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GLI UNIVERSI PARTICOLARI

Città e territori dal medioevo all'età moderna

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Filling the Void: Reconstructing the Chapel of the Bombardiers in the *Fortezza* at Radicofani

by Anabel Thomas

This essay offers a postscript to the late twentieth-century restoration of the fortress at Radicofani¹. As is well known, both the town and the fortress complex at Radicofani have undergone numerous changes since the medieval period, assailed in turn by conflicting political powers, human interventions and natural disasters. Quoting the early-nineteenth century essayist William Hazlitt, Mario Ascheri reminds us that in 1825 the fortress was a «maestoso» shadow of a «pos-sente» past². However, the fortified complex was already in a gravely deteriorated state at a much earlier date. When the Marquis de Sade visited Radicofani in the eighteenth century, he noted that the town's fortress had been completely dismantled³. Two centuries earlier, during the war between Siena and Florence, the whole castle complex was described as severely damaged⁴. Yet this fortress was referred to in 1483 as the «falcone e la sbarra di Valdorcìa»⁵. In its heyday this was in effect a fortified citadel serving as both an administrative and military centre. Yet, during the early years of the twentieth century, this previously powerful stronghold must have seemed closer to a toothless and gaping void than the imposing barrier that had guarded the Valdorcìa, braced like a hawk on high, ready for action. An attempt is made here to fill something of that void through a consideration of the history of the Company of the Bombardiers and their relationship with a small church with the *titulus* Santa Barbara that was located inside the castle grounds during the first half of the eighteenth century.

According to the *Atlante del Granducato Pianta della fortezza di Radicofani* (which is generally thought to have been drawn up towards the end of the sev-

¹ A. Thomas, *Tracking Female Religious Communities in the Southern Sienese Contado: The Benedictines and Franciscans of Early Modern Radicofani*, in *L'ultimo secolo della Repubblica di Siena: politica e istituzioni, economia e società*, edited by M. Ascheri and F. Nevola, Siena 2007, pp. 199-228.

² M. Ascheri, *Radicofani, terra di frontiera, terra di fortezze*, in *La città fortificata di Radicofani: storia, trasformazioni e restauro di un castello toscano*, edited by C. Avetta, Siena 1998, pp. 63-85: 63.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 68.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 64.

⁵ V. Passeri, *La rocca nel Quattrocento*, in *La città fortificata*, p. 106.

enteenth or during the early years of the eighteenth century) the church of Santa Barbara stood in the middle of an open space on the northern side of the central tower⁶. Orientated along a traditional east-west access, but with its entrance facing east, this structure was somewhat curiously embedded within a larger complex that included a number of unspecified living quarters, as well as an area designated as containing an oven and a cistern. Although listed as the «Chiesa di S. Barbera», in the *Atlante del Granducato*, the same structure was described as the «Cappella di S. Barbara della Fortezza» in a record drawn up in the middle of the eighteenth century by Giovanni Antonio Papi, the last castle chaplain⁷. According to Papi, the church (*sic*) of Santa Barbara was also the seat of the *Compagnia de' Bombardieri*, a military confraternity with a special veneration for saint Barbara.

1. *Santa Barbara in the fortress of Radicofani: three churches with the same titulus*

Rudimentary traces of the church identified as Santa Barbara in the *Atlante del Granducato Pianta della fortezza di Radicofani* still remain, but as this essay will show, this was not the first church with the *titulus* of Santa Barbara to be constructed inside the castle grounds during the early modern period. Nor, it seems, was it the only place in which the Company of the Bombardiers met for their religious celebrations. In fact, a complex series of events lay behind the construction of what in the *Atlante del Granducato* plan was the third church dedicated to saint Barbara. Two other churches carrying the same *titulus* had been erected inside the walls of the fortress three centuries earlier (the first, around 1417, and the second in 1467). As we shall see, these fifteenth-century structures were erected on a completely different site from the later seat of the *Compagnia dei Bombardieri*. Nevertheless, the dedication of all three churches to the same saint implies a clear link between them. There is also evidence to suggest that the bombardiers established an association with at least the second church of Santa Barbara and most likely with the first one as well.

According to the *Rationes Decimarum Italiae*, the three principal churches of Radicofani during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were the parish church of Sant'Andrea, the *pieve* of San Giovanni and the parish church (and later *pieve*) of San Piero⁸. Sant'Andrea is known to have served the parish of the fortified settlement adjacent to the fortress, Castelmorro. According to

⁶ *Pianta della fortezza di Radicofani (fine XVII - inizi XVIII secolo)*: a copy in Rome, Istituto storico dell'Arma del Genio, n. inv. 987; for a picture and bibliography see T. Ancarola, *Piante e vedute di città nella collezione delle stampe dell'Istituto storico di cultura dell'Arma del Genio di Roma (ISCAG)*, tesi di dottorato, Università di Napoli "Federico II", anno acc. 2007-2008, n. 598 <http://www.fedoa.unina.it/2030/1/Ancarola_Storia_Architettura_Citt%C3%A0.pdf>.

⁷ S. Cera, G. Roncaglia, *I documenti del XVI-XVIII secoli*, in *La città fortificata*, pp. 298-345 (Docs. 110, 343).

⁸ *Rationes decimarum Italiae nei secoli XIII e XIV*. *Tuscia*, I, Città del Vaticano 1932 (Studi e testi 58), pp. 122, 125, 127, 129 and II, pp. 164, 165.

eighteenth-century records Castelmorro formed a constituent part of the Radicofani castle complex and was known as the «Fortezza di sotto»⁹. By contrast, San Pietro was located outside the fortress and served the parish of the Borgo Maggiore in the town below. The *pieve* of San Giovanni is thought to have been located inside the castle complex although current research remains uncertain about its precise location¹⁰. Previous archival research shows that a number of other chapels or small churches were constructed in and around the fortress nucleus during the early modern period¹¹. It has been suggested that one of these, a church located in the area known as the «girone» on the north-western side of the fortress, could have served the female religious of Santa Maria, a monastic community mentioned in statutes drawn up for Radicofani in 1441¹². Another chapel described as within the main castle precinct in the middle of the fourteenth century may by contrast have been reserved for the use of the military and other officials accommodated within the castle complex itself.

Angela Lanconelli notes that by the middle of the fourteenth century lodgings for officials of the administration and for soldiers, as well as an arms depot and various other structures necessary for the daily existence of the fortified outpost, had been established in the vicinity of the castle's central tower¹³. These quarters included a kitchen area, cellars, a water cistern and a workshop for the repair of arms and tools, as well as a chapel for religious functions. There is no reference to the date of this chapel's foundation, function or precise location. Nor is there any mention of its *titulus*. However, its location close to the *mastio* indicates that it served the community in the immediate vicinity, rather than parishioners in the lower town or in nearby Castelmorro. In effect, this was the castle's chapel.

⁹ Cera, Roncaglia, *I documenti*, p. 337, Doc. 103.

¹⁰ Thomas, *Tracking Female Religious*, p. 209, and D. Ciampoli, *Radicofani. Fortificazione di confine dello stato senese: inizi secolo XV-metà secolo XVI*, in *La città fortificata*, p. 291; G. Roncaglia, *La fortezza di Radicofani nelle testimonianze grafiche e nelle perizie tecniche del XVI-XVII secolo*, in *La città fortificata*, p. 118; C. Avetta, *Ristrutturazioni e restauro. Un percorso attraverso gli ultimi quattrocento anni della rocca di Radicofani*, in *La città fortificata*, pp. 204-207; Cera, Roncaglia, *I documenti*, p. 330, Doc. 97 and p. 343, Doc. 110, and R. Piattoli, *Lo statuto del comune di Radicofani dell'anno 1255 (frammento)*, in «Buletino senese di storia patria», 42 (1935), pp. 48-65. See also *Toscana. 8: Siena e i centri senesi sulla via Francigena*, edited by E. Guidoni and P. Maccari, Rome 2000 (*Atlante storico delle città italiane*), p. 87 and p. 94, for a reference in 1241 to San Giovanni being the town's first *pieve*. San Giovanni no longer exists. But there is evidence to suggest that it was preceded by an even earlier *pieve*, San Donato. There are references to this *pieve* as early as the eleventh century, see Archivio di Stato di Siena (hereafter ASS), *Manoscritti*, B 36, no. 262, fol. 116r [May 1067] and no. 272, fol. 118r [January 1075]. San Giovanni seems to have continued as the *pieve* of Radicofani until the sixteenth century, when in 1578 the *titulus* of San Giovanni Battista was added to the existing *titulus* of the parish church of San Pietro in the lower town and that church was designated as the new *pieve*. (See G. Casali, *Per una storia urbana del borgo di Radicofani*, in «De strata francigena», 19 (2011) = *Radicofani e la via Francigena*. Atti del convegno, Radicofani 2 Agosto 2011, edited by R. Stopani and F. Vanni, Poggibonsi 2011, pp. 73-101.

¹¹ Thomas, *Tracking Female Religious*, pp. 207-209.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 201-211.

¹³ A. Lanconelli, *La rocca di Radicofani nel Trecento. Note dai registri dei tesoriери del Patrimonio di San Pietro in Tuscia*, in *La città fortificata*, pp. 91-102: 95.

Surviving documents show that many of the structures in the vicinity of the central tower were in need of repair by the middle of the fourteenth century. Indeed, between 1357 and 1360 there are numerous references to work being carried out on the walls and rooves of several buildings that were actually in danger of collapse¹⁴. The deterioration of the castle complex during the fourteenth century was clearly serious, as shortly after the Republic of Siena took possession of the Radicofani fortress in 1411, the decision was taken to construct a completely new military barracks there¹⁵. Over the next couple of years extensive building work was carried out inside the castle grounds, including the demolition and re-building of the pre-existing *mastio*. The following decades saw continuing reconstruction work all over the fortress¹⁶. Of the chapel already existing in the fourteenth century there is no mention. However, it seems likely that this, too, would have undergone repair. It may even have collapsed, for when the builders involved in reconstruction work at the castle during the early fifteenth century received payment for their endeavours in April 1417, no reference was made to any work on a pre-existing chapel. By contrast, Andrea del Massaio, *commissario* (chief official of the works) was paid «per fare compere e per fare la chiesa di Santa Barbara» (for arranging to carry out and to construct the church of saint Barbara)¹⁷.

While the April 1417 record does not specify the precise location of the new church of Santa Barbara, later documents reveal that it was constructed on a hill outside the old castle nucleus, and that parts of this hill were subsequently incorporated into the outer perimeters of the castle complex during the Florentine reconstruction of the fortress in the sixteenth century. The remains of this craggy outpost are still clearly visible in the northern curtain wall connecting the «baluardo di Santa Maria» with the «baluardo di Sant'Andrea»¹⁸. Little is known about this first church of saint Barbara, other than its approximate location. It seems unlikely, however, that it survived for long, for on November 24, 1447, the castle complex experienced devastating damage. Surviving records describe how lightning hit the «torre maggiore» and set fire to the powder supply «ad bombardam» (adopted by the bombardiers), close to the «baluardo di Sant'Andrea»¹⁹. It seems that the bombardiers' dump was completely destroyed, since a record of January 1460 noted that the «munizione», or re-arming of the castle was to be delayed by a month whilst the «apposito magazzino», or necessary new storage area was being constructed²⁰.

Records of reconstruction work carried out in the wake of the 1447 explosion indicate that the first church of Santa Barbara had indeed been damaged, as ref-

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁵ O. Bichi, *Radicofani. Notizie storiche*, in «Bullettino senese di storia patria», 19 (1912), p. 143. See also Passeri, *La rocca nel Quattrocento*, p. 103, and Ciampoli, *Radicofani*, pp. 290-291.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 291-294, Docs. 7-11.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 291, Doc. 6. See also Thomas, *Tracking Female Religious*, p. 207, note 32 for a discussion of the Massaio, the Massaino and the Massari at Radicofani.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 208.

¹⁹ Ciampoli, *Radicofani*, p. 292, Doc. 8.

²⁰ ASS, *Concistoro*, 566, c. 13v.

erence was made in September 1448 to the construction of a new wall «nel passaggio presso al canto di sancta Barbara in giuso verso la piazza de la corte» and «un altro pezo di muro facto da fondamenti seguendo el sopradecto per insino al torricello della guardia» («in the passage way next to Santa Barbara which leads towards the citadel's square» and «another piece of wall rebuilt from the ground and following the above section of wall as far as the guard room's small tower»)²¹. It seems clear from this that the church itself was close to the guardhouse and that both structures were bordered by a common stretch of wall.

According to the Atlante del Granducato *Pianta della fortezza di Radicofani*, the «Arsenale di Munizioni» was by the end of the seventeenth century located along the north-eastern wall of the castle complex between the «baluardo di Sant'Andrea» and the «baluardo di San Rocco». Another area defined as the «Grandi Arsenali di Munizioni» was located close to the central tower. However, a slightly earlier drawing than the Granducato plan reveals that the powder dump had previously been located close to the northern wall²². According to this sketch, the «magazzino dove stava la polvere» (previously, the storage area for the gun powder) was situated close to a church referred to as the «chiesina dello scoglio». The «corpo di guardia», or guardhouse is marked on the other side of the church. Both the «chiesina dello scoglio» and the guardhouse are shown bordered by the same circuit wall. Given the information included in the September 1448 document, there can be little doubt that this was the same wall that connected to the «canto di Sancta Barbara», and thus bordered the first church of Santa Barbara. Clearly, any church constructed on this site must have taken the full brunt of the 1447 explosion. There is confirmation of this in a record of March 1467 which notes that Antonio di Lorenzo di Chele and Tuccio di Tommaso di Francesco di Tucci had been put in charge of a completely new build of «una cappella in sul poggio fuore del cassaro dover era anticamente la cappella di Santa Barbara»²³. It seems that the fortress authorities were still content to place a building where people congregated *en masse* in close vicinity with highly explosive material. A clear link can be drawn between this second church of Santa Barbara and the «chiesina dello scoglio», since previous research has shown that the «chiesina dello scoglio» was on at least one occasion referred to as the «chiesa di Santa Barbara»²⁴. They were, it seems, one and the same building.

Carlo Avetta is of the opinion that this second chapel (or church) of Santa Barbara was the most important of the churches inside the early modern citadel, despite its apparently small size²⁵. According to the 1467 record, the new structure was to be eight *braccia* long and six *braccia* wide – thus a mere eight metres in length²⁶. A record dated May 30, 1699 does indeed describe the existing

²¹ Ciampoli, *Radicofani*, p. 292, Doc. 9.

²² Avetta, *Ristrutturazioni*, p. 206.

²³ Ciampoli, *Radicofani*, p. 295, Doc. 11.

²⁴ Thomas, *Tracking Female Religious*, p. 208.

²⁵ Avetta, *Ristrutturazioni*, p. 204.

²⁶ One *braccio* was equivalent to 3.6 feet.

«chiesina dello scoglio» as «so small that it was unable to accommodate all the inhabitants of the fortress»²⁷. It also seems that the actual site of the church, straddling as it did an outer stretch of the expanded perimeter walls, gave cause for concern about the safety of the fortress itself²⁸.

Previous research has indicated that the «chiesina dello scoglio» was dismantled some time between 1699 and the middle of the eighteenth century. Documents recently unearthed in the Curial archive at Chiusi provide a more precise account of events on the ground²⁹. They also reveal that the Company of the Bombardiers had not only been associated with the second church of Santa Barbara, but that they transferred their seat to yet another church with the *titulus* of Santa Barbara prior to establishing themselves in the church of Santa Barbara outlined in the Granducato plan. Indeed, it seems as if the bombardiers may have been marking time whilst the third church of Santa Barbara was being constructed inside the fortress. One surviving record dating to 1687 notes that the Comune of Radicofani had given the Compagnia dei Bombardieri the site of an abandoned and ruined church, on the understanding that they would restore the building as a chapel under the title of Santa Barbara and San Rocco³⁰. A further record dated 1695 refers to the chiesa di San Rocco e Santa Barbara «di detta Compagnia dei Bombardieri». In this context it is significant that records filed under the «chiesa di Santa Barbara in Fortezza» in the Chiusi Curial archives end abruptly in 1695. The most likely conclusion to be drawn from this is that the second church of Santa Barbara ceased to function at that date. But, as we shall see, some years were to elapse before the third church of Santa Barbara was completed.

It seems that suggestions made during the seventeenth century that the «chiesina dello scoglio» should be reconstructed inside the fortress walls and on the site of an old powder magazine that had been deemed too close to living quarters for safety were adhered to³¹. Indeed, this explains the somewhat unusual arrangement whereby the church of Santa Barbara outlined in the Atlante del Granducato *Pianta della fortezza di Radicofani* appears to be embedded within a block of living quarters, rather than standing in its own independent space. The fact that the decision was taken to reconstruct the «chiesina dello scoglio» at all indicates not only that it had acquired a particular significance, but also that it was still regarded as providing a useful service to the military, by then in complete command of the fortress complex. The third church of Santa Barbara was in effect the new «cappella del castello». It was to this castle chapel that the Company of the Bombardiers returned, only a few decades after establishing themselves in the church of San Rocco e Santa Barbara dei Bombardieri. This was, however, to be something of a swan song, as the new chapel was suppressed by the middle of the

²⁷ Cera and Roncaglia, *I documenti*, p. 330, Doc. 97.

²⁸ Thomas, *Tracking Female Religious*, p. 208.

²⁹ I am grateful to signor Giovanni Mignoni for his kind assistance during my research in the Diocesan archives at Chiusi.

³⁰ Chiusi, Archivio della curia diocesana, *Radicofani*, Faldone 95 B, fasc. 4.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

eighteenth century and the fortress itself evacuated. Nevertheless, records charting that process reveal significant information about the embellishment of the company's final seat in the third church of Santa Barbara.

When Giovanni Antonio Papi drew up his record of events around the middle of the eighteenth century, he noted that Santa Barbara had been damaged following yet another powder explosion on 13 September, 1735. However, the new church had subsequently been restored and had continued to be officiated until a last mass was celebrated in what Papi describes as the «Cappella di Fortezza» on 19 July, 1750. Two months earlier, the total evacuation of the fortress had been put in hand³². Giovanni Antonio Papi for his part was asked to remove all furnishings from the erstwhile Chapel of the Bombardiers and send them to the «Fortezza di Siena». This command was however only partially executed, since Papi records that he held back a wooden sculpture of the *Madonna and Child*, which he refers to as the «Madonna del Castello», and which he claimed had been displayed in the church of Santa Barbara since 1411. This statue, which has been attributed to Francesco di Valdambrino is now displayed in the right-hand aisle of the *pieve* of San Pietro, where it is known as the «Madonna del Camposanto».

A detailed record of Santa Barbara's furnishings is contained in a record drawn up by Filippo Papi (Giovanni Antonio's brother) on January 31, 1747³³. Among the items listed were three paintings described as «quadri diversi», a small alabaster figure of saint Barbara, «una tavoletta con alcuni voti d'argento», a silvered wooden cross and six silvered wooden candlesticks. Such furnishings were clearly in line with stipulations laid down in 1467 concerning the second church of Santa Barbara. According to these, the new church was to be embellished with one altar and figures of saint Barbara and other female and male saints were to be included in the decorations. It seems likely therefore that when the «chiesina dello scoglio» was dismantled during the last years of the seventeenth century, its contents were carefully preserved and then transferred to the new church inside the castle complex. Of the «Madonna del Castello», there was, however, no mention in the 1747 inventory. Yet, from its title, it seems that this statue was one of the most treasured decorations in the erstwhile Chapel of the Bombardiers, if not of the fortress itself. Giovanni Antonio Papi was also clearly determined to keep this statue within the castle precincts, rather than see it transported away to Siena, since following the last mass in the chapel in 1750 he arranged for it to be displayed in the nearby church of Sant'Andrea in Castelmorro, in other words, in the «Fortezza di Sotto».

This was, however, a relatively temporary measure. By the middle of the eighteenth century the old borgo of Castelmorro was in a state of decline and its parish church in need of repair. Before long, the whole area was destined to be replaced by a purpose-built public cemetery. That said, a surviving register of «entrare e uscite» for Sant'Andrea shows that the church was still being offici-

³² Cera and Roncaglia, *I documenti*, p. 341, Doc. 106.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 339, Doc. 104.

ed in the second half of the 1760s, despite numerous references to repair work both on the fabric itself and to the sacred furnishings and vessels³⁴. It seems likely that the church was further damaged by the powerful earthquake that hit Radicofani on October 5, 1777. According to contemporary reports, whole areas of the town were destroyed, including the Tribunal of Justice and virtually all the houses³⁵. The death of Sant'Andrea's curate, Lorenzo Mazzuoli, on 19 February, 1784 seems to have prompted the church's final demise.

A record of September 1786 notes that the church had been suppressed and that the decision had been taken to transfer the *cura*, or governing chapter of Sant'Andrea to the Chiesa della Madonna delle Vigne, a country church several kilometres outside Radicofani on its south-western side³⁶. At the same time permission was sought to construct a cemetery on the site of Sant'Andrea and that a painted image of the Virgin Mary that was much revered by the local population should be transferred to the chapel that was to be erected in the new «camposanto». According to an inventory drawn up on October 2, 1786, it seems not only that this request was granted, but also that part of the church of Sant'Andrea itself was incorporated into the new cemetery chapel³⁷. Of the «Madonna del Castello», there is no obvious reference, but it seems unlikely that the statue was moved to the cemetery, despite the prevailing tendency to refer to it now as the «Madonna del Camposanto». There is furthermore evidence to show that it was not sent to Siena, despite a stipulation in the September 1786 record that all the other sacred furnishings in Sant'Andrea should be sent to the city. Documents recently unearthed in the Diocesan archive in Chiusi reveal that this last vestige of the Chapel of the Bombardiers inside the fortezza was in fact taken to the chiesa della Madonna delle Vigne, where it remained until 1863. On July 2 of that year, the statue of the *Madonna and Child*, which had once more attracted great devotion from the local population, was taken back to Radicofani and placed in its present position against the semi-circular niche of the altar of San Michele Arcangelo inside the *pieve* of San Pietro³⁸.

2. The «Madonna del Castello» and the Compagnia dei Bombardieri

While surviving documents thus throw considerable light on the various sites in which the «Madonna del Castello» has been displayed during the last

³⁴ ASS, *Comune di Radicofani*, 642.

³⁵ L. Caradini, *La posta di Radicofani*, in «L'universo», 44 (1964), p. 21, and Casali, *Per una storia urbana*, p. 86.

³⁶ Chiusi, Archivio della curia diocesana, *Radicofani*, Faldone 94 B, fasc. 8.

³⁷ *Ibidem*. I am grateful to Fausto Cecconi, cultural assessor of Radicofani, for conversations concerning the possible incorporation of material from Sant'Andrea into the new cemetery, confirmed now by the cited archival records.

³⁸ Chiusi, Archivio della curia diocesana, *Radicofani*, Faldone 95 B, fasc. 2. For an analysis of the statue and its recent restoration, see V. Cuozzo, *La Madonna del castello di Radicofani: indagini diagnostiche, conservative e storico-artistiche di una scultura lignea policroma del Quattrocento*. Thesis, University of Tuscia, Faculty of History of Art, supervisor C. Pelosi, academic year 2010-11.

two and a half centuries, the statue's earlier history and the circumstances under which it was commissioned remain unclear. Since we now know that the church in which the statue was displayed during the first half of the eighteenth century had been constructed several hundred years after Francesco di Valdambriano's death, the question must arise: where was the «Madonna del Castello» displayed during the three hundred years in between? Giovanni Antonio Papi's assumption that the «Madonna del Castello» had been displayed in the church of Santa Barbara since 1411 seems at first sight unlikely, the most obvious objection being that the church over which Papi presided as chaplain from 1740 was only recently constructed. That Papi makes no reference to an earlier chiesa di Santa Barbara also suggests that he was not reliably informed about the castle's past history, or the part played by the «Madonna del Castello» in that past. As we shall see, it is possible that Papi deliberately misled the authorities in order to hold on to the castle's oldest and most venerated work of art. However, it seems doubtful that the «Madonna del Castello» could ever have been permanently set up in the first church of Santa Barbara as early as 1411, since surviving documents indicate that that building project was only just beginning in 1417. Moreover, even if construction work had begun at an earlier date, and a secure space had been found for such an image within the new structure, the powder explosion of 1447 and ensuing fire must surely have destroyed any wooden sculpture permanently displayed inside the adjacent church.

One possibility is that the statue was originally commissioned for the *pieve* of San Giovanni. This might explain why it was referred to at a later date as the «Madonna del Castello». However, had the «Madonna del Castello» been originally displayed in the old *pieve* it would surely have subsequently been re-located to the new *pieve* of San Pietro e San Giovanni Battista, rather than being transferred to a small chapel inside the fortress walls. This was clearly not the case. The fact that the «Madonna del Castello» was recorded as part of the furnishings of the Chapel of the Bombardiers inside the castle complex in the mid-eighteenth century opens up another line of enquiry. The hypothesis is raised here that the image was commissioned by the Company of Bombardiers and as such formed an integral part of their religious devotions in each of the several sites in which they apparently assembled.

As evidence presented here reveals, the third church of Santa Barbara was not the only seat of the Compagnia dei Bombardieri. Indeed it seems that prior to the late seventeenth century, the bombardiers had gathered together in a number of different places on an *ad hoc* basis. When drawing up his report of Radicofani and its environs in 1676, Bartolomeo Gherardini recommended that the small church of San Rocco should be handed over to the Compagnia dei Bombardieri, because that company had no fixed point of reference and had in the past carried out its religious devotions «now in one church now in another»³⁹. Gherardini had already noted in his report that the church of San Rocco

³⁹ ASS, *Manoscritti*, D 83, fol. 402, no. 14.

was «destrutta», or derelict. As we have seen, it appears that Gherardini's recommendation was accepted, for just over a decade later the Company of the Bombardiers was established in their new chapel with its double *titulus* of San Rocco and Santa Barbara. In fact, according to a list of expenses drawn up in 1685, the bombardiers not only already owned terrain in the vicinity of the fortress, but were also by that date responsible for the church of «San Rocco ai Bombardieri»⁴⁰.

There is now no trace of the church of San Rocco ai Bombardieri. However, its *titulus* indicates that it was located in the vicinity of the «baluardo di San Rocco», which overlooks the *borgo* of Radicofani on the southern side of the fortress. Surviving records do in fact confirm that the church was located outside the castle complex, since there are references in the nineteenth century to the old Radicofani road «detta di San Rocco» which connected the Porta Romana on the south of the town and the Poggio del Calcinaio to the east⁴¹. There is also evidence to show that the church was still being officiated as late as 1776, since on July 20 of that year, Giuseppe Amerighi and Giovacchino Valenti Santesi «della Chiesa Laicale di S. Rocco» were called in as witnesses in a case of disputed land in the Comune of Radicofani⁴². The Company of Bombardiers was not, however, mentioned at that date. Other surviving records reveal that the church was still administered as late as 1780⁴³. Yet surviving evidence confirms that the Company of Bombardiers had transferred their seat to the church inside the fortress walls several decades earlier. In fact, a record of December 1713 refers to the «chiesa di San Rocco» rather than the «chiesa di San Rocco e Santa Barbara ai Bombaradiieri», indicating that the bombardiers may already have left⁴⁴. Perhaps they had merely been waiting for the completion of the third church of Santa Barbara, so that they could return to what they regarded as their proper and original seat under the protection of their patron saint Barbara and inside the fortress walls.

Further records do indeed confirm that the bombardiers left San Rocco some time before the end of the third decade of the eighteenth century. They also reveal an interesting connection between the castle chaplain Giovanni Antonio Papi, the church of San Rocco and the Company of the Bombardiers. A double-entry register for the church of San Rocco dated 1776 contains an insert in the form of a small, inscribed booklet. According to its inscription, the priest and chaplain Giovanni Antonio Papi had been elected to that role on 30 July 1729⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ Archivio del Comune di Radicofani, 151 (*Istanze e affari diversi. Strade. Fabbriche. Rescritti. Ordini e Circolari dal Novembre 1795 all'Ottobre 1798*, no. 104).

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, *Strade*, 1833, n. 15 (Cantone unico del Calcinaio - Descrizione della strada. Porta Romana presso Radicofani ... fosso dell'Orcia Morta). The «Strada Antica di Radicofani d.a d. S. Rocco» (2), is listed before the «Antica Strada della Madonna delle Vigne» (3).

⁴² ASS, *Comune di Radicofani*, 168 (*Lettere e ordini pervenute al tempo del cessato Governo Francese 1808-1812*).

⁴³ Archivio del Comune di Radicofani, *Debitori della soppressa chiesa di S. Rocco, ed opera di Castel Moro, 1796-1797*.

⁴⁴ Archivio del Comune di Radicofani, *Fogli Sparsi*, 1710-1810, no. 204.

⁴⁵ ASS, *Comune di Radicofani*, 644.

A final entry dated 29 July, 1754, apparently written by Papi himself, notes that the church of San Rocco had fallen into almost complete disrepair, but that it had subsequently been whitewashed and made decent for the celebration of mass. Inside the end cover of the same booklet an entry dated 14 August, 1754, repeats that the church had once more been blessed and that the chaplain Giovanni Antonio Papi had celebrated mass there. Within the main register itself there is a reference to the «Compagnia» or «Scuola dei Bombardieri», dating to 6 August, 1746⁴⁶. According to this, the company was at that date no longer associated with the church of San Rocco.

But, to conclude: the strongest evidence in support of the theory that the «Madonna del Castello» was originally commissioned for the Compagnia dei Bombardieri rests on the fact that the statue does not figure in the 1747 inventory of furnishings belonging to the third church of Santa Barbara, but that it was clearly housed in the church at that date. The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this is that the «Madonna del Castello» did not belong to Santa Barbara, but to some body associated with it. Had the image belonged to a company that merely assembled in the church at that date, it might naturally have been regarded as exempt both from the list of the church's furnishings and from transport away to Siena. Given the peripatetic circumstances of the Compagnia dei Bombardieri noted by Bartolomeo Gherardini, it seems more than likely that the company would have transported precious images and vessels belonging to them to and from each of the sites in which they assembled. Such practice would naturally have protected the company's furnishings in the event of any of their meeting places being damaged, as for example following the 1447 explosion of the bombardiers' powder dump. The fact that the fortress itself had been evacuated by 1750 and that the Company of the Bombardiers was about to be disbanded, if not already defunct, must however have presented Papi with a practical dilemma as to where best to display this much-revered image. There can be no doubt that the company was historically associated with the fortress. The church of Sant'Andrea may thus have seemed an appropriate solution, given its position in the «Fortezza di Sotto». At least there the statue could remain within the old fortress complex. What then, of Papi's apparently impossible claim that the «Madonna del Castello» had been displayed in the church of Santa Barbara since 1411? On the basis of the hypothesis raised here, much hangs on the date at which the Compagnia dei Bombardieri was founded. At the very earliest this must have post-dated the second quarter of the fourteenth century, since gunpowder was generally not in use before 1330. Given Siena's renewed activity in the fortress of Radicofani in 1411, it seems likely, however, that such a company was formed in the wake of that, rather than at an earlier date. If this were the case, the Compagnia dei Bombardieri could have commissioned the statue of the *Madonna and Child* in celebration of their own recent foundation.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, c. 3v.

The «Madonna del Castello» may thus indeed have been displayed in the first church of Santa Barbara and ultimately, as the company's most venerated image, have been transported to the eighteenth-century Chapel of the Bombardiers inside the Fortezza.