

My decision to connect the Via Francesco with the Via Francigena by walking across to Umbria caused some planning problems as it was not part of a recognised long-distance walk. Thus, distances between available accommodation were long. We had reduced today's walk by doing some yesterday and then catching a taxi to where we had finished. I seriously questioned the decision to walk when I hopped out of the taxi into torrential rain which was slanting silver ropes slamming into loose earth, ploughing it like gunfire. I waved goodbye to Carol as I set off to find my way through a maze of forest tracks to Sarteano. Things were made more difficult with the loss of telephone reception and my silly decision to modify my waterproof map protector so that it was no longer waterproof, the good thing about walking in the rain, it hides the tears. I passed this B & B on the way which would have been a good place to stay. The grey sky has been a rarity for us but it was there all day. By good luck rather than good design I left the forest just outside the village of Sarteano. I was wet through and just a little cold.



There was a market in the village so I thought I might be able to buy a cheap tee shirt but alas they were selling only street food which in itself was interesting but of no help. I trudged off through the town looking for a sheltered spot to have a rest and change my raincoat, yes I took two today. I spotted a seat under a shop awning and headed that way. It was outside a self-serve laundromat, so I thought why not. I took off all my wet clothes except for my shorts and undies, there has to be some modesty even though my raincoat would have covered the essentials and put them through the dryer. Half an hour later I was on my way with warm clothes and socks and thankfully the rain was abating and within the hour, had ceased completely not to return for the day.

On my way out of Sarteano while not heading for Radicofani I was on the road to it. A runner jogged up behind me stopped and asked if I was doing the Via Francigena, we had a bit of a chat about where I had walked. I asked him where he was running to, which was to Radicofani, a sixteen kms. climb up the mountain. He said he was training for his first marathon, I have walked up to Radicofani in the past and this would be a tough run. He went on his way as I turned off to head towards the more sedate climb to my destination.

As I dropped down of the mountain range it was obvious that this valley was not as dry as Tuscany, these grapes indicate that the summer has been much milder. Being a non-drinker, I wouldn't know but these very sweet grapes look as if they would make a mighty fine drop of red. The grapes were indicative of all the plants in this valley which obviously had benefited from better growing conditions. As I dropped completely out of the hills I moved onto a delta flat which was a garden of Eden compared to the dry Tuscan area. I must admit I also enjoyed walking along a flat bit of track for five kms. As I left the flat I crossed into Umbria, and what is Umbria famous for, Hill Towns. I know

Citta Della Pieve is up there somewhere I just have to do the climb and find my way through the mist and fog. As I climbed up the fog cleared



and I found myself in a lovely crescent shaped village. While Tuscany makes sure that you know you are arriving into that province I thought it was nice for the local band to come and drum me into the village. For those sleuthing the quotes in the blog there are two today.

