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THE COMMUNITY: WORK, CULTURE AND CUSTOMS

Today as in the past, San Lorenzello is regarded as an agricultural centre. Of the community's 2446 residents in 1987, 1592 lived in outlying country areas whilst only 854 lived in the village proper. Most of them (503) were in the historic centre which was home to 256 families living in the same number of dwellings.

Employment data for the population confirm this: of the 737 working residents (30% of the population), 37.7% worked in agriculture, 22.8% in industry and 39.5% in the tertiary sector.

Production activities are quite diversified. In addition to production deriving from agriculture (oil and wine) there are a number of factories and notably craft industries: ceramics manufacturers who help to keep alive a tradition dating back three centuries and have become famous nationwide, but also bakers.

The culture of San Lorenzello's community is still largely agriculture-based, even though it has been influenced by cultural models brought in by returning emigrants or by television. The degree to which cultural models are changed or preserved depends, however, on whether the families concerned live in the outlying country areas or in the village proper. The structure of this scattered population was typical of peasant communities based on interfamilial and neighbourhood relationships, that is to say always within the same socio-economic group. This structure still persists today, even though this farming area is now host to other activities too (real estate, small

businesses, etc.).

In old San Lorenzello, however, the school and village square remain the cultural and spatial focus of the total population irrespective of class distinction. The leisurely stroll, the inevitable meetings on the "piazza" and the chance for a little chit-chat are things which undoubtedly save the modern community from a total loss of its identity.



Up to the second world war San Lorenzello was the meeting place for young people from all over the basin of the middle course of the Titerno. Then, the flight from the land in the sixties and new lifestyle models began to destroy this role. But the village's

small size does not prevent it from enjoying an intense level of cultural activity. Theatre, twinning with towns abroad, a variety of entertainments, and above all a very strong awareness of their precious heritage is shared by older and younger generations alike. The determination not to lose their cultural identity is every bit as strong in the people of San Lorenzello as the need for modernisation and progress.

And this is beyond doubt a concrete asset of the system, both cause and effect of protecting the quality of the countryside and the architectural heritage.

