



MUSEO DELLA ROCCA
MALATESTIANA DI
MONTEFIORE
CONCA

AD PUGNAM PARATI (ready to fight): THE FIGURE OF THE KNIGHT

Training to become a knight required a long and hard period of practice, exercise, training with weapons and caring for the lord's horse and military equipment. Not by chance the first task of a groom was to carry his knight's shield, hence the name squire, derived from the Latin scutarius ("shield bearer"). A squire would accompany his knight into battle, helping him to put on his armour and rescuing him if he was in difficulty. Initially a knight's armour consisted of a simple chain mail garment, a sort of tunic made up of numerous small interwoven iron rings. To cushion the blows, an undercoat, stuffed with leather and rags, was also sometimes worn. From the 12th century onwards, knights started to wear metal sleeves and thigh guards in order to protect their arms and legs as well. The use of iron plates instead of the simpler chain mail became widespread during the 14th century, while it was not until the 15th century that people began to wear shaped wrought iron armour to protect every part of the body. This was shaped by farriers to make pointed tips and blades slide over its surface. Plate armour could reach a total weight of around 25 kg and often had designs and decorations engraved on it using a burin. Edges and embellishments were often made of gold or were gilded. One of the most widespread embellishments was the crest, the ornament or plume of a knight's helmet, which had the primary purpose of making it easy to identify a knight and the army that flanked him on the battlefield. The most important weapon was undoubtedly the sword. Until the 13th century, they were forged as double edged broadswords, but when chainmail was replaced by plate armour, longer and thinner swords became widespread, used to strike with the point and slip between the iron plates.

Montefiore Conca (RN) - ITALIA

www.visitmontefioreconca.com





MUSEO DELLA ROCCA
MALATESTIANA DI
MONTEFIORE
CONCA

Another typical weapon used by knights was the lance, used to charge and run over foot soldiers and other formations of knights, while in hand-to-hand combat iron maces became popular to smash armour. Equally widespread was the use of short-handled battle axes used in mounted combat and their long-handled twins for use in field combat. Crossbows and longbows are not to be forgotten. One curiosity at the time of the crusades was the anathema of Pope Innocent II during the Second Lateran Council in 1138:

“Illam mortiferam artem et Deo odibilem Ballistariorum et Sagittariorum adversus Christianos et Catholicos exerceri de cetero sub anathemate prohibemus”.

Literally:

“We forbid under penalty of anathema that that deadly and God-detested art of slingers and archers be in the future exercised against Christians and Catholics”.

Canon law therefore forbade the use of crossbows and longbows, but only against Christians, leading one to suppose that they may be used against pagans and Saracens.

Montefiore Conca (RN) - ITALIA

www.visitmontefioreconca.com

