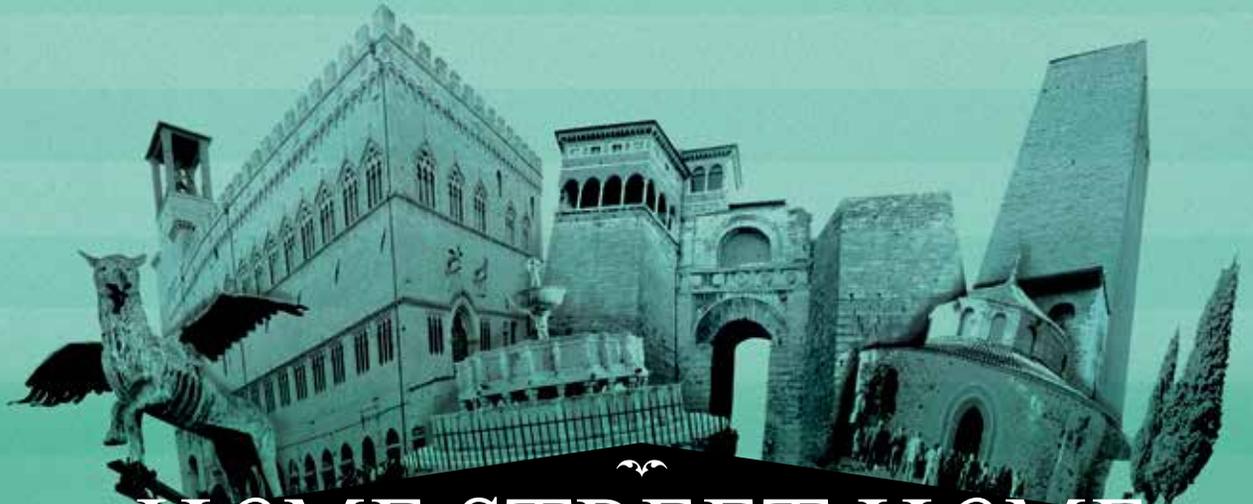


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Maria Rita Zappelli
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HOME STREET HOME
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- Perugia's history told through its streets -

Morlacchi Editore

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- *Perugia's history told through its streets* -

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Opposite, where there used to be, of all things, a car dealership, the new university library now stands; previously it was the Palace's horse riding grounds. Often, the homes of the aristocracy included a space for riding practice (there was also one in front of Palazzo Gallenga Stuart).

Around 1875 the square and the nearby Piazza del Teatro Civico (now both united under the name of Piazza Morlacchi) underwent vast changes, especially on the front side, with the construction of Palazzo Bianchi in Via del Canaletto and the partial demolition of the Church of Santa Maria degli Aratri, which more or less separated Piazza degli Aureli (Piazza Morlacchi) from Piazza degli Aratri (Piazza Cavallotti).

At the end of the road, where a modern building now stands, there used to be another Palazzo, called Coppoli.

VIA BACIADONNE Kiss-The-Ladies Street

Via Bonaccia → Via Imbriani

This strange name is to be found in other Italian cities as well: in Città della Pieve there is an alley which takes its name from the fact that it is so narrow it forces strangers to embrace. The one in Perugia is wider, but discreetly hidden from prying eyes.

VIA BAGLIONA Bagliona Street

Inside the Pauline Fortress

The name comes from the Baglioni family, which made its residence here until the houses were partially demolished to make way for the Pauline Fortress.

A mysterious path leading into the bowels of the underground city, this "urban fossil" was opened to the public in 1983, with the inauguration of the *scale mobili*, the escalators. As Ottorino Gurrieri put it so eloquently in his booklet on the Fortress: "Today, anyone looking at the frescoes by Benedetto Bonfigli will see the walls, the towers and the palaces of medieval Perugia stretching from Sant'Ercolano to Santa Maria dei Servi, and it pains the heart to realize how much of the city has been wiped from the face of the earth, to make way for a fortress destined to be torn down later! But we must stop to acknowledge that, in any case,

the passing of time would have brought all manner of destruction, transformation, renovation, and even if all the buildings had survived they would be quite different from what could be seen at the dawn of the fourteenth century. Towers would have been knocked down or lowered, palaces and houses refurbished, churches ruined by the excesses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—and so, we must leave our regrets aside" (O. Gurrieri, 1956). To continue along this line of thought, we could say that, ironically, the cause of the Baglioni quarter's ruin also insured its survival, and Via Bagliona has lasted longer than the Pope's fortress.

The *Electa Guide* to Perugia gives the following description: "sixteenth-century supporting arches and medieval and Renaissance doorways and windows look out onto the street, which was transformed into an underground passageway inside the fortress. To the right side (coming from Via Marzia), an opening leads to the first tower once belonging to the houses of Gentile Baglioni (thirteenth-century), still proudly displaying all its windows, doors, archways, and a well. [...] An intersection of three roads, bordered by perfectly preserved medieval houses (even the floors are original!), opens amidst walls marked by Gothic arches in travertine stone. Doors open onto interior spaces which, now buried underground, feel like the sets to a ghostly theater. The *cordonata* started here; it was a street leading to the Porta del Soccorso, the doorway which can be seen in Viale Indipendenza, and another road leading up to the lost square called Dei Servi (Of the Servants) or Di Malatesta, where the ancient Church of Santa Maria dei Servi, the Collegio della Sapienza, and the house of Malatesta Baglioni once stood." Just before the crossroads, on the right, a section of the street led to the Baglioni square, basically a courtyard connecting all the family residences. From here, other roads led to Piazza Grande (Corso Vannucci) and to Piazza Piccola and Sant'Ercolano (now Via Baglioni). The latter would have passed by the old hotel called the San Marco, which was so well known that it gave its name to the street. Previously, this area housed an even older hotel, the "Albergo del Re," or "King's Hotel." The San Marco and the other hotels from the fourteenth-sixteenth century ("delle Chiavi," of the keys; "del Leone," of the lion; "della Campana," of the bell; "della Corona,"