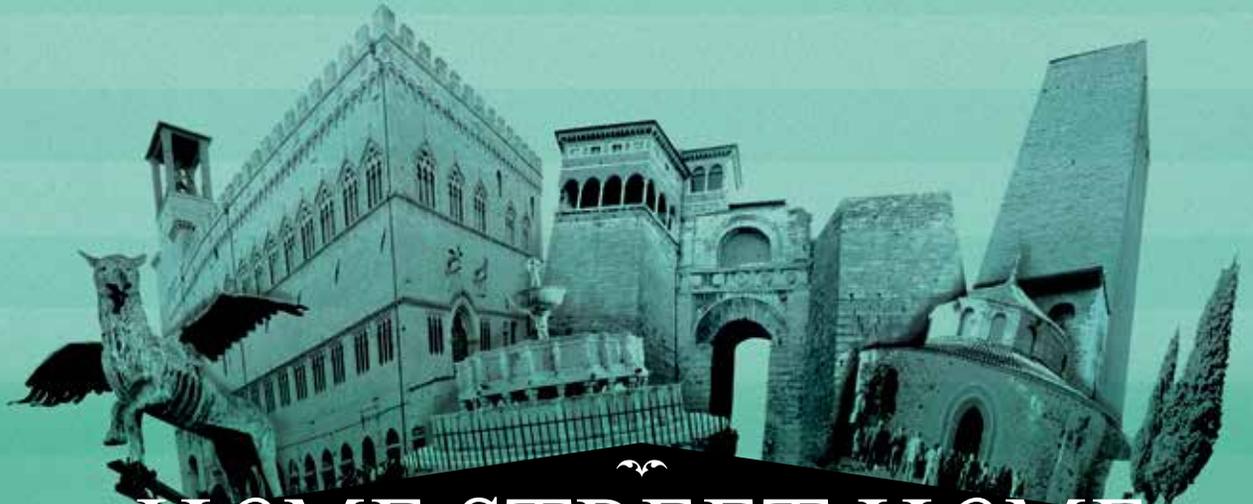


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Maria Rita Zappelli
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HOME STREET HOME
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- Perugia's history told through its streets -

Morlacchi Editore

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

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VIA DEL POETA *Poet Street*

Via Fabretti → Via Sant'Elisabetta

We don't in fact know which poet may have lived here. What remains however is the memory of one of the more prosaic "closed houses" (i.e. brothels), "La Bianca," quite popular and located here until 1958 (when the Merlin Law outlawed prostitution). Another more elegant one was in Via del Prospetto.

RIMBOCCO DEI POLLAIOLI *Alley of the Poulterers*

Corso Vannucci → Piazza Matteotti

Later Via della Chiavica and Via del Mercato.
Today Via Fani.

The street had this name in the Middle Ages for the commerce that went on here was primarily that of poultry, although beef, pork, mutton, lard and salt were also sold.

Gigliarelli, noting items from the *Matricola artis Macellatorum* (Registry of Butchers) cites two butcher shops found at the end of the street: a large one where all kinds of meats were sold that were "very good and well-regarded" in all Italy, and another more modest shop next door selling mutton and lamb.

VIA DEL PORCO *Pig Street*

Via Alessi → Via Augusta

It was not even an alley but in fact a private street. The beginning of it is just past the Ranieri residence and has a metal gate, just as there is one at the other end below, at the top of a flight of steps so narrow that only one person can pass at a time. It ends among the gardens below the Chiesa del Gesù. It was closed in 1848 due to poor sanitary conditions and for the use to which it had been put, considered morally reproachable.

The alley was known for the following anecdote: "The Ranieri, whose residence stood on the piazza beside the Gesù, enjoyed a time-honored right to walk up and down the piazza each morning accompanied by two pigs. At other times these obese messers were to be found in a stall down in the gardens that are still located between the walls at the foot of the 'skyscraper church.' A stub of an alleyway that is now a dead-end once led from the

gardens of the Ranieri to Via Alessi and was called in fact Via del Porco (Pig Street) [...]. Moving up and down the piazza, working harder with their jaws than it is possible to imagine, in less than half an hour they had cleaned it of every herbaceous and leguminous leftover. It was a stroll of obvious public utility for the resulting cleanliness and of further utility to the bearers of this right for they saved on feed for their animals. And so from time immemorial the Perugians had given a nickname to these two genuine assistants to the cause of public hygiene. They called them the 'Little Sirs of the Ranieri Family'" (U. Ranieri di Sorbello, 1970).

LARGO DI PORTA PESA *Weighbridge Passage*

Between Via Pinturicchio, Via Brunamonti, and Via XIV Settembre

The passage has retained the name it was given when a public weighbridge was set up here to weigh loads upon carts entering the city. The weighbridge was actually right next to the customs barrier (no longer in existence) that had been erected near the center of the square. It took the place of a demolished city gate that provided an opening in the section of the wall coming from the San Simone Gate and turning towards Monteluca, exactly between the start of Via dei Cecchi and the corner of Via del Pasticcio and Via Brunamonti. The older gate however was preserved, the so-called Arch of the Tei. It was part of the initial medieval wall that encircled the city prior to expansion along the street leading to Sant'Antonio.

VIA DEL POZZO *Well Street*

Via Caporali to Viale Indipendenza

There is no well to be seen but surely there must have been one here. An Etruscan cistern (300 B.C.E.) was once found in this same area. Originally for public use—Via Caporali was an important artery in the Etruscan street network—it was incorporated during the following century into a Roman *domus*, of which a section of pavement has been rediscovered.

A plaque, placed on the house to which it refers, recalls that the famous Perugian mathematician G. Neri hosted in 1618 Galileo Galilei. Inside this building is an elegant sixteenth-century courtyard.