



MUSEO DELLA ROCCA
MALATESTIANA DI
MONTEFIORE
CONCA

THE WINDMILL

A windmill stood at the top of the fortress by at least 1494, but possibly already many years earlier, from which a millstone found during excavations in the storerooms originated. It was reused as part of a threshold and rests today in the inner courtyard. Throughout the Middle Ages mills functioned as machines for almost any type of use, driven by water and wind and more rarely by animals. The mills were not only used to grind cereals and grains, but would also provide the power to drive more complex machines such as winches and workshop hammers. In the space of just a few years mills were transformed from mere grinding machines into symbols of power throughout the whole of Western mediaeval Europe. Large fortified dwellings such as the Rocca di Montefiore sought the self-sufficiency needed in the event of a siege to ensure survival within the castle. To build or use a mill was not an activity left to free enterprise. The feudal powers first, then the free communes that arose in Italy at the end of the first millennium, and the signorie later, from the beginning of the 14th century, also understood the economic possibilities linked to the construction of windmills. This is why the operation and use of windmills was placed under the control of the city authorities and the lords and their use was taxed, i.e. the payment of taxes by any farmer who requested their use.

Montefiore Conca (RN) - ITALIA

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