SIXTEENTH STAGE - EUROPEAN TRAIL CORRIDOR E/1.

RELEVANCE IRPINIA TREKKING AVELLINO.

CONNECTION FIFTEENTH STAGE.

SANT'ANGELO A SCALA ( 610 mslm ) - RUDERI DEL CONVENTO DELL'INCORONATA ( 1060 mslm ).

THE PATH OF THE CAMALDOLESE MONKS.

Sant'Angelo a Scala is a Borgo nestled at the foot of Mount Vallatrone ( 1517 mslm ). It has about 850 inhabitants. Its name is said to derive from the presence on the site of a Church of Sant'Angelo dedicated by the Lombards to the Archangel Michael. The term scala could be related to the conformation of the surrounding mountains. Worth visiting is the Church of St. James built in 1375 with a bell tower on the left side and in whose interior are the remains of Pope Sylvester I° and the 18th-century wooden statue of Our Lady of the Crowned.

The Camaldolese Hermitage of Santa Maria dell'Incoronata in Sant'Angelo a Scala was consecrated on Sept. 22, 1577, to implement a form of religious life that placed seclusion at the center of every profession of faith. The Hermitage of the Incoronata was the first Romualdine Monastery in Campania. As with the Virginian Order of Montevergine who built an Abbey in Loreto di Mercogliano, the Camaldolese also had their own building in the Borgo di Sant'Angelo for the shelter of the fathers during the long, cold winters.

The route begins at the Sant'Angelo Municipal Headquarters and the Church of St. James, with bell tower and washhouse, where the remains of St. Sylvester I° Pope, which were moved by Pope Paul IV Carafa, were laid to rest.

One climbs a steeply sloping asphalt road until it intersects the variant ( to the left, after about twenty meters one can visit what remains of the winter headquarters of the Camaldolese Palace ), and then keeps to the right and passes alongside the sports field and castle. Continue straight on, descending a little, then climbing back up to a spring under the road.

Here the real historic trail begins. Leave the asphalt and continue straight on a small cemented stone road that immediately climbs steeply with narrow hairpin bends through chestnut groves. Past the last farmhouse the cobblestones end and a dirt road begins. After a tight bend to the right the slope softens a bit and you pass a short straight stretch, at the end of which you leave out a detour to the left and continue keeping to the right. You pass another section with a good slope and in a sharp bend you disregard the dirt road that descends on the right and continue by turning left. After a short traverse you come to another sharp bend, where you disregard a detour that descends to the left and turn right. The contour turns thin out a bit, but the gradient is still challenging.

You pass two easy hairpin bends and a third very narrow and steep one, then proceed for a short stretch almost level and meet another wide one to the left.

Another easy traverse and bend to the right, where a small statuette of Our Lady has been placed in a rock niche and where you should disregard a detour that descends slightly to the left. Last hairpin bend to the left and short straight stretch that brings us to a crossroads. On the right, uphill no, while on the left slightly uphill you can reach a viewpoint over the Sabato Valley and the Caudina Valley ( in this case you have to retrace your steps to reach your destination), while, with a slight detour to the right, slightly downhill, you go to the ruins of Incoronata.

At this point it is obligatory to mention a description of the place made ten years after the consecration of the Monastery by Luca Ispano, historian of the Camaldolese Congregation:

"having reached the summit of the mountain, a wide, pleasant and straight street opens up leading to the door of the hermitage. At the entrance, in the midst of a small square, which on the right has the rock cut off, on the left a strong wall, opens before the eyes the magnificent temple of St. Mary : certainly it is not sumptuous, but fabricated of solid structure and of such greatness, that greater should not be desired in that solitude. After all this, there stretches towards the West a spacious field in which are laid out in the hermitic custom, some solitary little houses, one separated from the other, and which are the most beautiful and most comfortable that one has in any of our other hermitages."

Along the driveway we come across a series of centuries-old beech trees that lead us to the Ruins of the Monastery of Our Lady of the Incoronata, with its mighty series of living stone arches. This concludes the Junction with the Fifteenth Stage, which comes from the FIE Toppo del Monaco Refuge and continues to the Sanctuary of Montevergine and Avellino.

DIST. km 6 - DUR. h 2.30 - DISL.in salita mt 410 - DIFF. E.

In the opposite direction DISL on descent mt 410. DUR h 2. Max point mt 1090 Belvedere.

PRESENCE OF WATER ON THE ROUTE : ONLY AT THE START.