

**LATINA - TOR TRE PONTI - BORGO FAITI – MESA - MAZZOCCHIO -
BORGO VODICE - BORGO HERMADA - BORGO SAN DONATO – PONTINIA
- LATINA**

(Length: about 70 km. The Reclamation of the Pontine Marshes) LATINA was founded in 1932 and appointed provincial capital in 1934. Its places of interest include the municipal offices (Palazzo Comunale), finance buildings (Palazzi Finanziari), the tribunal, the cathedral of San Marco, the government building (Palazzo del Governo), the national organization of war veterans building (Palazzo dell'ONC), the post office, the Opera Nazionale Balilla building and the ONMI building. Also worthy of a visit: Duilio Cambellotti Museum, the Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, the Numismatics Museum, the Medals Museum, M. Valeriani Museum of Etching and Photography, the Museum of the Pontine Marshes, B Podgora Museum of Sessano 1950 and the Municipal Antiquarium (Procoio in Borgo Sabotino). From an archaeological point of view, the most important area in Latina is the district of LE FERRIERE (near BORGO MONTELLO) from which important ruins of the Italic city of Satricum, including remains of the Temple of Mater Matuta, were excavated. Heading towards LATINA SCALO, at the intersection with the SS 7 (Via Appia) there is an epitaph dedicated to the reclamation work promoted by Pope Pius VI. On Via Appia southwards through TOR TRE PONTI, the Roman *mutatio* (a station at which riders could change their horses) from whence the Decennovium road commenced, to BORGO FAITI (in which there is a fine historic exhibition focusing on the Piana delle Orme), where Saint Paul encountered the first Christian communities on his way to Rome (known as the FORUM APPII), it is possible to reach MESA, another important *mutatio*. Of interest in Mesa is a farm house built by Pope Pius VI in 1780, whose entrance is decorated with epigraphs recording Emperor Theodoric's attempts to reclaim the land between 507 and 511 and two military columns confirming the re-paving of the Decennovium road by Trajan. Not far from the farmhouse lies the Mausoleum of Clesippus. Taking a number of secondary roads through BORGO HERMADA and BORGO VODICE, both established following the land reclamation, it is possible to reach PONTINIA, one of the new cities created as a result of the land reclamation scheme. Among the various neoclassical buildings are the municipal offices, the church of Sant'Anna, the carabinieri barracks, the cinema, the

hotel, a number of schools, the aqueduct tower and the Casa del Fascio which now houses the Museum of Malaria. Taking the SS 148 from Pontinia we reach BORGIO SAN DONATO, another town dating from the land reclamation, and we may return to Latina via the SS 148 or continue south on the Via Litoranea to Sabaudia.

LATINA – CAPOPORTIERE – LAKE FOGLIANO – LAKE CAPROLACE - LAKE PAOLA - S. FELICE CIRCEO - FONTE DI LUCULLO – SABAUDIA - LATINA

(Length: about 70 km inside the Circeo National Park). Heading towards the coast from Latina to Capoportiere, and then taking the coast road (Lungomare) southwards it is possible to reach the entrance to CIRCEO NATIONAL PARK, an area of great beauty and delightful peace and quiet. The coast is characterized by two distinct natural features: a series of coastal dunes and Fogliano coastal lake. The entrance to the park – and the Villa Fogliano - is at the intersection between Via del Mare and the Lungomare. The Lungomare also runs past three other coastal lakes (Lake Monaci, Lake Caprolace and Lake Paola (also known as Lake Sabaudia)) which, together with Lake Fogliano, are fundamental resting places for migratory birds. Continuing along the coast road, at Rio Martino it is necessary to head inland as the road is closed to traffic for 3 km in order to allow the passage of a small river. The coastal road can nevertheless be followed on foot. From Borgo Grappa it is necessary to take Via Litoranea for 2 km in order to reach the first right hand turning back to the coast. Flanking Lake Caprolace and Lake Paola, the Via Litoranea eventually leads to the foot of the northern slope of the Circeo Promontory, Quarto Freddo, which is covered with a thick Mediterranean woodland. Of considerable historic and archeological interest is the 16th century Torre Paola, a tower erected in order to defend the Roman port and channel which connect Lake Paola to the sea. Approximately 4 kilometres after Torre Paola, a winding road climbs the hill to SAN FELICE CIRCEO (98 metres above sea level), a seaside town of ancient origins mentioned in the story of Ulysses who was lured to these shores by the Witch Circe. The town centre is entered via an arched gate. Inside the city wall there is a 13th century Templars' Tower (Torre dei Templari) and a baronial palace (which now houses the municipal offices and a permanent exhibition focusing on Homo Sapiens and Habitat). The narrow lanes of the town centre are lined with shops, bars and boutiques. Three roads lead out of San Felice Circeo: one to Crocette and the Circeji Acropolis; one which follows the coast southwards to Quarto Caldo (Via del Faro) offering splendid views as far as the Pontine islands; and one which leads to the sandy beaches which line the coast as far as Terracina. Proof that the area was inhabited in prehistoric times can be found at the Neanderthal Hotel, in whose Guattàri Grotto (which can be visited on appointment), archaeologists found a 50,000 year old human cranium, and in the various grottoes lining the coastline (including the Grotta delle Capre, which can only be visited by boat together with an authorized guide). The religious buildings of note in the town of San Felice Circeo include the

church of S. Maria degli Angeli which houses one of the six authentic reproductions of the Turin shroud in its Sindone sanctuary, while approximately one mile offshore, at a depth of 18 metres, lies a Statue of Christ. Leaving San Felice Circeo on the coast road and heading inland to Fonte di Lucullo, it is possible to visit a delightful oligomineral water spring which flows through a Roman grotto in the middle of a wood while in the village of Palazzo it is possible to take a guided tour (information at Circeo National Park Visitors' Centre) of the Villa of Domitian, a splendid Roman imperial coastal villa located in the heart of the Circe Forest in Circeo National Park. With the exclusion of a few reserved areas, the park can be explored freely by visitors throughout the year. Further along the coast road lies the town of SABAUDIA, a seaside resort which is also home to Circeo National Park Visitors' Centre and Museum. Another fine documentation centre is the Claudia Ortese School and Marsh Health Centre at Lestra Cocuzza. Inaugurated in 1935, the town of Sabaudia offers many fine examples of rationalist architecture such as the municipal offices, the former Casa del Fascio, the hotel, the former barracks, the post office, the ONMI (Opera Nazionale Maternità ed Infanzia) building, the cinema and the naval barracks (Caserma Piave). The religious buildings of note include the church of Annunziata, whose Royal chapel was donated to the church by Queen Margherita, and the Sanctuary of Sorresca which stands on a peninsular in the lake. Other places of interest in Sabaudia include the Marcello Zei Civic Museum of the Sea and Coast, the Emilio Greco Museum and the Decorated Divine Comedy Exhibition. Before returning to Latina, it is worth stopping at Ponte Giovanni XXIII, on Sabaudia Lake, in order to view the Circeo Promontory in all its splendour.

TERRACINA - CAMPO SORIANO – LAKE FONDI - MONTE SAN BIAGIO – VALLE S. VITO – LENOLA – FONDI - SAN PUOTO LAKE - LAKE LUNGO - TERRACINA

(Length: about 60 km. The Fondi-Monte San Biagio plain and the Ausoni and Aurunci mountains). Located at the foot of the Ausoni mountains on the border between the Pontine and the Fondi plains, the town of Terracina stretches over approximately 15 km of coastline between the Circeo promontory and the town of Gaeta. Originally settled by the Vulsci (Anxur), the area has been inhabited in various ages, evidence of which is clear in Piazza del Municipio; the Roman ruins of the Emilian Forum, the ancient Via Appia, the Theatre and the Capitolium are juxtaposed with medieval buildings such as the cathedral of S. Cesareo, Palazzo Venditti, Torre dei Rosa (now home to Pio Capponi Civic Archeological Museum) and, further afield, Frangipane castle, the 18th century Palazzo Braschi (built by Pope Pius VI) and Palazzo della Bonifica. Proof of Roman presence in the area can also be seen in the shape of the Pesco Montano, cut by Emperor Trajan in 312 BC in order to let Via Appia through to the sea, as well as the Roman Port, the Severian Port and, on Mount Sant'Angelo, the hillside dominating the town, the Temple of Jupiter Anxur (4th century BC). The religious buildings of interest in Terracina include the church of San Salvatore, the church of Purgatorio and the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Delibera. Behind the town, at approximately 300 metres above sea level, lies the Camposoriano, a natural monument characterized by a series of spectacular rocky spires. Taking the SS 7 Via Appia out of the town across the intersection with SS 213 Via Flacca, it is possible to flank Lake Fondi, a coastal lagoon connected to the sea by the Canneto and Sant'Anastasia channels, while the Epitaph Tower (Torre dell'Epitaffio), a Roman burial chamber whose marble stones mark the southern perimeter of the Papal State, lies prior to the strip of "no man's land" which heralded the commencement of the Kingdom of Naples at Portella (Monte San Biagio). Two kilometres after Portella, a left hand turning leads to MONTE SAN BIAGIO, a small village located on a spur of Monte Calvo. Clustered around the slopes of the mountain, the lanes and stairways of the village all lead up to the castle (closed to the public) which dominates the houses below. Almost in the middle of the village, the church of S. Giovanni Battista conserves a 16th century triptych by Cristoforo Scacco, while the other religious buildings in the village include the tiny church of Madonna della Mercede, the church of S. Rocco and the church of Madonna della Ripa. Returning to Via Appia, at Vallemarina it is possible to see the ruins of a number of Roman tombs, including the mausoleum of Emperor Sergius Sulpicius Galba who was born in the village. A few kilometres to the left of Monte San Biagio lies the Valley of San Vito, an area of particular natural beauty and home to the tallest cork wood in Italy.

Returning once again to Via Appia, at Fondi, we take the turning for LENOLA (425 metres above sea level), a village which, surrounded on three sides by the Ausoni mountains, is said to have been established 1500 years before Christ on one of the main migratory routes over the valley of the River Liri and the Fondi plain. Surrounded by a city wall, the village occupies the upper part of the hill which is straddled by numerous streets, lanes and stairways all leading to the baronial palace at the top of the village. Among the places of interest in Lenola are the church of San Giovanni Evangelista, the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, the church of Santa Croce and the church of the Benigne Grazie as well as the Sanctuary of Madonna del Colle in which there is a highly venerated image of the Virgin and Child. The sanctuary can also be reached via the delightful Scalinata della Pace staircase which is decorated with mosaics and bass-reliefs. Returning to Via Appia, the next place of interest along the coast is the ancient town of FONDI which stretches from the slopes of the Ausoni mountains to the sea and extends over approximately 10 km of coastline. (FONDI-LIDO). Certainly of Italic origin, as testified by the cyclopean walls, the town flourished in Roman times and, indeed, is still laid out according to a cardus-decumanus plan. The cultural and architectural features of the town include the Castle (with Civic Archaeological Museum), Palazzo del Principe, St. Peter's cathedral, the Jewish quarter and the 15th century church of Santa Maria Assunta, while outside the city walls are the church of San Francesco and, at the northern entrance of Via dell'Appia, the tiny church of Madonna del Soccorso. Other places of interest include the ruins of the abbey of San Magno, and, on Mount Arcano, the tiny Sanctuary of Madonna della Rocca. Just to the west of Fondi it is possible to visit the Natural Monuments of Lake Fondi and the Mola della Corte-Settecannelle. Heading out of Fondi towards Sperlonga, at the turning for SS 213 Via Flacca, we go along San Puoto Lake, a Carsic lake fed by underwater springs.

SPERLONGA – ITRI – CIVITA SANCTUARY– CAMPODIMELE – SPERLONGA

(Length: about 60 km. Between the sea and the Ausoni and Aurunci mountains). Located on a rocky spur of Colle S. Magno, SPERLONGA is an ancient fishing village and a famous seaside resort whose centre is typically Mediterranean in appearance, with white houses, tiny lanes and stairways descending the steep cliff directly to the sea. Proof that the area was occupied in Roman times can be found in the ruins of an Imperial Villa (visible from Via Flacca) and Tiberius' Grotto, which is located at the southern most tip of Angolo beach. Many of the marble statues found in the archaeological area are now exhibited in Sperlonga National Archaeological Museum. The area is also part of the natural monument of the Promontory of Tiberius' Villa and the Torre Capovento-Punta Cetarola coast, all of which is included in Riviera di Ulisse Regional Park. The fortifications and ruins of the gates in the city walls date back to medieval times as do the former church of Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo and the church of San Rocco. Below the village, at sea level, lie the delightful Angolo and Canzatora beaches, the port and the Truglia tower. Heading inland from Sperlonga along the ridge of the mountain, we can reach the hillside village of ITRI (170 metres above sea level). Split in two by the Via Appia, one side of the village stretches as far as the sea and includes an imposing medieval castle (restored), the collegiate church of San Michele Arcangelo, the bell tower of the destroyed church of Santa Maria Maggiore, while the other side of the village includes the church of Annunziata. Taking the SS 82 out of the centre of the village, for about 10 km, it is possible to reach the sanctuary of Madonna della Civita (Monte Fusco, 670 metres above sea level) in which there is a beautiful icon of the Virgin Mary as well as a fine collection of ancient and modern votive offerings. Another place of interest in Itri is the Museum of Brigandage. On the outskirts of the village and especially in the gorge of Sant'Andrea, there is a perfectly preserved stretch (about 2 km) of the ancient Roman Via Appia and an ancient Roman wall. The road also passes the ruins of a Bourbon fortress. On the SS 82, inland, CAMPODIMELE (647 metres above sea level) is a hilltop village located at a mineral water spring in a suture between the Ausoni and the Aurunci mountains just in front of Mount Faggeto (1259 metres above sea level). The medieval village centre is surrounded by a restored city wall with twelve cylindrical towers, reachable through a ring-road. Among the religious buildings in the village are the church of San Michele Arcangelo and the church of Madonna delle Grazie, while the Piazzetta del Comune offers a beautiful view over the valley. Outside the village, it is possible to visit the restored monastery of Sant' Onofrio. Campodimele lies at the centre of the regional park of the Aurunci

mountains which covers a total surface area of 47,385 hectares. Furthermore, it has been statistically proven that Campodimele is the municipality with the longest living population in Italy, a fact which has resulted in the village being known as the 'village of long life'. The return trip ends to Sperlonga.

**GAETA - FORMIA - MARANOLA - MONTE REDENTORE - TRIVIO -
CASTELLONORATO - SPIGNO SATURNIA - SCAURI - MINTURNO - SS. COSMA E
DAMIANO - CASTELFORTE - SUIO TERME**

(Length: 95 km - The sea, hills and mountains of the Gulf of Gaeta). Located on a ridge of the Mount Orlando peninsula, one of the seaward slopes of the Aurunci mountains, GAETA is surrounded by a wide range of natural habitats, including the marvellous beaches which make it a leading holiday resort. Gaeta was both a Maritime Republic and, in 1860-61, the last bastion of the Bourbon monarchy. In ancient times, the area was inhabited by the Romans as can be seen by the ruins of the seaside villa of Fonteus Capitone (at Fontana beach), the great mausoleum of Lucius Munatius Plancus, close to the sanctuary of Trinità on Mount Orlando (a nature reserve which, together with the Blu Marina Oasis, is part of the Riviera di Ulisse regional park), and the Mausoleum of L. Sempronius Atratinus. However, the town reached the height of its splendour in the middle ages. Indeed, numerous buildings in the S. Erasmo area - such as the Angevin-Aragon castle, the cathedral of S. Erasmo, the churches of S. Giovanni a Mare, S. Domenico, S. Francesco, Annunziata (with the adjacent Grotta d'Oro), Madonna della Sorresca, S. Lucia and S. Caterina - date back to this period. Special mention must be made of the Sanctuary of SS. Trinità and the adjacent Turk's Grotto and Montagna Spaccata, a fissure in the rock which is said to have opened up on the death of Jesus Christ. Also worthy of a visit are the Museum of the History and Culture of Gaeta in Palazzo dell'Annunziata and the Diocesan Museum. Approximately 5 km from Gaeta lies FORMIA, a small town located at the centre of the Gulf of Gaeta, which in Roman times was already a busy seaside resort renowned for the mildness of its climate. Evidence of Roman inhabitation can be found in the ruins of various stretches of megalithic walls, the arches of the Roman aqueduct (at Mola), the crypto-portico of Villa Comunale, the ruins of a fish farm at the port, the Roman villa underlying the privately owned Villa Rubino - in which the Bourbons surrendered to the Piedmontese in 1861 - of which the portico still remains, a large Roman water tank and the Roman-Bourbon port of Caposele. On Via Appia it is possible to see the Roman fountain of S. Remigio and the Tomb of Cicero (km 139,200). Among other important medieval buildings: the 14th century fortress and tower and the church of S. Maria di Ponza in Mola (sea), and the ancient church of S. Erasmo and the churches of S. Anna and S. Maria la Noce in the Castellone district (sea and hill). Another important place of interest is the National Archeological Museum housed in the basement of the municipal offices. Moving inland, it is possible to visit MARANOLA at the foot of Monte Altino, a village whose position enables views over the entire gulf. In the medieval centre, we can see the remains of a castle, a

rectangular tower and the churches of S. Maria ad Martyres and S. Luca. The village lies on a steep road up Monte Redentore (1250 metres above sea level), a mountain which takes its name from the statue of Christ located on its summit in 1901. At the foot of the mountain, after a visit to the rocky sanctuary of S. Michele Arcangelo, through the hamlet of Trivio we reach CASTELLONORATO, a village which takes its name from the castle built by Onorato I Caetani on the road to Cassino. Castellonorato offers excellent views over the Gulf. Returning to Formia and taking Via Appia to S. Croce, we find SPIGNO SATURNIA. The original centre of Spigno Vecchio, now more or less abandoned except in summer; and the new village of Spigno Nuovo which lies on the Formia-Cassino highway. In the older part of the village, much of which was destroyed in the second world war, are the ruins of the city wall at Campovivo and an ancient *castrum*. The village lies on the slopes of Monte Putrella, the highest peak in the Aurunci mountain range at 1553 metres above sea level, whose freshwater springs – and especially the Capodacqua spring - supply all the neighbouring villages. The religious buildings include the church of S. Croce. From Spigno Nuovo, on the Formia-Cassino highway and heading towards the sea on the Via Appia, we may visit SCAURI, in the municipality of Minturno which, together with MARINA DI MINTURNO, stretches the length of coast from Monte d'Oro to Monte d'Argento. In addition to the defensive towers which can still be seen on the cliffs, in Scauri it is also possible to see a stretch of city wall. Monte d'Oro also marks the beginning of the Giànola-Monte di Scauri, with the Oasi Blu, a natural reserve which is part of Riviera di Ulisse regional park.

Heading inland towards MINTURNO, whose centre develops around Corso V. Emanuele, we find important monuments: the baronial castle, the Palazzo Municipale (a former monastery), the 13th century collegiate church of S. Pietro and the churches of S. Francesco and Annunziata as well as a fine Exhibition of Traditional Dress and the World of Agriculture. The territory of Minturno extends as far as the southern border of the province of Latina, which is marked by the River Garigliano, over which a 19th century chain bridge leads to the province of Caserta. On the provincial border lies the Roman archaeological area of Minturnae, with a stretch of the original Via Appia, the ruins of a Republican Forum, an Imperial Forum, a bathing complex, a macellum, an amphitheatre (in which summer theatre seasons are organized), and an antiquarium. Next to this ancient Roman city lies the British Military Cemetery (Second World War). On the other side of the street are ruins of a Roman aqueduct. The delightful hillside hamlets of S. Maria Infante, Pulcherini and Tufo are also worthy of a visit. Ten km inland from Minturnae lies the hillside village of SS. COSMA E DAMIANO which, together with the

neighbouring municipality of Castelforte, commands a fine view over the plain of the River Garigliano. Although completely destroyed in the terrible bombings of the second world war, it still shows Palazzo Tibaldi, the churches of SS. Cosma e Damiano and of S. Lucia. Above the village, in the hamlet of Ventosa, there is a beautiful medieval tower. CASTELFORTE is the most southern municipality in the province of Latina, on the border with the region of Campania, from which it is separated by the River Garigliano, the village still retains its original medieval layout. The most important monuments are the city walls, the Santa and Cianca gates, the square tower and the church of S. Giovanni Battista. Older still is the hamlet of SUIO ALTA, with the ruins of a small castle, while just below the village lies the disused country church of S. Maria in Pensulis. Along the banks of the River Garigliano lies SUIO TERME, a natural spa which has been famous since Roman times for its therapeutic waters (aquae vescinae) - perfect for water therapies, irrigations, inhalings and insufflations – and mud.

THE PONTINE ISLANDS

Now reachable by ferry from Formia, Terracina, San Felice Circeo and Anzio, PONZA was an important Roman base as can be seen from the ruins still visible on the island (Pilate's Grotto, an eel fishery, large scale hydraulic works and tunnel). Lining the brightly coloured Corso Pisacane, the village of Ponza dates back to the 18th century; it includes a 16th century Bourbon Tower (now a hotel), as well as municipal offices and the church of Trinità. Other features of Ponza are the semicircle of houses overlooking the port, the coloured cliffs, the numerous coves and beaches which line the coast and the beauty of the sea-bed. In order to fully appreciate them, it is necessary to take a boat trip round the island, to understand the true magnificence of the unique rock formations, the lighthouse, the stacks, the beaches of Chiaia di Luna and Punta Capo Bianco, the stacks of Lucia Rosa, Feola and Acqua, Fontana and Fonte bays, Cala del Gaetano, the Spaccapolpi rock, Cala d'Inferno, Cala del Core and Frontone beach. Approximately 6 miles from Ponza lies the tiny island of PALMAROLA whose marvelous seabed and obsidian-rich rock formations are the result of ancient volcanic eruptions. Approximately 6 miles off the other side of Ponza lies the island of ZANNONE. Now part of Circeo National Park, Zannone is famous for its fine holm oak woods, various flocks of mouflon sheep, the ruins of its medieval monastery of S. Spirito and its Roman eel fishery at the natural port. Created as the result of the activity of underwater volcanoes, VENTOTENE (which can be reached by ferry from Formia and Terracina) was clearly inhabited in Roman times as can be seen from the ruins of the port, the fisheries and Villa Giulia (at Punta Eolo). The urban centre dates back to the 18th century and develops around the castle (now home to the municipal offices and an Archaeological Museum) and the church of S. Candida. The island is very small and easy to explore on foot and offers marvelous views over both sea and land. The coast is lined with beaches (including Calanave, Cala Rossano, Parata Grande, Punta Eolo, Cala Bosco, Punta Pascone, Punta dell'Arco, Cala Battaglia and many others). Ventotene was also the place in which the first document of Italian Europeanism - Manifesto for a Free and United Europe - was drafted by A. Spinelli, E. Rossi and E. Colomi. Indeed, this document is now known as the Manifesto of Ventotene. Just over a mile from Ventotene lies the tiny island of S. STEFANO. Dominated by the ruins of the former Bourbon prison - in which various irredentists, anarchists and antifascists were held captive - Ventotene and S. Stefano are now part of a marine nature reserve and protected by severe codes of behaviour.

**LATINA – CORI – ROCCAMASSIMA – NINFA – NORMA – SERMONETA – BASSIANO –
LATINA - APRILIA – CISTERNA**

(Length: circa 130 km. From the flatlands to the villages of the Pontine marshes and Monti Lepini). Located approx. 20 km north of Latina, CORI lies 300 m above sea level in the foothills of the Monti Lepini. Already a flourishing urban centre in the 5th century BC, to which date the oldest of the three city walls can be traced, the origins of the village are steeped in mystery. The city walls were restored in the middle ages, reinforced with new towers and bastions and the three gates (Romana, Signina and Ninfa gates) were added. The symbol of the city is the Temple of Hercules which dates back to the 1st century BC, as does the Temple of Castor and Pollux, of which all that remains are two columns leaning against a modern building. In the lower part of the village, the well (Pozzo Dorico) and bridge (Ponte della Catena) both date back to Roman times. Of special interest are the church of S. Oliva, which is home to the local history museum, the church of S. Maria della Pietà and the church of S. Francesco as well as the (nationally listed) Annunziata oratory which is frescoed with illustrations of the life of Christ. In the upper part, the Sanctuary of Madonna del Soccorso can be reached via a steep stairway. Ten km from Cori on the road which passes through GIULIANELLO lies the highest municipality in the province, ROCCAMASSIMA (746 m above sea level). Laid out according to the typical castrum plan, the village is traversed by narrow lanes, while the houses huddle closely around Palazzo del Principe castle. The most interesting buildings are the church of San Michele Arcangelo (built together with the castle but modified at the end of the 18th century), the church of Carmine and that of S. Rocco Fuori le Mura. Returning to Cori through the Doganella crossing, we may visit NINFA, a medieval village abandoned between the end of the 14th and the 18th century. Located at the foot of the hill topped by the village of Norma, in correspondence to the spring which feeds the lake and the river of the same name, the ruins of the abandoned city include a medieval tower, castle walls, municipal offices, seven churches (including the church of S. Maria Maggiore) and numerous houses. Nevertheless, the real beauty of Ninfa lies in its nature reserve. Lovingly established in 1920 by the Caetani family, it is home to thousands of plants from all over the world as well as a wide range of indigenous bushes, trees, roses and essences. Climbing the hill from Ninfa to NORMA (410 m.), there are magnificent views over the plain below. Surrounded by medieval city walls, interrupted by one main gate and a secondary entrance, the village of Norma includes a number of fine religious buildings such as the church of SS Annunziata with the chapel of refuge, of Immacolata and of S. Rocco. Other places of interest include the Civic Archaeological and Virtual Museum of the Ancient Norba and its

archaeological site (on Colle della Civita), which contains the ruins of the city destroyed by Sulla in 89 B.C., and the Chocolate Museum. Below the village on the Ninfa side of the hill, lies the rupestrian church of S. Michele Arcangelo (or S. Angelo al Mirteto), a natural grotto transformed into a church in 1183. Descending from Norma towards SERMONETA, we find the 12th century abbey at VALVISCIOLO. Built in local limestone, this is one of the first examples of Cistercian-Gothic architecture in Italy. The abbey includes the Abbot Stanislao White Gallery. Six km further down the hill from Valvisciolo lies SERMONETA (257 m above sea level), one of the best conserved examples of a medieval village in Latium. The village centre is surrounded by a city wall with five gates or rood doors and dominated by the imposing Caetani castle and keep. Over 42 metres in height, the castle is accessed via a drawbridge which leads to a parade ground, with various lodgings, dungeons, stables and chemin-de-ronde. In the village, the main places of interest are the 15th century palazzo in which the municipal offices are now accommodated, a number of tower houses, the panoramic belvedere, the merchants' loggia, the 13th century cathedral of Assunta (with the Diocesan Museum), the church of S. Giuseppe (frescoed by Girolamo Siciolante), the ancient church of S. Michele Arcangelo, the Museum of Ceramics and the "C'era una Volta" (Once upon a time) Museum. Returning from Sermoneta via Sermoneta Scalo, after about 10 km we reach BASSIANO (562 m above sea level), a medieval village located on a hilltop facing Monte Semprevisa (1537 m). Surrounded by woods, the village is further defended by a 12th century city wall with nine towers. The places of interest include the church of S. Erasmo, the 11th century church of S. Nicola, the 16th century church of S. Maria and the 16th century Palazzo Baronale, which is now home to the municipal offices, and the Opera Aldina Museum dedicated to Aldus Manutius, the father of modern publishing, who was born in Bassiano. Outside the village, the sanctuary of Selvascura (approximately 3 km from the village) includes a fine 17th century crucifix and a hermit's grotto with 14th century frescoes, while the sanctuary of Trinità, built in 1938 on the mountain of the same name, is also worthy of a visit. Bassiano is also the perfect point of departure for an excursion to Monte Semprevisa. On the way back to Latina, the village of CISTERNA, probably built over the ancient Roman Tres Tabernae, was the last *mutatio* (a station at which riders could change their horses) before the beginning of the Decennovium road (excavation at km 58 on Via Appia). The site is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles recording Saint Paul's journey to Rome. Cisterna centres around the 16th century Palazzo Caetani, a feudal stronghold built around a courtyard, with a Roman well and "grottoes" underneath. In addition, the church of Assunta contains a fine collection of ceramics from Faenza. The municipal gardens originally laid out by the Caetani

family in the 16th century extend around a 19th century fountain (Fontana Biondi). Much of the Ninfa nature reserve lies within the municipality of Cisterna. Just a few kilometres from Cisterna, APRILIA lies on the border of the provinces of Latina and Rome. Inaugurated on 29 October 1937, Aprilia was the fourth “new city” created under fascism. The countryside around Aprilia is scattered with places of interest including Buon Riposo, Carano (home of the tomb of Menotti Garibaldi) Campo Morto (renamed Campoverde in 1958) whose name derives from the tragic events which befell the area, Torre del Padiglione (at km 51,500 on SS 148 Via Pontina), Carroceto where Pope Innocent XII stayed on the night of 22 April 1697, the Horti Sanguilanei, an experimental Mediterranean garden filled with many rare species of plant, the horticultural workshops of the International Floriculture Centre and the zoo. The centre of the town is marked by the church and the statue of S. Michele Arcangelo and a Permanent Exhibition of the History of the City.

SEZZE – ROCCAGORGA – MAENZA – PROSEDI - PISTERZO - ROCCASECCA DEI VOLSCI – PRIVERNO – FOSSANOVA – SONNINO

(Length: approximately 110 km - The Medieval Villages of Monti Lepini and Monti Ausoni). Taking the SS 156 from Latina to Sezze Scalo (Museum of Peasant Civilization) and then continuing for approximately 24 km, we reach SEZZE (319 metres above sea level), a village whose prehistoric origins are testified by a number of important finds (Riparo Roberto, Grotta Iolanda and Grotta Arnalo dei Bufali, in which a drawing of a man dating back to between the Mesolithic and Aeneolithic ages was found on the walls). The oldest part of the village is surrounded by polygonal walls built in four different styles, while the Romanic and Gothic-Cistercian cathedral (Duomo), the church of S. Pietro, the former Convent of the Poor Clares (closed) and the municipal Antiquarium all date back to the middle ages. The village also has a fine Toy Museum. In the surrounding countryside we may visit the Roman ruins of Le Grotte building and the Arches of S. Lidano, which are all that remain of a temple dedicated to Juno. Approximately 9 kilometres from Sezze lies ROCCAGORGA (289 metres above sea level), a small village built around Palazzo Doria Panfili, a feudal home restored between the 17th and 18th centuries. The village includes the 18th century church of S. Leonardo and S. Erasmo (with an underlying rest area: Rifolta), the delightful church of S. Antonio, the Museum of Aeronautics (with a fine polychrome cupola) and the Monti Lepini Ethnic Museum housed in the Baronial Palace. Just a few kilometers from Roccagorga lies MAENZA (358 metres above sea level), overlooking the valley of the River Amaseno and protected by the slopes of Monte Calvello (935 metres above sea level). The village huddles round the recently restored Baronial Palace in which S. Thomas Aquinas stayed for a few days prior to his death, while the religious buildings in the village include the church of S. Maria Assunta in Cielo and the church of S. Reparata. Returning to the SS 156 (Via Monti Lepini) and heading north we reach PROSEDI (410 m.), a medieval village on the border with the province of Frosinone. Despite restoration initiatives completed in the 18th century, various stretches of the original city walls still remain intact. Other places of interest in the village include the churches of S. Nicola (Romanic) and S. Agata, the baronial palace and a fountain built by Pope Benedict XIII in 1727. The village is famous for its Good Friday celebrations. On the hillside, the horseshoe shaped hamlet of PISTERZO is home to the Palazzo del Capitano, Palazzo Gabrielli and the church of S. Michele Arcangelo. On the way back down the valley, it is possible to visit ROCCASECCA DEI VOLSCI (376

metres above sea level), built on a spur of Monte Curio, which offers fine views over Priverno, the valley of the River Amaseno and the Pontine marshes. The medieval origins of the village are clear to be seen in the layout of the lanes surrounding Piazza Umberto I, Palazzo Massimo and the church of S. Maria Assunta. Other places of interest include Palazzo del Capitolo and the churches of S. Sebastiano and S. Croce. Overlooking the village from the top of the hill is the classical temple of S. Raffaele (in which there are a number of 17th century frescoes attributed to the school of Domenichino), while the round temple of S. Maria della Pace lies just a few metres below. Returning to the SS 156 and heading south, one finds the medieval village of PRIVERNO (151 metres above sea level) which is surrounded by thick defensive city walls. The focal point of the village is Piazza Giovanni XXIII, in which Palazzo Comunale, Palazzo Antonelli and the Romanic-Gothic cathedral of S. Maria Assunta, in which a skull that, according to a pious belief, would be the skull of Saint Thomas Aquinas, is preserved, the Delfini fountain and Palazzo Valeriani-Guarinia are located. Other buildings in the village include Palazzo Zaccaleoni, the former Bishops palace, the Municipal Archaeological Museum and the churches of S. Tommaso, S. Cristoforo, S. Antonio Abate, S. Benedetto, S. Giovanni Evangelista, S. Nicola and S. Chiara. Approximately 3 kilometres below the village, a 33 hectare park contains S. Martino Castle (in which there is a Museum of Mathematics) and the Gardens of Archimedes. The archaeological area of Privernum (Mezzagosto) lies to the left of the village on the road to Frosinone and contains the remains of several villas dating back to between the 2nd century BC and the 12th century AD (when the site was abandoned). Taking the SS 609 southwards it is possible to visit the abbey of BORGO DI FOSSANOVA, the first example of Gothic-Cistercian architecture in Italy, which was consecrated by Pope Innocent III in 1208. In addition to the central nave, two minor naves and a splendid rose window, the abbey complex also includes the guest quarters in which S. Thomas Aquinas died in 1274, the cloister, the refectory and the former monastery. The Borgo includes a medieval stable building in which a Medieval Museum is now housed and a former infirmary which is now a conference and concert hall. On the way back to Latina we can visit SONNINO (430 metres above sea level), a village located on one of the hills leading to Terracina and Monte S. Biagio (Valle di Camposoriano with its Natural Monument and Monte delle Fate). The village centre occupies the upper part of Colle S. Angelo and is characterized by narrow winding lanes, steep stairways, towers and gates, stone buildings, thick defensive walls, a cylindrical tower (Torre Antonelli), Palazzo Antonelli and the churches of S. Michele Arcangelo, (a sanctuary since 1947), S. Marco, S. Giovanni Battista and S. Pietro. Not to be missed is the Border Lands Museum. A path from the village leads to the western

slopes of Monte delle Fate (1090 metres above sea level) which are planted with fine holm oak, turkey oak and sage woods.