



Visiting the Margins

**IN**novative **CUL**tural **TO**urism in European peripheries

**Tuscan-Emilian Apennines - Garfagnana**

**Innovation Factsheet - 03/2023**



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### 1. CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY

This pilot case is focused on the small village of San Pellegrino In Alpe, consisting of only 38 residents and administered by two municipalities and two provinces, splitting it between the Italian regions of Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna. Located at an altitude of more than 1500 mt, this village is the highest inhabited area in the Apennines. Thanks to its location, it has been a place of passage for pilgrims and merchants since the Middle Ages. The hamlet still has the typical characteristics of a mountain village, and is dominated by the architectural complex of the Sanctuary and the old *Ospitale*. Moreover, the place is crossed by important historical routes used by pilgrims and merchants, such as the *Via Matildica del Volto Santo*, or the *Via Vandelli*.



The shrine housing the bodies of Saint Pellegrino and Saint Bianco inside the Sanctuary.

Another key asset of San Pellegrino is the *Don Luigi Pellegrini Ethnographic Museum of the rural life*, named after the 20th century spiritual leader of the village. The museum contains about 4000 artefacts, unifying the culture of the village with its surrounding landscape. Indeed, another asset is the remoteness of the village which makes it attractive for people seeking adventure and nature-based tourism activities, like hiking, biking, horse riding and so on.

#### Expected results and actions

In order to renew the offer of the place with a view to **sustainable cultural tourism** that includes the **local community** in a participatory manner, the team felt it necessary to start by analysing its strengths as a **micro-tourist system**, which include everything that can be attractive to visitors: the ethnographic collection, the discovery of the history of San Bianco and San Pellegrino (religious tourism), the living conditions and hospitality of pilgrims: what has changed from the past, the landscape and outdoor activities.

In this context, the pilot project aims to:

- Relaunch of the Ethnographic Museum in San Pellegrino in Alpe and create of a broader tourism system aimed at increasing the impact of cultural tourism in a small and remote area;
- Involve the younger generations to strengthen their cultural identity and shift the focus to their importance in cultural policy development. This action has been set into action by a first visit of university students, who have later developed projects on possible touristic routes in and around San Pellegrino in Alpe;
- Develop appropriate training sessions with the stakeholders, that will enable local working in tourism to expand their offer, integrating it with the cultural and natural ones;
- Creation of itineraries that promote the integration of different forms of tourism, such as cultural, naturalistic and food and wine tourism, already present in a disaggregated form in the territory.

### **The pilot innovations**

In this factsheet we aim to discuss and anticipate the innovations this pilot case has developed up to this point, including the ones which the team plans to set into motion in the following months:

- As anticipated, the pilot aims at **creating new visitor itineraries** that make it possible for visitors to discover all of the resources of the territory. The area has different cultural, spiritual and natural resources, which will be made accessible and connected as a mean of understanding the history and development of this location;
- Design **attractive narratives** of the previously mentioned itineraries, so as to engage visitors in the local history. These narratives aim to give value to the history of the Sanctuary and the pilgrims' routes, and to the local ethnographic museum;
- **Mobilising artists to strengthen the attachment of communities to their heritage** and to share it with others. This line of action has already been implemented thanks to theatre performances, carried out initially in the summer of 2022, telling the history of the place and how the ethnographic museum was created in the 1960s. In addition, stories of local citizens were told, taking their cues from the museum's objects;
- **Promotional and visit tools** to be implemented as a means to better the knowledge of visitors regarding the existence of the village and its tourist offer. Various options are being developed, such as road signs and explanatory posters around the village with qr codes.

## **2. CREATING NEW VISITOR ITINERARIES**

*The Garfagnana territory is rich in history, natural resources and is characterised by a strong cultural identity. The creation of new tourist itineraries, in harmony with the values of sustainability and slow tourism, makes it possible to discover wide areas of these territories that are currently outside the traditional tourist routes or constitute destinations of secondary importance.*

To achieve this objective, last October, an educational visit to San Pellegrino in Alpe was held for the students of the second year of the Fondazione Campus Degree Course in Tourism Sciences.

The visit was organised by Professor Enrica Lemmi, lecturer in “Tourist itineraries and landscape as cultural heritage” and current Managing Director for Tourism, Education and Research at the Fondazione Campus university, as well as coordinator of the INCULTUM project for the Pilot of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines.

During the day, they were invited to visit the exhibition dedicated to San Pellegrino inside the Sanctuary of Saints Pellegrino and Bianco, to attend a theatrical performance by local actress Elisabetta Salvatori dedicated to the history of Don Luigi Pellegrini and the Ethnographic Museum,

and finally to visit the museum's halls and exhibition. All activities were promoted and supervised by Professor Enrica Lemmi, who then followed the students in the realisation of tourism projects related to San Pellegrino. In fact, at the end of the visit, the students were asked to analyse the site of San Pellegrino in Alpe and the surrounding areas to create innovative tourist itineraries capable of enhancing both the natural aspects of those areas and the historical and cultural ones.

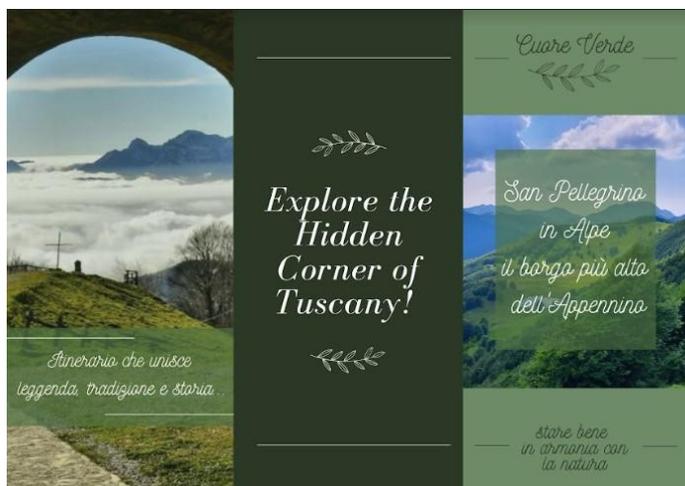


*The tourism students of Fondazione Campus*

The projects drawn up by the students include a wide range of innovative solutions for rethinking tourism in the Garfagnana area, creating new networks and itineraries between local realities, connecting the resources of places with the local stakeholders.

### ***THE GEO-ITINERARY, A NEW WAY TO DISCOVER THE TERRITORIES***

The projects developed by the students are inspired by the values of the geo-itinerary, a type of itinerary focused on slow and sustainable tourism, which is able to create meaningful connections and synergies between travellers and the destination, actively including the communities that inhabit the territories.



*On the left, the brochure front page of a students' project developed in the frame of the course "Tourist itineraries and landscape as cultural heritage" taught by professor Enrica Lemmi.*

### **Dissemination of the project**

After being developed, the projects were then presented on two different occasions. The first took place during the Assembly of the UNESCO MAB (Man and Biosphere) Reserve of the

Tuscan-Emilian Apennines at the Alfieri Theatre of Castelnuovo di Garfagnana on the 15th February. During the event, Pilot 5 coordinator Enrica Lemmi took the stage to present the INCULTUM project and, in detail, to explain the initiatives promoted in San Pellegrino in Alpe and to present the students' projects.

The second occasion to talk about INCULTUM took place at the Fondazione Campus on the 17th February 2023 during the Winter School organised by the University of Pisa, UNESCO Chair in ICT of Università della Svizzera Italiana and with the support of Museo della Grafica and of Sistema Museale di Ateneo di Unipi.

On this occasion, Professor Enrica Lemmi and Dr. Adele Cagno, new member of the project team for Pilot 5, spoke about INCULTUM and the case study of San Pellegrino in Alpe as a territory for the development of best practices related to cultural tourism.

### 3. MOBILISATION OF ARTISTS TO STRENGTHEN THE ATTACHMENT OF COMMUNITIES TO THEIR HERITAGE

*One of the most important activities organised in San Pellegrino in Alpe concerned the creation of a theatrical performance carried out in collaboration with the local Ethnographic Museum, to revive and celebrate the memory of this community and its territory through a narrative approach.*

The main themes dealt with are the customs and traditions of rural life that are part of the cultural heritage of Garfagnana, experienced through the stories and memories of the local inhabitants.

The aim is to introduce local inhabitants to the historical and cultural memory of the San Pellegrino in Alpe and to create interest in the destination to attract new visitors.

The show is entitled “Un prete, due Santi, un confine e 4000 pezzi unici” (A priest, two saints, a border and 4000 unique pieces) and is focused on the life of Don Luigi Pellegrini, the local priest and founder of the Ethnographic Museum. The choice of Elisabetta Salvatori, the actress who performed the play, is due to several reasons. First of all, the themes of collective memory, especially of people living in peripheral and inland areas of the Tuscan region, have always been the leitmotif of her playwriting. Secondly, the language she uses is easy to understand, but with great emotional emphasis and very close to the local community and the spirit of the place. Finally, Salvatori has an in-depth knowledge of the Garfagnana and San Pellegrino in Alpe territories, so she is able to tell the specificities of the area in a sincere and effective way.

During the summer of 2022, between July and August, seven performances took place in the courtyard next to the Ethnographic Museum:

- Preview: 3rd July
- Shows: 4, 31 July, 1, 14, 21, 28 August



*A picture of the theatrical representation*

#### **THE MUSEUM AS CROSSROAD BETWEEN GENERATIONS**

The show takes the form of a kaleidoscope of episodes and moments of everyday life somehow connected to the objects on display in the museum rooms. This enables the visitor to connect each element of the exhibition to a character or a particular episode and vice versa, so that an intimate and personal bond is created. The museum no longer just consists of rooms and objects but becomes a vital meeting point of history, culture and memory across generations.

The theatrical performances will also be repeated during the next summer season: the dates will be defined shortly.

The theatrical performance was used, among other things, as a means to stimulate dialogue and training moments for local stakeholders through the interventions of the local government, the municipality, and the mountain community. During the summer of 2022, between July and August, seven performances took place in the courtyard next to the Ethnographic Museum:

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*A glance of the exhibition inside the museum*

### **THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION**

The phases for the construction of the show were essentially three:

- The research and collection of material necessary for writing the texts. Elisabetta Salvatori gathered oral testimonies, written documents, interviewed local inhabitants and lived in the area to capture all the details: memories, stories, the lives of characters, idioms, dialectal cadences. (November 2021 to mid-December 2021)
- The writing, which was the longest phase. That's because the material collected was very often, by its very nature, fragmentary and disorganised. (Mid-December 2021 to April 2022)
- The memorisation of the text and staging, which took about two months of practice. (April 2022 onwards)

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## **4. ATTRACTIVE NARRATIVES**

*San Pellegrino's strategic position has probably made it a place of passage and crossroads since Roman times. Its historical path spans more than a millennium, indistinctly and fascinatingly combining founding myths and established facts, united by political, spiritual and commercial purposes. One might think that the new millennium has granted a marginal space to an area so distant from national and international mobility routes, but on the contrary, and thanks to what San Pellegrino can tell us about itself, we are witnessing a rebirth based on tourism and the local rediscovery of its traditions.*

The development of a captivating and fascinating narrative is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of cultural tourism - and consequently also naturalistic, sustainable and digital ones - within the San Pellegrino in Alpe site.

The heritage of stories, tales and myths that the village carries with it is of a richness that is hard to find elsewhere in the Apennines.



*This low relief is the only old representation we have of Saint Pellegrino located in the Sanctuary. It probably dates back to the XIII century. One of the many interpretations of this is the one referring to it as the "slap" that was supposedly given to the Devil by San Pellegrino (or vice versa, depending on the interpretation of the story).*

Even the enormous religious imprint that hovers over the entire territory has a peculiarity that makes it unique in the entire western Christian panorama. In fact, and despite the great veneration by Tuscan-Emilian Catholics, the founding saints of the village, Pellegrino and Bianco, are not considered canonical figures within the same ecclesiastical institution, which 'endures' the popular cult but has never done anything to develop or promote it.

Pellegrino, who according to myth was the heir to the King of Scotland, and his faithful hermit companion Bianco belong perhaps to an older belief, probably pre-Christian, and later developed under the mantle of Christianity to create a continuity centred on the very strength of the site of San Pellegrino: the continuous passage, on the mountaintop, of men, goods, armies, saints and ideas.

The mists of the foundation are certainly attractive, but even the "official" history of San Pellegrino knows how to give great happenings that can mirror, and exemplify, faithfully the power diatribes of Italy's many pre-unitary states.

The historical-mythological heritage of San Pellegrino is a treasure chest that is not afraid to be compared with the narratives of much larger and more famous centres and places, which is why the development of this intangible asset is crucial for the subsequent enhancement of the entire surrounding area of the village.

The works to develop the narrative of the site that is the subject of the Pilot has already begun, and even today, inside the old church, it is possible to admire a dedicated section in which a number of authentic tools and effigies have been installed, as well as information panels that describe in great detail the founding myth of San Pellegrino and the subsequent historical journey.

Bringing us closer to modern times, and without bothering the saints Pellegrino and Bianco, the entire Ethnographic Museum "Don Luigi Pellegrini" is basically a great material narrative of peasant life that has



*A room of the Ethnographic museum in San Pellegrino in Alpe. Here we can see the tools used to make candles.*

remained unchanged for centuries: a complex system of values and practices that today can be seen and admired in as many as fourteen rooms divided over four floors.

Inside the museum, too, the INCULTUM Pilot 5 team is developing a precise enhancement policy, which will focus specifically on the installation of digital nameplates that will allow a better understanding of the exhibits and the very history of the museum and its founder, and the development of digital “avatars” that will be able to guide tourists along ethnographic paths.

In this way, it will be possible to achieve one of the goals to which every type of cultural tourism should aspire, which is the synergy between tradition and innovation, between analog “discovery” and digital deepening.

However, the decision to focus on the intangible heritage of San Pellegrino is not merely a tool for tourism promotion, but will also allow locals and inhabitants of neighbouring communities to learn more precisely about their own history and the ways of life that their ancestors preserved until a few decades ago. In tourism practices that recognize themselves in the terms of sustainability and sharing, the relationship with locals is fundamental: they are based precisely in the conscious choice to include local inhabitants and businesses in the chosen path of enhancement and in the choices of doing for future interventions.

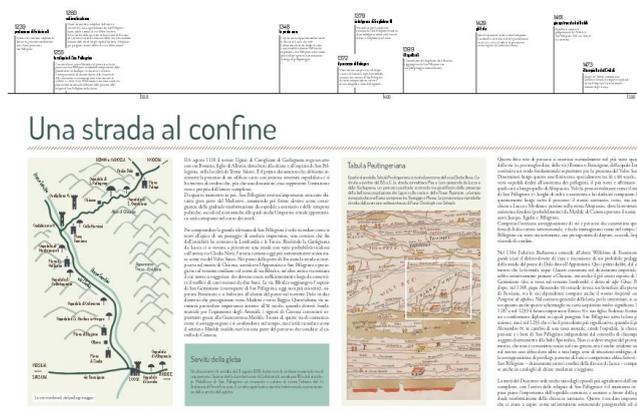
A virtuous synergy, made up of simultaneous learning and teaching among all stakeholders, in which knowledge of the history of the area, and its strengths, can only be a prerequisite.

## 5. PROMOTIONAL AND VISIT TOOLS

*To be implemented as a means to better the knowledge of visitors regarding the existence of the village and its tourist offer.*

In the context of promotion and visitor support tools, the San Pellegrino pilot case has currently developed and installed illustrative panels inside the Sanctuary. Following a historical study that focused not only on the Sanctuary itself, but also on the lives of the two saints (Bianco and Pellegrino), a large panel was created to illustrate along a timeline the most significant events connected to this place. The installation, inaugurated in the summer of 2021, was attended by a large number of participants, and was accompanied by short guided tours created by the project collaborators.

These panels were created as a visual aid to visitors of the sanctuary and aim to further connect the cultural instances of the village to the existing tourist offer.



*The first picture was taken the day of the inaugural event, during a guided visit. On the right, we can see a section of the panel and the logo developed to identify the project.*

Following this line of action and the success of this installation, the team is planning to further invest into these promotional and visual aiding tools. The aim in the months to follow, is to design two types of panels. The first type will be located along the road route leading from the Garfagnana valley to San Pellegrino in Alpe, to help potential visitors find the place more easily. In fact, this was one of the main difficulties encountered when first analysing concerns from locals and visitors. This type of signposting requires more time, as its implementation needs to follow the necessary steps with local institutions. An initial meeting on this subject will take place in the coming weeks.

Subsequently, the team has planned to create illustrative panels to be located in different locations of historical, cultural and natural importance; the positioning and themes of these will be selected with the support of the community, in the spirit of the INCULTUM project. The objective is to create

panels that can support the tourist's visit and help them understand better what he or she sees, as well as redirect to more in-depth content through qr codes. The most appropriate method for redirecting content via qr codes is currently being studied, but among the hypotheses proposed are a database to be managed according to the INCULTUM guidelines or an actual landing page. The information will be in both Italian and English, making them accessible to both national and international tourists.



*On the left, a visual representation of the didactic panels as imagined by the team and some of the locations where they might be located.*

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