



Castle of Godano

SESTA GODANO

Location: The Castle of Godano is located on top of a hill where we can still see the ancient circular village. In the 19th century, the village was abandoned by its inhabitants, who moved to the flatter area of Sesta, in the Vara Valley basin below. At a later time this territory annexed several communities and among these was Godano.

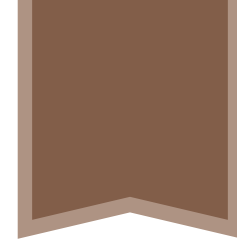
Type of castle: The structure of the castle dates back to the 12th century.

Strategic role: This castle was built as part of the Malaspina project to control the whole valley, and to oppose the expansionism of Genoa and Pontremoli along the road between Sestri Levante and Val di Magra valley.

Further use: During the Second World War the castle was used as a stronghold by the Allied Forces.

Current condition: The palace is nowadays a ruin. It has recently been the focus of an archaeological investigation.





Castle of Godano

SESTA GODANO

Viewing: After a recent restoration, which created a safe tour for visitors, the castle is now accessible.

History: Godano was part of the Diocese of Luni, but from a political point of view it was involved in the affairs of the Estensi and the Malaspina families. The Estensi conquered this area in the 11th century and they became lords of Pontremoli. As a consequence of this, they controlled the roads leading to the coastline – which passed through Godano and Chiusola –, while the Malaspina fought to impose their supremacy in Lunigiana from the 12th Century onwards. The castles of Godano, Chiusola, Rio and Groppo probably constituted an independent, fortified quadrilateral area.

Pontremoli and the territories controlled by its common were in turn the target of the Fieschi, especially of Nicolò and Alberto – nephews of Tedisio, who was one of the castle's founders –. In fact, we know that it was Alberto Fieschi who turned the castle into an operational centre against the Genoese, in order to oppose their expansionism in that area. But soon he had to face the reaction of the Genoese Republic: in 1273 captain Andrea Doria sent his crossbowmen and his foot soldiers to conquer the castle.

After 1274, the Godano feud was again led by the Malaspina. After the divisions of 1408

the castle remained in the marquis Morello Antonio di Mulazzo's possession. His descendants kept it until 1525, when the inhabitants of the village imprisoned the last Malaspina marquis because of his behaviour, with the consent of the Duke of Milan on whom they depended. Then the Governor of Pontremoli – still with the approval of the Duke of Milan – set the inhabitants of the village free. They agreed then to be subject to the Republic of Genoa on the 28th October of the same year.

Structure: The castle's structure dates back to the 12th century. Archaeological findings reveal a period of intense activity leading up to the 15th century and another one in the 16th century, when it became part of the Republic of Genoa.

The castle has been safe to visit since 1993 but the structure has been examined only in recent times. Some wall ruins of the fortress that stood on top of the hill have been discovered. The stones of which the walls are made come from the coastline. This means that great artisans squared them off, and this reveals the effective importance of this structure for the territories under the rule of the Malaspina. Beside this, the archaeological investigation revealed a system of buttresses close to the top of the castle.