



History of

CASTELLO DI BACCARESCA

in collaboration with

Prof. Stefano Bordoni



The ancient fortress of Baccaresca was built in the 12th century. It's name probably goes back to the 'berries', the fruits of the shrubs that have always grown luxuriantly in the area. Baccaresca was a military castle placed to guard the hills between Branca and Fossato di Vico. The area represented a highly strategic point for the control of the Byzantine Corridor, a road that allowed the connection between Rome and Ravenna since the era of the Roman-Barbaric kingdoms.

Testimonies concerning the centuries prior to the 14th have been lost in the dust of history. We have to wait until the second half of the 14th century, when the Chamberlain's Registers begin to record the captains and castellans who took turns in guarding the manor and its territories. The first of them was Nicolaus Sforzolini in 1389, when the city of Gubbio had just come under the control of the Duchy of Urbino. The property was then sold in 1787 to the Episcopal Church of Gubbio.

The castle's fortunes changed in 1861 with the advent of the Unification of Italy: the entire estate passed to the state property and then into the hands of various private owners and insurance companies, up to the current owners who restored the fortress and returned the site to its former splendour. Since 2018, a series of archaeological activities and investigations conducted by Prof. Stefano Bordoni at Castello di Baccaresca have revealed a complex series of construction activities.

An ever-evolving Castle

The research made possible to identify at least 3 main construction phases, the result of a much larger number of interventions. Prof. Bordoni produced 3 three-dimensional renderings in order to illustrate its appearance in its most characteristic historical phases. The first stage dates back to the mid-15th century.



The second phase dates back to the mid-16th century in which the castle and its military nature were strengthened with specific interventions. The first and least visible was the reinforcement of the wall base. The second and most impactful, still visible today, was the raising of the tower at the north-east corner. Such activities to strengthen the defences are common at the same historical age and find various parallels in other castles in the Gubbio area.



The last phase identified by Prof. Bordoni dates back to the early 18th century, when the ownership of the castle passed to the Bishop's Curia of Gubbio. Then the first restoration and maintenance works began, consolidating its new function as a palace and no longer as a military defence. In the first half of the 19th century, the bishop's works ended with the adjacent church of St. Anne being established as the parish church. In the following century, new interventions aimed at restoring and giving the Castle some aesthetic elements with a medieval flavour: among others, the establishment of new and fascinating battlements.



Trivia:

In the 16th century, Sancia, the daughter of Corraduccio di Corrado della Branca, had married a nobleman from Gubbio, Carlo Gabrielli, bringing the Castle of Baccaresca as dowry.