

the defeat of Pistoia in the war with Florence. As the tradition wants the lion is without head because the beheading was done by the Cecina people, who have always been rivals of the Larciano people. With the domination of Florence, Larciano became a place of Townhall. Among the mayors we remember Francesco Ferrucci, the general of the Florentine Republic, killed during the battle of Gavinana in 1530 between the Florentines and the Imperial Army who tried to restore the Medicis to power in the town. In the square we find **the church dedicated to Saint Silvestro (7)**, as it was under his Papacy that Larciano became converted to Christianity. The Church shows a structure with a single nave, raised presbitery and rectangular apse. The organ is very special, situated under the entrance and main altar in stone. And finally we arrive to **the Castle Palace (8)**, defended by a wall of 203 meters by 13 with two entrances: one is where we go out and which overlooks the square, the other is along the course of the wall to the East of the tower. Originally the structure was setted with a raised passage which linked the four lookout points arranged at the edges. On our left the Captain House allowed people to reach the tower across the drawbridge situated ten meters above the ground. These days it is possible to see the cistern for the storage of water and the underground where the

Civic Museum was developed which contains many relics of the prehistoric period up to the present day. Climbing about 200 steps up to the Tower it will seem to you to go back in time, to the wars of the Middle Ages; reaching the top you will remain breathless, enjoying the beautiful scenery which opens out in front of you, on the clearest days to the Apuan Alps and S. Gimignano.

Museo Civico

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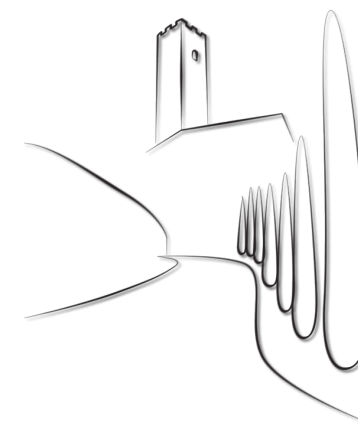
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Larciano Castle

LARCIANO

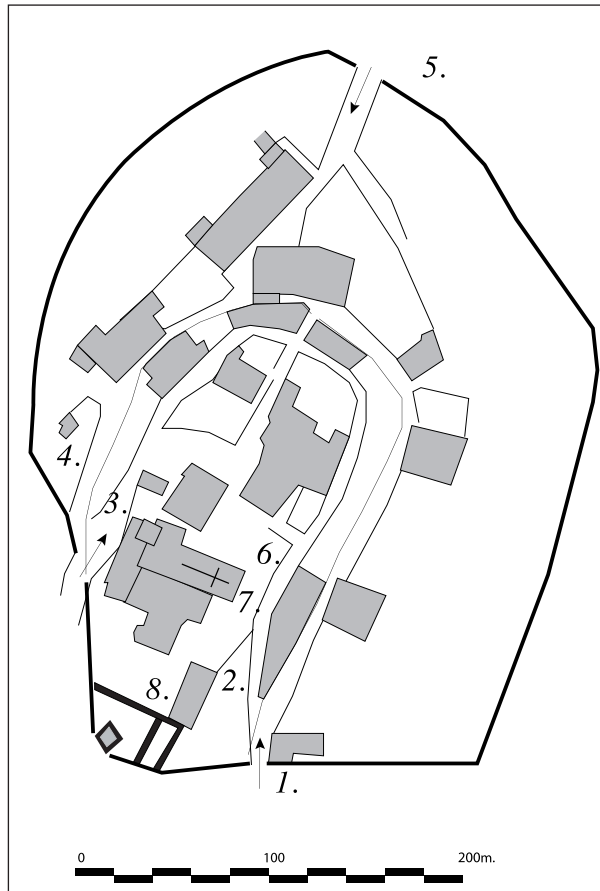


Where medieval walls
tell a whole story



Guided historical-itinerary
of Larciano Castle

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Larciano Castle is a proud medieval village situated on the western slopes of Montalbano, 160 m. above sea level where we have a splendid view of the Valdinievole, Fucecchio Marshes and the Pisa mountains. This excellent position has stimulated people to live here ever since the Etruscan period. In the Roman times in Larciano there were a lot of roads linking the village with the Fucecchio Marsh, the Arno River and the

Tirreanean sea. We can start our itinerary with the **Nord West Gate (1)**, one of the three main accesses to the Castle. It is important to imagine Larciano Castle as a structure in a continuous evolution from XI to XIV century: the first fortification of the ancient villa was made at the end of XI century by the Conti Guidi of Modigliana, who built a large territory with Larciano, Vinci, Cerreto and other villages, which do not exist anymore. The main purpose of the castle was not defensive, but representative of prestige and power of the Conti Guidi on the surrounding territory. Leaving the gate behind us we go along the stone road and after a few meters in the Balzo road appears a low wall that delimits the former **first wall circle (2)**. Going straight along the same road we arrive at a single piece of wall destroyed, where we can observe, on our left and covered by a thick vegetation, **the second gate of access (3)**, perhaps the most ancient, with stones of big dimension and grossly worked. At the moment of feudal crisis, the Pistoia Townhall acquired, on November 23, 1226, the castle and its district from the sons of Conte Guidoguerra of Modigliana, paying 6000 Pisa dinars. The high price was in effect favorable for the Pistoia Townhall because Larciano represented an important village on the political-military point of view inside the conflict with Lucca Townhall, but also an economic advantage (because it was rich in wood, vineyards and olive

groves) and was strategic (with the possibility of using new links to the sea with Marsh Port and Canals to the Arno river). In this period was effectively strengthened and lengthened the perimeter as far as the present length of about a kilometer and the Palatium was rebuilt and the Tower raised, reaching the height of 36 meters. Larciano became thus the principle defensive castle at the south of Pistoia Townhall. From the gate, passing along the road going downwards, we arrive at the **"Old Olive Oil Factory" (4)**, where we can admire the ancient millstone, the symbol of olive oil processing. Carrying on up to the underpass, we turn left along Spinelli street where, a little further, we find the **South Gate (5)**. This point reminds us of the period of conflict between the Papacy and the Empire in the struggle for the investitures. In effect the war between the Guelfa Lucca and Florence and the Ghibellina Pistoia determined the passage of the castle to Lucca in 1302. Pistoia again purchased Larciano in 1310 with the payment of 10000 golden orins. From the south Gate still in Spinelli street we go along the underpass and immediately after the steep ascent on our right we reach the top of the hill from where we can admire a fantastic panorama. Having arrived in the Castle Square we have in front of us **the Marzocco (6)**, sitting lion which is the symbol of Florentine domination which began in 1401, after