



THE OLD TOWN OF ALGHERO

The Old Town is rare and unique. The buildings which are typically urban reveal the various stages of a long, distinct and complex cultural process connected to the political, economic and social aspects of the island. Although the Sardinian historians state that Algiers was founded in 1102 by the Doria family from Genoa, nowadays there are other opinions. Some scholars say the origins go even further back, while others claim they are more recent. It's doubtful that the name Algiers derives from «Alga» - seaweed or even from «Terra Aligeri» - Alighiero's land, and it certainly isn't convincing that it comes from the Arab saying «Al-Gar» - fortress.

1345 is definitely the date of origin of Catalan Algiers. Algiers is still Catalan and this is not only obvious because of the language and the traditions but also because of the monuments which in the Old Town seem to exude their Catalan origins.

Take for instance the two bell towers, the architecture of the cathedral and the church of San Francesco and the Gothic Catalan style of many buildings.

This style which is a reflection of the Gothic French and influenced by Arab architecture is also present in Catalonia and in Spain in general. Algiers like Cagliari shows evidence of this architecture.

We can find portals adorned with lilies, windows with gothic arches, ornamental leaf sculptures, ceramic work and statues of people and animals.

Buildings in this style date back to the 15th and 16th centuries.

The perimeter of the Old Town

Let's walk around the Old Town starting off from the oldest pier.

At the foot of the Bastions of Santa Barbara and Pigafetta we find a semi-tower, an ancient access to the sea and the Tower of Sant'Erasmus where we can see a Catalan crest which is the only one left on the city walls.

Further on we come across the Tower of Porta Terra, known as the Jewish Tower with its war memorial in liberty style.

Next comes the Tower of Sant Joan in Piazza San Francesco from where it is easy to observe the remains of some ancient bastions. Near there is the Tower of Sulis.

Just along from there is the octagonal Tower of Sant Jaume which many historians claim

to be the oldest of the remaining towers. Going along the Marco Polo Bastions we reach a little bell tower and the Tower of Santa Barbara where gunpowder was kept. Crossing the last section of the bastions we come back to the port and going down a flight of stone steps we come to Piazza Civica.