



ROCKY COMPLEX OF SAN MICHELE DELLE GROTTI – MAN AND CALCARENITE

A special site that shows how the laborious excavation of people into the Gravina Calcarenite formation has shaped an extraordinary landscape. Located overlooking the Gravina in Puglia, the complex stretches for hundreds of meters on four levels. Inside is a main cave-church that preserves medieval frescoes and 17th-century decorations, while the walls reveal fossil remains of a sea dating back some two million years.

Panoramic views from the complex's balconies offer a fascinating perspective on the geological evolution of Puglia, the ravines and the Bradanica foredeep towards Matera. The complex also represents an example of the geology and hypogean architecture that characterizes the entire city of Gravina in Puglia, linked to the Gravina Calcarenite sediments, which date back about 2 million years and are of marine origin.

The excavation of stone materials and the creation of underground rooms and cisterns for water storage facilitated the construction of the buildings above. This practice remained in use from the Bronze Age until the Middle Ages.

MG6 Geosite – regional significance

Location: Gravina in Puglia

Age: Paleogene - Quaternary

Interests: Geology - Stratigraphy - Archaeology - Human evolution - Climate change – Water springs

