

location	
region	Tuscany
province	Massa Carrara
municipality	Fivizzano
sector	Pizzo d'Uccello
toponym/locality	Equi Terme
interest	
scientific interest	hypogean karst phenomena
	hydrogeology
	palaeontology
contextual interest	archaeological
	cultural
interest evaluation	representative
level of interest	national
conservation status	
characteristic/condition	fair
risk of natural deterioration	non-existent
risk of anthropogenic deterioration	medium



geological and environmental description

The karst complex of Equi Terme's caves comprises two different elements: "Buca" and "Tecchia", situated not very far one from the other, where Fagli valley flows into Lucido's valley. "Buca" di Equi opens up at 258 m a.s.l., to the hydrographic left of Fagli stream, almost at the same altitude. The karst cavity is about 850 m long, parallel to a fault running in north (north-west)-south (south-east) direction, and it spreads into the cataclases formed by friction between cherty Limestones and dolomite Marbles. It follows a mainly horizontal course, therefore the height difference is scarce (48 m). The cave is ramified into tunnels, corridors and halls, which at their end, rise to over 60 m. Karst galleries are embellished by stalactites and stalagmites, which often resemble columns, limestone flows, curtains and lace-like forms.

"Buca" di Equi is a perpetual karst spring of underground water, whose average flow rate is estimated around 250 l/s. During floods, spectacular and violent water outflows occur, reaching a maximum of 15 m³/s. Slightly to the north there is a second spring, called Barilla, which is the Buca's upper floodway and has an average flow rate of 200 l/s. The hydrogeological basin of Equi Terme's springs has not yet been identified precisely. It includes Pisanino massif and probably parts of Orto di Donna and Acqua Bianca's valleys, situated beyond the watershed. The catchment area probably measures 15 km², with a linear underground water course about 8 km long until the spring and a height difference of almost 1600 m.

Finally, Equi Terme's Tecchia is a hydrologically speaking neutral cavity which opens up in cherty Limestones, at 305 m a.s.l., to the left of Fagli stream. The cave resembles a rock shelter and is home to significant deposits of palaeontological, palaeoethnological and archaeological interest. Excavations, started in the 19th cent., brought to light stone tools from the Mousterian to the Neolithic, together with Würm and post-glacial faunas (wolf, dhole, jackal, leopard, lynx, ermine, marmot, beaver, ibex, chamois, etc.). The remains of *Ursus spelaeus* (Rosenmüller & Heinroth), which probably inhabited the cavity in alternation with Neanderthal hunters, are particularly numerous.

description of the level of interest

Several scientific interests are concentrated in Equi Terme's karst cavities complex, known as "Buca" and "Tecchia", starting from geomorphological, hydrogeological and palaeontological interests, not to mention the area's historical and archaeological value. Their importance is already significant when they are taken separately, but their synergic effect renders them highly interesting, at least at national level.