

GUARDISTALLO

14 - Anello dei mulini e del lago di Linaglia – 10 km – 450 m difference in height

As we have already seen in route 9, also in the valley of the Linaglia ditch there were several mills and our route includes three, drawing a ring that seems like the shape of a heart or a leaf.

We will leave the cars in Guardistallo, at the end of via dei Mulini, from where the dirt road via del Migliarino starts, and then turn right into via di Cavina (both streets belong to a network of Etruscan cave roads).

At the first crossroads, turn right again, we are immediately encountering a religious shrine and then, again on our left, numerous caves carved into the tuff wall.

Soon we come to an installation of the aqueduct, while on our right we find the farm of SS. Annunziata, built on the ruins of an ancient convent, of which the base of the perimeter walls of the church is still perfectly visible.

Continuing further west, we leave the little road almost immediately for a path that is barely visible on the right, which quickly leads us to the remains of the millpond and, further down, to the mill building where we can still see one of the millstones (the *sottana*). and the exit from the *infernaccio*.

The mill is located on the course of the *Botro Renaio*, a tributary of the *Fosso Linaglia*, and is the most upstream of those we will meet today.

We retrace our steps towards the farm and, crossing some meadows on our left, we'll find a trace of a path and an ancient bridge that crosses the Renaio.

We continue to the right and then for small bends that lead us to go up the side of the hill, to come out at the beginning of Via di Vallicorati, near the asphalted road that leads to Guardistallo.

We take via di Vallicorati, a local dirt road flanked by beautiful farmhouses, keeping the left only at the first fork and then always the right, until we reach a dilapidated house, surrounded by woods.

Here we will turn left along a steeply descending path, which will take us to Lake Linaglia, formed by an artificial barrier on the homonymous ditch, probably built in the 18th century and, before stopping on its banks for a snack, we will be able to close visit other tuff caves.

Once coasted the lake on the left, right in front of the bank that closes the lake to the west, a small path departs, initially steeply downhill, which leads to the course of the Fosso Linaglia, beyond which a wall rises. of calcarenite in which the caves are excavated.

We are in fact on the north side of the rock formation which, further south, hosts the caves of via dei Parmigiani and, further south, those of via delle Tane, which we visited respectively with route 6 and route 4.

Going back along the path that passes near the other side of the lake and shortly after passing it, we will notice on our left the traces of an ancient *dry wall*, presumably belonging to the remains of the Spedale di San Leonardo in Linaglia, one of the many religious institutions under the control of the Della Gherardesca Counts and responsible for welcoming travelers and pilgrims.

We then leave the path turning right to ford the Linaglia and take another small road which, in the valley bottom, runs parallel to the provincial road to Casale M.mo. In this section the remains of a pavement (Roman? Medieval?) are clearly visible; it indicates that we are on the road that once led to Casale.

After a while, on our left and further down from the path, we can see what, at first sight, looks like a small pelaga; by observing more carefully, we can instead recognize the perimeter of the gora, while immediately downstream a small house shows us what must have been the lowest mill. We continue on the path, until we cross another dirt road that comes from the provincial road to Casale, near the locality of Chiassone.

We take it to the left, turning again towards the course of the Linaglia.

On our right we find a beautiful little house with a garden and a bamboo grove, certainly built on the remains of the middle mill, because the wall of the mill stream is still visible above it.

Our road is once again interrupted by private property and the gate of the *I Massi farm* appears in front of us. On the right, however, we find a small path that goes up along the mill gora and, in the first section, along the Linaglia ditch. Through a short series of hairpin bends, the path leads us to an olive grove that we cross, to then finally emerge on the road interrupted by private property.

This is the via di Migliarina, which we will take to the right and which will bring us back to the starting point.