



MENAGGIO CASTLE*

* building totally or partially in ruins

You can find this point of interest in Menaggio - Path 1 - Stage 2

INFORMATION

Location: Menaggio Castle stood on the hill that juts out over the Sanagra stream, overlooking the back of the town. The proposed itinerary goes round the large area that presumably was occupied by Menaggio Castle; the information relevant to the accessibility of the single sections is available in the description of Stage 2.

Services: a number of parking spaces are available in via Nazario Sauro.

Leisure and food: cafes nearby.

DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

The strategic role of Menaggio was determined, in addition to its geographical location, by the presence of the Castle, which had an important part in controlling the surrounding territory, also due to the communication system with the other fortifications of the area (triangulations). It remains unclear whether Menaggio already had a fortification in the proto-historic or Roman ages, as some local historians suggest. The first documented piece of news available is that on 24 February 934, Hugh of Provence, king of Italy, granted Gerardo Castelli and his successors the feud of Menaggio with its Castle, as a sign of gratitude for their many services to him. Federico Cereghini, in the publication *Novecento anni da Mengaldo (1095-1995)*, suggests that Gerardo Castelli probably had to rebuild the Castle, which was now in ruins. According to a local legend, mentioned by Ignazio Vigoni in *Breve storia di Menaggio e dintorni (A brief history of Menaggio and its surroundings)*, the walls were reconstructed by using lime mortar mixed with wine instead of water, as an auspice to fiercely resist enemy assaults (which future events would unfortunately prove ineffective). Initially, the Castle was probably formed by four angular towers connected by walls, which were to be later extended to the lake, where two towers were built, and which were demolished in the 19th century. After various attacks, sieges and fires, within the wider scenario of the age-old fights between Como and Milan (Menaggio was on Milan's side), Guelphs and Ghibellines, in 1523 the Castle was set on fire and largely demolished by the Grisons, with the exception of part of the walls: the stones were used for the construction of new buildings and of the terracing that nowadays support vegetable gardens and gardens, but this part of the town of Menaggio continues to preserve the flavour and charm of the ancient fortress.