



The Tower of Avenza

CARRARA

Location: The fortress of Avenza, also known as “the tower of Castruccio”, is located close to the Carrione valley, overlooking the medieval village, in the area of the municipality of Carrara.

Type of castle: Castle and fortress.

Construction period: End of the 15th century and beginning of the 16th century.

First appearance in historical sources: The oldest written document mentioning Avenza dates back to 950, in the Codice Pelavicino. In 1180 the Bishop and Count of Luni assigned that territory to the lords of Carrara.

Strategic role: The fortress of Avenza always had great importance because of its strategic position close to the sea and along the road towards the Emilia Scauri road and the Francigena road. It was a centre of commerce for a wide area. During the rule of the Malaspina, the tower and the village had a defensive function due to its position close to the Genoese.





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Further use: When the military function ended in the 19th century, the fortress was bought by civilians around 1860, and in 1883 it was destroyed to use its stones as building material.

Current condition: Ruins.

Viewing: No.

History: The history of the fortress is linked to the town of Carrara, which was under the rule of the bishop and then for some time of two different lords who conquered the whole area. In the 15th century the village was conquered by the Genoese Campofregoso. In 1483 it was assaulted by Agostino Campofregoso, ally of the Malaspina. Thanks to the Malaspina the importance of the fortress increased, as it stood in a strategic position between the fief of Massa and the Genoese Republic. In the Second half of the 16th century, Alberico I Cybo tried to recover the village after a crisis by making the plain safe, by restoring the defensive walls and by exempting the inhabitants from tax.

Structure: The Malaspina restored and enlarged the structure in the 16th century in order to control the pre-existing village of Avenza. The tower of Avenza was part of a fortress composed by three fortified circular towers and by another small quadrangular tower from which it was possible to access the palace. The two buildings - the fortress and the palace - occupied the northern part of the fortified village, whose entrance was well protected. At the ground floor there are two quadrilateral salons and the prisons. The first floor was characterised by some rooms without a particular function, while inside the core of the largest tower there was a windmill. At the fourth floor there was a sort of platform. At the fifth floor there were a sentry box, an armoury, a small bell tower and a walkway linking the towers.