

## 11. Via dell'Oro and via degli Arienti

The name via dell'Oro (street of gold) is a very old name which was already documented in 1296/97 as *Burgus Auri*. It owes its name to the decision of the city in 1250 to concentrate all of the activities of the refinement of precious metals in this area. The name evolved into Borgo dell'Oro (village of gold). Nearby was the street Borgo degli Arienti, nowadays via degli Arienti, where silver was worked. The guild of metal workers also managed warehouses in via Sant'Alo' and in via Carbonara for the retail and wholesale of coal (*carbone*). They were also responsible for collecting taxes on the tools for weighing materials.

## 12. Via Chiudare

A *chiuvara* or *chiudara* was a drying structure in the form of a large tent or canopy in which were arranged hooks or nails (*chiodi*) from which the name was derived. Wool cloth was hung to dry on these hangers after being dyed. In 1322 there was already a building for the use as a drying room. It was near the current street number 9 and was turned over to the wool trade in 1585. Next to this building was a lawn used in the summer for ball games by college students from the college of Saint Luigi.

## 13. Via Altaseta

The true Altaseta was in reality the parallel street now named via Palestro, but in various texts there was confusion and the two streets were mixed up. The best silk (*seta*) was produced in via Altaseta which took the name from both the high (*alta*) quality and price. The *caldiere* (furnaces) for extraction of the silk from the cocoon of the silk worms were here. The entire operation was situated here, because the canal that crossed the city furnished water power to the factories.

## 14. Via de' Gargiolari

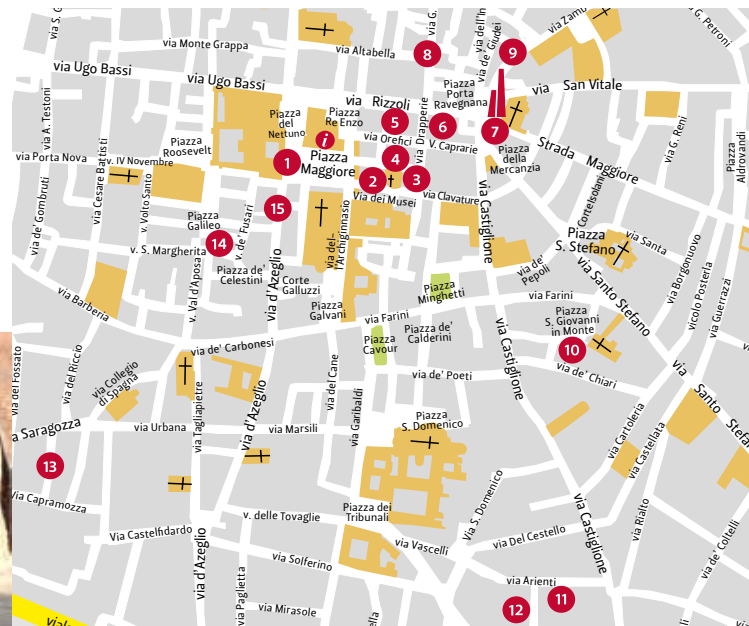
Many workers of hemp (*canapa*), called canepini (or *gargiolari*), that practiced their trade here gave the name to this district. The painter Guido Reni had his studio in this street in 1635 although the exact location is not known.



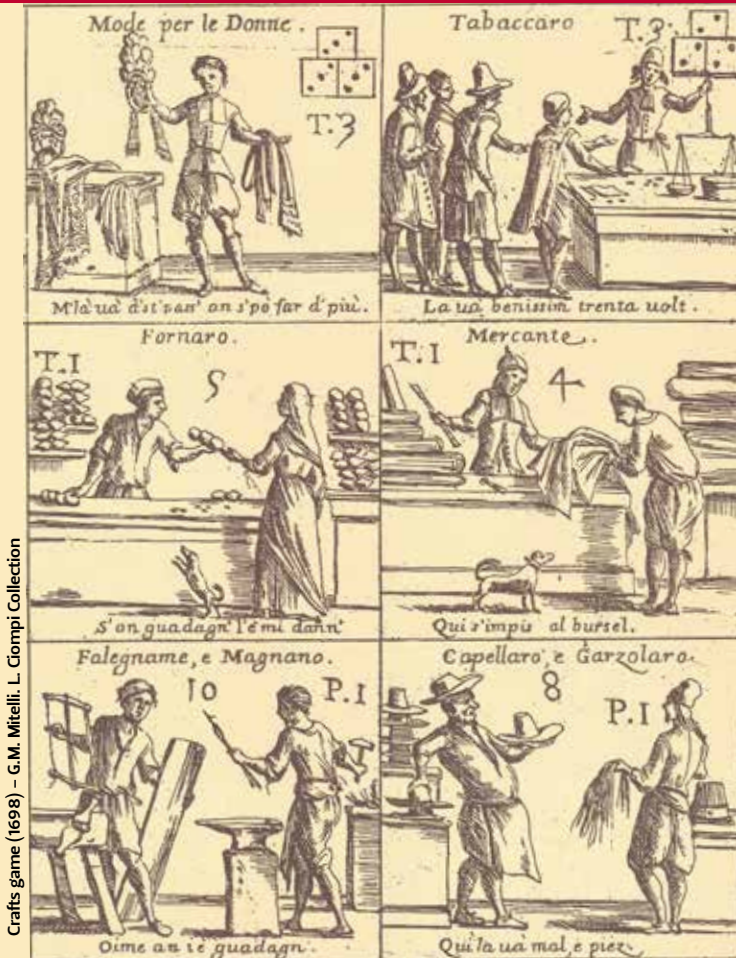
Art and History collection. Carisbo Foundation

## 15. Via de' Pignattari

The name of this street is probably derived from the old kiln for terracotta cooking pots (*pignatte*) and other crockery in terracotta established by Antonio e Giulio Cesare Milioni in 1589 as noted in a formal plea from the inhabitants to the Senate for it to be torn down. Or more likely the name derives from the headquarters of the guild of the kiln workers that by law had to be here and nowhere else.



Crafts game (1698) - G.M. Mitelli. L. Ciompi Collection



# Old crafts of Bologna

The history of Bologna is also the history of its artisans and merchants. The Bolognese exhibited a continuous industriousness as the city developed these important "arts", many of which have by now disappeared.

Palazzo d'Accursio. Old units of measurement



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Piazza Maggiore 1/e

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Comune di Bologna



## 1. Piazza Maggiore

This *piazza* has always been a natural meeting place for trade from Europe, the Middle East and Africa. For centuries up until 1877 there was also a very popular market of vegetables, fruits and fabrics located here and also in the nearby Piazza Nettuno. On the sloping base of Palazzo d'Accursio you can still see the models of the measures used to assure fair transactions in the market. Also in the piazza, from the 12th to the 18th centuries on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August every year the feast of the *porchetta* took place: the elders who governed the city tossed food and coins to the hungry populace and in the thrilling finale they tossed a whole spit-roasted pig (*porchetta*). The guilds (independent unions of craftsmen and merchants) were born in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most powerful of these was that of the notaries who built the beautiful Palazzo dei Notai (Notaries), which was their headquarters until 1287. In the same period the artisans and shops started to gather together in the area of Porta Ravegnana and so were born the streets that designated the trades.

## 2. Via Clavature

The names of some streets reveal the importance of arts and crafts in the history of Bologna. In via Clavature the organization of metal workers had their workshops and probably various shops produced locks (*chiavature*). There was also a famous glassmaker and no shortage of shops for medicinal herbs to serve the nearby Hospital of Santa Maria della Vita. In fact by 1260 there was already the Compagnia dei Battuti which have dedicated itself to collecting charitable contribution for the care and assistance of the ill and pilgrims.



## 3. Via Drapperie

Sellers of wool cloth (*drappo*) had their shops located here. The guild of these cloth merchants was surely the most powerful of medieval Bologna. From its headquarters in the little via Drapperie it not only monitored its own members, who were subject to penalties for violation of its statutes, but also required that those who aspired to work in this trade pass a very difficult exam. In 1486 they constructed their majestic headquarters building called Palazzo Strazzaroli in Piazza Ravegnana. There was also a little churchyard in front of the 14<sup>th</sup> century church of San Matteo degli Accarisi in via Drapperie. Today the façade of the old church is still visible inside a modern bookstore.

## 4. Via Pescherie

In 1286, to create the square of Porta Ravegnana, shops and houses between the Asinelli tower and the church of Santi Bartolomeo e

Gaetano were demolished. The fish shops were moved to the street that took the name Pescherie Vecchie (old fish shops). The activities of the fish mongers as well as those of the butchers were always a source of concern for the civil authorities. The sale of fresh fish was allowed only at Porta Ravegnana to simplify the collection of duties and to control the sanitary condition of the fish.

## 5. Vie Orefici e Caprarie

The street via Orefici was named for some of the most noted workshops of precious metals. It was the result of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century enlargement of Via Rizzoli and the demolition of old constructions including three medieval towers named Artemisi, Guidozagni and Riccadonna which are recorded on a plaque at number 6 of Piazza Mercanzia. Via Orefici changes name to via Caprarie, a name taken from an old word for butcher. The coat of arms of this trade is still visible at nr. 3 and reveals an oddity. The street was once very narrow and was named Ruga degli Scannabecchi, which is a synonym for butchers. Also the Scannabecchi family probably took their name from their trade. The works by Annibale Carracci (1560 - 1609), a local painter, nephew to a butcher, portray that kind of shop.



## 6. Via Calzolerie

This street takes its name from its period as an area of shoe makers and shoe shops. The headquarters of the guild of the shoemakers was on the west side, more or less halfway, at old number 1267. Via Calzolerie was the only small street that survived the destruction of the small streets with business specialties between via Rizzoli and via Orefici. These included typical old streets for the crafts of sword making, sheep shearing, furs, stables and makers of heavy ropes.

## 7. Piazza Mercanzia

In the year 1391, from the Palazzo della Mercanzia, the bell Lucardina (now preserved in the Museo Civico Medievale) was rung to start the historic first meeting of the council of the merchants of Bologna. Inside the palazzo, today the seat of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Artisans, you can admire the 300 coats of arms of the guilds and outside, under the high battlements in front, are terracotta symbols of the crafts.



## 8. Via Altabella

At one time it was called via delle Selle (saddles) where they practiced the trade of horse tack (saddles, bridles, stirrups etc.). Many authorities agree that the current name is associated with the Azzoguidi tower called "Altabella", but the Bolognese scholar Giuseppe Guidicini (1763-1837) noted that the house now at number 10 was called Altabella and the name was probably derived from that.

## 9. Via De' Giudei

The street name makes reference to the former Jewish ghetto that was located here. They were industrious workers in the field of fabrics and silk and operated a very prestigious and historic printing press. After the issuance of the papal bull of 1555, even in Bologna the Jews were confined in a well defined area which was called "enclosure for the Jews" and later by the more common term ghetto.

## 10. San Giovanni in Monte

The headquarters for the guild for merchants that specialized in salt, salted meats, cheese and corn was located here. In 1200 Bologna already had a guild called the Compagnia dei Salaroli for those who worked with pork using salt for preservation. Their symbol was a cup being showered with salt. In 1294 there were 281 shops of these *Salaroli*. Probably these more than others contributed to the legend of Bologna the "fat" with its sausages and *mortadella* celebrated by both Italian and foreign travellers.

