



The Castle of Rocca Sigillina

FILATTIERA

Location: The castle of Rocca Sigillina, also known as Rocha Vallis Azzolinae, is located on top of a hill in the final section of the Mount Orsaro, in the valley of Capria creek, close to the southern border with Pontremoli, along the road towards Cirone, where there was a branch of the Lombarda road towards Parma.

Type of castle: Fortified village with fortress.

Construction period: The origins of the castle are uncertain, but the construction of the first fortress on the hill overlooking the village could date back to many centuries ago, due to its strategic function.

First appearance in historical sources: The first documented mentions date back to the beginning of the 13th century, probably between 1225 and 1231, when the fortress was assigned to Franceschino, son of Opizino di Filattiera.

Strategic role: Control of the border between Pontremoli and the territories of the Malaspina. It was also an important intersection point of the roads from the Magra valley to Parma, through the mount Orsaro and the pass of Cirone.





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Further use: The decadence of the fortress started when the Florentine became lords of Pontremoli after 1650. They strengthened the Cisa road and abandoned the less comfortable path passing through Rocca Sigillina.

Current condition: The most considerable remains are a solid rectangular bastion on a cliff which is also part of the main structure. The defensive walls have recently been restored.

Viewing: Partially, with caution.

History: After the division of the fief between Spino Secco and Spino Fiorito, it passed to Franceschino di Opizino di Filattiera, but in 1225 the subjects – influenced by Pontremoli – rose up. Those insurrections lasted for over three centuries.

After the rule of Sir Atto or Azzo -Ghibelline friend of the Malaspina-, of Castruccio and of many other lords, in 1446 Pontremoli reconquered the fortress thanks to the Florentine, Who strengthened it and in 1488 accepted the submission of the villagers.

So new battles for the ownership of the fortress took place. Among the lords involved there were the Dukes of Milan, the Republic of Florence and the Noceti from Piacenza, who settled in the area of Bagnone around the half of the 15th century. The battles ended when

Cosimo I de Medici bought definitively this territory in 1548.

Structure: The village of Rocca Sigillina was equipped with defensive walls protected by the rocks on the eastern side, in the part of the village located on the right watershed of Caprio creek. There is no evidence of the castle today, but only remains of the defensive walls. The origins of the fortress are uncertain, but the ground on which it was built had previously been modified.