

## **PYRAMIDS OF POSTALESIO**

Although the name may be misleading, we are not in Egypt nor we are referring to constructions dating back to the ancient Egyptians. The Postalesio Pyramids are a very rare geomorphological phenomenon in our valleys, more correctly defined with the term "erosion pyramids". Their dialectal name is instead "pilùn", that is pillars, columns, because, indeed, due to their tall and slender shape they recall more the idea of a pillar, or even, depending on the consistency, of a spire or a tower.

But let's try to understand what erosive phenomena have generated these particular structures. At the beginning we find a poorly cohesive terrain consisting of a glacial deposit and therefore strongly subject to the erosive action of the waters, also favored by a steep ridge. Then the water of streams and rain begins its slow and continuous action, over time digging deeper and deeper furrows that affect it and draw a branched system of channels. Some portions of land, however, resist erosion, as they are more compact, thanks to the presence of boulders that exert considerable pressure on the underlying layers of the soil. The result? Towers even 12 meters high, with different shapes, some more slender, others more massive, however all surmounted by one or more boulders that acted as a "hat" to the finer sediments below.

The site of the "Pyramids of Postalesio" is in fact located within a valley of glacial origin subsequently shaped by the erosive action of the Caldenno stream, a left tributary of the Adda River, which, thanks to particular geological and climatic conditions, gave rise to this rather rare and interesting morphological evolution. The protected position of the site within the valley and the sedimentological characteristics of the deposit have therefore allowed the formation and preservation of these spectacular erosion pyramids and the site lends itself well to describing the dynamic of erosion. Each of the pyramids has a peculiar morphology: seven are clearly evident, three pyramids are being formed, while the presence of many sub-rounded erratic boulders, observable at the foot of the erosion basin, could indicate a greater number of pyramids collapsed in the last decades, whose debris column was quickly washed away leaving only the boulder that served as a hat.

The lithologies of the boulders are mainly micaschists from the so called Punta di pietra rossa formation, gneiss from Dosso Cornin, a member of the same formation, and Gneiss from Monte Tonale.

The existence of the valleys dug between the pyramids also creates a particular microclimate that allows the development of a dense forest with the simultaneous presence of species of cold climates, including larch, spruce, silver fir, Scots pine, alongside species that prefer milder climates.