SIXTH STAGE - EUROPEAN TRAIL CORRIDOR E/1

RELEVANCE IRPINIA TREKKING AVELLINO.

BENEVENTAN SECTION.

BOCCA DELLA SELVA (1395 mslm) - MONTE MUTRIA (1823 mslm) - BOCCA DELLA SELVA - FONTANA PAOLA (1190 mslm) - COSTA DEL MONACO - CUSANO MUTRI (475 mslm), end of stage.

Cusano Mutri (BN) is a Borgo of 4028 inhabitants positioned at 475 mslm in a horse ciampa surrounded by the Matese Mountains and open to the valley with a gorge crossed by the Titerno River. According to historians it was the ancient Cossa Sannita, destroyed by the Romans together with Telesia. At the beginning of the 8th century A.D. some Volturnese Benedictines settled there in the Church of Santa Maria del Castagneto, while in the countryside more than a dozen settlements arose. The turning point came with Norman rule, which initiated a phase of urbanization. The local economy was based mainly on sheep farming and the wool industry.

The Old Town still retains all its original medieval charm characterized by winding streets, wide stairways, arches and houses with portals and windows made of local dressed stone. Don't miss a visit to the Churches of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, the oldest in Cusano (550 A.D.), and Santa Maria dei Castagneti (late 7th century), and the 18th-century Palazzo Nobiliare di Santagata. For more than a century there has been a tradition of flowering the streets, squares and churches of the town in June. They are covered with paintings made with flower petals.

The Stage starts from the bar - restaurant in Bocca della Selva, to turn left uphill on a paved service road. After a while you leave out a road on the right and continue on a straight road, at the end of which you win a hairpin bend and so for three more times, until you reach a widening where the road ends. On the right we take, still uphill, a path and, after a while, at a fork, turn right ( on the left the uphill path leads to Serra del Perrone, from where the fifth Stage comes ), keeping below the ridge line and at the edge of the vegetation (Bocca della Selva we keep it on our right).

We continue in this way, climbing gradually until we reach a small saddle where we must proceed straight ahead ( a path starts on the left that descends toward the Cusano Valley ). Proceed for a while and leave the ridge line to deviate to the left entering the beech forest to avoid an unnecessary climb among the rocks and a subsequent descent. You leave the vegetation and cross a small plateau and then climb among rocks, for a stretch, on the ridge line. After this stretch you keep a little below the ridge on the right side, always keeping Cusano Mutri and its valley in view.

You enter a path devoid of vegetation where you follow the trail of cow and horse herds. You reach a depression, which you pass by going around it on the left and passing it between a group of rocks.

Continuing on you come to a plateau, where, on the right, right on an overhang overlooking the whole valley of Cusano Mutri, there is a "Votive Wayside Shrine" dedicated to St. Anthony. After a pause to admire the landscape below and around us, we retrace our steps and head back toward the ridge line that lies just in front of us. We make an arc turning to the right taking the ridge line that heads to the summit of Mount Mutria ( 1823 mslm ), where there is a pyramid of stones and where the wind often swirls hard.

On clear days, especially in the early morning hours, you can see the Adriatic Sea and the Tyrrhenian Sea. After a well-deserved rest, we retrace our steps and descend to Bocca della Selva to begin the Sixth Stage ( those who do not wish to climb to Mount Mutria must take into account the description that starts from this point ).

From the Piazzetta of Bocca della Selva (1393 mslm), the border point between the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento, as well as of the Campania/Molise Region, where you can visit some businesses selling typical local products, as well as the aforementioned bar-restaurant-refuge, the descent to Cusano Mutri begins.

One briefly follows the provincial road toward Cusano, and then, at an intersection, keeps to the right on a small internal road. Immediately after,is meets another small road and continues straight ahead. You continue always on a paved road and turn first left and then right to pass among rows of cottages, disregarding a road to the left and, immediately after, one to the right. You reach Fontana Sparago (1260mslm), which is almost always devoid of water, and pass over the right Molise Aqueduct. Continuing on, one encounters hotel and accommodation facilities.

From here we pass on a dirt road and leave out a detour on the left just before reaching the Paola Fountain (1190 mslm), with three mouths always working. We are right on the rocky part of the apex of the Vallone dell'Acqua Paradiso, just opposite the Borgo di Cusano. We turn a little to the left and make a semi-curve to the right that takes us to Fontana Vertolo (1130 mslm), where, however, it is not possible to get drinking water.

We continue the descent on a brecciata with a fair gradient until we come to a small plateau where the slope softens and where the walking surface becomes grassy. We are at an altitude of 1,000 meters and, after passing a wide curve, we meet a dirt road, on our left, that would take us to the Bauxite Mines . Our Stage, however, continues straight ahead and passing between two large rocks on a brecciata with a good gradient. We pass a section approaching the Vallone with a left turn, a straight section, two alternating left and two right turns, to arrive at a wider bend right at the high beginning of the Acqua Paradiso Vallone.

From here you begin a traverse made a little difficult by the gravel, culminating in a sharp bend to the right, again a small straight stretch and a bend to the left. A long traverse and a right turn. Continuing straight for a while we come to the last sharp bend, where we meet, on the right, a path that descends to the cave of Frà Roberto, while our route descends almost straight. A little further down (780 mslm) we find an aqueduct structure that laterally has an overflow outlet with very fresh drinking water.

Costa del Monaco is a very old mule track that from 600 mslm reaches Bocca della Selva at 1393 mslm. This road structure was for centuries the only link between the two localities until 1973, when the panoramic South Matese provincial road was completed. It remains, for trekknig, a fascinating way to attavers unspoiled places, rich in history and naturalness.

Descending, at an altitude of 631 mslm we meet, on the low passage of the valley, a detour on the left that leads to the old village of Civita di Cusano and the Bauxite Mines. We omit this detour and keep to the right, continuing to descend until we meet a small aqueduct structure and an iron bar with a passage to the right. Continue on a dirt road and pass no less than six detours to the right proceeding straight ahead.

You intersect a municipal road to Contrada S. Leo, from where you meet a grassy dirt road. You turn a little to the right and cross a small wooden bridge over a stream. You pass on a municipal road and leave out two detours to the right to reach an intersection with the provincial road just in front of a bakery-bakery. Here turn right crossing the Contrada S. Felice and omitting one detour to the right and one to the left, to reach the built-up area of Cusano Mutri.

DIFF. E / TRAINED - DUR. h 7 - DIST. km 15,500 - DISL.in ascent mt.485 and in descent mt.1,405. In the opposite direction DISL.uphill mt 1405 and downhill mt 485. Maximum altitude mt 1823.

PRESENCE OF WATER ON THE ROUTE : THREE SOURCES.