

Itinerary: Montecrestese and its villages starting from Pontetto
Identification code on the website: Sector A "Educational Routes" –IA11

Local identification code: GFM-1



[gpx](#)

[kmz](#)

Main aspects of the itinerary

Ossola has a rich history of ancient architecture that may surprise any visitor. Time seems to have stood still in this area. Historic artefacts were skillfully adapted to the needs of daily life in Ossola.

Montecrestese has a great history and beauty that is worth exploring. The area is home to various archaeological remains, from prehistory (Iron Age, 5th century BC) to the Roman period (1st and 2nd centuries AD) and the Middle Ages up to the beginning of the 20th century. This short hiking excursion gives an overview of some of these historic aspects.

A brief description of the itinerary

When the bus arrives in Pontetto, head for the brick oven, climb the dirt road through the village and reach the chapel dedicated to Saints Joseph and Francis, built in 1683. In the village of Vigna, climb up a beautiful dirt road, at the fork of which is the 16th century chapel of the Madonna della Misericordia. After crossing the road, you reach a paved path that leads to the Tempietto Lepontico di Roldo, an architectural structure that has three different phases. The first, higher part is a watchtower built in two different periods, while the lower part is considered by historians to be a small Gallo-Roman temple. The route continues to the right towards Vignamaggiore, a hamlet mentioned in documents as early as 1222, whose importance as a settlement in the middle of a large vineyard is obvious. From here the route climbs to Burella, where excavations have uncovered a cemetery dating back to the 5th century BC, typical of the Golasecca culture. Burella is one of the oldest settlements in Montecrestese. Near the 15th-century chapel are the mighty stone arches of a castle.

Continuing along the path, you will pass a washhouse and a double fountain, cross the riverbanks and vineyards until you reach the area of Cardone. From the small square of Cardone, take the wide path on the left that leads to the village of Giosio, past the old dairy and a fountain. From here, continue towards Prata until you reach the houses of the hamlet of Oro. A dirt road leads to the Crosetta Chapel, where you meet the Valle Isorno L00 road, which you follow towards Naviledo.

At the entrance to Naviledo, take the paved road to the left for a short stretch and then follow the dirt road to Altano. The route continues past old houses to the Cappella delle Anvelle (Chapel of the New Vineyards), built in 1501, and along a beautiful, paved road to the Church of Montecrestese. Dedicated to S. Maria Assunta, it was built on the site of a previous church dating from the 11th and 12th centuries; the current church dates from the 16th century and contains paintings by C. Mellerio and G. M. Borgnis. The 16th-century bell tower, which incorporates the Romanesque bell tower of the old church, stands on a rocky outcrop; nearby is the 16th-century chapel dedicated to Saints Fabiano and Sebastiano.

From the church of Montecrestese, you can go to the cemetery and then turn right along a dirt trail to the sanctuary of the Madonna di Viganale, built in 1672. From here the path leads past the archaeological site of Croppola to the 18th century chapel of Valle dei Cani.

Shortly after the Valle dei Cani chapel, turn right towards the archaeological site of Castelluccio. From here you descend to Castelluccio, where there are the remains of a castle. From here you reach the Piaggino farm and continue to the chapel of Egro and the bus stop.

Useful information

Domodossola railway station (from Bern and Milan) - From the bus station take the "round bus" and get off at the Pontetto stop.

Contact: Municipality of Montecrestese www.comune.montecrestese.vb.it

CAI contact person: Section of Domodossola www.estmonterosa.it

Refreshment stops: Agriturismo A.Z. in Piaggino tel. +39 032435259

Level of difficulty: The route is not particularly difficult, except for the stretch between Valle dei Cani and Castelluccio.

Height difference: 331 meters

Length of route: 9.6 km

Duration: 2 hours 25 minutes

Recommended equipment Trekking shoes

Numbered routes: A04 - L00 - L00a - G00a

Recommended period: Spring or autumn

Reference cartography

Map n° 112 scale 1:25,000 from Geo4Map/CAI

Digital cartography on App: Avenza Maps

Bibliography

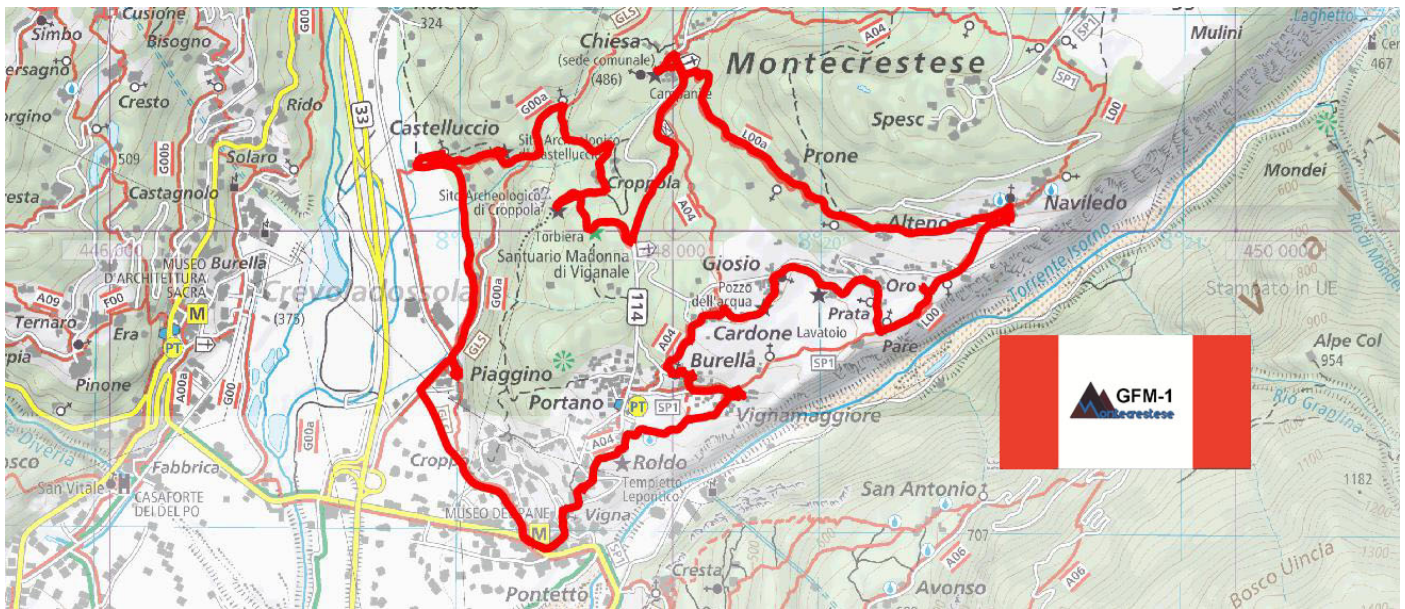
1. – “Ossola and its valleys”, G.De Maurizi, ed.Grossi, 2015

2. – “History of Montecrestese”, T.Bertamini, ed.Oscellana, 1991

GPX points table

ID	Descrizione	L.pro. (m)	Q. (m)	L. tr. (m)	T (min.)	Tp (h,min.)
01	Pontetto Bus	0	308			
06	Oratorio del Pontetto	295	344	295	5	0.05
11	Tempietto Lepontico	780	409	485	10	0.15
15	Oratorio di Burella	1.430	456	650	10	0.25
18	Loc. Cardone	1.805	503	375	10	0.35
23	Oratorio di Giosio	2.135	513	330	5	0.40
27	Case di Loc.Oro	2.465	529	330	5	0.45
34	Cappella della Crosetta	2.785	523	320	5	0.50
38	Loc. Naviledo	3.365	599	580	15	1h 05'
40	Loc. Alteno	3.760	589	395	5	1h 10'
46	Cappella Punto Pan.	4.740	529	980	15	1h 25'
48	Chiesa di Montecrestese	5.040	481	300	5	1h 30'
54	Cappella del cimitero	5.612	496	572	10	1h 40'
56	Sant.Mad.di Viganale	6.162	468	550	5	1h 45'
60	Sito Arch.di Croppola	6.637	419	475	5	1h 50'
62	Cappella della Valle Cani	7.127	401	490	5	1h 55'
65	Sito Arch.di Castelluccio	7.602	371	475	5	2h
66	Rive alte	7.722	381	120		
67	Loc.Castelluccio	7.982	318	260	5	2h 05'
70	Agriturismo A.Z.	8.822	313	840	10	2h 15'
71	Cappella dell'Egro	9.222	322	400	5	2h 20'
01	Pontetto Bus	9.612	308	390	5	2h 25'

GPS ID: identifier on the GPS – Description of the point – L.pro.: progressive length – Q: elevation – L.tr.: section length – T: section travel time – Tp: progressive time



Points of interest:

1 - Pontetto BUS stop –

Pontetto is a place that has not undergone variations and is linked to a wooden bridge that crossed the stream just beyond Isorno. The house, however, was well perched on some rocky outcrops with all the air of strong houses due to their sturdiness of the walls and the defenses of the courtyards.

02 – Wash room

03 – 19th century Pontetto Chapel

04 - Oven

05 - Crossing the road

06 - Pontetto Chapel. Dedicated to St. Joseph and St. Francis, it was first established in 1672 but completed in 1683. It was completed in the following years and only in the 1900s was the porch built.

07 - Start of the asphalt road

08 - Start of the dirt road in the Vigna area

09 - S. Orsola Chapel – Crossroads. Sixteenth-century chapel of Vigna, dedicated to the Madonna della Misericordia, also known as S. Orsola.

10 - Crossing the road

11 - Lepontian temple of Roldo. Among the ancient houses of the village, a building stands out on an imposing rocky outcrop, with an architectural structure in which three different phases of construction can be observed. The highest part is linked to a lookout tower built at two different times, while in the lower part a small temple from the Gallo-Roman period has been recognized by historians, consisting of an entrance atrium and a larger cell with a barrel vault and a single window in Crevola marble slabs. Roldo is a place that has undergone remarkable variations: Roccolo (1222), Rovolo, Rovollo, Rogolo (1346-1562) and finally Roldo (1667) (oak wood). Even in Roldo, the architectural structures and models found in the other houses are repeated. Roldo and the other neighboring homes were built here by some rich merchants from Vigezzo after buying farms in Montecrestese.

12 - Crossroads for Vignamaggiore – Vignamaggiore is a house already documented in 1222 with a clear meaning of a location set in a large vineyard. In the 18th century, Captain Giovanni Mattei of Algogno (Valle Vigezzo) purchased large properties there and built his small building with an adjoining private chapel.

13 - House with painting

14 - Crossroads for Burella - in the Burella area, during construction works, a burial with grave goods from the second half of the 5th century BC was found. Typical of the Golasecca culture. Burella is undoubtedly one of the oldest settlements in Montecrestese. Near the Chapel there are the mighty stone arches and the castle which rises just beyond on a rocky ridge. The place can be spotted from the rocky depression on which it rests (burella = small ravine), on the edge of which the robust tower of which the base remains. It was owned by some nobles, called Della Burella, who depended on the bishop of Novara, who had the center of his temporal jurisdiction here (from 1000 to 1400)

15 - Borella Chapel, already existing in the 15th century, was renovated in the 16th century. Don Giovanni Agnesina established a special ministry there and founded the first school in his native home.

16 - Wash house and double fountain

17 - Crossroads for Cardone - Vineyard banks

18 - Loc. Cardone - Houses and coat of arms – Cardone is a very ancient homestead. This is attested by tomb finds. The place, already present in 1222, can be derived from Cardetum with the meaning of a place full of thistles. It gave its name to the noble De Cardano family. A house located north of the current square appears to be the oldest. Externally it had some Gothic style paintings and some coats of arms. In the wall of the house built next to this one, the coat of arms of another branch of the De Cardono family is inserted on a slab of Crevola marble.

19 – Former Dairy

20 - Water well

21 - House with painting from the locality of Giosio. The place comes to us through the variants Zolgo (1223), Zosso (1364), Zoxo (1411-1457) and Zosio (1639). Nestled on a small rocky crop, it is surrounded by meadows and vineyards. It has fifteenth-century houses of solid structure, like strongholds. The Cucchi family had considerable weight in this homestead, providing lawyers, notaries and priests. The ancient house of this family dated 1611 was renovated in the 18th century and inside there are painted wooden ceilings and wall paintings painted by Giuseppe Mattia Borgnis.

22 - Wash house

23 - Chapel of the Giosio area. There was a small Chapel in the 16th century, on which the current one was built in the 17th century.

24 - Crossroads from the asphalt road to Casa Lavazza

25 - Start of the dirt road in Loc. Prata – Prata is at the top of a vast meadow basin. It is equipped with a monumental public wash house.

26 - Crossroads on the asphalt road

27 - Houses in Loc. Oro – Oro is a frequent place in Ossola meaning hill. The oldest center is made up of buildings that have the structure and configuration of strong houses or castles. In fact, nobles related to the De Castello family lived there, boasting ownership of many mountain pastures in the Isorno and Vigizzo valleys.

28 - Oven

29 - Houses of historical interest

30 – Dirt road crossroads

31 - Former eighteenth-century chapel of the Madonna delle Grazie painted by G.M. Borgnis - Wash house

32 - Oven

33 - Crossroads on the L00 route

34 - Crosetta Chapel, has a rectangular plan and is covered by a barrel vault and was the destination of the procession of the Litany of San Marco. It was apparently built at the end of the 15th century and decorated at the beginning of the 16th century, so called because the typical station cross of the Rogations was once erected there.

35 - Isolated house with cellar

36 - Chapel - Farm

37 - Crossing the road

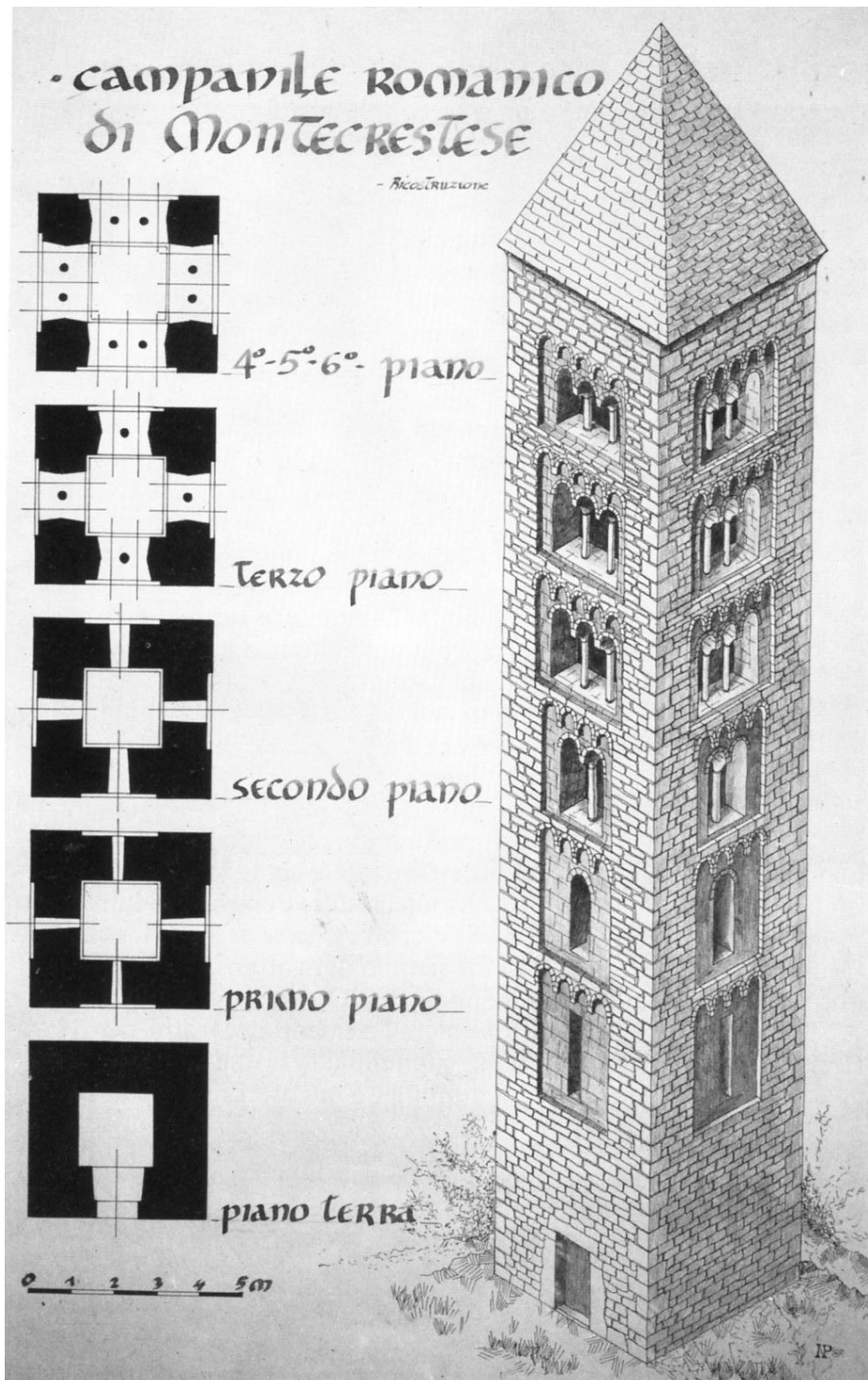
38 - Crossroads on the asphalt road in Naviledo – Naviledo is a homestead that is excellently exposed to the sun and sheltered, amid a vast cultivation of vineyards. The place of Novelledo (1235-1457) and Novaledo (1525-1618) also originate from this vineyard, with the meaning of plantation of new vineyards called novelle. It has ancient houses with large attics exposed to the sun. The Guglielmini house has a courtyard, oven and well and dates back to 1662. On one house there is a marble tile with the De Rodis coat of arms. The current Chapel, located at the top of the town, was built in the 17th century on top of an older one. Ancient houses from the 13th-16th centuries with bold architectural solutions are discreetly preserved.

39 - Start of the dirt road to Loc. Alteno

40 - Loc. Alteno is also a place linked to the cultivation of vines, derived from altana with the meaning of terrace with pergola. In Alteno, already documented in 1222, the lords of Castello had properties, traces of the name remained until the 15th century.

41 - Cappella delle Anvelle, also somehow connected to the cultivation of vines. The anvelle, are nothing other than the new cuttings or new vines. The chapel was painted in 1501

- 42 – Chapel of the Deposition from 1829 frescoed by Lorenzo Peretti
- 43 – House of Catascit
- 44 - Pink houses of Prone
- 45 – Sixteenth-century chapel which was rebuilt in 1930 but does not contain wall paintings
- 46 - Chapel - Panoramic point
- 47 - Crossroads on asphalt road - On route L04
- 48 - Information board - Church of S. Maria Assunta, built on a pre-existing church from the 11th-12th century called Romanesque. The construction of a new church took place at the end of the 15th century and towards the end of the 16th century a brighter church began to be built. It contains pictorial works by C. Mellerio and those from 1738 by G.M. Borgnis
- 49 - Chapel – The current bell tower from the 16th century includes the pre-existing Romanesque one of the ancient churches within its interior, and only by climbing up it is it possible to see all of its features



- 50 - Chapel of SS. Fabiano and Sebastiano dates back to the 17th century at the request of the population who escaped the plague. The start date was 1638 and its completion was in 1650 and only in 1891 was the porch built.

51 - Chapel

52 - Street of the fallen

53 - Monument to the fallen

54 - Cemetery Chapel - Crossroads

55 - Crossroads on asphalted road - Plaque

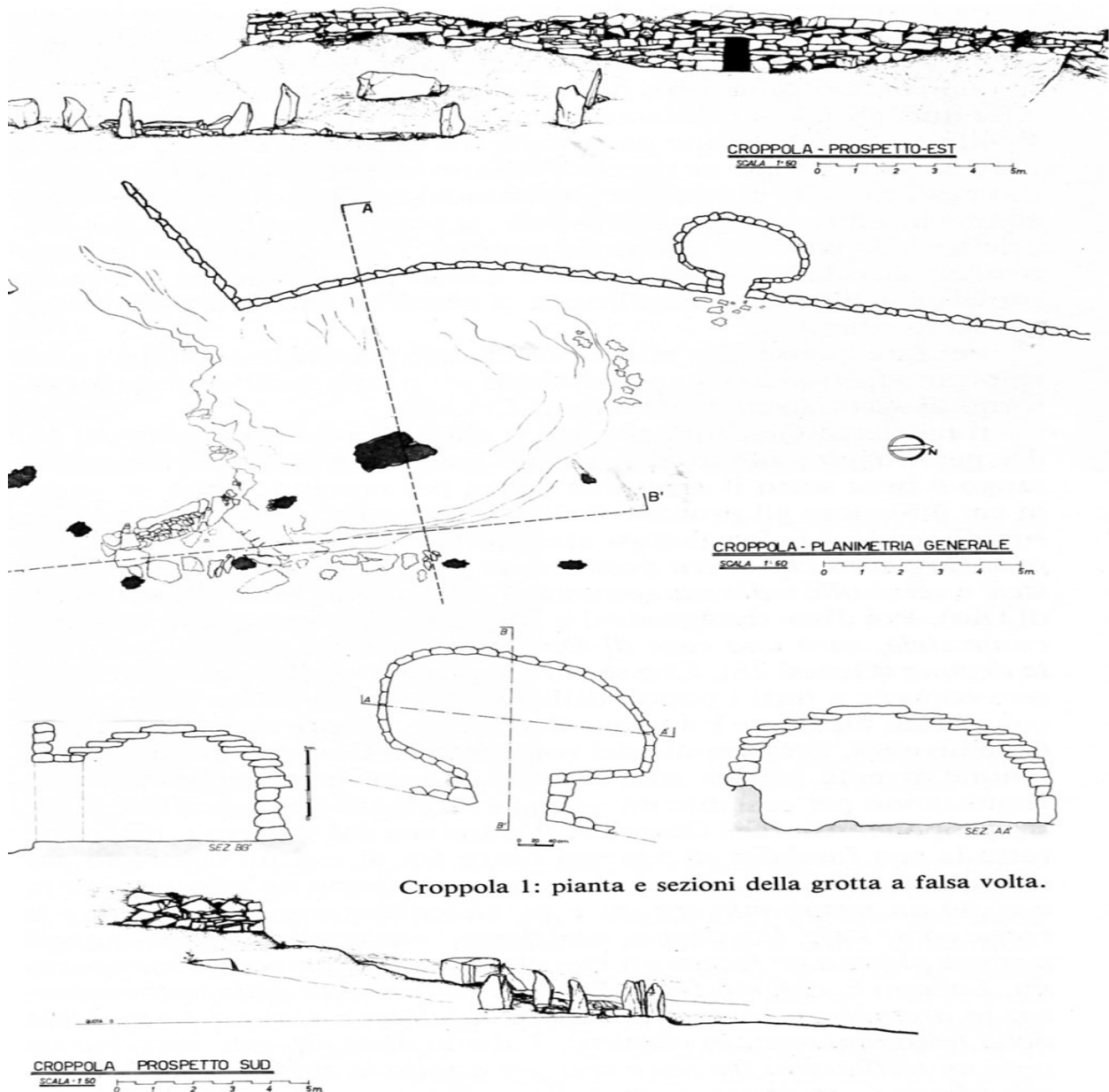
56 - Sanctuary of the Madonna Di Viganale. The origin of the Sanctuary is the most diverse but still originated from an extraordinary and mysterious fact. Along the dirt road that went up from the lower houses to the church, a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Graces was built by a certain Antonio Cerutti in 1516, the painter was Francesco Cagnola. The event happened in 1651, passers-by noticed a red stripe running down from Madonna's cheek and chin to her chest, one of them took the handkerchief and wiped off some of her blood and took it home. Meanwhile, word had spread which attracted many curious people; the church was initially skeptical but later, based on the various insistence of the population, after various events it was decided to build the Sanctuary which was completed between 1658 and 1672. - Crossroads

57 - Crossroads

58 - Crossroads

59 - Crossroads

60 - Archaeological site of Croppola



Croppola 1: pianta e sezioni della grotta a falsa volta.

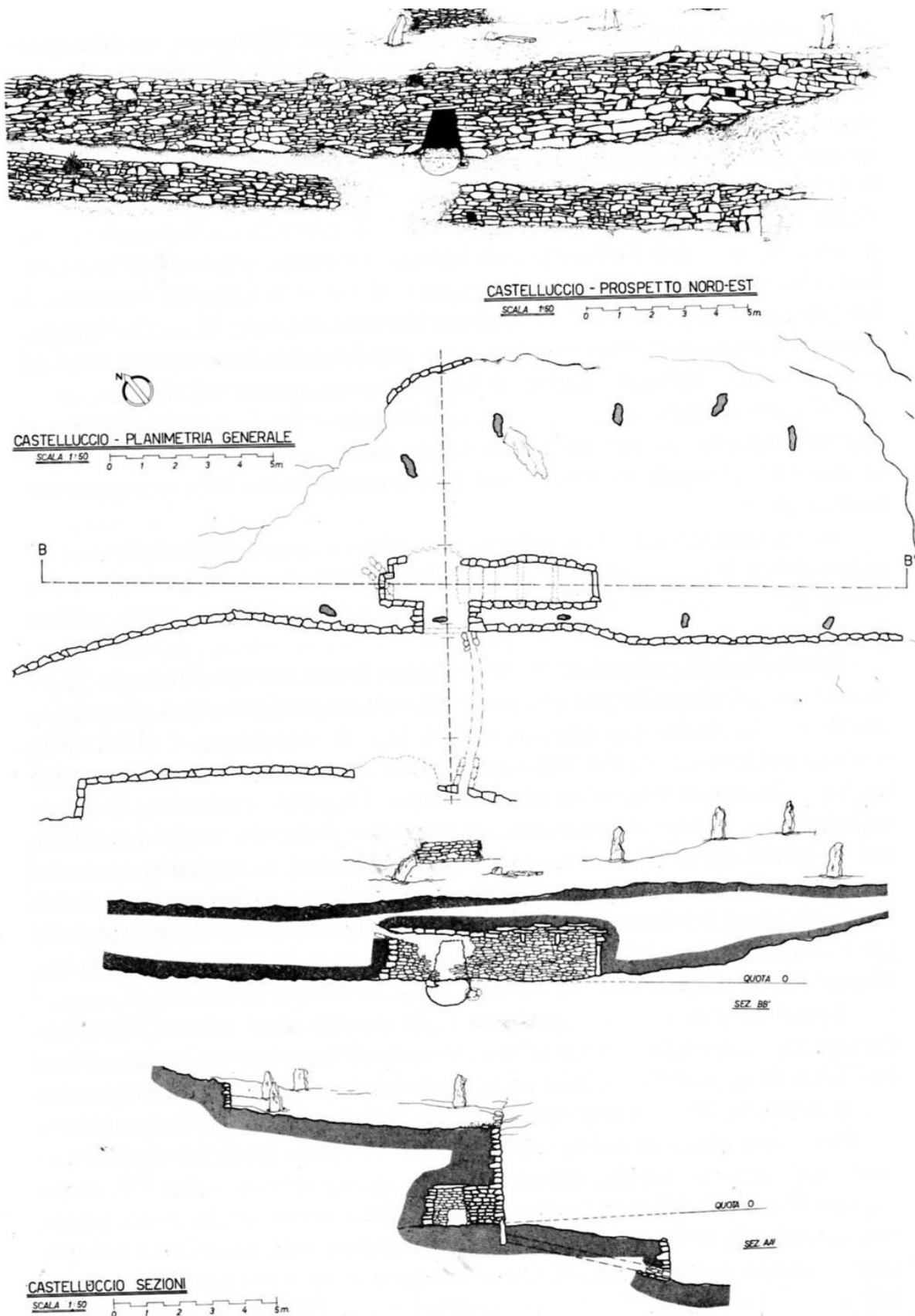
61 - Quarry

62 - Crossroads at the Valle dei Cani Chapel. In the eighteenth-century chapel, the figures of the Madonna appear, in the background and on the side walls S. John the Evangelist and the Guardian Angel

63 - Crossroads for Castelluccio

64 - Crossroads for Loc. Castelluccio

65 - Archaeological site of Castelluccio



6: Prospetto e planimetria del complesso megalitico di Castelluccio 1-(da «Oscellana» 1990 n.4).

66 - High banks

67 - Remains of Castelluccio Castle – Castelluccio is another tiny house, now uninhabited, but documented in the 13th century. It essentially consists of a small castle located on a rocky hill.

68 - Crossroads for Piaggino

69 - Crossroads on route G00a

70 - Loc. Piaggino - A.Z. Agriturismo tel. 0324 35259 – 3402434093 - agriturismoaz@alice.it – www.agriturismoaz.com

71 - Egro Chapel, 16th century

N.B.- Historical information extracted from: History of Montecrestese, Tullio Bertamini, Ed.Oscellana, 1991