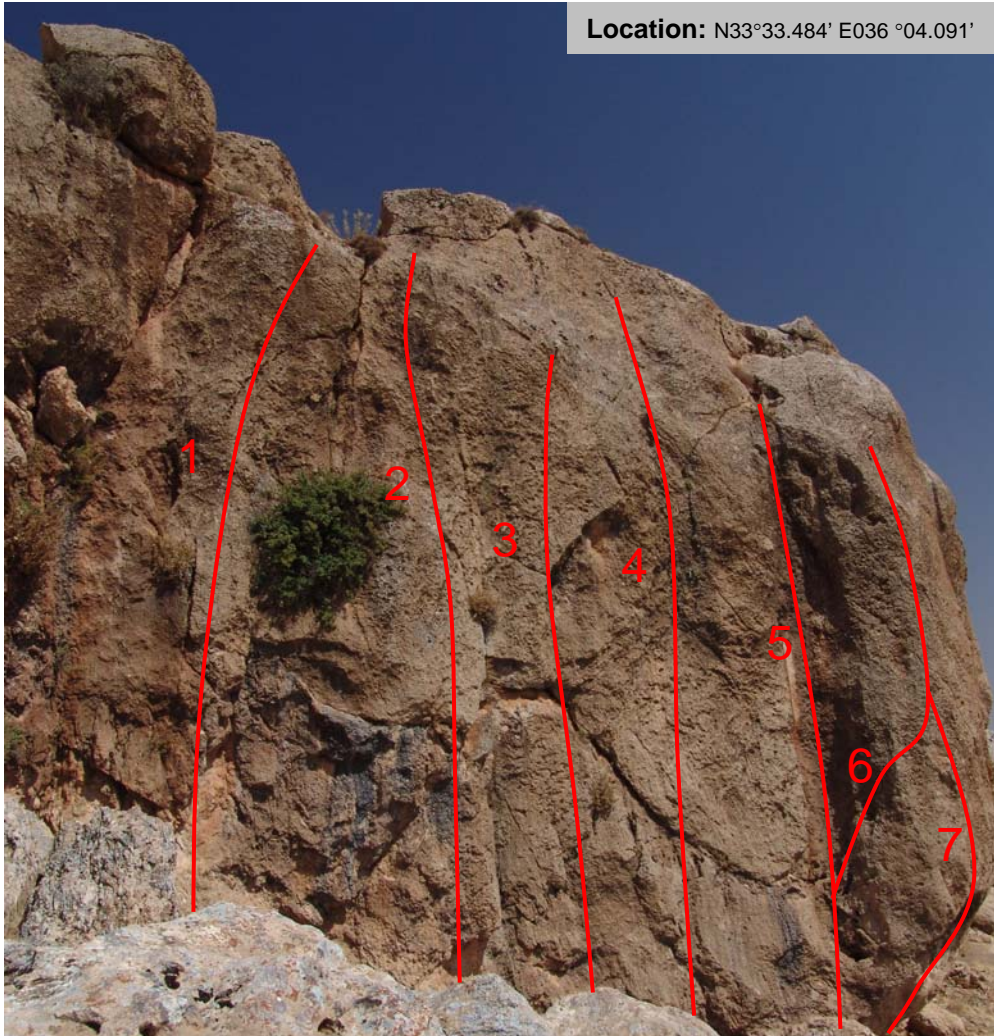


# Sabbourak

## Grand Canyon



Location: N33°33.484' E036 °04.091'



1	<b>The Dutch line</b>	5a	☆	JN
2	<b>Walking on sunshine</b>	5c	☆☆☆	JN
3	<b>Rabbits</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆	MB
4	<b>El Gigante</b>	5c	☆☆☆☆☆	AH
5	<b>Grand Canyon</b>	5a	☆☆☆☆	MB
6	<b>Exit</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
7	<b>You got to be strong</b>	7b	☆☆☆	MB

This section comprises a couple of routes of more moderate difficulties some of which have quite a special character. **Grand Canyon** follows up an almost half-tube-shaped rannel which gives the climbing there a very peculiar touch. **Exit** on the other hand is quite the opposite, a delicate climb on tiny steps up the undercut, and hence exposed feeling, pillar on the right. Real pleasure climbs are **El Gigante** and **Rabbits** with small cracks, ledges and holes as holds and steps, requiring demanding balance moves. The sector is ideal for a summer evening climbing session, when you just climb all routes from side to side. **September figs** located around the corner to the left of this sector provides a neat playground for the fakir's apprentice.

# Sabbourak

## Grand Canyon



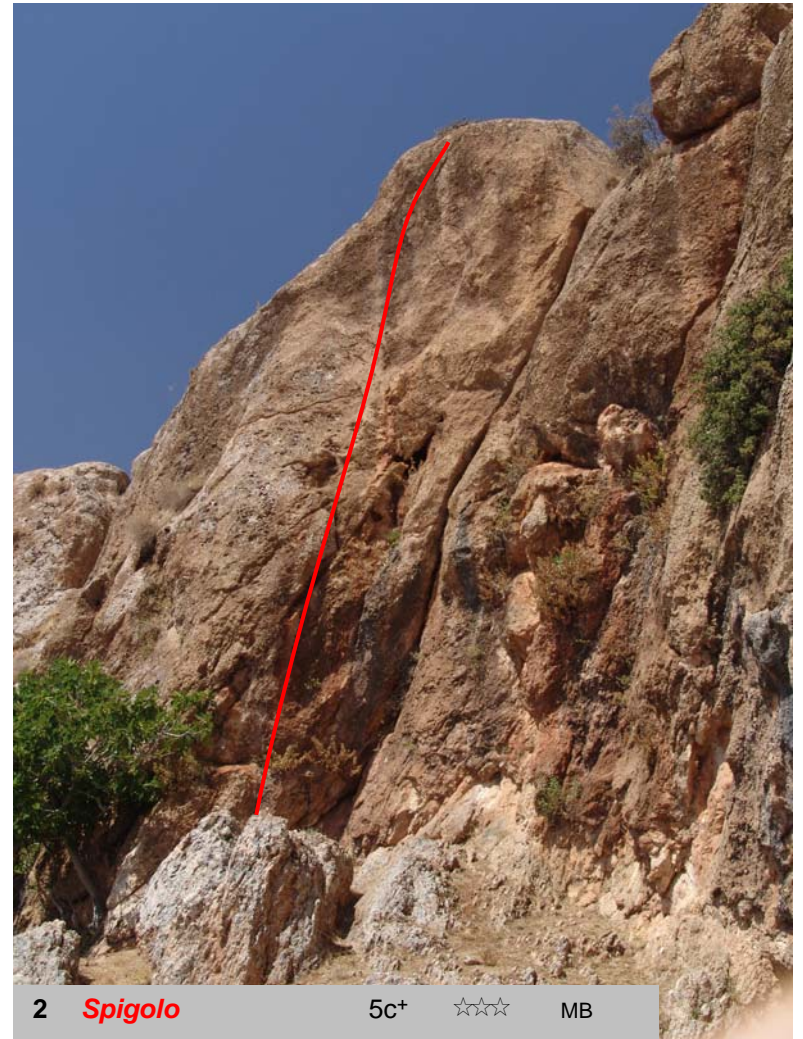
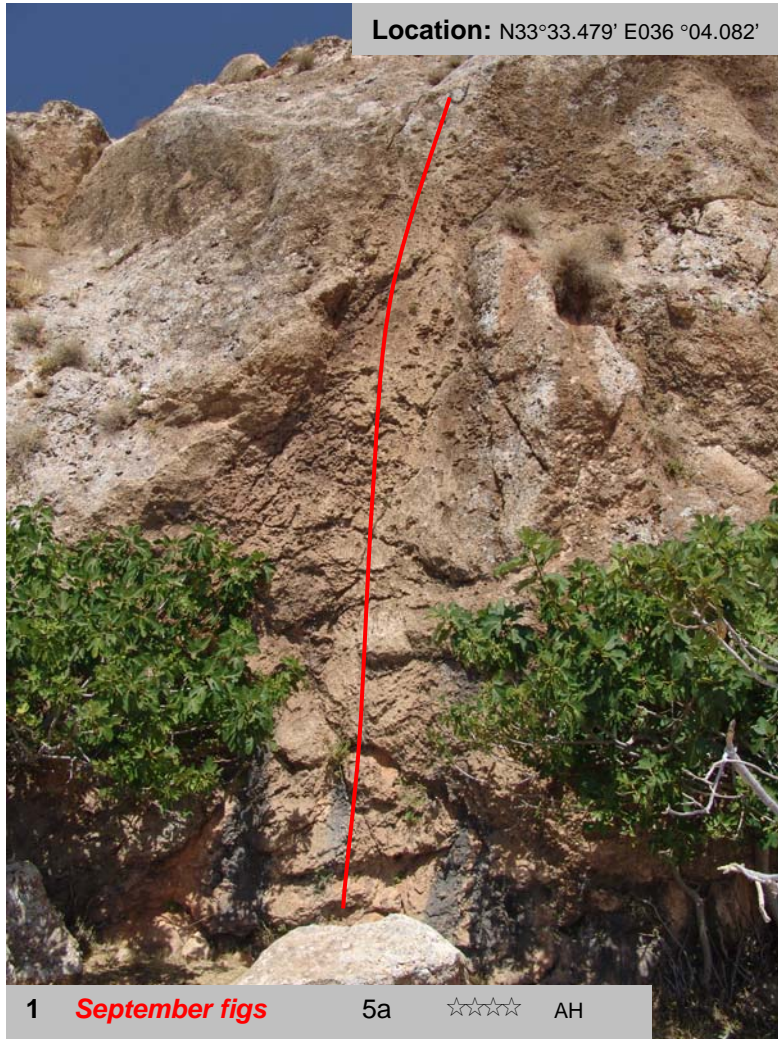
Markus Gschwind on *Exit*, 6a+



Scott Appelboom on *Grand Canyon*, 5a

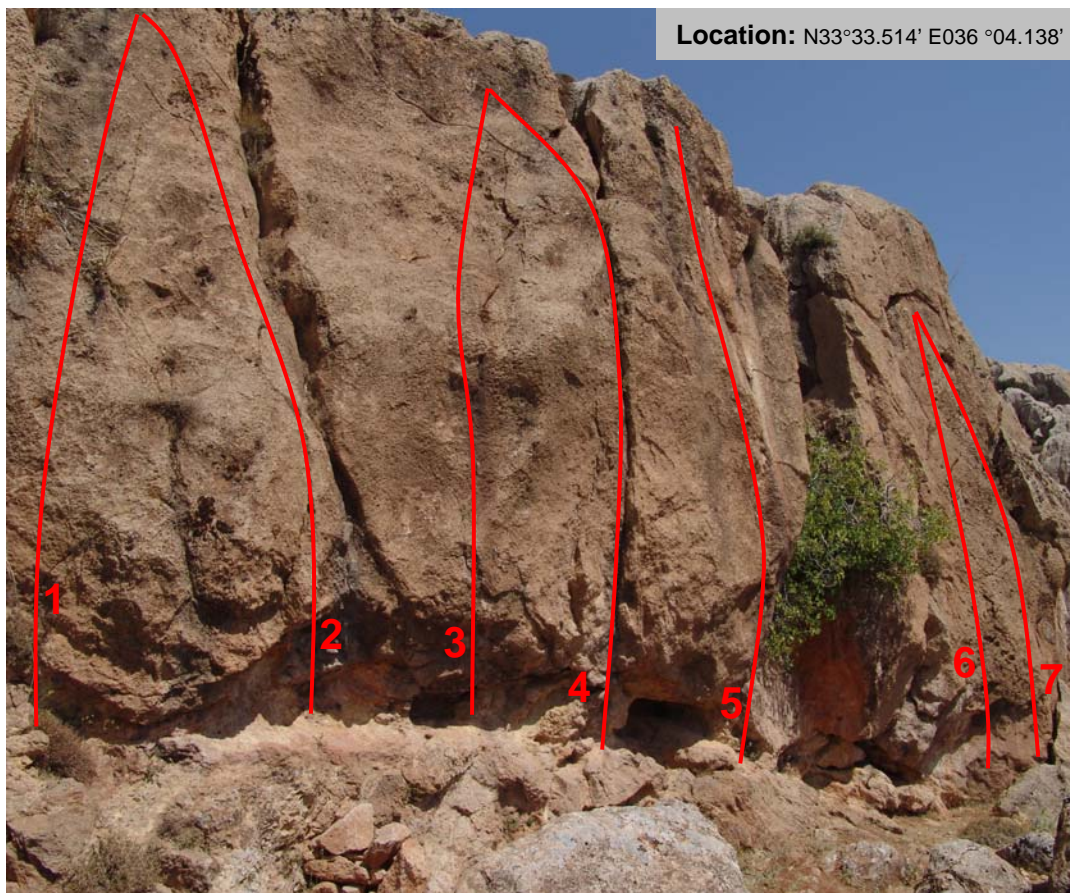
# Sabbourah

## September figs



# Sabbourak

## Warmduscher I



Location: N33°33.514' E036 °04.138'

1	<i>Pudelföhner</i>	4a	☆	JN
2	<i>Schwachsälzer</i>	5a	☆☆☆	JN
3	<i>Warmduscher</i>	6c	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
4	<i>The crack</i>	6a+	☆☆☆	MB
5	<i>Kaltduscher</i>	7a+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
6	<i>Kuschelrocker</i>	4c	☆☆☆	JN
7	<i>Feldbettcamper</i>	4c	☆☆☆	JN

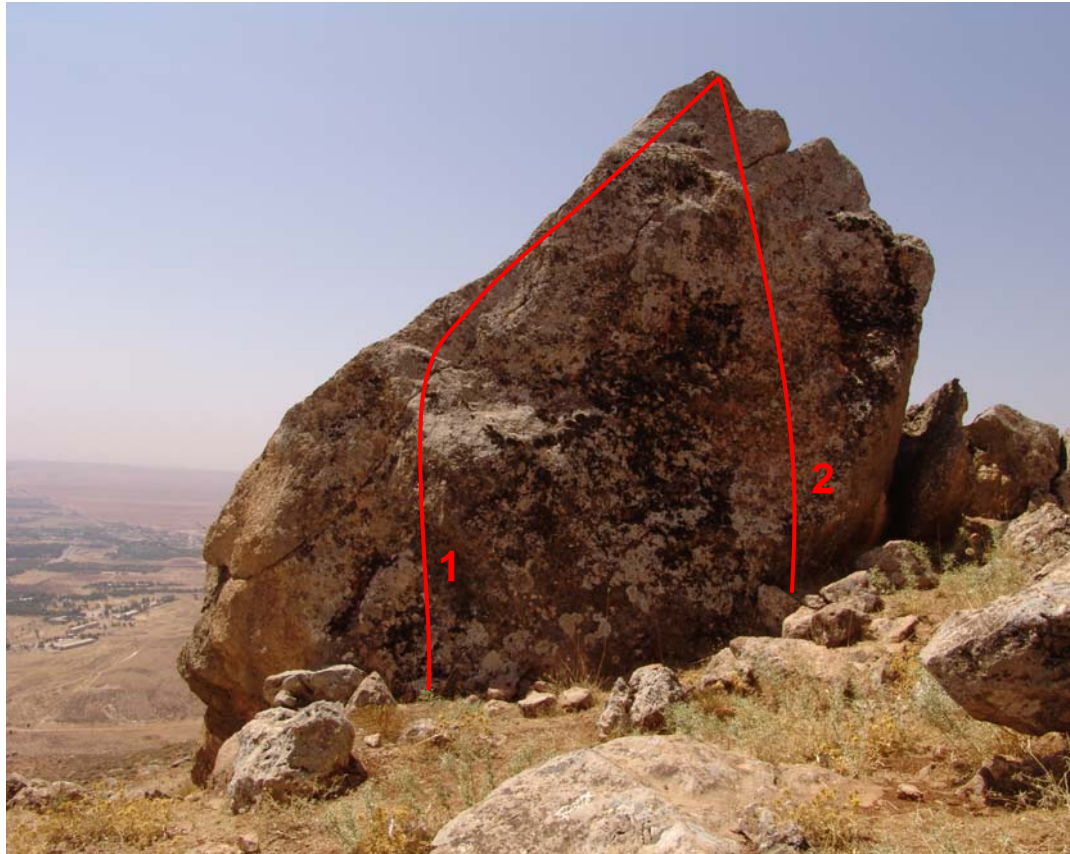
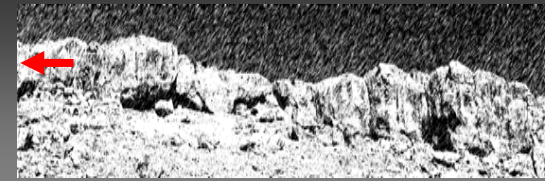
The routes in *Warmduscher* are not spectacular, but its real attraction is the protected grassy terrace between the main cliff on one side and the big boulder of *Warmduscher II* on the other. The climbs are short and either straightforward or very challenging. An ideal place for those who like to combine climbing with a family picnic.



Igor on *Kaltduscher*, 7a+

# Sabbourah

## Warmduscher II



**Warmduscher II** is not a part of the Sabbourah cliff but a free-standing boulder. It has been bolted up to provide climbing parents with top rope routes for their small kids. They can test themselves on the hard lines of **Warmduscher I** while keeping an eye on their offspring. A good location for beginners suffering from vertigo, too.

1	<b>Arrete special</b>	4b	LC
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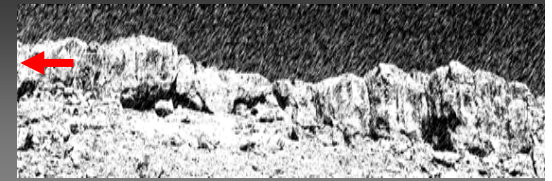
2	<b>Linzey's line</b>	3b	LC
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Annina Neidhardt on **Arrête Special**, 4b

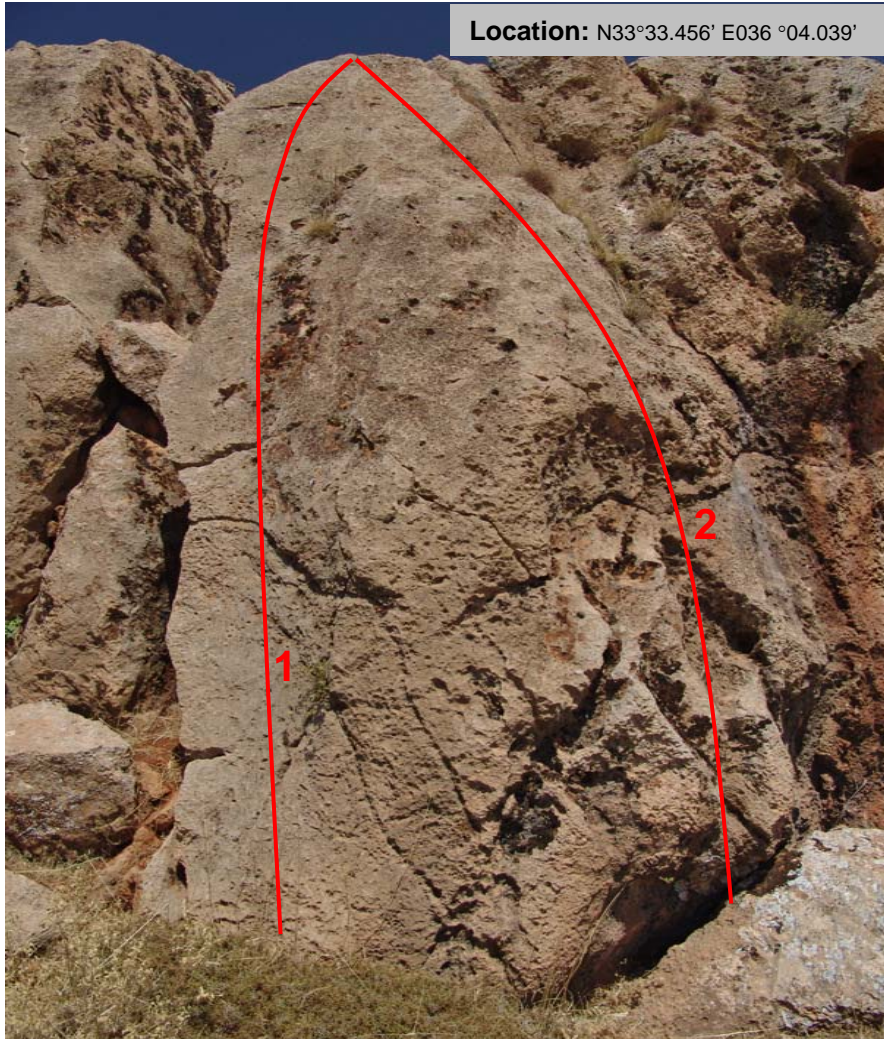


# Sabbourah

## 2b or not 2b

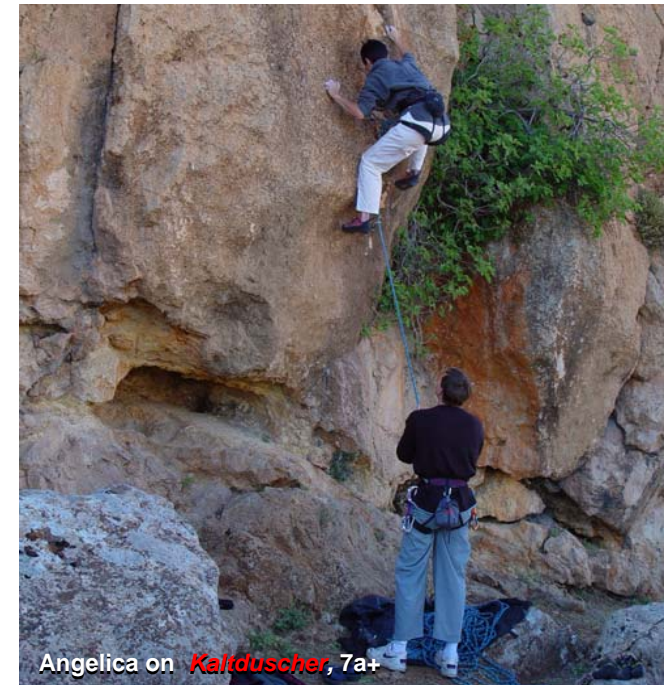


Location: N33°33.456' E036 °04.039'



1 *The minimum requirement* 3b UG

2 *2b or not 2b* 2b UG



Angelica on *Kaltduscher*, 7a+

Just a few meters to the left from *Warmduscher* there are two more routes for kids and the faint-hearted. Their difficulty is closer to the challenges of hiking than of climbing, but you have to start somewhere...

# Sabbourah

## The inner circle



The boulders down-hill from the Sabbourah cliff are sometimes too high to be climbed without protection, hence they were bolted up as well. A special Damascus boulder guide book has been published previously. **The inner circle** has been included in this book as an example to create interest for the formidable bouldering opportunities the area offers. The boulder is not all that simple to find. It is located about 70m down from the cliff and about 10m above the track the army has bull-dozed across the slope recently.



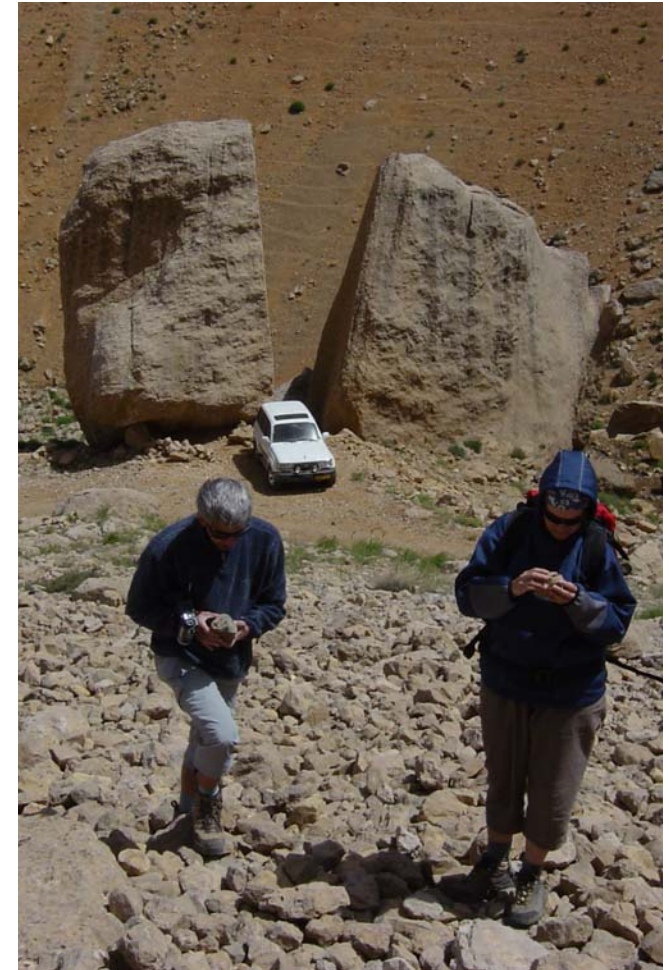
1	Zig-Zag	4b+
2	Attitude Target ?	5b
3	OverDubai	7a
4	Agincourt	??
5	The inner circle	8a
6	Wallstreet	??
7	Kids-Slab	4c

# Wadi Manchura



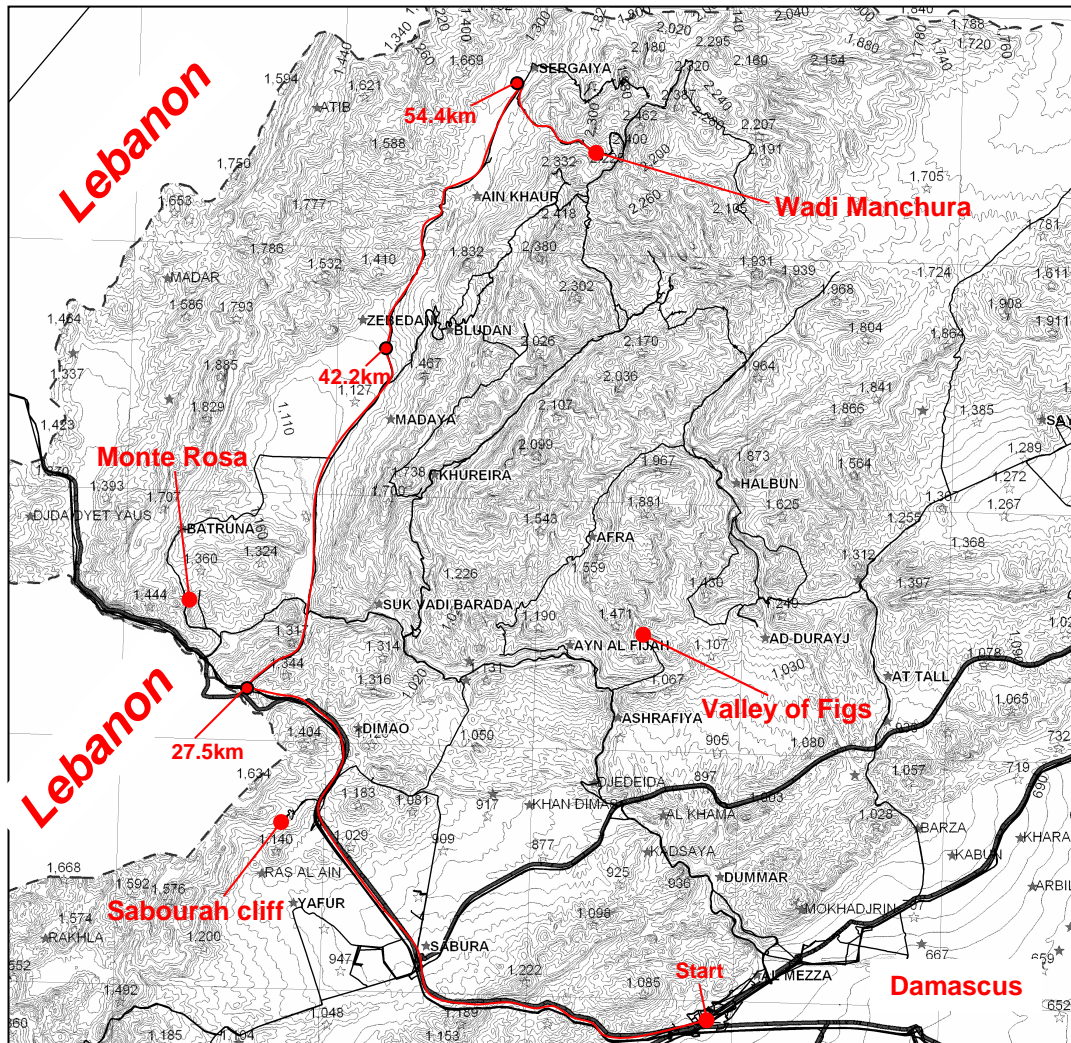
## General remarks

*Manchura* in Arabic means “chopped”, “sawed” or “cut in two”. When you see the boulders of **Kain** and **Abel** located at the beginning of the high plateau in Wadi Manchura, it becomes obvious where the valley got its name from. The limestone boulders with the size of a three-storey building look like chopped with an axe. The **Kain&Abel**, **Kompromiss** and **Katyusha** climbing sites are situated along the flat ground of the basin-shaped mountain valley. The fourth sector - **Les hirondelles** - which comprises the only true multi-pitch established routes in Syria is located a bit up the slope which closes off the valley to the East. Due to the elevated altitude of around 2000m, Manchura is the ideal area for the hot summer months: when the scorching heat in town makes it just impossible to lift a finger there is always a bit of a fresh breeze up here. Unfortunately, the site can only be accessed by 4x4 – and in spring, when the melting water is still flowing in the river-crossing on the way up, the drive requires some guts. Depending on the amount of snow that fell in the preceding winter, the season lasts from around end of May till the first snow falls normally around end November. The drive from Damascus takes an hour which in contrast to the sites closer to town such as Sabbourah and Monte Rosa preconditions the spot more for a full days’ outing than a quick evening session. But the fresh air and the mountain scenery are also inviting for the non-climbers for a picnic. Up the gravel slopes plenty of corral fossils can be found and one can hike on the shoulders of the valley to enjoy amazing views into the Lebanon mountains and the Bekaa valley. It is possible to go camping here, but the valley is a commonly know smuggling route – smugglers do not appreciate too much company. Thus, camp a bit out of sight and there won’t be trouble.



Linzey Cartwright and Annina fossil hunting above Kain&Abel.

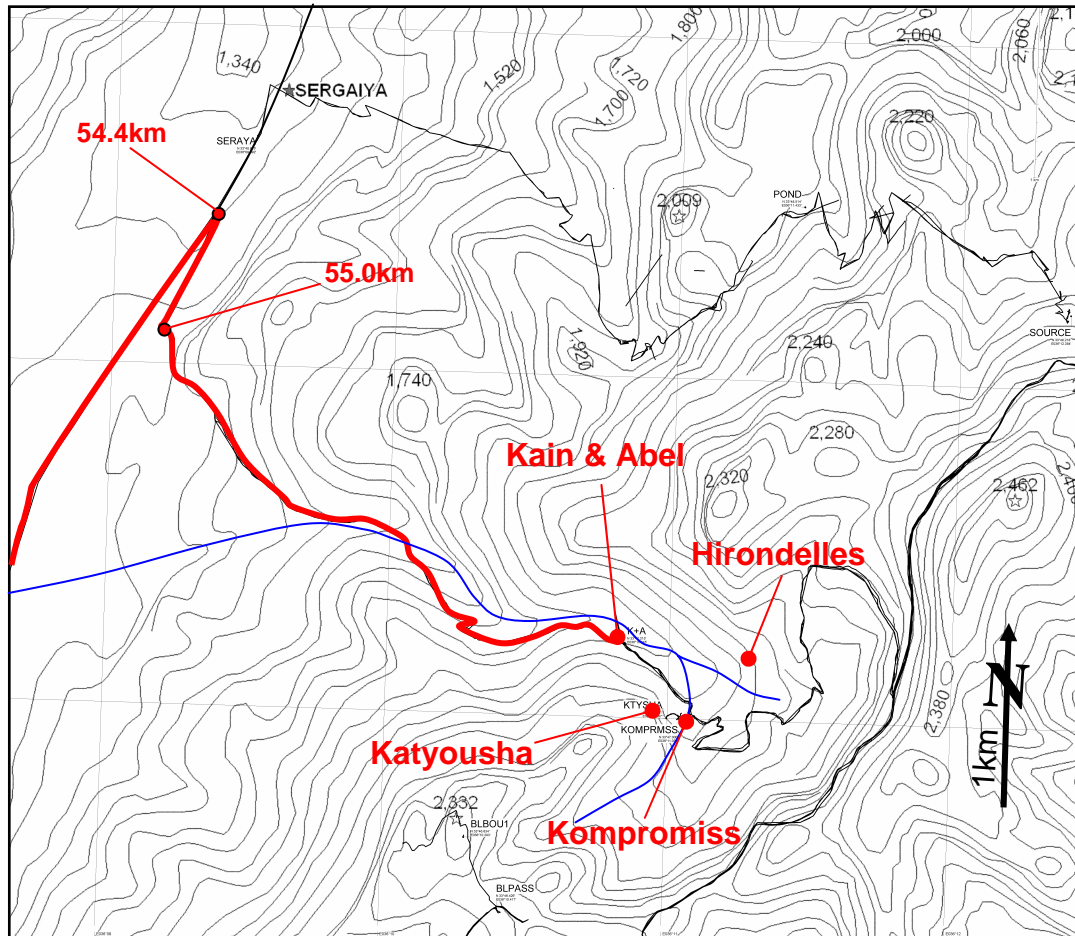
# Wadi Manchura Directions



## Directions

- 0km You reset your meter at the last traffic light on the Mezzeh Autostrada. Join the Beirut highway and follow it.
- 27.5m Take the exit to Bludan and Az Zabadani. After about 6km you cross the rails of the Damascus Bludan railway for the first time. You follow the main road and pass the exits to Madaya and Bludan.
- 42.2km In Zabadani, you arrive at a roundabout where you turn slightly to the right and up-hill. After about 300m you cross some rails again and you come to a traffic light in the village of Zabadani, where you continue straight on. You continue on the main road towards Sergaya. After a curvy section with a bit of ups and downs, you drive slightly down-hill into the village of Sergaya.
- 54.4km In the village, where the concrete curb that separates the lanes stop, you turn sharply (170 degrees) to the right into a small side street.
- 55.0km After passing two white houses on the right (650m), you turn left into a very inconspicuous looking tarmaced dirt track. After about 50m it starts to ascend, you drive through fruit orchards, until the tarmac stops and continue on the dirt track all the way up the valley.
- 58.6km After a bunch of steep switchbacks you reach the boulders of *Kain & Abel*.

# Wadi Manchura Detailed map



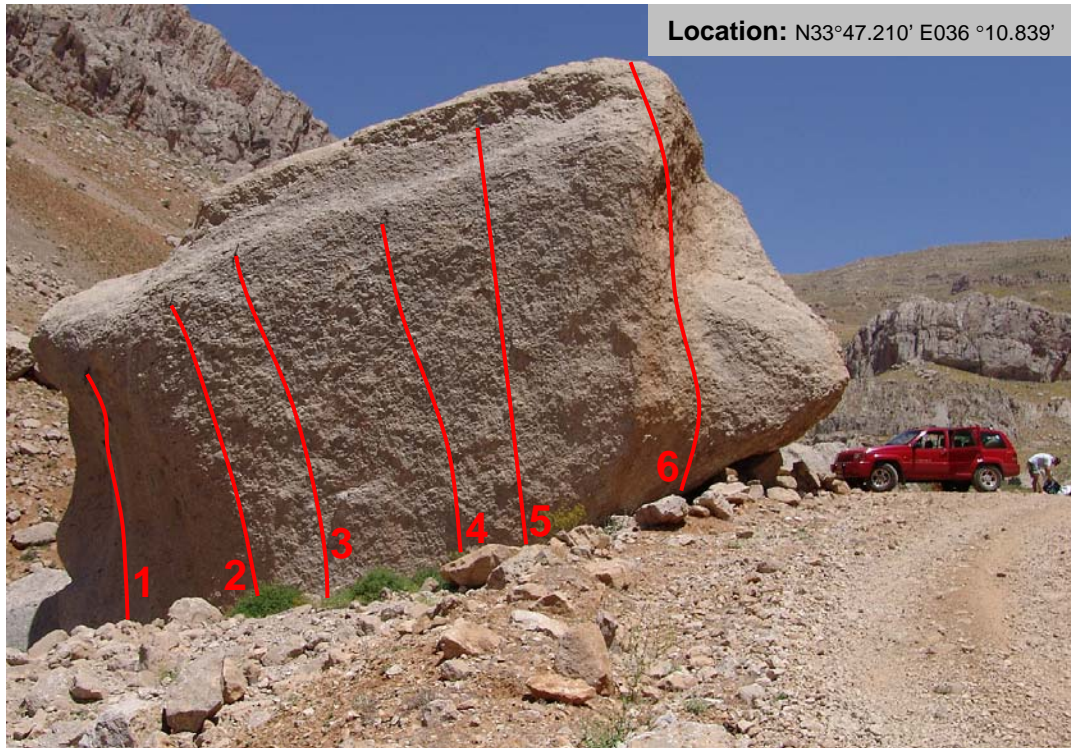
## Best time to climb

May-November the whole day. If it gets too hot over lunch time, go for a climb in the shadows or just take a siesta. If you climb hard enough, there is always a face without sun on **Kain & Abel**. **Katyousha** is in the shadows after about 1400 hours, **Kompromiss** only in the morning, but because it is located in a small gorge the belayer can withdraw from the sunshine soon after lunch. The double-pitch routes in **Les hirondelles** are best climbed towards the later afternoon and evening. Watching the sun moving towards the Lebanon mountains while hanging on an intermediate belay provides you with a view you won't forget so quickly.

## Special remarks

The radiation up in Syria's mountains is very strong, sun screen and head cover are strongly recommended. In spring and autumn, temperatures in the morning and towards evening can be cool. Taking a fleece with you is not a bad idea. Bring enough water and a picnic, you won't ride down to Sergaya just for lunch. Be polite to the locals, especially the fruit farmers at the bottom of the road. It is theirs, hence move out of the way with your car and let them pass if you meet them with their tractors.

# Wadi Manchura Kain West



Location: N33°47.210' E036 °10.839'

1	<b>For a single move more</b>	6b	☆☆	MB
2	<b>Best in class</b>	6c+	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
3	<b>6a all the way</b>	6b	☆☆☆☆	MB
4	<b>Tingly fingers</b>	6b	☆☆☆☆	MB
5	<b>Flying Carpet</b>	6c	☆☆☆☆☆	MB
6	<b>Manchura trail</b>	7a	☆☆	MB

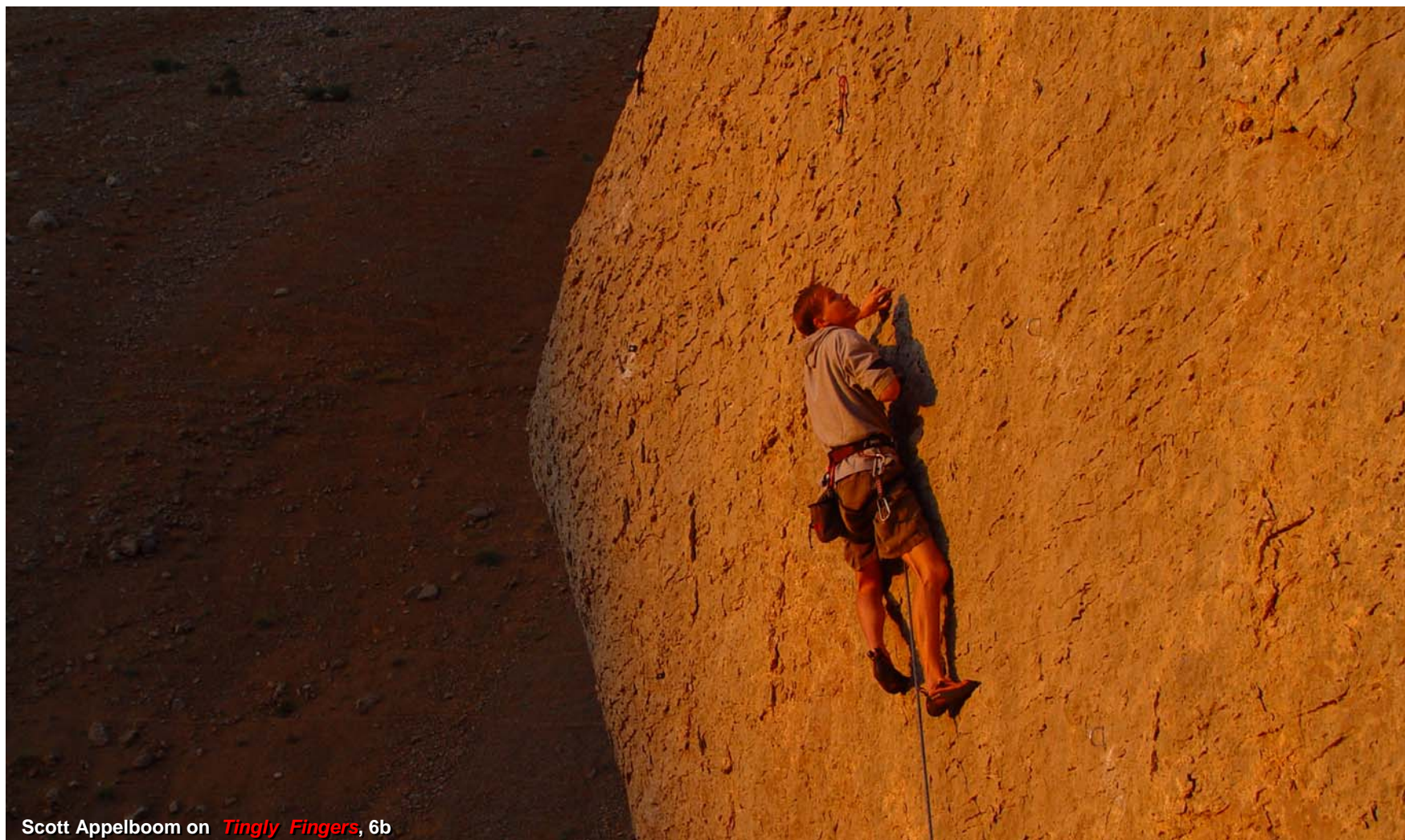
The boulders of **Kain & Abel** were spotted for climbing by Austrian UN soldiers, *Rüdiger Preiss* and *Wolfgang Glabautschnig*. They have drilled a few top rope bolts into Abel in addition to three routes. These are likely to represent the very first protected routes in Syria. Most of the now existing lines however were created by the people around the authors of this guide book. The routes in this sector are short but tough. The overhanging wall is covered with small ledges which generally make good foot and hand holds, but the movements demand sufficient finger and upper body power/stamina. A section for the slightly advanced climber.



Matthias Braun on **Best in class**, 6c+

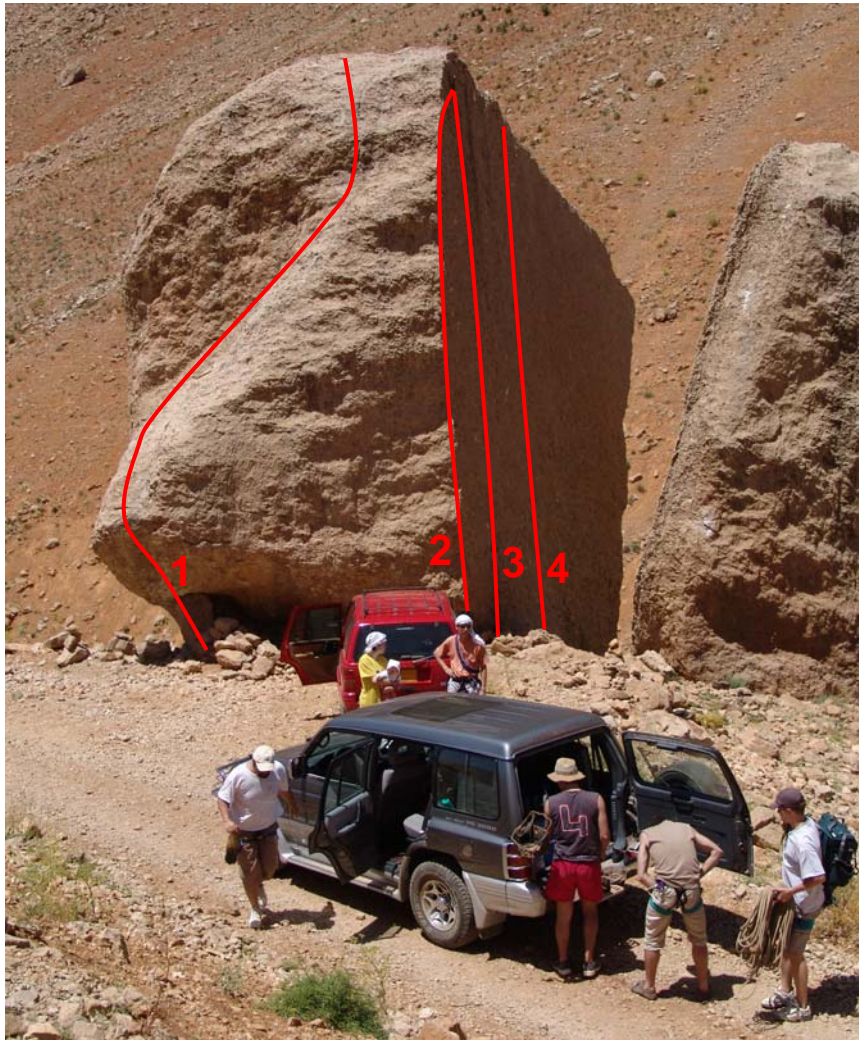
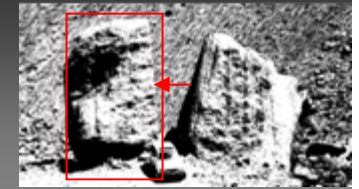
# Wadi Manchura

## Kain West



Scott Appelboom on *Tingly Fingers*, 6b

# Wadi Manchura Kain South & East



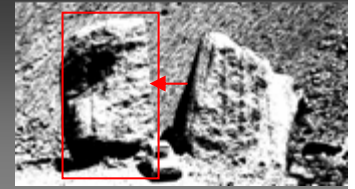
1	<b>Überhang</b>	5b	☆☆	RP/WG
2	<b>Leading Edge</b>	6b	☆☆☆☆	MB
3	<b>Too fast to fall(ow)</b>	7a	☆☆☆☆	MB
4	<b>Climbing the limit</b>	7c+	☆☆☆☆	MB

**Überhang** is one of the UN guys' creations, more a boulder problem than a route, really. A powerful move right at the bottom and the rest is scrambling. The other three routes are a completely different story: although the rock is sculpted and the dip not even vertical they are simply beautiful but difficult to do.



Scott on **Leading Edge**, 6b

# Wadi Manchura Kain South & East

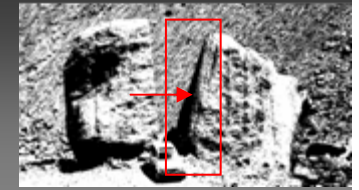


Matthias on *Too fast to fall*, 7a



Coral fossils that can be found here

# Wadi Manchura Abel West



1 **Talent Pipeline** 7c ☆☆☆☆ MB

2 **Kante** 4a ☆☆ RP/WG

The second boulder of the brother pair hosts a few more accessible routes for the mortals within the climbing community. This is obviously not correct for **Talent pipeline**, a line that looks tantalizingly doable from flat ground and then turns out to be a real bitch. **Kante** acted as the ladder the Austrians used to reach the top to drill their anchors. Since the rock is a bit brittle and we found only one piton in the rock, we put in two more bolts for the benefit of beginners – our sincere apologies to the developers. The four routes on the southern face of **Abel** are real beauties, especially the Austrian's **One hook** and **Wand**. The rock surface is sublimely shaped by the forces of nature and although the wall is full of structure, there is no obvious way to solve the problems. Every time you do it, you do it in a slightly different fashion.

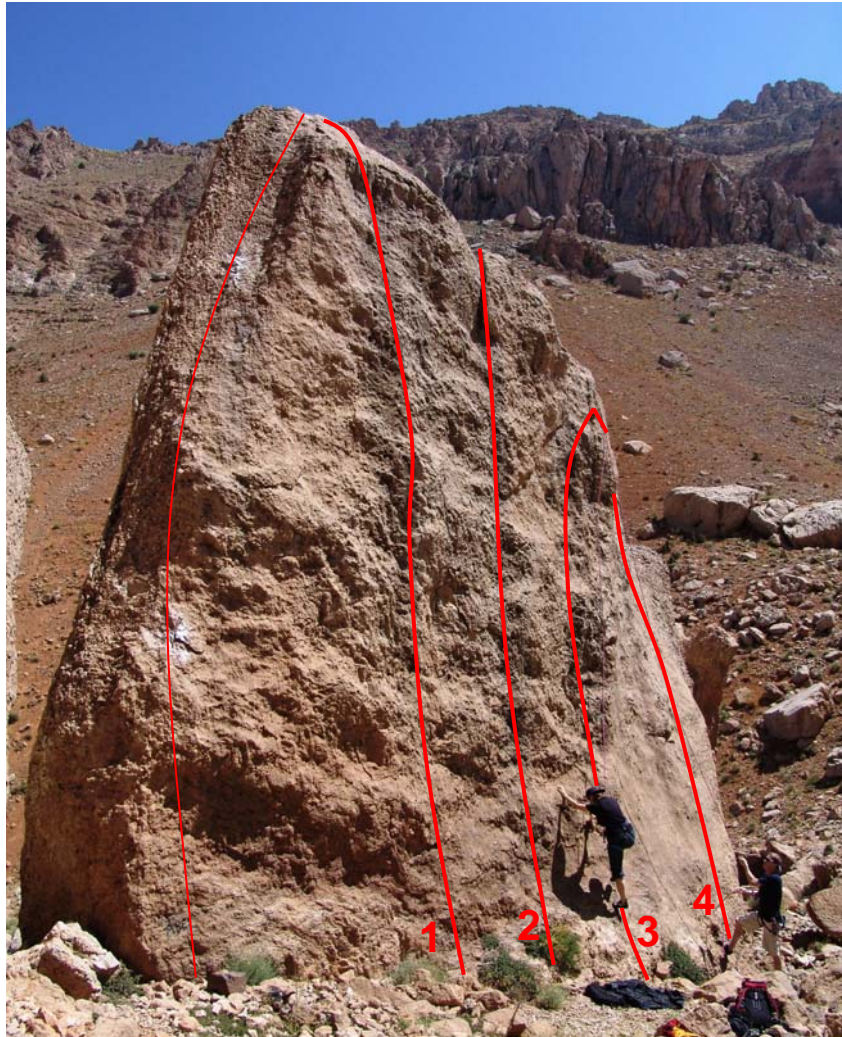
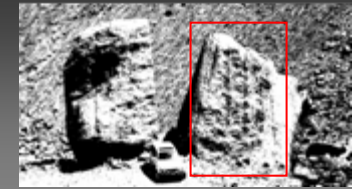
# Wadi Manchura

## Kain West



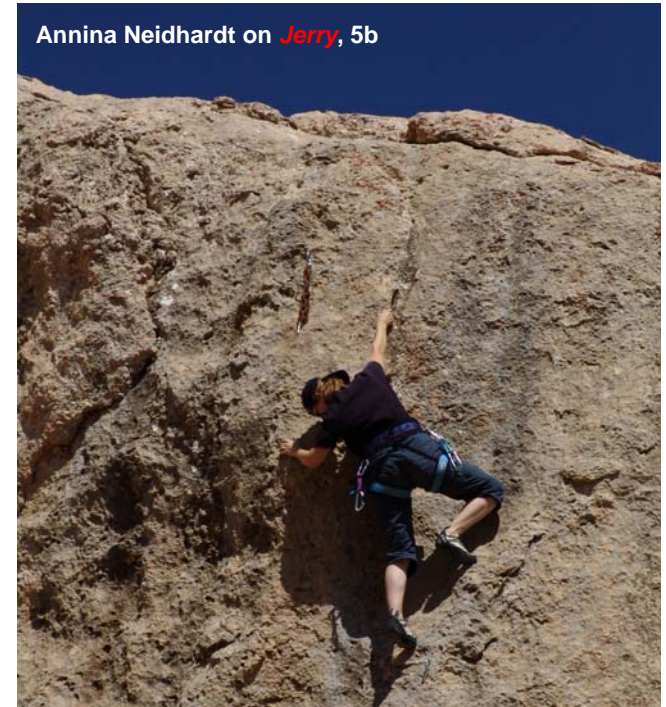
Matthias Braun on *Best in class*, 6c+

# Wadi Manchura Abel South

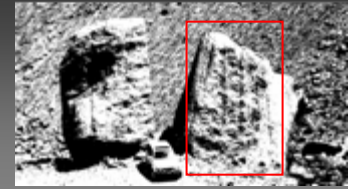


1	<b>One Hook</b>	5c	☆☆☆☆☆	RP/WG
2	<b>Wand</b>	5b	☆☆☆☆☆	RP/WG
3	<b>Tom</b>	4c+	☆☆☆☆☆	LC
4	<b>Jerry</b>	5b	☆☆☆☆☆	MB

Annina Neidhardt on **Jerry**, 5b



# Wadi Manchura Abel South



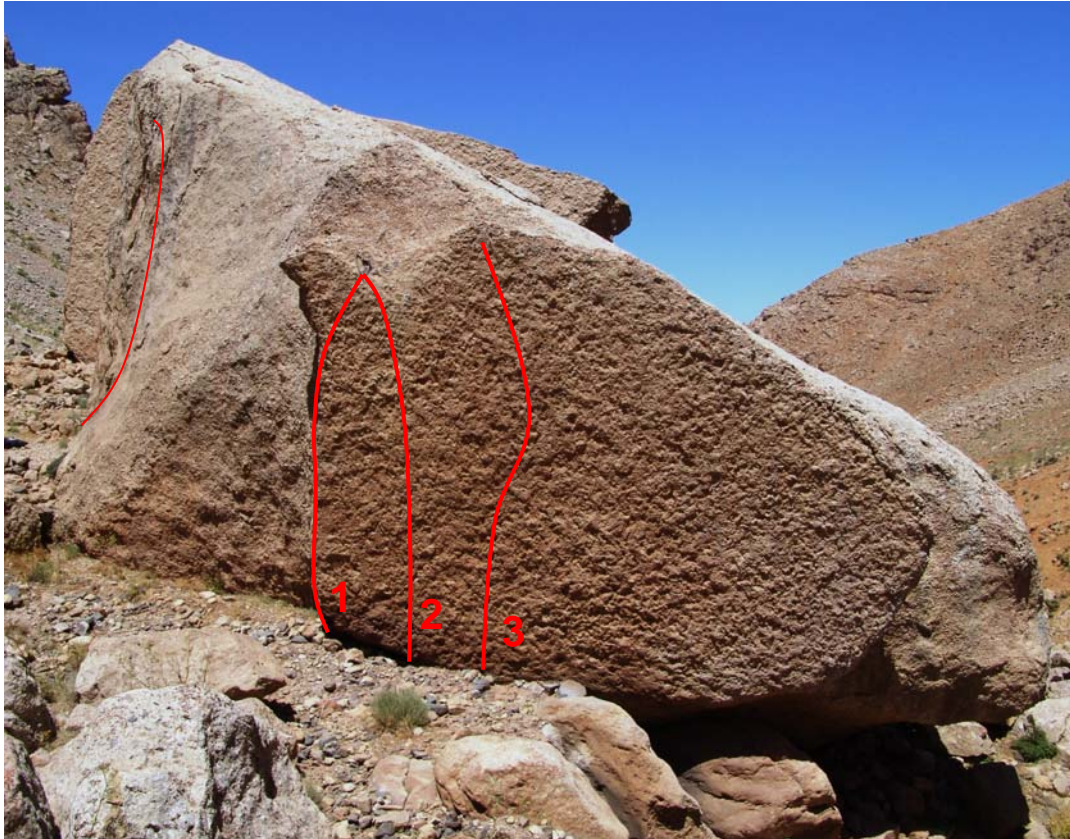
Lara on *Wand*, 5b



Linzey Cartwright on *Wand*, 5b

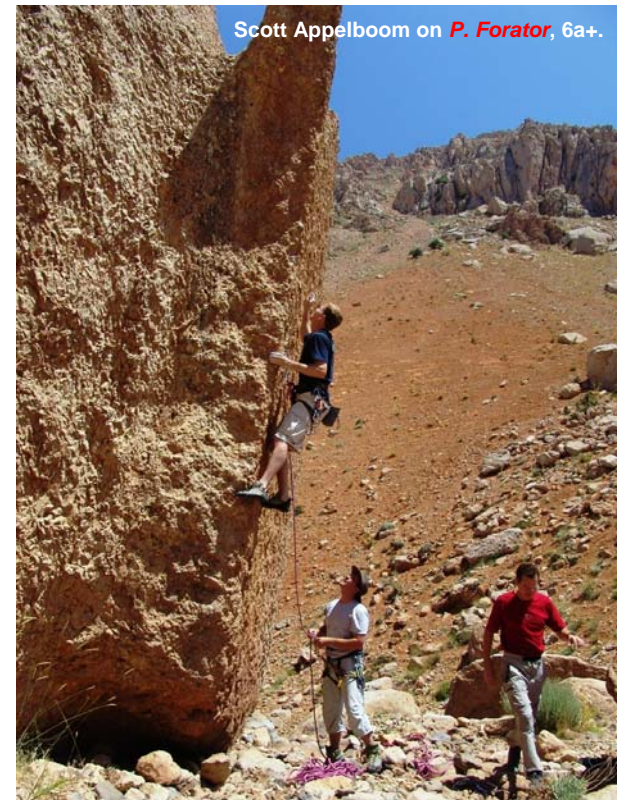
# Wadi Manchura

## Abel East



Three short routes, but after the three your fingers are ready to go home. The severely overhanging slab looks surreally glued to the main body of the boulder. Like on the other faces on **Kain&Abel** the limestone surface is full of finely chiseled features which would make decent holds on a vertical wall, but here... **B.Olting** and **D.Rilling** can be considered rather hard 6c's.

1	<b>Peter Forator</b>	6a+	☆☆☆☆	MB
2	<b>Brad Olting</b>	6c	☆☆☆☆	MB
3	<b>Daniel Rilling</b>	6c	☆☆☆☆	MB

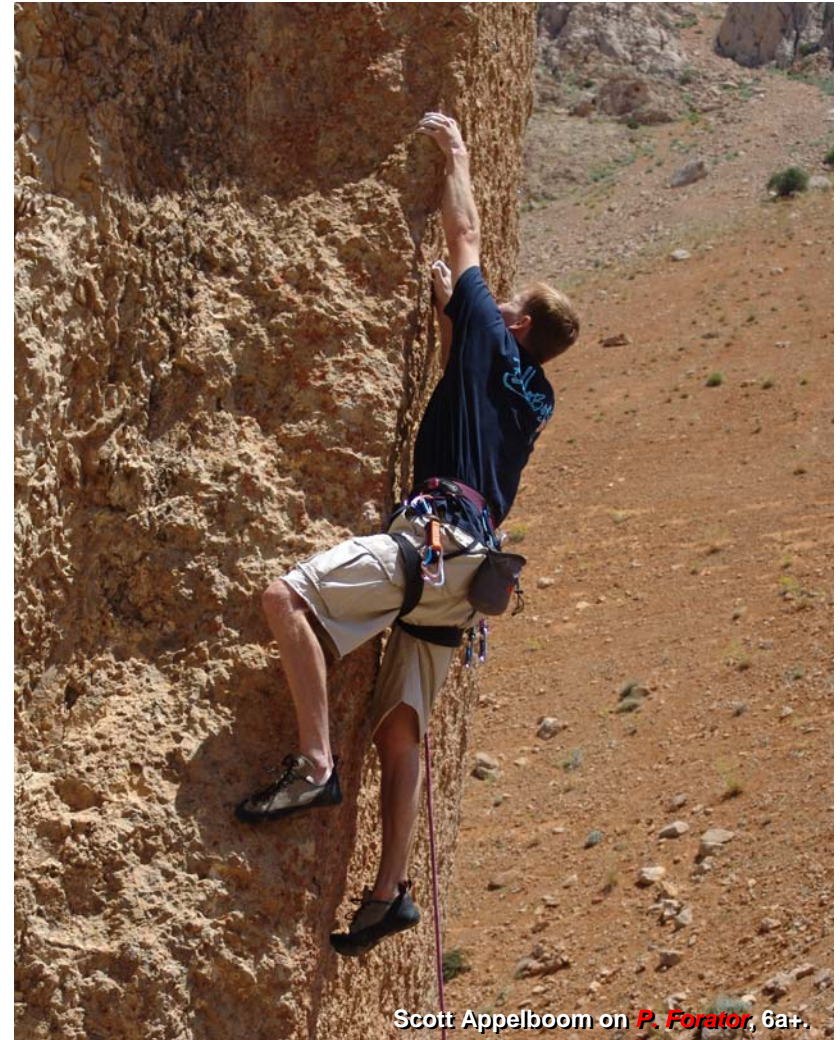


# Wadi Manchura

## Abel East



Perfect day in Wadi Manchura: Annina on *Jerry*, 5b.



Scott Appelboom on *P. Forator*, 6a+.

# Wadi Manchura



Wadi Manchura seen from Kain & Abel in early July.



# Wadi Manchura

## Kompromiss



Location: N33°47.000' E036 °11.039'

1	<b>No compromise</b>	5b+	☆☆☆	JN
2	<b>Philemon &amp; Baukis</b>	5a+	☆☆☆☆	JN
3	<b>Handballenreisser*</b>	5c+	☆☆☆☆☆	JN
4	<b>Scared</b>	6b	☆☆	JN
5	<b>La bouteille qui se vide</b>	5b	☆☆☆☆	JN

\*probably corresponds to a top rope route by R. Preiss with the same name

Like **Kain & Abel**, this sector has been described first by R. Preiss on his website. Unfortunately, apart from a few paint marks on the rocks, he and his friends have neither left any traces of their top-rope activities nor described their routes in detail. Since it is a rather cool little rock, we decided to develop the face. The currently existing five routes provide ample fun opportunities for the less dedicated rock-lovers. Till the end of May, water can still be flowing through the little gorge at the foot of the wall. It is in the shadow for the larger part of the day with about three hours sunshine around lunch time. The place is fantastic for picnic and even camping and almost ideal for kids.

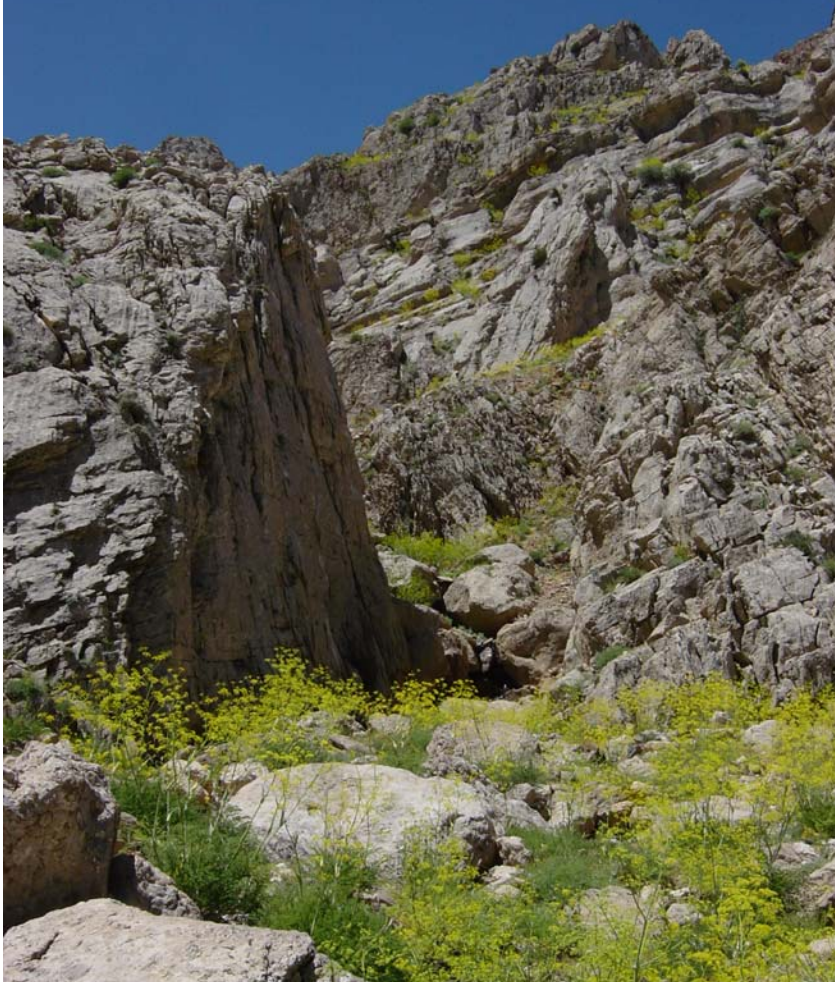
**Special remark:** Mind the fennel-plants which grow here: they are phototoxic and together with the sun can lead to severe burns on the skin and hurting liquid filled blisters.

# Wadi Manchura

## Kompromiss



The Kompromiss wall (on the left) seen from the dirt road in Wadi Manchura



The place is very suitable for a picnic



# Wadi Manchura

## Kompromiss



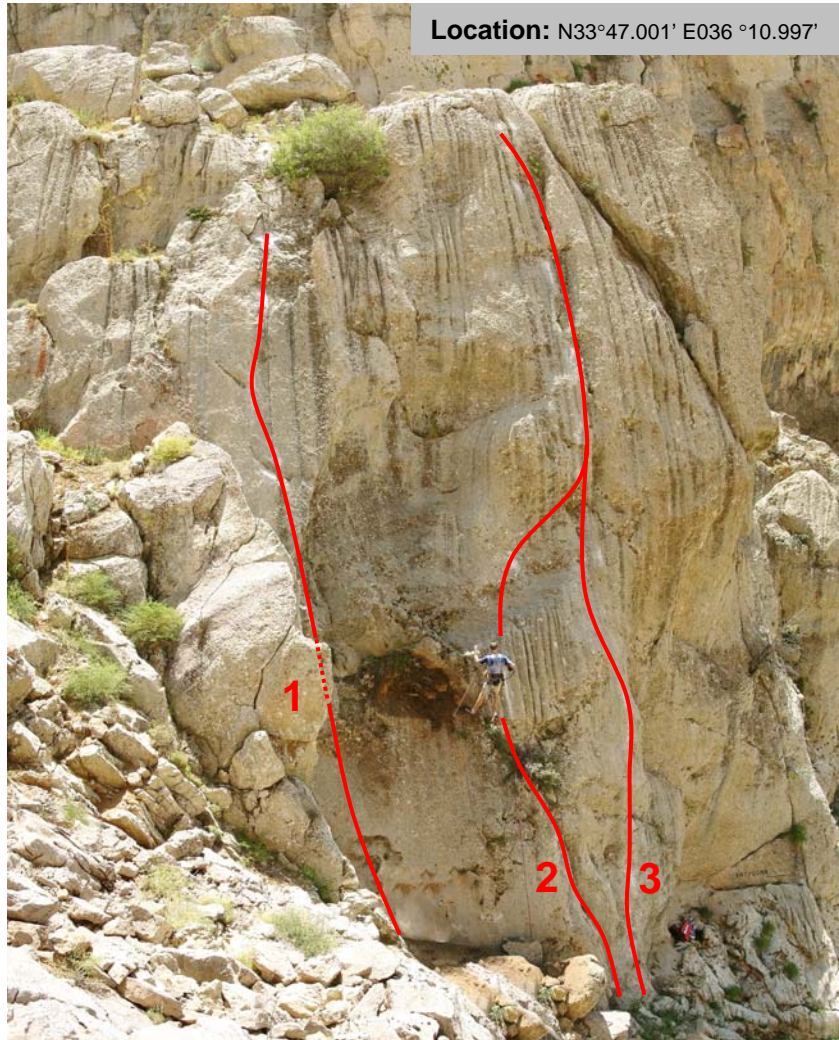
Jacques de Watteville on *Philemon & Baukis*, 5a.



Jürg Neidhardt on *La bouteille qui se vide*, 5b.

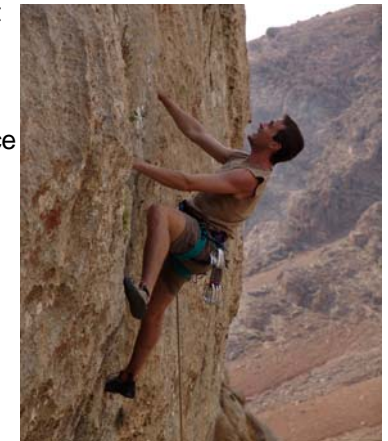
# Wadi Manchura

## Katyusha



1	<b>Demolition man</b>	5c+	☆☆☆☆	SA
2	<b>Bon fumage de bras</b>	5b	☆☆☆	JN
3	<b>Steps from heaven</b>	6b+	☆☆☆☆☆	JN

To get to **Kompromiss** and **Katyusha** you just follow the dirt road some 500m straight up the valley. After the river crossing, just before the road starts to climb again you can see the little **Kompromiss** gorge on the right side of the road. **Katyusha** is located about a 100m up the rubble fan on the left side of the gorge. The three routes in this section are quite long and of variable character. **Demolition man** looks like an impossibly smooth plate, but just enough fissures and ledges can be found in it to make it a slightly psycho but achievable climb. **Steps from heaven** starts with a technical entry followed by a slightly powerful bit, then the crux friction part and concludes with the long and easy partly overhanging run-out. Some of the holds there have the size of manholes. When we attempted the route for the first time, we couldn't find a way over the smooth section in the middle: there was simply no step to be seen. But then the sun disappeared over the edge of the face and for a few seconds only the most protruding spots were still illuminated by light: the looked-for steps! Hence the name of the route. **Bon fumage de bras** avoids the hard bits of it's neighbor, a good end of day route with a bit a gardeners touch.

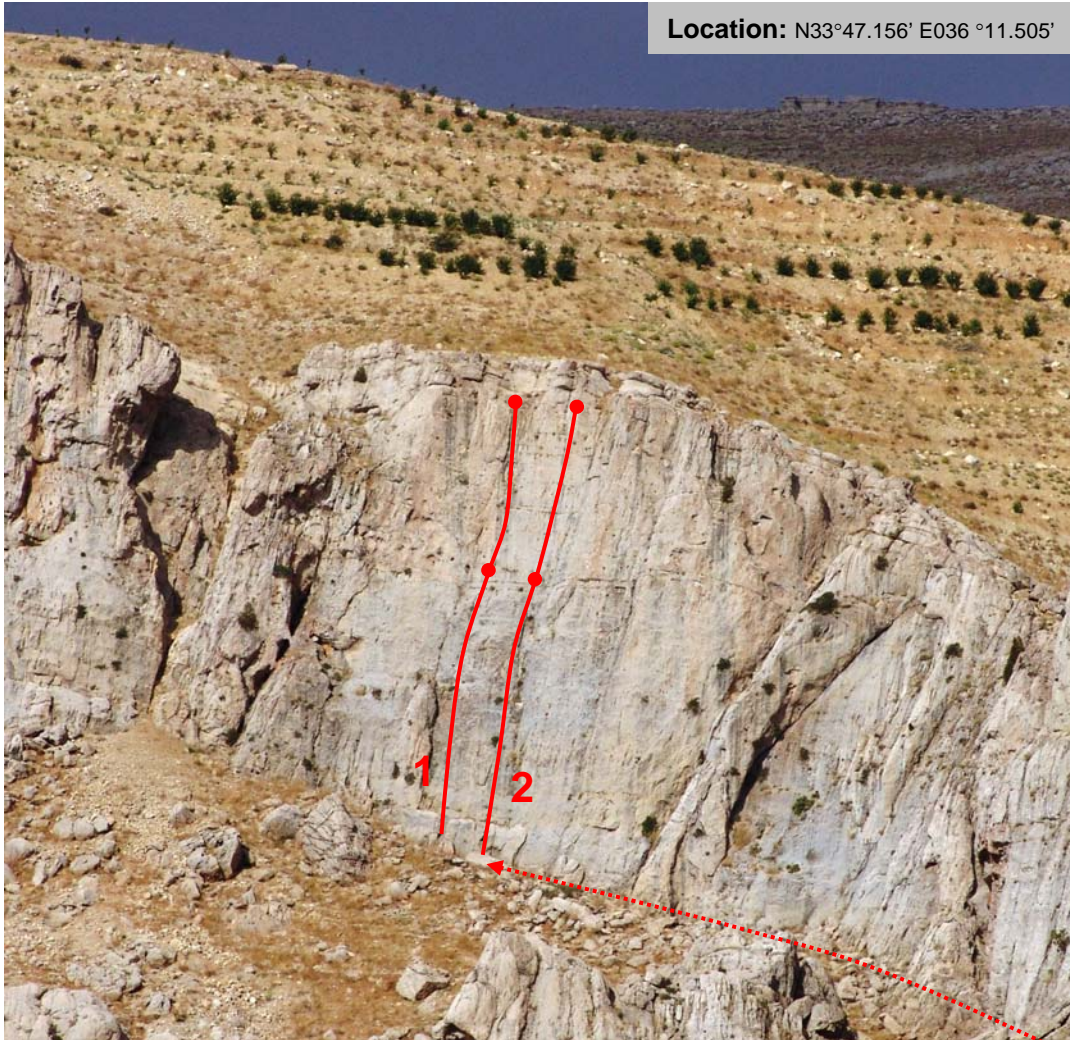


# Wadi Manchura

## Les hirondelles



Location: N33°47.156' E036 °11.505'



### 1 *Simply the best*

L1: 5b ☆☆☆☆☆ LC

L2: 6a+ ☆☆☆☆☆ MB

### 2 *Les deux vieux montagnards*

L1: 5c ☆☆☆☆☆ LC

L2: 6a ☆☆☆☆☆ MB

**To get there:** from *Kompromiss*, one drives up the dirt road 5 steep switchbacks and followed by a longer straight stretch and parks car in the following right turn. You then scramble down into a small cleft and end up with the rock face of **Les hirondelles** on your right. So far only two routes have been drilled into the rock here but there is potential for quite a few more. The rock is compact with holes and horizontal cracks as holds. From high up the wall one looks directly west into the Lebanon mountains, the best time to climb the lines is towards sunset.

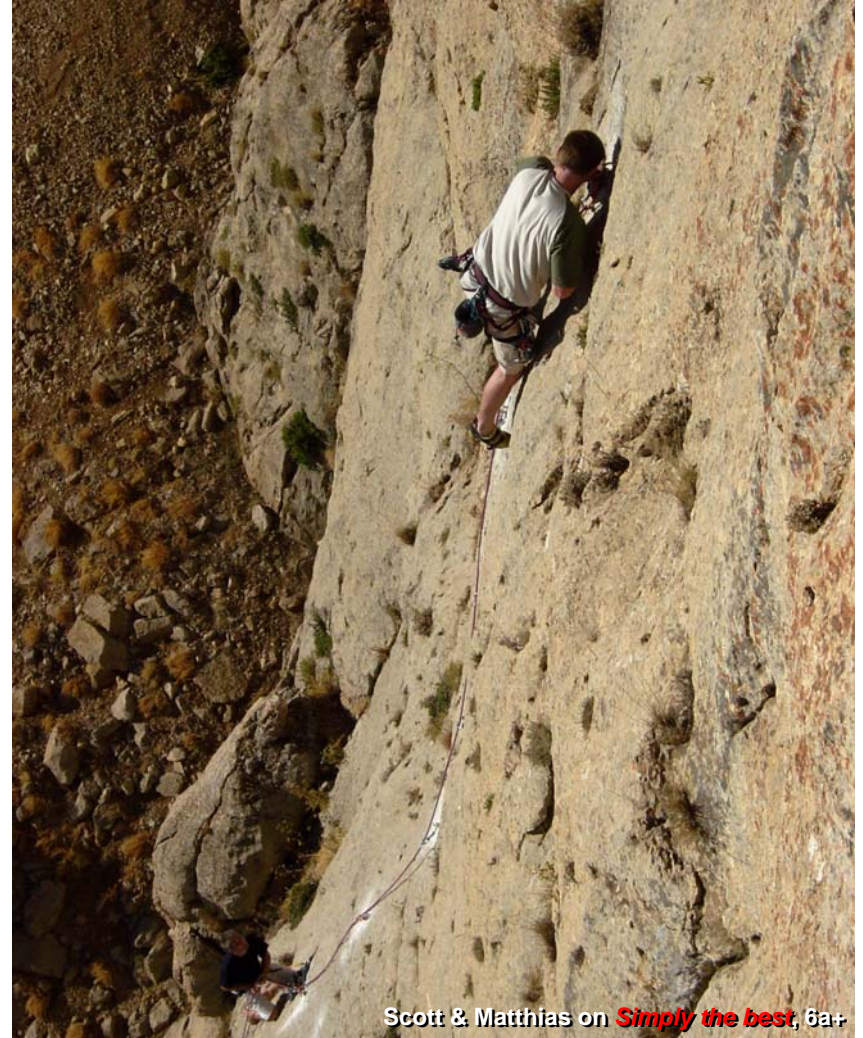
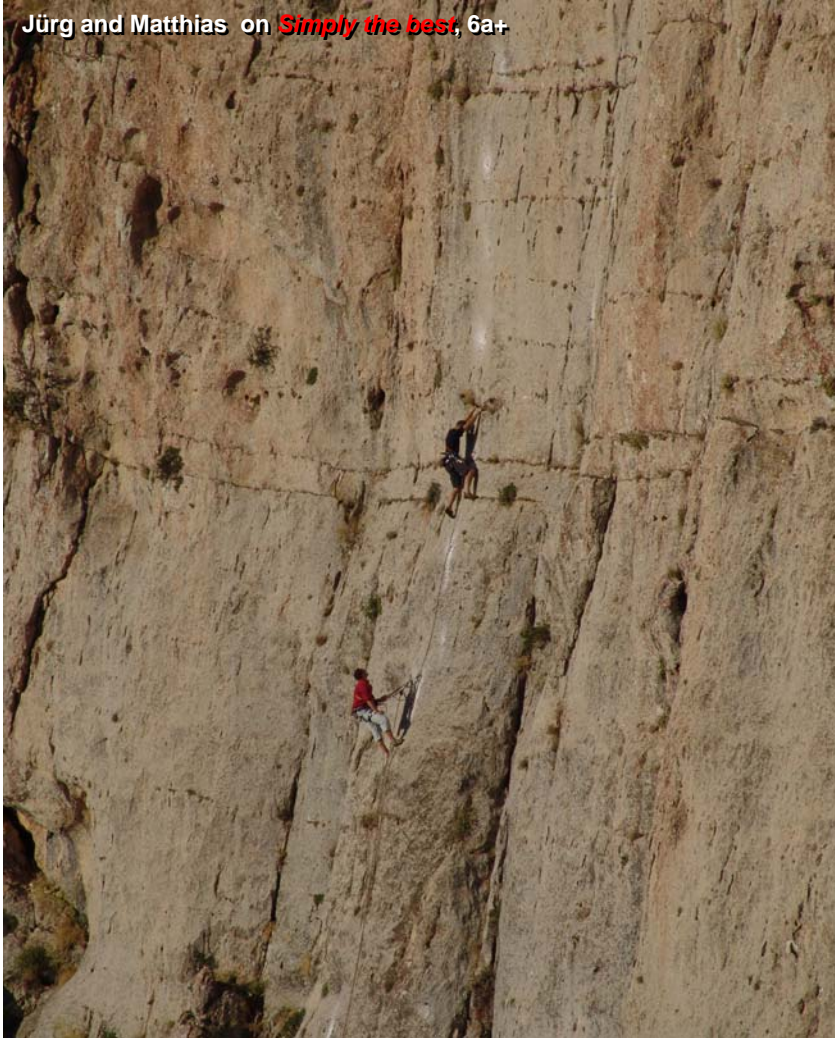


# Wadi Manchura

## Les hirondelles

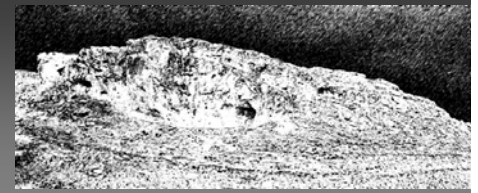


Jürg and Matthias on *Simply the best*, 6a+



Scott & Matthias on *Simply the best*, 6a+

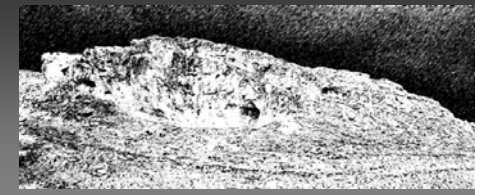
# Valley of figs



The **Valley of figs** climbing area has been developed single-handedly by the German Archeologist Markus Gschwind and his wife Anita. In the beginning, they had no contact with the other climbing groups and they followed a slightly different development style. Their five routes are longer than the routes in the other three areas and are generally climbed as two rope lengths. Since Markus has drilled all bolts by hand (!), the density of protection in the routes reminds one more of alpine tracks than of sport climbing lines. Nevertheless, the beautiful setting of the rock cliff in a region which is also popular for hiking, the slightly lower difficulties and the somewhat adventurous style of the climbs make a visit definitively worthwhile.

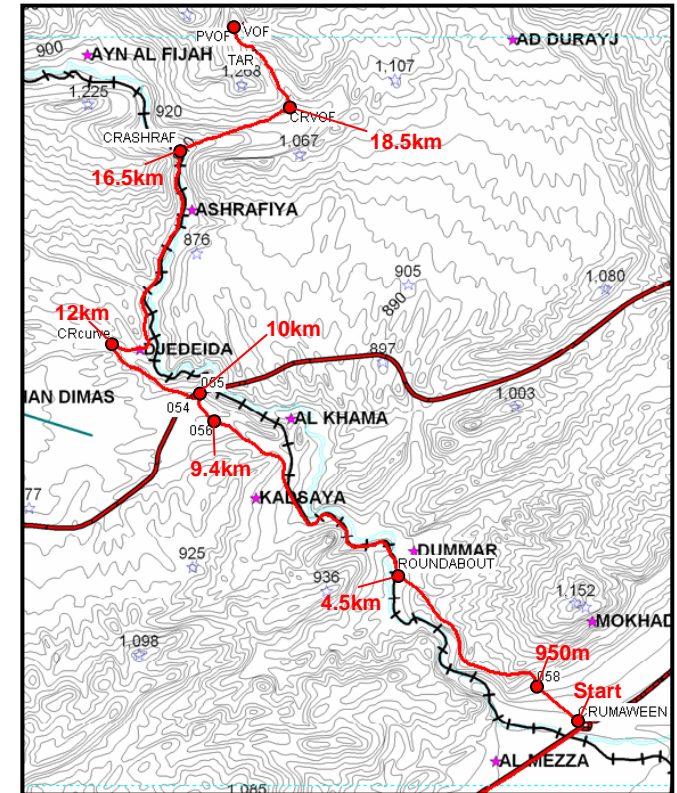
**Protection:** Hand-chiseled expansion bolts, few pegs and 1 friend, size 1.5; belays at the top of the cliff have to be set up with slings.  
**Length of the routes:** The height of the climbing cliff is around 50m.  
**Best time:** In summer: morning or late afternoon. In the winter: lunchtime and early afternoon; difficult to reach after heavy snowfalls.

# Valley of figs

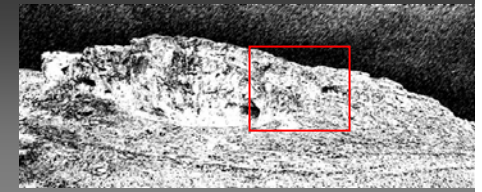


## Directions

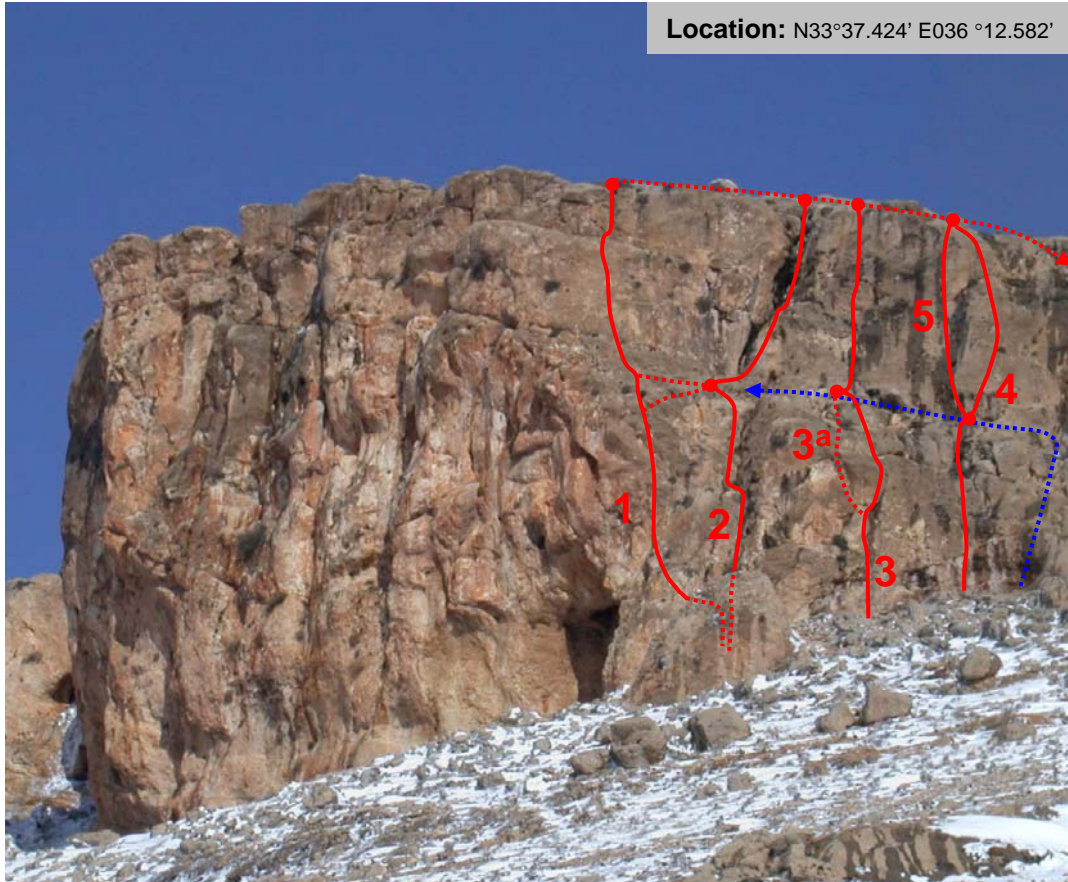
- 0km You start at Umaween square towards Mount Kassiou and Dummar.
- 950m One reaches the roundabout at the Shami hospital, which you cross and then follow the steep road up the hill towards Dummar.
- 4.5km After driving all the way down on the other side of the hill into Dummar, one reaches a small roundabout where you turn right and follow the bumpy road through Damascus' suburbs along the Barada river.
- 9.4km At the Y-junction you take the right lane towards the Barada valley.
- 10km Once you reach the major road connecting Sabbourah with At Tal, you cross it turning left and after a short stretch join the smaller Wadi Barada road to the right.
- 12km You reach another Y-junction where you follow the main Barada road sharply to the right.
- 16.5km After passing the narrow in the Barada valley at Ashraffieh Wadi, you cross the Barada to the right and drive into the village with the silver domed mosque. At the first crossing you turn right towards the cemetery and take the next small left road up the valley. At the next Y-junction you take the left lane, which leads up the left slope of the valley.
- 18.5km A small road on the left side leads into a steep and curvy tarmac path. It passes a very narrow gap with a roman quarry on the right. You follow the road for 1.8km until you arrive at a farm there you park your car and walk up 10min to the cliff up right.



# Valley of figs

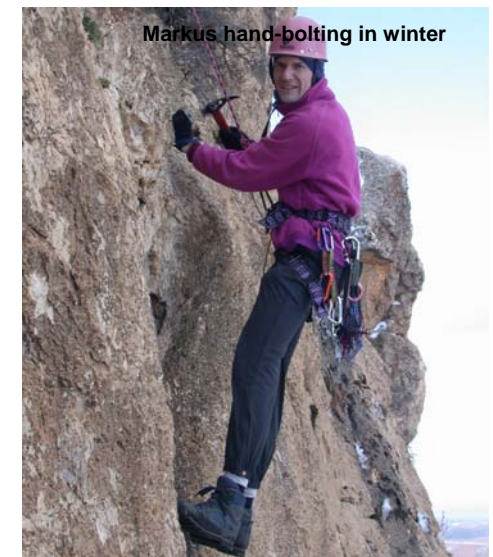


Location: N33°37.424' E036 °12.582'

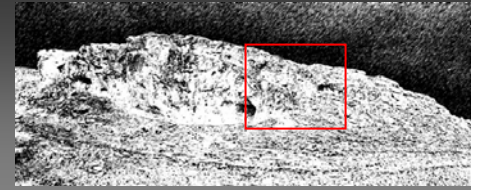


1	<i>Herbstvergnügen</i>	5b+	☆☆☆☆	MG
2	<i>Botanikverschneidung</i>	4c/5a	☆☆☆	MG
3	<i>Aufleger</i>	5b/4c	☆☆☆	MG
3a	<i>Normalhakenvariante</i>	5b	☆☆☆	MG
4	<i>Jakobsweg</i>	5c	☆☆☆☆	MG
5	<i>Für Ruth und Joachim</i>	5c+	☆☆☆☆	MG

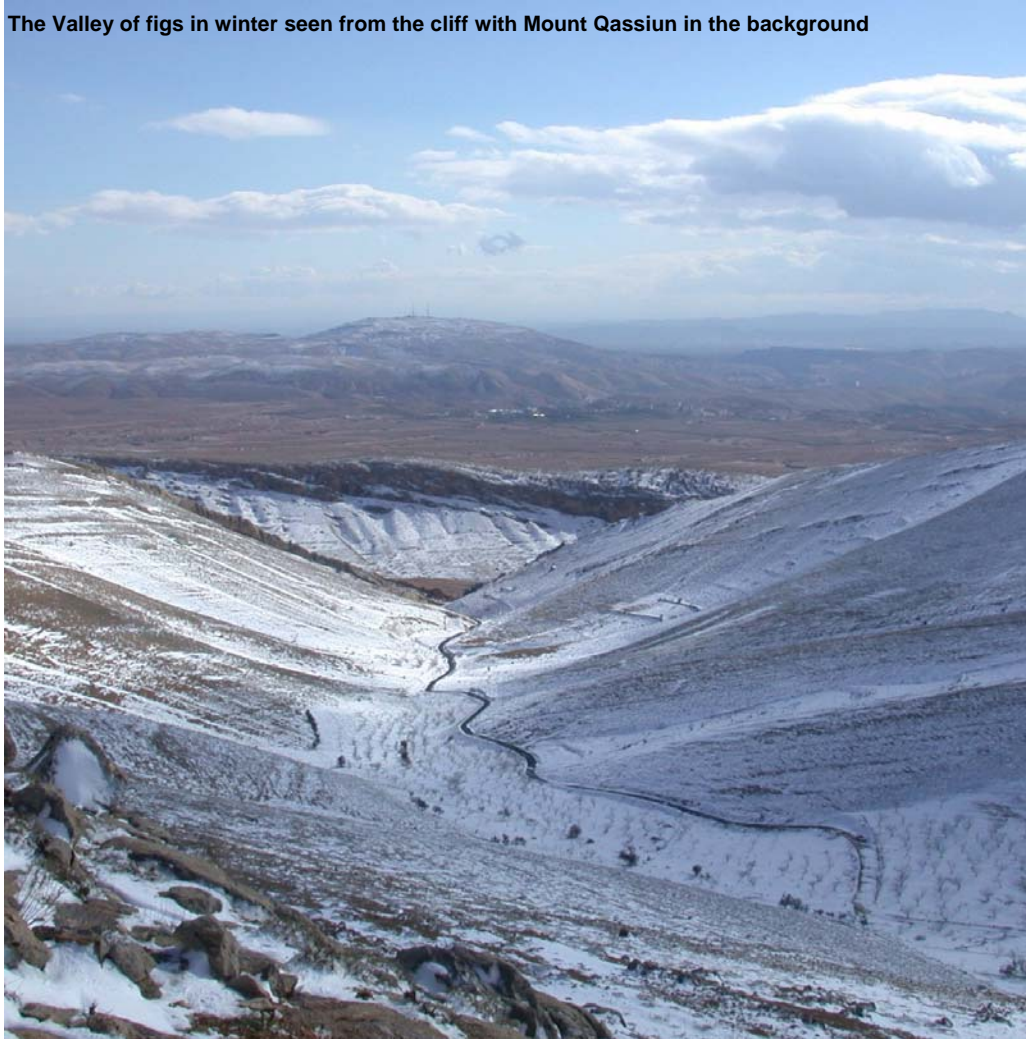
The length of the routes (>45m) make it necessary to abseil in two pitches or to use a twin rope. Since there are no equipped belays at the top of the cliff, it is simpler to climb down over easy terrain to the right. There is a terrace at the top of the first pitches which can be reached by scrambling up the blue dotted line.



# Valley of figs



The Valley of figs in winter seen from the cliff with Mount Qassiu in the background



Markus Gschwind on *Herbstvergnügen*, 5b+

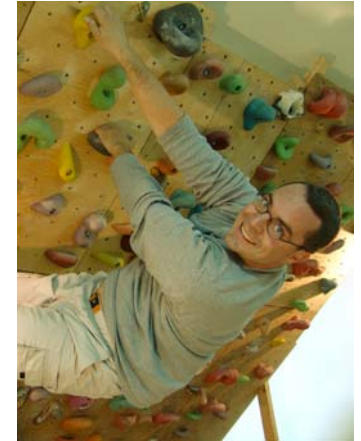


# Indoors

## East Mezzeh



Eva Borkner - hardcore indoor fan



Marion Saurel



Eva, Adnan and Annina fighting about who's climbing next



In winter, we train on our home climbing wall during week days when after work, it is too dark to climb outside.