



ARETUSA



THE LEGEND TELLS THAT RIVER GOD ALPHEUS FELL IN LOVE WITH ARETHUSA, NYMPH OF ARTEMIS, AND HE TRIED TO SEDUCE HER IN EVERY WAY. ARETUSA INVOKED THE INTERVENTION OF THE GODDESS THAT TURNED HER INTO A SPRING. SANK BENEATH THE IONIAN, ARETUSA WAS TO LEAD TO ORTIGIA.

ALFEO, NOT WILLING TO RESIGN HIMSELF, RELIED TO THE WAVES HIS DREAM OF LOVE: HE RAN THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND TO REEMERGE NEXT TO THE BELOVED IN THE GREAT HARBOR. IT IS THE SO-CALLED EYE OF ZILICA: POLLUTION THAT STILL CAN BE SEEN IN THE HARBOR NEAR THE SPRING. OVER THE CENTURIES THE SPRING HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED; IT WAS OUTSIDE THE CITY'S FORTIFICATIONS AND WAS ACCESSED BY A STEEP STAIRCASE TO THE SEA LEVEL.

THERE STOOD A DOOR, CALLED "SACCARIA" FROM WHICH THE ROMANS ENTERED THE CITY TO CONQUER IT. IN 1540 THE SPRING, WHEN CHARLES V STRENGTHENED THE MILITARY STRUCTURES OF ORTIGIA, WAS ENGLOBED IN THE FORTIFICATIONS. RELEASED IN 1847, THE RESERVOIR TOOK ITS PRESENT SHAPE. THE BELVEDERE NEAR THE SPRING IS WHAT REMAINS OF THE BASTION DEMOLISHED IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.



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