



The Castle of Bibola

AULLA

Location: The castle is located on a 300m high hill overlooking the Magra valley and nowadays it is a hamlet of the commune of Aulla. The fortified village spreads out along the southern side of the hill. The place name Bibula was mentioned in the Cosmography of the Unknown Ravenese around 660.

Type of castle: Castle with residences

Construction period: The first construction phase of the castle dates back to the 12th and 13th centuries.

First appearance in historical sources: There is evidence from the 9th century of a family whose name derives from this territory. A document of 1078 mentions a certain Odone di Bibola.

Strategic role: The castle's strategic position allows control of the whole Magra valley and the course of the Aulella river. Here there is an intersection with an alternative to the rancigena road. From the castle's towers it was possible to see Filattiera and Grondola, as well as the castles of Bastia, Monti, Lusuolo and Castiglione del Terziere, which all probably communicated with each other from a distance.





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Further in use: It has been abandoned since the 18th century.

Current condition: Ruins

Viewing: Only the exterior of the building can be visited.

History: The village where the castle stands is even more ancient than the source that proves its existence in the Byzantine age. In the Middle Ages, the site was under the rule of the Bibola Lords who, thanks to support from the Bishops, kept it until the middle of the 13th century. It is not known what kind of relationship there was between these Lords and the noble Attocani family from Lucca, who are often mentioned in documents from that period. In the middle of the 13th century, Bibola's power passed to Bernabò Malaspina who returned it to the Bishop in 1265. Military control of the castle was strengthened by Enrico da Fucecchio, who received the rights over this fief through the Moregnano family. In 1355, when episcopal power declined, Bibola passed to the Malaspina together with the fief of Lusuolo and was then sold in 1451 to the Marquis of Fosdinovo. After several changes of ownership, Bibola, Aulla and Montedivalli were sold to Adamo Centurione in 1543. In this period, the castle had a military road that disappeared around the mid-17th century. In the 18th century the castle was abandoned, although in 1706 – during the Spanish invasions – it was still a garrison headquarters.

Structure: The first construction phase – probably dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries – was on the site of the walls to the west of the factory. The quadrilateral structure of the castle, equipped with two circular, ogival-shaped towers, dates back to the second construction phase in the 14th century. During the third phase, a tower in the south-eastern corner was built, with a diameter of around 6m and relatively thick walls. There are two usable floors preserved that are linked by a hatch, where the remains of a chimney mean it may have had a residential function. Some well preserved architectural elements dating back to the fourth construction phase can still be admired on the south-eastern side of the defensive walls, where there is an 18th century entrance gate.