



The Castle of Giovagallo

TRESANA

Location: The village is located close to the municipality of Tresana, in the province of Massa Carrara, 350m above sea level. The castle stands on a butress on Mount Alpicella, which nowadays is located in the forest but once overlooked the wonderful Penolo valley, lying on the ridge of the watershed Vara-Magra. Shepherds used to pass through this area.

Type of castle: Castle with tower and marquis residence.

Construction period: 13th century thanks to Manfredi and Morello Malaspina.

First appearance in historical sources: The Pelavicino code includes several documents from the Middle Ages about Giovagallo. These documents state that the place name already existed in 1188, while the castle was mentioned in 1206 in a document about the power of the Bishop Gualtiero and the Malaspina over this area.

Strategic role: The strategic function of the castle of Giovagallo is probably linked to its central position in comparison to that of the fief of Manfredi, and to the proximity of the road linking the Apennines and the plain of Luni, which is nowadays known as Alta Via dei Monti Liguri. It also controlled the road that led to the Penolo valley towards Liguria.





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Further in use: Beginning of the 17th century.

Current condition: Remains of the tower and of the defensive walls.

Viewing: The remains are abandoned.

History: In 1266, the fief of Giovagallo was assigned to Manfredi Malaspina – one of the sons of Corrado l’Antico – together with Lusuolo, Madrignano, Virgoletta and the fourth part of Arcola. The castle and built-up area were constructed between the 13th and the 14th centuries and became the residence of Morello Malaspina and his court. The brave captain of several victorious battles in Tuscany for Black Guelphs who was mentioned by Dante in the Divine Comedy, was the husband of Alagia Fieschi, niece of Pope Adrian V. After the extinction of the Malaspina di Giovagallo in the middle of the 14th century, the fief was included in the Malaspina di Villafranca marquisate and then in Lusuolo. In the 15th century, the power passed to the Duchy of Milan until it became part of the Florentine Republic. Giovagallo again became an independent fief under the rule of Prince Corsini.

Structure: The tower is located on top of the hill and is the most important remains of this site. It was linked to another impressive structure, the only remains of which are the ground. Both ruins date back to the Middle Ages, which we can tell from the construction technique, and they were certainly residences. The perimetral defensive walls surrounding the top of the hill enclosed a built-up area, which developed until the beginning of the 17th century.