

Trentino Dry Stone Wall School



PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO





Valle dei laghi

The Accademia della Montagna del Trentino and Trentino Dry Stone Wall School

Set up in 2009 according to article 35 quater of L.P. no. 3 of 16/6/2006, the “Fondazione Accademia della Montagna del Trentino” immediately played an innovative and precious role at provincial level in overseeing and promoting the knowledge, enhancement and safeguarding of mountain areas, with all their unique and characteristic elements. Particular importance was given to education regarding the mountains and the training of new generations of workers and professionals operating in the mountains, so the activities and initiatives promoted by the Academy are often directed at the world of education and employment.

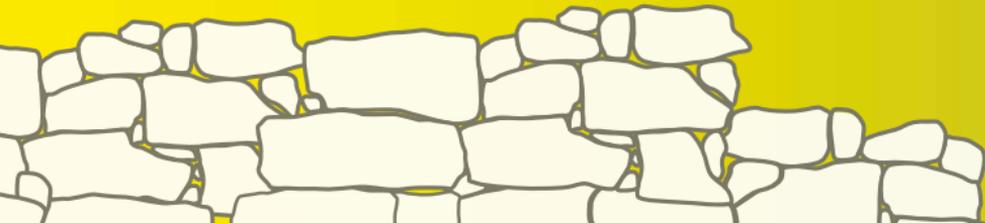
In the context of these general objectives, Trentino Dry Stone Wall School was set up within the Accademia della Montagna in 2013, with the objective of conserving, handing down and disseminating knowledge, skills and techniques linked to the ancient heritage of dry stone walls in Trentino and the alpine region. The school is made up of a working group that includes different craftsmen and professional figures, from master craftsman and surveyors to architects, engineers and teachers.



Trentino, a small treasure chest of diversity

Trentino represents only 2% of Italy, while the residents of Trentino make up just 0.9% of the Italian population, and yet within this small area there is considerable geographical and environmental, climatic, naturalistic and cultural diversity.

In Trentino there is “space” for around ten main valleys, seventy secondary valleys, ten tablelands, forty or so mountain chains, a hundred glaciers and around 350 lakes. The differences in climate and landscape are also considerable: Monte Brione, which looks out over Lake Garda along the southern border of the province and is the lowest mountain in Trentino, standing at a height of 376 m, has largely Mediterranean flora and fauna, in addition to large stretches of vineyards and olive groves; at the opposite end of the spectrum, Monte Cevedale lies on the northern frontier and is the highest mountain in Trentino, arriving at an altitude of 3766 m, and has a landscape characterised by alpine tundra, with scree, snowfields and glaciers. This means that in just 67 km, the distance between the mountains as the crow flies, it is possible to go on a virtual journey from the Mediterranean Sea to the extreme north of Scandinavia.





Val di Cembra. Photo: Antonio Sarzo.



Val di Gresta. Photo: Antonio Sarzo.

In terms of geology, all the main types of rock (sedimentary, volcanic and intrusive igneous, and metamorphic) can be seen in Trentino, creating remarkable geodiversity that is evident in the morphological and chromatic variety of the Trentino mountains.

The biodiversity is no less surprising, with flora counting around 2400 species, representing 54% of alpine flora and 35% of Italian flora, and fauna including 74 species described as “of Community interest”, as well being characterised by ‘noble’ species such as the brown bear, the wolf, the lynx, the golden eagle and the bearded vulture. The ethnographic diversity should also be underlined, as the result of occupation of the mountains by many small communities over centuries. With their “micro-stories” they have led to the development of characteristic and specific cultural elements, idioms and human landscapes.

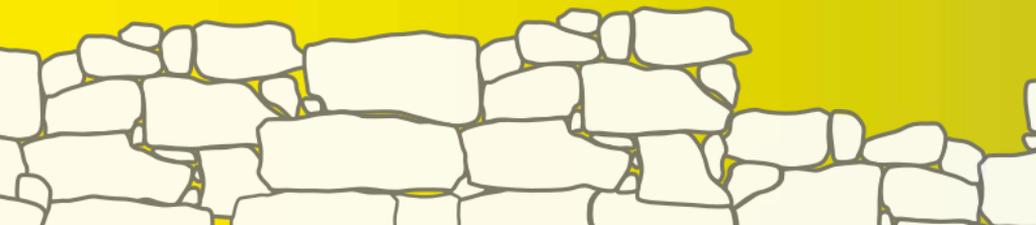
Dry stone walls in Trentino

In Trentino, as in other mountain areas, the dry stone wall tradition is as old as the need to plough harsh stony terrain, delimit and defend land and property and construct challenging terracing on the steep slopes of the mountains in order to be able to cultivate the land and live in such hostile environments, or more often simply to survive.



As a result of the considerable geographical-environmental, climatic, naturalistic and cultural diversity characterising the various areas of Trentino, landscapes involving dry stone walls in Trentino are geographically widespread and diversified, with variable characteristics in terms of the type of stone used, the construction techniques, density and roles of the structures.

Notable examples of terraced areas and landscapes characterised by dry stone walls can be observed in southern Trentino (e.g. the Val Lagarina, Val di Gresta, Upper Lake Garda, Valle dei Laghi), the Val di Cembra and some areas of the Valsugana, Giudicarie valleys, Val Rendena and the Val di Sole. As well as being used to construct thousands of kilometres of country walls, the dry stone wall technique was also used for stairways, arches, arched niches, bridges, rustic buildings, shelters, kilns, wells, cisterns, trenches, cobblestones and paving. There is an enormous heritage to be promoted, conserved and above all enhanced, because it contributes to the beauty, uniqueness and sustainability of the landscape and the opportunities offered.



The objectives and activities of Trentino Dry Stone Wall School

The specific objectives of the school are:

- the conservation, dissemination and handing down of traditional knowledge and skills linked to the construction and restoration of country walls and other types of construction built using dry stone walls to new generations;
- the conservation, enhancement and promotion of the considerable cultural, socioeconomic, landscape and naturalistic heritage represented by dry stone wall constructions and terracing systems on the slopes, both in Trentino and throughout the alpine region;
- to provide education regarding dry stone wall landscapes, disseminating knowledge and raising awareness of the unique characteristics and values, roles and potential of these landscapes and geographical areas.

In order to pursue these objectives, the school organises theoretical and practical courses on dry stone walls, both at initial level (introductory) and higher le-



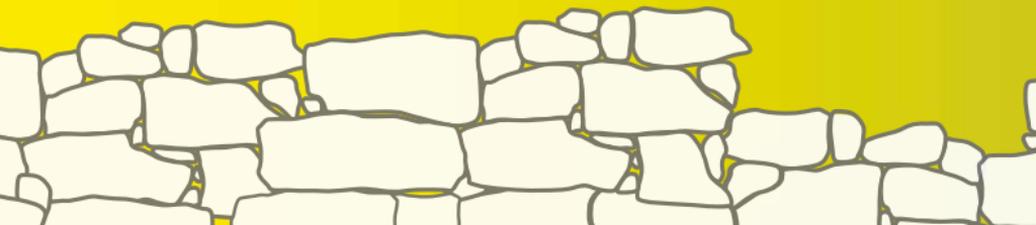
vel (advanced), directed at craftsmen, freelance professionals, technicians, farmers and enthusiasts generally, also to meet training needs linked to the new occupational profile of “Builder, expert in the construction and recovery of dry stone walls”, established with the Autonomous Province of Trento’s provincial government resolution no. 858 of del 26/5/2015. Furthermore, the school offers refresher courses directed at the world of education and professional categories; it participates at events, meetings and conferences on the subject of dry stone walls; it maintains and develops collaborative relations and consultancy with bodies, institutions and associations, operating both in Trentino and in other geographical areas.

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SCARAMELLINI G. & VAROTTO M., 2008 – Paesaggi terrazzati dell'arco alpino. Atlante. Marsilio Ed., Venezia (review of studies and research on terraced landscapes in the alpine region)

Web sites (useful references)

www.accademiamontagna.tn.it

(web site of the Accademia della Montagna del Trentino, with information and material regarding the activities of Trentino Dry Stone Wall School)

www.paesaggiterrazzati.it

(web site of the Italian branch of the International Terraced Landscapes Alliance, offering information and material)





Pedersano. Photo: Antonio Sarzo.

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