

ATESSA

5) Porta di San Giuseppe

Via Fontane Vecchie, 66041 Atesa CH

The morphology of the old town centre of Atesa is still surprisingly compact and homogeneous, despite enormous irreversible damage caused by inadequate restoration work. Looking at it, Atesa is formed in a spiral shape with its built up districts which wind around the church of San Michele and the Castle, which stand in exactly the same place where the ancient villages named Ate and Tixa, stood and from where Atesa originated. As they joined together the town underwent construction work resulting in numerous churches often accompanied with hospitals or shelters, workshops for craftsmen, convents and elegant villas all defended by a perimeter wall or by wall-cum-houses evenly divided by eight entrances, usually situated by the churches or the chapels and dedicated to the same saint whom the church was named after.

The entrances of Santa Croce, San Lorenzo, Sant'Antonio and San Giovanni, also known as Porta Cannella have been completely cancelled by the fabric of the city, while those remaining and well conserved include the entrances of Santa Margherita (XIII-XIV century) the porticella or Santa Giusta (XIV secolo), the 'Ndriano arch (XVIII century) otherwise known as San Nicola or Porta Ripalta, all situated near churches which are no longer standing. Finally there is also San Giuseppe, named after the adjacent little church which is just outside the walls of the town.

Near the San Giuseppe entrance, originally called Porta delle fonti which takes its name from Via delle Fontane, there used to be a church named Santa Maria dei Raccomandati which was later replaced by the church Madonna della Cintura, with an adjacent hostel for pilgrims, passersby, tourists and the sick.

In its present majestic architectural style with its arch in gothic style dating back to the XI century, and with its pointed, hanging, little arches restored in the XIV century. Porta San Giuseppe retains its ancient charm and its role played in the medieval context showing the damage done both during battle and by human neglect.

Overlooking a rocky surface with a long flight of steps, it is possible to see the valley below and the farming lands where business and cultural exchanges took place with Lanciano and other towns in the Sangro Valley and on the coast.

Abruzzo Audioguide

