

3 : Castel Sismondo – Rocca Malatestiana



The fortified residence of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini from 1432 to 1468, combined a celebration of his prowess with defensive needs. The demolition of the buildings between the Castle and the municipal square, ordered by Sigismondo, emphasised the dominant position of the Castle and its sheer size triumphed over the headquarters of civic and religious power.

The fortress asserted its supremacy thanks to its massive towers, to the outer walls with escarpments, to its broad moat, and to the size of its keep which, as it was plastered white, stood out against the red of the entrance tower. The defensive system, organized in consultation with Filippo Brunelleschi, was equipped with cannons.

When the Castle was restored, it became evident that it had incorporated preceding elements such as the Roman walls and towers, the Mediaeval Gattolo gate, the central group of houses and the Malatesta buildings. In the inscription above the main gate, however, Sigismondo declared the entire construction as his own. Work on the building began in 1437 and continued for about 15 years, even though it seems the castle was already lived in by 1446.

Today nothing remains except the central nucleus of the original construction, which we can see represented in the medals of Sigismondo and in the fresco by Piero della Francesca in the Malatesta Temple. The main gate is still surmounted by an inscription and by the coat of arms with an elephant and a rose on a chequered board, symbols of the Malatesta family.

The Castle later became a pontiff fortress and from the 17th century underwent severe changes: the outer walls were demolished, the moat was filled in and the furnishings were removed. It became a prison in the 19th century up to 1967, but since the 1970s has become the centre of a complex series of restoration work, sustained in recent years by the CARIM foundation. Today the Castle is an important seat for cultural events.

Now, go back towards Piazza Cavour, turn into Via Sigismondo and at the first crossroads you will find the entrance to the Church of St. John the Evangelist, commonly known as Sant'Agostino, fourth stop on this journey of ours.

Listen to file number four.