

Mid grade trad rock western dolomites **1**

Emiliano Loszi



● INTRODUCTION

Just two years after publication of the first edition it was already time for a second. This new edition has changed in look and organization while maintaining its original, well received characteristics.

The availability of substantial new material and the desire to integrate the inevitable corrections, some purely editorial, others (thankfully few) involving clarifications and modifications to the route descriptions, led to the decision not to run a simple reprint. Bearing in mind that many “old” readers only recently purchased the first edition, it was decided to sub-divide the new edition into two volumes, “Western Dolomites (Volume 1)” and “Western Dolomites (Volume 2)”, the first being a corrected reprint of the previous edition, and this second volume including all the new descriptions which, thanks also to the help of our generous collaborators, had been collected in the period from publication of the first edition (2009) to the present. This means that our established “mid-grade” readers can acquire all the new material without having to buy both books. Obviously, new readers (and virtually all readers of the English editions) are unaffected in this way. The only resulting “oddity” is that both volumes cover exactly the same geographic area.

Furthermore, a small number of descriptions from the original edition were, for various reasons, significantly changed and consequently these have been “moved” to the present Volume 2 of the new edition where they completely replace the original descriptions. Again this is irrelevant for the English editions.

Without going into unnecessary details, it is noted that the characteristics of the guide, which most readers appear to like, remain the same. Many thanks to all the friends who collaborated in the realization of this second volume, resulting in the addition of a few slightly more difficult routes, and in a few new areas, suitable for “mid-graders” who occasionally enjoy something a bit more demanding. As usual, there is a lot of additional material at the website www.quartogrado.com, where any corrections (hopefully few) will also be published.

All possible care was taken so that this second edition is useful both to those already in possession of the first edition and new readers. All the routes described were climbed in person by the author or our various collaborators.

Wishing you all a good read and good climbing.

Emiliano Zorzi



INTRODUCTION

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SASSOLUNGO

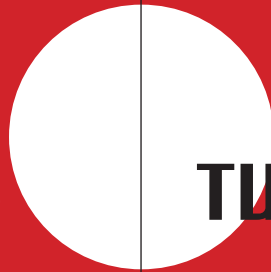
004 • Sassolungo, *Normal Route*

005 • Punta delle Cinque Dita, *Normal Route*

006 • Punta delle Cinque Dita,

NW Arête of the Pollice

007 • Punta Grohmann, *Via Dimai*



TWO



This is Val Gardena's crowning glory, and its imposing north face dominates the valley. It has a great many mountain routes to suit all tastes and abilities. That said, apart from the Cinque Dita, which is literally on the doorstep of Rifugio Demetz, the other routes all tend to be serious undertakings, with descents which are as difficult as access is easy. The classic routes on the mountain are generally very popular and some can get very crowded, such as the Arête of the Pollice ("Thumb") and the normal route on the Cinque Dita. Sometimes, queues can be found even on the normal route leading to the summit of Sassolungo, which is quite possibly the best route of its kind in the Dolomites.

Even the sunny faces overlooking Val di Fassa (Punta Grohmann, Torre Innerkofler and Dente) are popular and offer excellent outings at moderate grades. Even so, they are often long and complex, such as the S arête of Punta Grohmann, which is probably the most famous.

MAPS: Tabacco sheets

05 (Val Gardena) 06 (Val di Fassa), scale 1:25.000

Main support bases

Passo Sella, m 2242

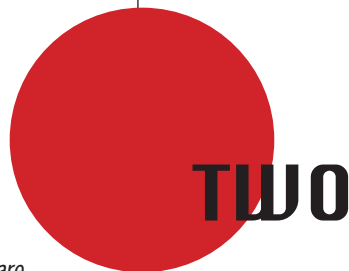
This is one of the most popular climbing venues in the Dolomites. On Sundays in the summer months it is alive with a chaotic mixture of tourists, motorcyclists, walkers and climbers. It can be reached along the main roads from Val di Fassa or Val Gardena. Numerous facilities are available on the pass: the historic Rifugio Passo Sella (2180 m, ITALIAN ALPINE CLUB, 80 beds, open summer and winter. Tel 0471 79 51 36) is one of the oldest buildings of its type in the Dolomites, and sits just below the pass on the Val Gardena side, near the Sassolungo cable car station. Following this, other accommodation was gradually added, such as the Maria Flora hotel, which is right on the pass itself. Other rifugios and hotels in the area between the pass and Col Rodella are:

Rifugio Valentini; private, 50 beds, tel. 0462 60 11 83, www.rifugiocar-lovalentini.com;

Rifugio Salei; private, 16 beds, tel. 0462 60 23 00, www.rifugiosalei.it;

Rifugio Frederich August, private, 36 beds, tel. 0462 76 49 19.

The pass has routes of all grades and types. The Sella Towers are rightly famous, but their close proximity to the road means routes are often extremely crowded, as are the routes accessed from the top station of the Sassolungo cable car, near Rifugio Demetz. No less crowded are the routes on Piz Ciavazes, which is virtually a roadside crag. This is



accessed from the roadside parking approx 2 km beneath the pass on the Val di Fassa side.

Sassolungo Group

Sassolungo, Normal Route (Route 004), Cinque Dita, Normal Route (Route 005), N arête of the Pollice (Thumb) (Route 006), Punta Grohmann, Via Dimai (Route 007)

Sella Group

Piz Ciavazes, Via Rossi (Route 008), Via Piccola Micheluzzi (Route 009), Via della Rampa (Route 010)

Rifugio Toni Demetz, m 2681

This is situated on Forcella del Sassolungo, just below the Cinque Dita ("Five Fingers") and the shoulder of Sassolungo. It is quickly accessed using an old cable directly from Passo Sella, so the rifugio is often swarming with people and routes above it can get very crowded, even though it can often be quite cold here. Tel. 0471 79 50 50.

Routes: Sassolungo, Normal Route (Route 004), Cinque Dita, Normal Route (Route 005), N arête of the Pollice ("Thumb") (Route 006)

Bivacco Carlo Giuliani, m 3150

This is an emergency shelter situated very near the summit of Sassolungo along the Normal Route, right beneath Torre Gialla. It is quite small, containing one enormous rubber mattress, but is well-maintained and provides a comfortable shelter in case of emergency. It also has a solar-powered emergency radio. For those not familiar with the Normal Route, this bivouac is not easy to find, although its green roof can be spotted reasonably easily if one looks SE from the summit.

Routes: Sassolungo, Normal Route (Route 004)



SASSOLUNGO 3181 m

SE face – Normal Route



FIRST ASCENT:

Cengia dei Fassani:

Austrian army, summer 1917

Canalone basso:

P. Grohmann, F. Innerkofler,
P. Salcher, 13 agosto 1869

Final part:

L. Bernard,
G. Davarda, 13 agosto 1892

HEIGHT GAIN: 550 m

ROUTE LENGTH:

1800 m approx

GRADE: PD+ max 3+

TIME: 2 hrs 30 mins - 5 hrs
(depending how much of the route is pitched)

ROCK: generally good, although expect to find all types on a route of this length

EQUIPMENT: slings, small selection of nuts. No pegs required. (All stances have in-situ pegs, cemented rings and hooks. Some sections have fixed ropes and ladders)

SUPPORT BASES:

Rifugio Demetz,
Bivacco Carlo
Giuliani

*Climbed on
30.8.2008*

004

For a normal route, this is a complex and very long outing in a spectacular setting which presents no major technical difficulties. Climbing unroped or on a short rope, and with good navigation, the route can be climbed quite quickly. Times increase dramatically if the route is pitched or if navigation difficulties are encountered. Normally, the descent can take longer than the ascent, especially if numerous abseils are made. Bivacco Giuliani is approx 1 hour below the summit. It is well-maintained and has an emergency radio.

APPROACH

From Rifugio Demetz situated on Forcella del Sassolungo, descend approx 100 m (10 mins) towards Rifugio Vicenza. On the R, an obvious track leads to the easily recognizable Cengia dei Fassani ("Fassani ledge"). After a short distance, a rock spine is reached, which provides access to the ledge.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Normally, the route is climbed moving together on a short rope. Only one section requires pitching (above Bivacco Giuliani, on the Torre Rossa).

Descend with caution the short crest (10 m, 3-), to reach the Cengia dei Fassani. Continue along this without difficulty along a track, passing a beautiful pond. After 100 m, ascend a first easy gully (40 m, 1). Exit this L to a notch. Now descend slightly, and follow cairns along ledges to reach a second gully with jammed blocks (move of 2). Exit this L after 60 m to another notch. Head gradually up over easy ground (50 m, move of 2), to reach another yellow gully. DO NOT climb this. Turn a rock flake on the left (red paint marking). Climb a short wall on good holds, slightly diagonally L (35 m, 3, 1CR at half height and ST 1P at the top), and then L easily (50 m, 1) to a col.

Pass through the col to the W face and descend a few m to reach a fixed cable, which assists a traverse slightly downward (30 m, exposed). At the end of the fixed cable, traverse a small gully and climb a short passage immediately to the L of a red niche (10 m, 3, ST 1P at the top). Continue diagonally L on easy rock (25 m, 3-, ST 1P) to reach a notch (10 m, 2).

Descend the gully below, traversing R and down (face out) on ex-

PAUL GROHMANN
(1838 – 1908)

Born in Vienna, he was a solicitor by profession. In 1862 he founded the Austrian Alpine Club, and became one of the first pioneers of the Dolomites. He was arguably the first to start purely mountaineering exploration in the Dolomites, at a time when none of its main summits had yet been scaled, at least with mountaineering intentions. To help him in his exploits, he engaged village dwellers as guides and porters. Along with him the Lacedelli, Dimai and Innerkofler dynasties were born. He claimed first ascents of almost all the major Dolomite summits, although it is very likely that at least some had probably already been summited by local chamois hunters. Starting in 1863, he successfully scaled all three Tofana mountains, Antelao, Marmolada, Cristallo, Sorapiss and Tre Scarperi. In 1869 he closed his Dolomite career by scaling summits which for that era were at the limit of what was considered



004

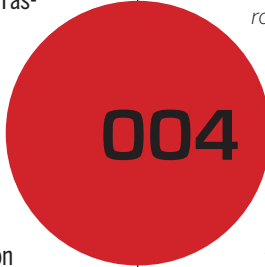
posed, but solid rock (20 m, 2, hook), to reach an easy ledge. Follow this (cairns) until in sight of the glacial basin (glacier not yet visible). After a short smooth wall (3 m, 3; possible easier alternative up a gully to the L), continue easily along a ledge (60 m, 1, red markings, very useful in descent) to reach the large scree-filled basin and what remains of the glacier (1 – 1 hr 30 mins; end of Cengia dei Fasani).

Traverse the basin to reach the start of the deep Canalone Basso (rock with red marking at the start), which nowadays is avoided by following the rock ridge to the L. This is called the variante delle guide. ("Guides' variation"). Enjoyable climbing just to the L of the crest (60 m, 2) leads to steeper and more exposed rock. Two chimneys and a short wall (35 m, 3, one move of 3+), lead to a section equipped with metal rungs above Canalone Basso. Where these finish at a notch (hook), continue traversing upwards (20 m, 2, hook), now high above the gully. Climb a crack which slants R (25 m, 3, ST 1CR at the top). Then traverse easily R (10 m, 1), to reach a metal cable, which leads R to the top of Canalone Basso. Climb loose earth and rocks to the nearby Forcella del Canalone Basso (20 - 40 mins from the glacial basin).

On the other side, there is the scree-filled basin of the Amphitheatre. Traverse this for 50 m along a track to reach a gully on the R (cairn at the base), called Gola delle Guide ("The Guides' Gorge").

Climb up good rock (15 m, 2) which leads to the start of the gully. Continue enjoyably up well-featured walls (25 m, 3), to reach an easier section above with loose rocks (60 m, 1 and 2). Climb an easy-angled chimney, then a jammed block is overcome on the L, to reach the col at the top of the Gola delle Guide (25 m, 3. In descent, this can be descended with 5 abseils of 25-30 m. Anchors down the bed of the gully). Climb good rock on the L (50 m, 2) and then a short scree-filled gully (30 m, 1) to reach Bivacco Giuliani, directly beneath the obvious Torre Rossa ("Red Tower", which is in fact yellow!) 2 – 3 ½ hrs from the start.

Climb one pitch along the knife-edge crest beneath Torre Rossa, passing to its R at its base (5



climbable: Sassolungo and the Cima Grande di Lavaredo. Both these routes are included in this volume, although nowadays only the middle section of the normal route on Sassolungo follows the route originally taken by Grohmann. It is however notable that, apart from this exception, all the other routes discovered by him are still today considered the normal routes to reach these summits. Routes such as those on Tofane or Antelao, although almost without any technical climbing, are at the uppermost limit of what could be considered scrambling, and



m, 3). Make a short but very exposed traverse R on well worn, slightly friable rock (1P, 3 m, 3+) to reach the start of a vertical crack. Climb this on good holds to the summit of Torre Rossa (15 m, 3, move of 3+; ST 1CR for abseil).

Now follow the crest to reach the summit. After a few ups and downs over towers (30 m, 2, exposed; 1 hook just after Torre Rossa), continue along the L side of the crest (SW face) on easy ledges with some scree, passing a secondary summit with an old crucifix (30 m, 1). Just after this, climb R to reach another secondary summit, and then descend to the next notch (15 m, 2). Turn the next secondary summit on the L, to reach the notch which separates it from the true summit (40 m, 1 and 2), which is reached without difficulty up broken rocks and scree (30 m, 1). Large cairn with summit book and some stakes.



are immensely rewarding undertakings. Although originally very well-off, financial ruin in 1873 was to finally keep him away from the Dolomites and mountaineering.

He wrote a book in 1877, Wanderungen in den Dolomiten, which was one of the first best-sellers in mountaineering literature.

DESCENT

Descend the ascent route. Numerous abseil anchors are present (see topo or detailed description on www.quartogrado.com).

See www.quartogrado.com for more photos.

