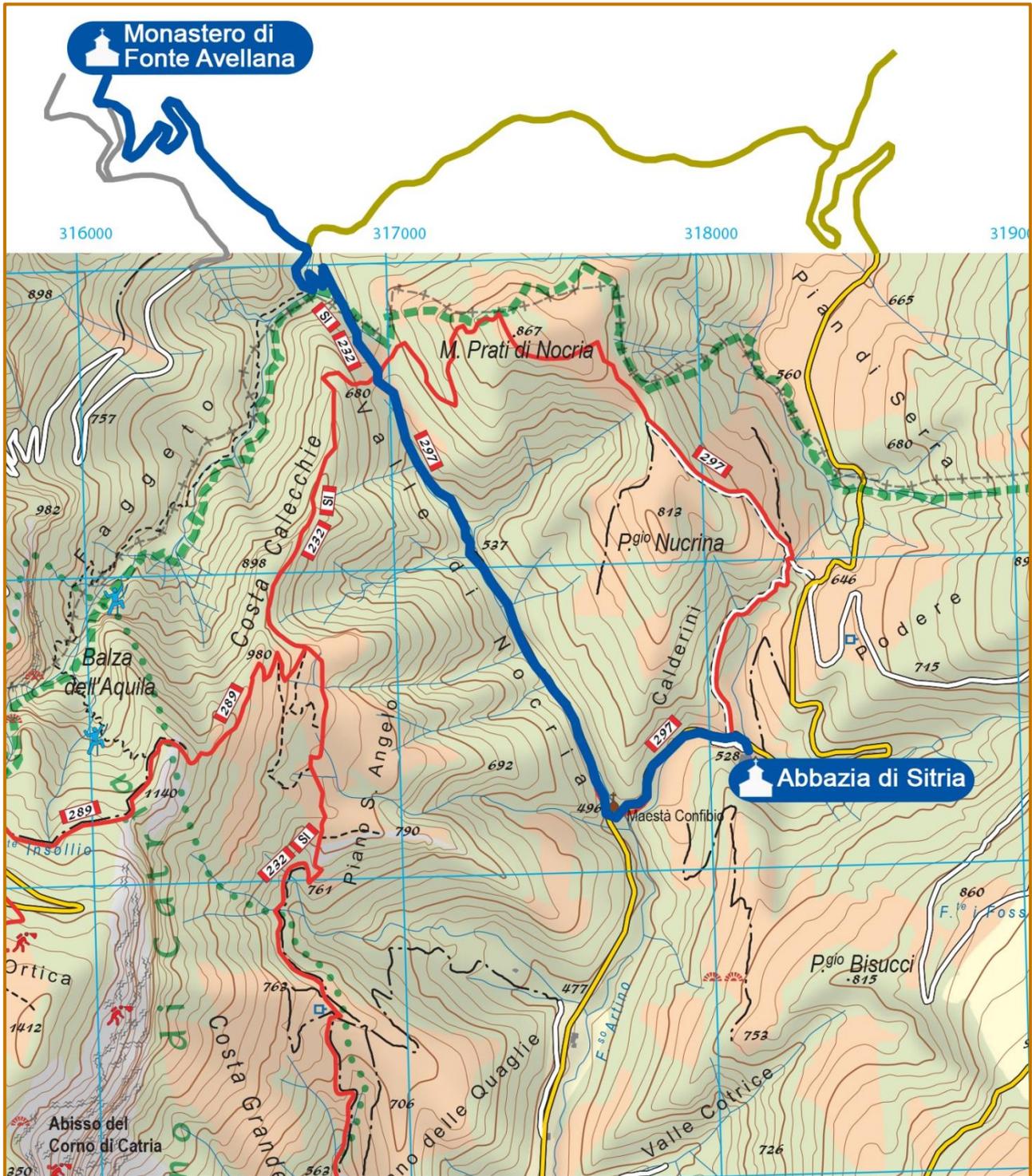


6

FROM BADIA DI SITRIA TO FONTE AVELLANA



6. FROM BADIA DI SITRIA TO FONTE AVELLANA

“Nature, history and spirituality”

(TRAILS N. 297 - 232)

Lenght: 10 km, round trip

Difference in elevation: 360 m

Time: 3 hours there and 2 hours back

Difficulty: E

Drinking water available: yes (Badia di Sitria and Fonte Avellana)

The trail leading from the Abbey (Badia) of Santa Maria di Sitria to the monastery of Fonte Avellana can be reached via the S.S. Arceviense: when you come to the little village of Isola Fossara (a hamlet of Scheggia and Pascelupo), continue to Serra S. Abbondio in the narrow valley of the River Artino where Abbey of Sitria stands approximately 1.5 km from Isola. You can park here. Turn back from the abbey down the road towards Isola Fossara along Trail 297, marked by blue and white waymarkers. At the bridge where the waters of the Fosso Nocria join with those of the Artino (at Maestà Confibio), turn right at a little roadside shrine and walk back up the Fosso Nocria. The trail leads first to a clearing full of broom, blackthorn, field roses and brambles. Then enter the coppice, where shade-loving plants

predominate, such as manna ash, hornbeam, hazel and cornelian cherry, and grow in the shade of downy and Turkey oaks. This type of vegetation offers food and shelter for many species of animals. In fact, the majority of plants here produce fleshy fruit (blackthorn, cornelian cherry, field rose and brambles), much loved by the birds and numerous other vertebrates. When you reach the pass that marks the boundary between the Region of the Marche on peak-top meadows, you'll find splendid views stretching before you: to the south, the valley is covered with lush vegetation of mainly coppices, whereas to the north you can admire the monastery of Fonte Avellana in the distance, surrounded by woods of chestnut, holm oak, maple and beech trees, which transform into a kaleidoscope of autumn colors,

Roesel cricket



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as there are so many different species.

The different environments appear to be pieces which fit snugly together in an extraordinary mosaic. Also of special interest is the vegetation along the river banks, home to numerous species



Abbey of Sitria with Corno of Catria

of insects that make up the base of the food pyramid for the woodland and river ecosystem. In fact, the survival not only of the titmouse, wren, chiffchaff, shrike, horned owl, but also of hedgehogs, moles and shrews is guaranteed almost exclusively by the presence of these insects.



Tricopter Limnephilus lunatus



Scops owl

In some stretches, the trail crosses streams, which supply the water for the river Artino, especially in winter. These little streams are populated by crustaceans, amphibians and macro-invertebrates (stoneflies, mayflies and caddisflies): extremely delicate, environmentally sensitive organisms.

Descend the opposite slope towards Fonte Avellana on Trail 232 as far as the River Cesano, where there is a long climb along the paved road to the hermitage of Fonte Avellana.

The variety of environments, colors, sounds and forms of life present and the continuity between the different ecosystems provide these places with the same fascination, which has guided pilgrims and travellers in search of spirituality over the centuries.

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Monastery Fonte Avellana