



The Castle Aghinolfi of Montignoso

MONTIGNOSO

Location: The castle stands on a hill overlooking Montignoso, 5km away from Massa. It stands on a rock close to the pedemontana road of the Apuan Alps, overlooking the stunning coastal panorama between Livorno and Isola del Tino.

Type of castle: Castle with residential and military function.

Construction period: the origins of the castle date back to the Langobardic age, even if we do not know exactly when it was built. Researches on the defensive walls show that there was a pre-existing quadrangular tower dating back to a period between 755 and 980.

First appearance in historical sources: A parchment of 753 states that the fortress existed in the Late Middle Ages. There was a mention of an olive grove in the surroundings of the "castellum Aginulfi" even if the first authentic document mentioning it dates back to 764.

Strategic role: In the Middle Ages the castle had a strategic function. It was used to control the road located under the Francigena road.





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Further use: The last works on the castle were in the 17th century, after 1799 the structure was abandoned.

Current condition: The structure has been restored.

Viewing: It can be visited on Sunday and holidays, open 16:00-18:30. For further information please go to www.istitutovalorizzazionecastelli.it

History: The history of the castle is linked to its strategic position. Many lords of the area wanted to conquer the fortress: the towns of Lucca and Pisa, the Bishops of Luni, the Malaspina and the Marquis of Massa. From the 13th century it was part of the belongings of Pietrasanta, i.e. a municipality of Lucca, until the French Revolution, except in the period between 1438 and 1444. In 1857 it was finally annexed to the Duchy of Modena until the unification of Italy.

Structure: The structure is composed by buildings dating back to different ages: the castle was initially composed by only one tower, but in the 15th century it was restored . The structure is overlooked by two tall bastions called “towers of San Paolino and San Francesco”. There were three defensive walls and a large circular tower which was used as watchtower linked to a smaller octagonal tower. The documents of the 16th century show that inside the defensive structure there were 130 houses for the villagers of Montignoso in case of danger. In 1585 a part of the structure was demolished as it was not adapt to the modern war strategies. In that same period, they built the place of arms and the eastern defensive walls with the walkway and the access to the underground corridor. In the 16th century Lucca decided to restore this important castle and strengthened the eastern side.