



The Castle of Arcola

ARCOLA

Location: The castle is located in the middle of the hilly village of Arcola, overlooking the Magra valley in the province of La Spezia.

Type of castle: Castle and residence

Construction period: 12th century.

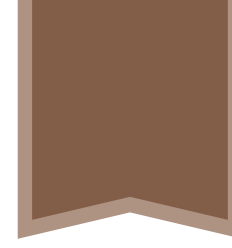
First appearance in historical sources: In the 11th century the place name was mentioned in the sources, but the village has existed since the Roman age. A document was written in the castro Arculae in 1128.

Strategic role: The castle was used as a stronghold to resist the growing power of the Bishop of Luni.

Further in use: 18th century

Current condition: The site is well preserved.





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Viewing: It is the seat of the Town Hall and can be visited.

History: The territory of Arcola's court - fertile and strategic - has always been the subject of donations, assignments and conflicts.

The castle was built and owned by the Obertenghi di Massa and Estense. It became a stronghold to oppose the increasing episcopal power. When the Estensi left Lunigiana in the 12th century, Arcola became an almost independent feudal union ruled by the Viscount of Versilia and the consortium of Vezzano, which included Arcola among the territories that later passed to the bishop.

This period was the peak of Arcola's history until the return of the Malaspina, whose ancient privileges were reconfirmed in 1231. They claimed the whole area, which started the conflict with the Bishop. The Malaspina's power ended with the arrival of the Genoese.

Moruello Malaspina tried in vain to ally with the Fieschi and the Grimaldi. In 1278, the fortress was conquered by Bartolomeo di Negro, one of Oberto D'Oria's lieutenants. This forced the Marquis to sell the fief to the Republic and it then shared the same destiny.

Structure: The original structure of the castrum of Arcola is barely distinguishable. There are still parts of the defensive walls of the castle, which was restored in the 19th century to become the Town Hall. The only intact structure is the pentagonal tower, comparable to that of Vezzano. It was the main part of the keep and was used as a watchtower and to protect the castle from attacks at its weakest point.