

## New climbing routes in Theth, Albania 2020.

In this document you'll find topos for some new routes we were able to climb in Theth this past summer. There's already info online about traveling and staying in Theth so this is purely about those new routes.

Keep in mind that Theth still sees relatively little traffic, climbing or otherwise. This means anything from the approaches to the grading can turn into an adventure. This can be a great thing, it also means you should probably take this info with a grain of salt and take your time to figure things out. If you are looking for a local guide to help you get oriented, consider [Gerhard Duro](#). He has been one of the most active local climbers for years and is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable tour guide.



*Picture: Job van Hemert on the traverse on 'just light, not enlightened'.*

## **Just light, not enlightened, Maja Arapit (7a+ or 6c+/A0, 220m, 6 pitches)**

The route follows a nice crack system that offers cool and varied climbing on good rock, mostly protected by gear. The climbing is relatively consistent apart from a bouldery move right at the start of pitch 5 but this could easily be bypassed with a tension traverse.

You can climb the route from the valley in a long day. Alternatively you could camp at the cavers camp below the south face. Here you can find water in the cave. If you decide to camp any higher you will have to carry water.

For gear we used a double rack of cams from .3-3 with a single 4 (black diamond sizes) and 60m double ropes (50m should work as well).

### Approach (about 4 hours from Theth).

From Theth take the trail towards the cave and the south face of Arapit. The start of this trail follows the main dirt road from the village up the valley and is the same as for Qafa Peja. The trail is marked with red and white paint regularly and signposts for Qafa Peja occasionally.

After about an hour the two trails split. Go left towards the south face. Finding the start of the trail after leaving the riverbed can be tricky but it's one of the two main trails on this side of the valley. Once you've found the trail it is regularly marked and easy to follow.

When you come to the base of the south face and the cavers camp just keep following the trail as it winds up to the west shoulder of Arapit. You will come out of the forest and start to traverse around the mountain. The route will come into view. Continue a bit more until you can head right, leaving the trail behind and flanking the base of Arapit as you make your way to the start of the route.

*P1). The water runnels. 5a, 45 m.* Start towards the left side of the water runnel ridden slabs. If you're ever here in the rain you'll gain an understanding of how the runnels came to exist. Belay on a big hourglass feature.

*P2). Sheep terraces. 5a, 50 m.* Continue up the water runnels. Lower angel and grassy towards the end. Bolted belay below a steep corner at the base of the headwall.

*P3). Half Lek flake. 6b+, 25 m.* Climb up the corner. A spectacular section through an overhanging bulge. Afterwards step left and wrestle your way up the 'half lek flake'.

*P4). The boulder solution. 6c+, 30 m.* A tricky and cool face sequence protected by two bolts. Probably cooler (trickier) for shorter climbers.

*P5). Prince swing. 7a+ or 6b/A0, 20 m.* A hard, span dependent move off of the belay. Easily avoided by hanging in the rope, from the anchor, and leaning past. Afterwards nice balancey climbing. The belay is a couple of meters up after you climb around the corner.

*P6). PTFE free corner. 6a, 45 m.* Steep move above the belay. Follow the corner as it gradually becomes more slabby. Watch for loose scree when topping out. Bolted belay just below the summit. Rappel straight from P6 to P4.



Just light, not enlightened. Maja Arapit west face.



## **Triangle wall, Maja Kolajet (6c+, 100m, 4 pitches)**

A cool, albeit slightly inconsistent route. It starts with two pitches of nice face climbing on great rock, mostly protected by bolts. The route finishes with two easier, gear protected, pitches that aren't quite as special.

You can climb the route from the valley in a day or camp by the shepherds settlement. If you could decide to camp by the shepherds you could combine it with the existing climbs on the nearby Maja Shale (saddle mountain).

For gear a single rack from .2-3 (black diamond sizes) and a single 70m rope will do.

A note on the mountain's name: the first (documented) ascent of the mountain named it Qatat e Verlla. After talking to locals and looking at maps we think that was probably based on a miscommunication between the climbers and shepherds. We think the mountain is more likely called Maja Kolajet. But we're not sure about that. We're not even positive the existing hike/scramble leads to the same summit. Luckily the climbing is enjoyable even if we messed up with the name.

### Approach (about 3 hours from Theth).

From Theth follow the trail to Qafa peja (Peja pass). The beginning can be a bit confusing because it tends to change a bit every year depending on what the river does in spring. Once you leave the riverbed behind it's a big, well marked trail. Just before reaching the coll, by a wooden cross, take the trail on the right to 'gropaet e bukkura'. This translates to 'beautiful holes' and is the name of the shepherd's place. Follow this trail for about ten more minutes and you reach the beautiful holes. From here, head up the steep scree and grass (see picture). A short section of scrambling follows before the steepness eases off again. Continue to make your way up to the base of the wall (about one hour from camp). On the way down you can do a single rappel from an hourglass feature to avoid the steepest part. We think there are probably alternative approaches that might be less steep but we didn't get a chance to check them out.



*Picture: approach for 'triangle wall'.*



## Triangle wall, Maja kolajet

P1). 6b+, 25 m. Thin, technical start with bolts. Some easier gear climbing and then some exciting mantle moves to finish. Bolted belay by a small ledge.

P2). 6c+35 m. Traverse right under the small roof, then follow the bolts up the slab. Climb the steep corner and after the final bolt follow the ramp right. Belay on a big hourglass.

p3). 5b, 20 m. Climb up at first in the chimney and then on the edge of the outside 'fin'. Gear belay at the base of a chimney just around the corner.

p4). 5a, 15 m. Easy, corner with some loose rock to the top of the wall. Belay is bolted, slightly to the right. Rappel from p4 to p2.



## **Grunasit Canyon, Theth.**

A nice wall with afternoon shade and a relatively relaxed approach: mostly flat and about 20 minutes from the Kulla. Currently three routes but room for more (that's a theme here).

The approach might be tricky or at least cold and wet in the shoulder seasons if the river is high. All the routes are fully bolted.

### Approach

From the Kulla take the trail towards the waterfall (follow the other tourists, or ask).

After the red bridge, keep right instead of going up towards the waterfall. Continue up this trail marked with red and white paint. There are several forks. Generally, continue straight crossing a manky wooden bridge. If you start heading up the flanks on the left you've gone too far left. If you end up at the bridge above the entrance of the canyon you get a cool view but you've gone too far right. After a while the wall will come in to view on your right. Continue a bit further until you can make it down to the riverbed by a small wash. Once you're directly below the wall a short (~20 m) bushwack and you're there!



*Picture: Job van Hemert on 'Sweatin' out o' my eyeballs', Grunasit canyon.*



## Grunasit canyon, main wall

- 1). Tug of war.....6c....20m
- 2). Thug of war.....7b+...35m
- 3). Albanian breakfast.....7a....25m
- 4). Sweatin' out o' my eyeballs.....7a+...25m

