

THE FOUR CHANTS

The “4 chants square” in Palermo is not only one of the most beautiful views of the city. It is a condensed of its ancient and modern history and represents the ideal starting point to know the origins of the Sicilian capital and its oldest districts.

Architecture and works of Piazza Vigliena

The elevations of the four buildings that outline the 4 chants are divided into three different levels. In the first, in Doric style, there are allegories of the seasons, represented by Roman gods Aeolus, Venus, Ceres and Bacchus. In the upper level, Ionic style, there are the statues of four sovereigns. The initial project foresaw that these were modeled in bronze from Scipione Li Volsi. The sculptor, however, made only the statue of Charles V, then moved in Piazza Bologna, and that of Philip IV that instead will be destroyed. The current statues are in marble and were carved between 1661 and 1663 by Carlo D'Aprile. The sovereigns represented are: Charles V, Philip II, Philip III and Philip IV. In the last level, in composite style, there are the statues of the four holy protectors of the respective mandations: S. Oliva, S. Cristina, S. Agata and S. Nymph.

Curiosity

The most important festival in Palermo is definitely that of Santa Rosalia. The night of July 14 the statue of the saint is carried in procession from the Cathedral to the sea. One of the most significant stops is at the 4 chants square, where the mayor of the city lays flowers at the statue of the saint's feet, to the cry of: "Viva Palermo and Santa Rosalia!"

Piazza Vigliena, together with Palazzo Abatellis, is one of the main locations used by the director Wim Wenders in his film "Palermo Shooting".

The Quattro Canti were also the place used for public parties and executions. An ancient Palermo saying reads in fact: "parties and forks in Vigliena Square". For these reasons Vigliena Square is sometimes called also "City Theatre".



