

CITTA' DI MAROSTICA

The Lower Castle

Marostica became "Scaligera" (The Della Scala family from Verona were called the "Scaligeri") following the conquest of Vicenza by Cangrande della Scala in 1311, and the family remained in control throughout the fourteenth century until 1387. Marostica, a border outpost of the Della Scala, was involved in the war between Padua and Verona in the 1312-1314. During this period Marostica, which rose and grew around St. Mary's Church situated to the east of the present-day walled town, was attacked and sacked by the Padovani, but the fortress on the Pauso held out. In 1338 Marostica fell under the dominion of Sicco da Caldonazzo, but only for a few months before returning into the safe hands of the Della Scala, who decided that the town's fortifications required attention. During the Fourteenth century they built the Upper Castle on the Pausolino and the Lower Castle, joining them with a curtain wall studded with walkways and battlements. The Lower Castle is a large crenulated quadrangular structure with a donjon (keep), built with local sandstone and limestone. Very few fired bricks were used as they were extremely expensive in those days. There were two drawbridges over the moat, one in the north and one in the south of the building. Above the south entrance there was a battlement which has been reconstructed in recent years and the inside bailey (courtyard) is surrounded with two loggias (galleries) supported by strong brick columns. The Lower Castle gradually changed from being a military fortress to being a place of government and when Marostica passed under the rule of the Republic of Venice in 1404, it became the Governor's (or Podestà) residence: here he managed the civil justice and supervised the good governance of the community. The "Consiglio dei Trenta" (the Council of Thirty) was held in the "Sala Consiliare" (Council Hall). The castle also housed the town's prison from the Venetian period up until the early Twentieth Century.

Upper Castle "Castello Superiore"

It was built on the top of the Pausolino hill and it overlooks the walled town and the Lower Castle (Castello Inferiore). It was built upon a previous tower (or donjon), which was mentioned in Thirteenth-century documents, and it dates from the time of the Lord of Cangrande della Scala II (1352-1359), the great builder of the so called "Scaligeri" defensive works. This construction was originally a massive structure, with four corner towers and a keep which is now mostly in ruins. The stone "Ladder", the coat of arms set in the front of the castle gate's lunette, is another reminder of the Della Scala dominion of the 14th century. Work in 1934-36 restored the Castle's battlement tower above the entrance lunette.

Walls and gates

The town curtain wall's construction (approximately 1700 -1800 metres in length), surrounding the Pausolino hill, began on the 1st of March 1372 during the time of Cansignorio della Scala (1359-1375). According to the Venetian historian Marin Sanudo (1466 - 1536), the wall took three years to build and was completed in 1375. The wall is crenulated and has "chemins de ronde"

(walkways) around the entire internal walls. Three sturdy gates Vicentina (south), Bassanese (east) and Breganzina (west) together with 24 bastions projecting outward from the curtain wall protected the town from attackers. A moat and the drawbridges in the Lower Castle further strengthened the defensive structures. When the local train station was built at the beginning of 20th Century (outside the south-east wall near the Lower Castle) another gate, Porta Stazione, was opened to allow easier access to the town centre.