Castello Sforzini di Castellar Ponzano

Category: Castles, Fortresses
business description: Travelling along the ancient via Postumia in the stretch south of Tortona, approximately 8 km from the town, lies a small hamlet called Castellar Ponzano. The place is a strategic point not only for the control of commercial traffic, but also for that of the River Scrivia.
The area was already inhabited in Roman times and there was a fortification in the early Middle Ages but the first information on the Castle dates to 1200, when it belonged to the noble family Ponzano. The characteristics of the structure suggest that it had been built between the 13th and 14th century. In 1364, Emanuele Ponzano is Vicar General Galeazzo II Visconti in Milan. For his merits, in 1365 he obtains the diploma of nobility from the emperor Charles 4th with the title of "Conte ad personam". The Ponzano family were a branch of the ancient Frankish family of Manfredingi, whose nobility can be traced back to the 6th century.
At the end of this first reconstructive phase, the Castle was very similar to what it looks like today: an internal courtyard with rounded arches supported by brick columns completed the new works. A walkway above the vaults of the courtyard connected the tower to the block built to the east.
In the 16th century the Castle passed to the Balbi noble family of Genoese origins who owned many properties in Piedmont. At the same time, the Castle saw significant renewal, with renovations and enlargements: on the north side, a new building was built using the perimeter wall, which on the ground floor and first floor was used as a noble residence (on the ground floor the frescoes are still visible with the coat of arms of the Balbi family), while on the basement floor a preceding structure, probably a portico with roof in wood used as a shelter for pilgrims, was transformed into a large vaulted cellar. Finally, on the south side, a loggia was built with rounded arches and cross vault ceiling, of which clear traces remain on the wall. Outside, on the east side, above the ancient entrance, an epigraph with the coat of arms of Galeazzo Balbi as a sign of the new owner.
In the mid-17th century, the building was partly derelict due to the decline of the Balbi family and of the looting suffered at the hands of the French troops in 1642. It was purchased in 1654 by the noble brothers Nicolò Maria and Biagio Busseti of Tortona and restored. It was later ceded by Busseti in 1715 in perpetual lease to the Guasone family, who became its definitive owners in 1824, remaining in its possession until the second half of the 20th century.

The structure was recently purchased by a private owner who will manage its conservation and visits.

Guided tour by appointment.

phone: +39 334 294.3083
Admission fee: Yes
Guided visits: Yes

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other: Guided tours by appointment

Links

http://www.castellosforzini.it/

Photos







