

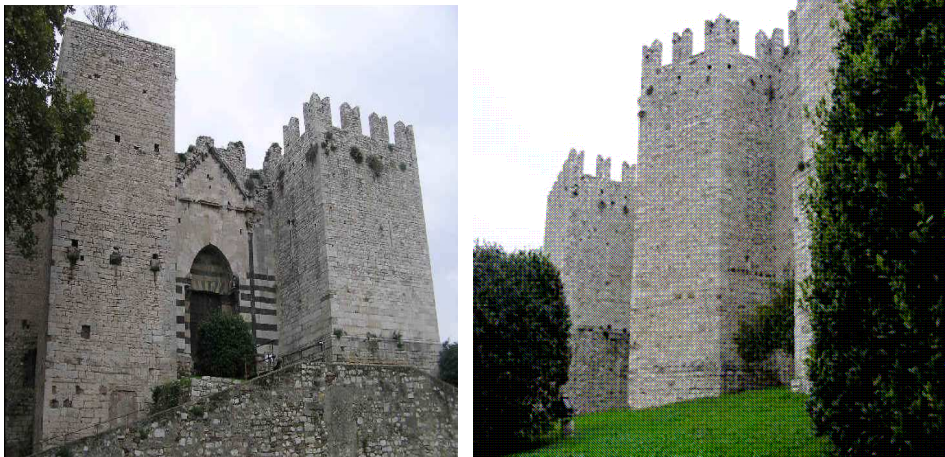


## Welcome Reception

Wednesday 11 July 2007

### Emperor's Castle

Piazza delle Carceri  
Prato



The Emperor's Castle is the most significant example in Central Italy of the architectural school that developed around the fascinating personality of Frederick II (1194-1250), Holy Roman Emperor, from the Hohenstaufen family of Swabia. Its most interesting characteristic is its superb Swabian style, unique in Central Italy; in fact, its normal geographical location would be in Southern Italy, together with the masterpieces of fortified architecture like Castel del Monte or Lagopesole.

Construction started in 1248 on the orders of Frederick II of Swabia with the aim of bringing the main communication routes from the South of Italy to Germany under military control, in particular the road from the mountain pass of Montepiano through the Bisenzio valley into the heart of Tuscany.

