NINETEENTH STAGE - EUROPEAN TRAIL CORRIDOR E/1.-

RELEVANCE IRPINIA TREKKING AVELLINO.

AVELLINO ( 336 mslm ) - GROTTA DI SAN MICHELE ( 853 mslm ) - CONTRADA ( 420 mslm ) - CANALE ( 516 mslm ) - FERRARI ( 380 mslm ) - SERINO ( 423 mslm ).

The stage begins at the Church of S S Rosario in Avellino and proceeds along Via Zigarelli, crosses Corso Europa and descends, still along Via Zigarelli, to the Fenestrelle stream. It crosses the bridge over the stream and turns right, going up its orographic right bank for a short distance. After a while you leave the creek and proceed straight on a slightly uphill cross-country road.

At a bend you pass by a riding stables and face a section with a good incline. You leave out a detour to the right and continue straight ahead. At a subsequent bend you keep to the right ( no left ), and, on a slight descent, you proceed through beautiful hazel groves. On the right you begin to admire a beautiful view of the Avellino Valley, with the background of the Partenio mountain range, with the foothill towns of Monteforte Irpino, Mercogliano, Ospedaletto d'Alpinolo and Summonte.

The small road continues among hazel groves, passing by cottages and groups of houses. One must ignore small detours that go into private properties. One proceeds with slight ups and downs, always with the Partenio in view on the right. You disregard a paved road that descends on the right and, subsequently, another one that climbs on the left. From here you descend slightly, then climb to reach a crossroads . Proceed leaving out the road on the right downhill and the one on the left uphill and continue straight ahead. Another small stretch downhill and you come to the small square of Contrada Bagnoli.

Here you proceed straight ( no left uphill and no right downhill ). After a descent and an ascent, you leave the main road and take another inter-purpose road to the left that is subservient to several farmhouses. You continue through hazel groves proceeding uphill. You pass the Acqua del Paradiso spring and, after two hairpin bends, turn left ( small semi-fallen wall structure ),and then turn immediately right on a track through a pine forest.

You come to intersect a dirt road and turn left slightly uphill. You come to a fenced private property and turn right around it to resume the dirt road keeping to the right. After a while you come to a fork in the road, turning left downhill you can reach Contrada directly, while turning right you can climb up, on the historic trail, to St. Michael's Cave. This section is a bit challenging because of steps, shaped rocks and a good slope. In the last part you have to overcome some hairpin bends. This leads to the small church dedicated to the saint on Mount Faliesi at 853 mslm.

Continuing for another short stretch after the small Church, we find, on the left, a large rock with a cross and, after two narrow hairpin bends, a walled structure with an entrance arch and bell protecting the ancient cave ( it is dated in 667 A.D. ) dedicated to St. Michael by the Lombards after their victory over the local populations.

After seven laps around the small altar and a well-deserved rest you retrace your steps back to the Church and begin the descent, keeping to the right with respect to the finish side. You face a somewhat challenging section on a sloping and narrow path that is a bit slippery both when wet and when dry, as the ground is almost rockless.

In the descent, you always keep the plain of Forino and Contrada in sight, passing several hairpin bends without the presence of detours, until you intersect a dirt road, where you keep to the left. After a while you come to a fountain and, soon after, the dirt road ends and you switch to an asphalt road. Continue past five hairpin bends until you reach the industrial nucleus of Contrada, which you cross, still on a paved road, and then continue straight ahead passing behind the Sports Field.

After another short stretch we arrive in the built-up area of Contrada. We cross the SS 88 and a parking lot and, immediately after, turn left. to cross the Historic Center of the Village.

The place name Contrada derives from the late Latin " REGIS CONTRADA " , i.e., road of inhabited place, as connoted by its location along the ancient road of the TWO PRINCIPATES, which connected Beneventum to Salerno. It has a population of 3049 and is located at 420 mslm. Worth visiting is the Church of the Carmine with its ceiling decorated with two tempera-painted panels representing one the Assumption and the other the Madonna del Carmine and with a 1709 canvas by Solimena inside, depicting the Madonna and Child. The Church of St. John the Baptist, in Baroque style,. The Church of St. Anthony, of 18th-century origin, and the De Mansis Casale Ospedale mansion, from the second half of the 17th century.

Continuing on, you enter the SP leading to Banzano and follow it for about 1,500 meters, then leave it by turning left, still on asphalt but on a secondary road. At a bend you leave out a srada on the left and proceed straight for another 1,000 mt. This brings you to the end of the asphalt, right at the entrance to an Agriturismo ( on the left), where you have to continue straight, on a dirt road, to cross the Bosco di Materdomini (chestnut grove).

You leave out two detours on the right and, having reached the municipality of Aiello del Sabato, you enter another provincial asphalt road, keeping to the right. After about 500 mt you disregard a detour to the left and proceed straight ahead, as at the intersection of two other roads, the first to the left and the second to the right. In 100 mt ,after a bend to the left, leave the paved road and turn right onto a dirt road.

You thus descend to the hamlet of Canale di Serino. We come out on a paved road and turn right to reach the historic center, where we meet the Mother Church dedicated to San Lorenzo, from the 16th century, with inside a painting by F. Guarino from 1636, depicting a Deposition and a painting by A. Solimena, from 1704, depicting the martyrdom of San Lorenzo. Next to the church there is also a beautiful three-jet fountain. You can also visit the Pelosi Oratory, an ancient aristocratic chapel built by the Pelosi family in 1475 and dedicated to St. Vincent, a rare example of Baroque art.

At the height of the Mother Church we turn left onto a historic dirt road that takes us to the other hamlet of Ferrari, where we can visit the Church of San Giovanni from 1683, which has , on the facade, a large bell window and a stone portal with a triangular pediment, and the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, founded in 1588, which has a simple gabled facade and a single room inside.

You cross the central Piazzetta and then turn right to pass, first under an SA/AV highway overpass and then over the railway line. At the next junction you keep right and disregard two other detours to the right and two to the left, to reach the Historic Center of Serino, Stage Headquarters.

DIST km 24 - DISL. uphill mt 851 and downhill mt 764 - DUR h 8 - DIFF E.

In the opposite direction DISL. uphill mt 764 and downhill mt 851.

Maximum altitude mt 853.

WATER ON THE ROUTE: YES.