

Maria Rita Zappelli



HOME STREET HOME

- Perugia's history told through its streets -

Morlacchi Editore

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

By *Maria Rita Zappelli*

Translated by *Deborah Rim Moiso*
& *Alan Whykes*

Edited by *Zachary Nowak*

Morlacchi Editore

Agostiniano introduced to Perugia the cult of the Image of Mary which moved miraculously from Scutari to Genazzano in 1467” (S. Siepi, 1822).

The final building on the right displays, along with other buildings, a small anthology of sentences sculpted along the lintels in travertine of the windows at three different levels. Along Via Pinella one can read: *Domus sua cuique tetiss refugium Deo adiuvante* (Each and every man’s house is his safest refuge, with the help of God); *Quidquid agis prudenter agas et respice finem* (Whatever you do, act prudently and beware of the consequences); *Per fenestras intrat mors et vita ergo vigila* (Both death and life may enter through the windows, so be alert); and from the Piazza Matteotti side: *Sanctitas in corde* (Holiness in your soul); *Veritas in ore* (Truth in your words); *Iustitia in opere* (Justice in your works).

VIA PINTURICCHIO

Piazza Fortebraccio → Porta Pesa

Previously Via Muzia and Via del Ramerino. Since 1871 the street has been dedicated to Bernardino di Betto (Perugia 1454-Siena 1513), the noted artist who signed his paintings Pinturicchio. A plaque marks the building in which he lived, on the corner of this street and Via delle Volpe.

The street was widened and made more regular in 1888, a project that involved chopping the front off buildings protruding into the street. The results can be seen in the section between Via dello Sturione and Via del Melo.

Via Pinturicchio used to be known for its “funeral agencies,” though now only one urn seller remains. To understand this, it helps to remember that from the mid-1800s on, this street was the route for all funeral processions heading from the center of the city towards the cemetery (inaugurated in 1849); and furthermore, that in the sidestreet of Via del Melo there was the parking area for the city’s hearses. Remaining with the theme, in nearby Piazza Grimana was the Bindocci brothers’ emporium which rented out *torce a calo*: “The use is traditional. The family members of the deceased, in his/her memory, would pay willing persons to walk ahead of the coffin carrying rented torches. The storekeeper, upon return of the torches, would weigh them and bill them for the wax consumed” (L. Catanelli, 1987).

Among other activities on the street were several artisan workshops often in the quarters of the former convent. In the cloister of Santa Maria Nuova, Tilli established a lithography in the early years of the 1900s, and after the Second World War Aretini opened a small factory called “L’Etruria,” which produced ceramics. “More than the Etruscans, those men in their long working clothes resemble old monks as they work away in the old cells of the monastery, mixing clay, putting their feet to the pedal of the wheel, throwing wood into the kiln, and setting out pots and jugs in the courtyard so that they would dry in the sun, which peeped from behind Alessi’s bell-tower” (D. Magnini, 1974).

The ex-monastery of San Tommaso, after the post-unification decommissioning, became in part the home of several small industries such as the Vajani bagmaker and the laboratory, directed by Eufemia Caganelli, that employed the *a fiamma* process (i.e. a hot printing technique) used since the 1400s. From the beginning of the 1900s there was also the educational building, first operating as the Umberto I public school and now as the Ugo Foscolo intermediate school. During the Fascist period it hosted the National Institute for the Protection of Maternity and Childhood (ONMI), a body created in 1925 and dissolved in 1975. There was also the noted after-work pitstop “Barillaro” where, aside from recreational activities, various public demonstrations were planned and “Fascist Befana” packets were distributed (the Befana is a Twelfth Night witch who brings gifts on the feast of the Epiphany).

VIA DEL PISCINELLO Little Fountain Street

Via della Sposa → Via Antinori

At the bottom of the street was the thirteenth-century gate of the same name whence began the Piscinello road, which corresponded to the modern-day Via San Siepi. This road passed through a rural valley called Piscinello, hence it is probable that the street name relates to this toponym, which in turn reflects the presence of water (as with Fonti Vegge, Pescara and Fonti Coperte).

The denomination comes from a medieval fountain (*piscinello*: small fountain) that is still in existence. Above it is a plaque advising: “Garbage