

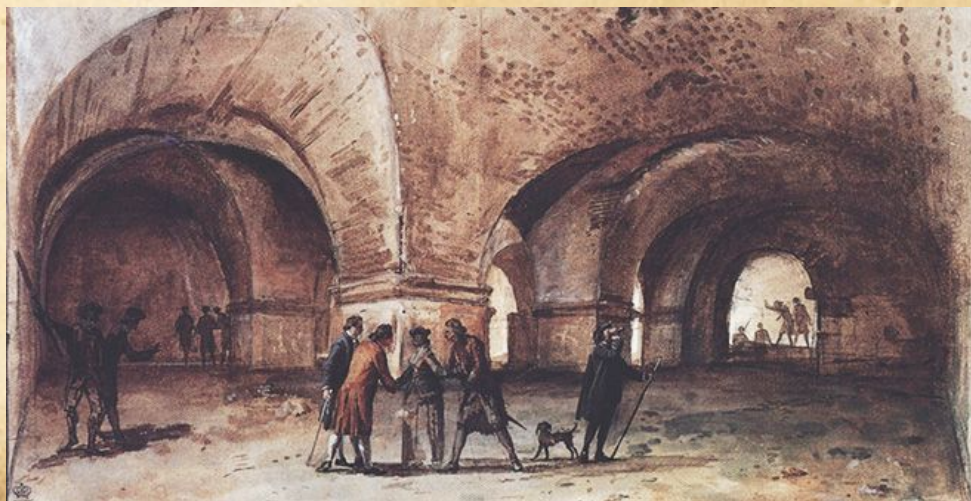


The Achillian Baths



The Origins

The first Spas originated in places where it was possible to exploit the natural springs of hot water or those with particular healing qualities. Over time, especially during imperial age, they also spread within the cities, such as the Achilliane Baths in Catania. The Achilliane Baths were founded in the Roman era, around III B.C. Some historians assume that the term *Achilliane* derives from the name of the builder, or from a statue of the Greek hero Achilles.



The History

The Achillian Baths are one of the most significant buildings of the Roman-Empire age in Catania. The monument was excavated in the eighteenth century by Ignazio Paternò, Prince of Biscari, who in his journey to all the antiquities of Sicily remembers having freed the monument from the earth accumulated there after the earthquake of 1693. He managed to discovery only a part of the large thermal complex of which he had identified traces under the cathedral of Saint' Agatha, under the Seminary, current seat of the Diocesan Museum, and under the Palazzo Senatorio, now the Town Hall.



The History


In the nineteenth century the architect Ittar redesigned the plan, while Adolf Holm, in his work *Catania Antica*, describes as a whole the building of which, in 1856, parts had been discovered under the Seminary of the Clerics and under Via Garibaldi. The part of the building that can be visited today consists of a central room with four pillars on which the vaults are set. At the center of this room there is a basin originally covered with marble, as well as some slabs, in fragments, which must have constituted the flooring of the room.



The functions



Since the times of the ancient Romans the spas have been places of regeneration of body and spirit. For the Romans they were environments that everyone could access with different shifts, for example women could not enter if there were men in the baths. The spas were also important for socialization and mental and physical relaxation. Here everyone could treat their body with water, alternating cold and hot baths, combining them with physical exercise and other treatments.



The Characteristic

The baths has some characteristic:

- First of all the heat, which came from the floor. Under the floor there was an empty space where fagots were burned to heat the rooms and the water in the tubs.
- Another characteristic was,for example, the smell, which came from the wine and perfume that were thrown into the water. The Romans used pumice stone to wash themselves.





Thanks For Watching Us

