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Exploring the Digital Evolution: Case Study of Bagnoregio's Historical Significance and Media Impact

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Abstract

In line with the rapidly growing role of social media in shaping public perceptions of and attitudes towards heritage sites, this study is timely to scrutinize the influence of social media on how people perceive historical heritage with a special emphasis on Bagnoregio, Italy. Through investigating the interaction between modern values and traditions with the help of archival research and digital ethnography, it shows the expansive gap between community perspectives and institutional norms. The study intends to conduct a media analysis, which comprises of various cultural contexts and cross-checks with UNESCO criteria, in order to suggest an understanding of the current issues in heritage preservation and provide possible ways of bridging the gaps between institutional frameworks and social realities.

Keywords: Social Media Influence, Cultural Heritage, Bagnoregio, Community Perspectives, Heritage Preservation

Introduction

Media influence in the world is undoubtable, and such impact has become particularly relevant in transforming values that are WWappreciated by contemporary society, including those which are related to history protection. The established structure of norms and standards seems incapable of matching the new technological developments, especially in the digital era. "Heritage" becomes a social category for us every day, and the ideas of valuable heritage become more varied, making a gap between what our life experience is and the pre-assigned UNESCO sets wider and wider.

In this respect, this study seeks to explore the discrepancies between Bagnoregio's heritage status and its widespread fame on social media. By analyzing the impacts of social media on the perception of Bagnoregio's heritage, this research aims to shed light on the evolving dynamics of heritage preservation in the digital age.

Bagnoregio, a small town in Lazio region in Italy, is an example of a centuries-old place (Fig. 1). The town's importance and popularity on social media are evidence of the gap between what should be accorded as a heritage site and what UNESCO considers as a criterion. In this case, the town's historical importance is strongly portrayed online, and it resonates strongly with the people, especially those on social media, but this might not necessarily be the criteria espoused

by UNESCO.

It is a national heritage that has been rising in fame after its recognition in foreign media and in particular after the release of the movie Laputa: Castle in the Sky in 1986, the author Hayao Miyazaki mentioned that Bagnoregio was the town that inspired him from creating the movie. After its success in the late 20th century the historical town of Bagnoregio has been welcoming major tourist visits from all over the world and especially Asia. The problem that has risen after its recognition is that its importance within the media and people is not yet recognized from the UNESCO.



Fig. 1 . Geographical Position of Bagnoregio, accessed on 20th March 2024, Source: [googlemaps.com](https://www.googlemaps.com)

The research carried out in this article not only focuses on the

material artifacts present in Bagnoregio but also considers the immaterial features such as online social media, which are vital to contemporary cultural heritage values. At the core of the investigation lies a fundamental question: What are the roles of modern values and societal awareness in the perceptions of heritage in the digital age, which is now mostly social media-oriented? The paper aims to portray the multi-layered human involvement in history by putting history and present-day discourses in perspective. In academia, both the research process and the ensuing text refer to the already existing problems and suggest different perspectives about the preservation and appreciation of heritage.

The gap between media or social values and the UNESCO standards has already been discussed, any researchers have already addressed the integrated view of the digital landscape and social values in the criteria set by UNESCO. The paper by McClelland et al. (2013), titled "A values-based approach to heritage planning: Promotion of the recognition of the dark side needing preservation and destruction," reveals the role of embracing diverse values in heritage conservation initiatives. One of the crucial functions of the media in heritage representation is creating an appropriate image of cultural heritage in the mind of the general public. These representations, influenced by various social and cultural features, might differ from those criteria of UNESCO for defining heritage objects. Becoming knowledgeable about the interaction between media depiction, societal values, and existing institutional norms is key to the development of successful heritage conservation strategies in the digital era. This viewpoint is especially important for us to see this topic as part of a larger context that are more than just traditional values of beauty and history. Similarly, the study conducted by Molina et al. (2023), titled "Citizens' perceptions of World Heritage values: the article by the name, "World Heritage Status and local perceptions: a case of Cuenca, Ecuador" details the differences between the local views and the criteria of World Heritage status by UNESCO. Molina et al discuss the opinion of Cuenca's community on heritage designation, which experiences the importance of placing social and cultural aspects above technical parameters. The ideas shared by this paper is consistent since they are aimed at enhancing community participation in heritage management to promote success preservation strategies. Methodologically, this article intends to adopt an interdisciplinary approach, which combines archive research, qualitative analysis as well as digital ethnography in order to capture heritage discourse in the digital age.

Moreover, the investigation is not limited to geography only but includes a comparative study of the media representation of heritage from diverse cultural perspectives such as Chinese, Italian, and other Western representations of heritage. By creating a comparison between these views, this paper aims to understand similarities and differences in the conception and presentation of heritage in different cultural paradigms.

The paper will be organized into a thematic approach that analyzes diverse aspects of Bagnoregio's historical heritage. It will commence with "**Tracing the Time: Bagnoregio's Historical Context**," where historical and cultural aspects are explored as a foundation for understanding its heritage.

Following this, "**Navigating the Digital Landscape: Social Media's Impact on Heritage Perception**" will address how the common belief that social media is changing the way contemporary Bagnoregio heritage is perceived and makes the distinction between local and institutional recognition. "**Voice of the Mayor: Government Attitudes towards Heritage in Bagnoregio**" embraces the emotions and opinions of the residents, explaining the relationship between the community and the heritage. Subsequently, "**Framing Heritage: Media Representations from Diverse Cultural Contexts**" This will extend the scope to explore Bagnoregio from different cultural contexts which will help uncover cultural stereotypes and hidden cultural traces. Finally, "**Bridging the Past and Present: Insights and Implications for Heritage Conservation**" provides a comprehensive overview of insights derived from the study, making suggestions for heritage conservation practices and addressing the challenge of institutional norms and social realities. The structured approach of the paper will thus enable readers to distinguish the heritage dynamics of Bagnoregio in the digital era.

Tracing the Time: Bagnoregio's Historical Context



Fig. 2 . Picture of Bagnoregio, Source: Giada Zhou

Situated in the heart of the Lazio Region of Central Italy, with its capital not too far away from it, Bagnoregio, an attractive town (Fig.2) with many historic and artistic monuments, is one of the places you should visit. The city of Bagnoregio can be traced back to the Etruscan civilization that prospered in Central Italy around 7th century B.C. Hence, Bagnoregio is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the region and is cradled with rich culture and archaeological wealth.

During Medieval times, Bagnoregio went through different stages of progress and culture. It, therefore, became a very important center of trade, arts, and academic exchange. The dominating position of the volcanic hill, surrounded by the picturesque Vulsino lake and Tiber river valley, gave the town both strategic advantage and aesthetic appeal. In 1695, a terrible earthquake destroyed the town (Delmonaco, 2004), and this made many buildings in the town collapse. Many of the town's people traced back their steps to the neighboring village, Bagnoregio, which set in motion a new demographic and administrative structure. From when it was established till nowadays, the town numbers decrease each year because of the eroded ground and the not easily accessible link with the city (Fig.3-4).



Fig. 3. Pathway to Bagnoregio in 1900, Source: From the Archives of Mauro Galeotti



Fig.4. Bagnoregio in 1940, Source: From the Archives of Mauro Galeotti

Recent years have posed new challenges for Bagnoregio, particularly concerning its geological fragility, as highlighted by Delmonaco et al.'s research on the "dying town" of Civita di Bagnoregio and the threat of landslides. This weakness underscores the delicate balance between preserving the culture and the risks posed by nature. Although its historical backdrop goes back to the time of the Etruscan civilization, Bagnoregio of today is being put to the test by modern threats, a high population of tourists, and weather conditions, including the erosion of volcanic cliffs and landslides. The town's situation on the top of a hill (Fig.5), once a source of strength and attraction, is now the cause of concern for the townspeople who continue to struggle with the task of seeking global recognition and help to stabilize the cliffs and protect the town from geological instability.



Fig. 5. Bagnoregio Tourism Map, Source: <https://www.civita-di-bagnoregio.info/mappa/>

The Cultural Landscape of Civita di Bagnoregio, while recognized in the tentative list submitted for UNESCO consideration (Fig.6), it has not been considered for the next step, which is the nomination, the listing raises questions about its current status and the ongoing efforts to address its challenges. While the listing emphasizes the interaction between man and nature and the quality of preservation, it's pertinent to critically evaluate how well these attributes are being maintained in the face of contemporary threats. The historical significance of the town must be juxtaposed with the practical challenges it faces today, such as dwindling population numbers and the impact of tourism on its fragile environment. Therefore, while acknowledging its historical and archaeological wealth, it's essential to explore the town's current condition and the strategies being implemented to ensure its sustainable preservation in the future.

In fact, the media presence and cultural value of Bagnoregio are not within the scope of institutional classifications, rather they signify the increasing disconnect between institutional norms and everyday realities. From this study, one of the aims is to explain this disconnect, hence, giving a comprehensive perspective of heritage preservation in a world that is constantly changing. The aim is to draw from the past and the present, put face to face social media and heritage value, why it is necessary to consider modern values, in order to accurately map out the path toward a better cultural preservation.



Fig.6. Bagnoregio UNESCO Candidacy Logo, Source: CANDIDATURA UNESCO 07/2019

tural exchange, give a chance to bridge this ideological gap. Through the use of social media, all these heritage stakeholders, such as the local communities, heritage organizations, and policymakers, will be well-informed and understand the varied mindsets concerning heritage sites. The development of more sensitive and comprehensive preservation strategies can be achieved through collaborative efforts, which integrate both local knowledge and global perspectives. The result may be the development of conservation approaches that reflect the dynamic interactions between tradition, modernity, and community beliefs. So, whereas social media may sharpen the divide between local appreciation and official recognition, it may be at the same time a springboard for a positive change in the perception and preservation of heritage.

Voice of the Mayor: Government Attitudes towards Heritage in Bagnoregio

The interview led by the CUSANO ITALIA TV, with Mayor Luca Profili offers critical insights into the complex interplay between the heritage of Bagnoregio (Fig.8), UNESCO's preservation ideals and how these are represented by the media. In his reflections not only major goals of the city are underlined but also eminent differences in stories told in different media channels are shown.



Fig.8. CUSANO ITALIA TV, Interview with the Mayor of Bagnoregio, accessed on 24th March 2024, Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJUJg7aRbbs>

“La candidatura di Civita nata nel 2015 insieme alla regione Lazio va proprio in questa direzione,” (Mayor Luca Profili, personal communication, January 30, 2022) (see Appendix A)

Mayor Profili pointed out, noting that all the members of the community cooperated quite well in order to get UNESCO recognition. Therefore, the offer for quality tourism experiences adopted by UNESCO is in line with the sustainable heritage management that Bagnoregio has a mission to maintain even though the status could be changed in the future.

Besides, the focus on how Asians from Japan and China are among the biggest groups to visit Bagnoregio indicates how media, for instance, movies, have the power to shape and influence people to travel.

“....durante la passeggiata con la guida mia mi ha raccontato che è amatissima in Giappone Civita e amatissima in

Giappone perché tutto sembra sia nato da questo fumetto di Hayao Miyazaki che sembra sia stato ambientato a Civita può di conseguenza un po' esplosa anche in Cina.” (Mayor Luca Profili, personal communication, January 30, 2022) (see Appendix A)

While the grandeur of media publicity might be hard to resist, Mayor Profili admitting real problems that mark the heritage management in the digital era suggests the complexity of the issue. He accentuated,

“Abbiamo fatto la scelta di aprire una società partecipata che si chiama Casa Civita che gestisce diciamo proprio tutta la parte relativa all'organizzazione turistica.” (Mayor Luca Profili, personal communication, January 30, 2022) (see Appendix A)

This proactive approach reflects the community's ability to bounce back from the impacts of mass tourism with the media channels as the base for disseminating balanced stories.

UNESCO values and media portrayals can be connected through the responsible narrative of stakeholders that shows devotion to culture of Bagnoregio. Through the amplification of community voices and the echoing of narratives coherent with UNESCO principles, media outlets can help in increasing knowledge and awareness about the cultural heritage of Bagnoregio (Fig.9).



Fig.9. Tony Costa Heywood, one of the seven inhabitants of Civita, crosses the footbridge to the twin village of Civita, Bagnoregio, every Wednesday morning to buy groceries. Heywood and his late wife, Astra Zarina, were American architects who moved to Civita in the 1960s and founded “The Civita Institute” to promote design, architecture, and environmental conservation. PHOTOGRAPH BY CAMILLA FERRARI, Source: <https://www.nationalgeographic.it/viaggi/2020/02/civita-di-bagnoregio-il-turismo-salvera-la-città-che-muore>

The mayor's point about the management of tourism activities at Casa Civita by the community is the foremost proof of their interventionist approach to strike a balance between the two conflicting notions of heritage preservation and the demands of modern tourism. Through the centralization of tourist management under a localized authority, Bagnoregio shows its determination to manage this balance between the preservation of its heritage and the tourists' accessibility. In addition, Sagacious Profili's acknowledgment of the risks

posed by mass tourism is an essential aspect of sustainable tourism by ensuring the town's preservation. In connection with media platforms that define globally how these heritage destinations are perceived, the involved stakeholders must provide a narrative that celebrates the cultural wealth of Bagnoregio and at the same time advocate for responsible visitors' demeanor.

In fact, Mayor Profili has shown the multifaceted character of heritage management in Bagnoregio where local aspirations, media power, and UNESCO ideals cross each other. Through the adoption of cooperative modes that bring local voices to the forefront and advocate for sustainable tourism application, Bagnoregio can negotiate the changing media environment while preserving its rich heritage for the benefit of future generations.

Navigating the Digital Landscape: Social Media's Impact on Heritage Perception

We discover in detail how media representations and the preservation of heritage are linked in exploring the intriguing scenario of Bagnoregio which is a product of different cultural views towards its historical value. By means of in-depth study involving media outlets from Italy, China, and the world – we discover multiple factors which make people think of this romantic place.

It causes different emotions towards its heritage sites among the locals who visited Bagnoregio. While some part complains the un-Italian idea of paid tourism (Fig.10), the place where everyone can have fun now, others appreciate it as a memorial site (Fig.11-12). Bagnoregio has this mysterious power that attracts even distance places, terrifying photographers and heritage lovers across the world.

In China, the saying "Castle in the Sky" is widely used, which stems from the film "Castle in the Sky," which is the name of the masterpiece of Japanese filmmaker Miyazaki Hayao. (Fig.13)



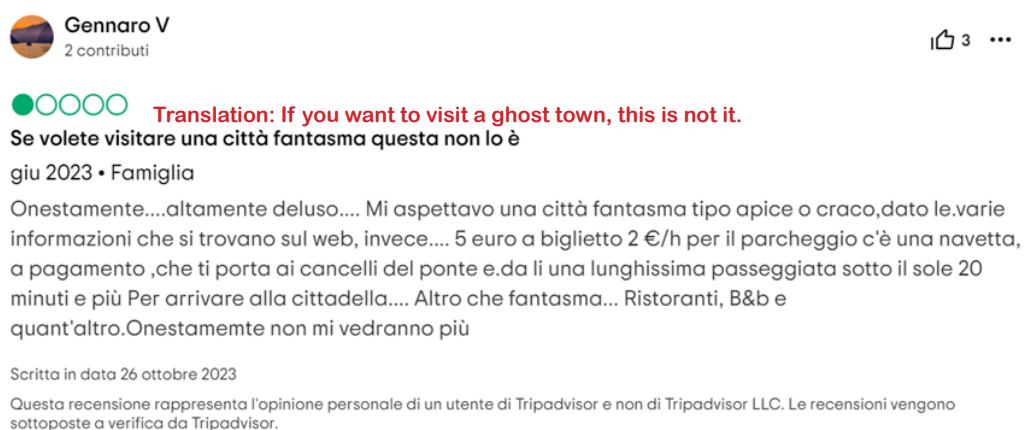
Translation: Honestly.... highly disappointed.... I was expecting a ghost town like Apice or Craco, given the various information found on the web, instead.... 5 euros per ticket 2 €/hour for parking there's a shuttle, for a fee, that takes you to the bridge gates and from there a very long walk under the sun 20 minutes and more To get to the citadel... Far from being a ghost town... Restaurants, B&Bs and whatnot. Honestly, they won't see me again.

Fig.11. Dario Accessed on March 2024, Source:Trip Advisor



Translation: What can I say? A historic gem... with only 11 inhabitants but always bustling. The peace and calm provided by those who come here to live a moment of relaxation, discovery, and love. Truly lovely... with many charming corners and stunning views! It's a must-visit at least once. Well-equipped with a beautiful square featuring a central bar and many nice restaurants. Definitely better from spring onwards, surely immersed in greenery...

Fig.12. Andrea De Masi, Accessed on March 2024, Source:Trip Advisor



Translation: Honestly.... highly disappointed.... I was expecting a ghost town like Apice or Craco, given the various information found on the web, instead.... 5 euros per ticket 2 €/hour for parking there's a shuttle, for a fee, that takes you to the bridge gates and from there a very long walk under the sun 20 minutes and more To get to the citadel... Far from being a ghost town... Restaurants, B&Bs and whatnot. Honestly, they won't see me again.

Fig.10. Gennaro V, Accessed on March 2024, Source:Trip Advisor



Fig.13. Post by @sulittleli, Comparison of Bagnoregio with Castle in the Sky, Instagram Accessed on 20th March 2024

Bagnoregio, as mentioned by the mayor himself, is widely visited by Asian tourists each year (Fig.14), it is in fact a widely spread topic shared and liked on Chinese social platforms like Xiaohongshu (Fig.15) and Douyin or by Chinese users on western social platforms. Noteworthy, travel agencies in Italy listed Bagnoregio among the top ten must-sees, more confirmation of its importance for Chinese tourism.



Fig.14. The portrayal of the town in the movie earned it this affectionate name in China. As a result, this cultural heritage catapulted Bagnoregio onto the map as a primary destination for Asian tours with many visiting the place annually. Date: 2018, Source: <https://www.nationalgeographic.it/viaggi/2020/02/civita-di-bagnoregio-il-turismo-salvera-la-citta-che-muore>



Fig.15. Search Keyword 天空之城 (Castle In The Sky), Xiaohongshu Accessed on 20th March 2024

In the Western countries, Bagnoregio is perceived mostly as a secret locality. But the remoteness of the place can leave travelers depressed. Social media platforms have become powerful storytelling channels consisting of posts that go viral, and therefore they showcase the town's ethereal beauty and historic significance. Nevertheless, this tourism boom encounters some of the particular problems such as oversurfing which in turn means balancing efforts to preserve heritage and effectively manage visitors.

Through its digital channels, the commitment of Bagnoregio community to heritage conservation strategies is exemplified. In particular, some platforms like Instagram and TikTok have allowed for quite large user-engagement, nearly 200 thousands posts on Instagram with the tag of #civitadibagnoregio (Fig.). Just like that, TikTok with over 2.8 million location visualizations and individual videos getting millions of views play a key role.

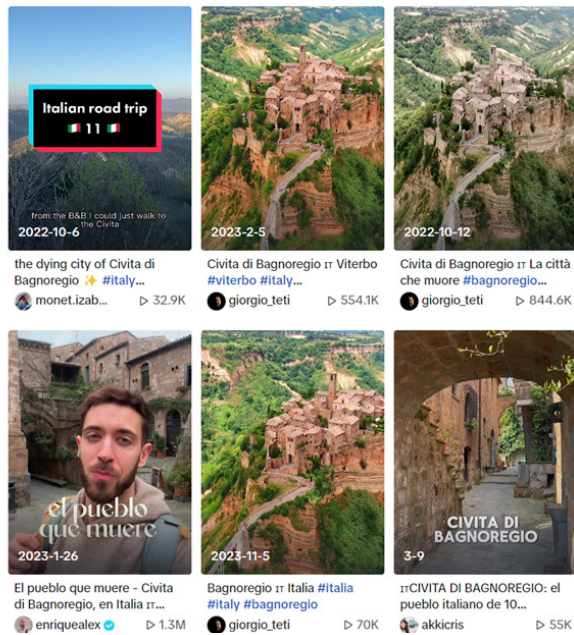


Fig.16. Search Keyword "Bagnoregio", TikTok Accessed on 29th March 2024, (Source: <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/civita dibagnoregio/>)

Behavioral correspondence versus number of tourist arrivals reveals the emerging patterns of heritage tourism. Also, tracking evolving public views on the town's cultural value through past and present accounts deliver essential views on how the town is presented in the media.

On the other hand, issues like spread of misinformation and overtourism reveal the necessity of applying subtle methods of heritage preservation in the digital age. Blending chances for engagement with the energetic preservation of traditional features may demand interesting tactics and organizations among the stakeholders.

At last, what media representations and heritage preservation present about Bagnoregio's cultural heritage is a woven story full of meanings. Through the process of digital storytelling and by using media tools in a smart manner, we can build the groundwork for the sustainable preservation of Bagnoregio's priceless heritage thus guaranteeing that the town's rich heritage remains as an inspiration for ages to come.

Bridging the Past and Present: Insights and Implications for Heritage Conservation

The study of Bagnoregio's heritage in the light of its media impact as well as the changing nature of societal norms and values illustrates the complexity of preserving heritage in the modern media age. Finally, in this work is given a comprehensive cultural analysis taking into account historical background, media representations, local views and discrepancy between local ways and institutional cultural norms. At the end of the journey, I have synthesized the main inputs and conclusions from the investigation.

First, the historical value of Bagnoregio reflects the ancient cultural elements of the town that reveal the architectural beauties and historical stories, which spread over centuries.

The town's portrayal in popular media, notably in films like "Laputa: Castle in the Sky," and the movie "Castle in the Sky" produced in 1986, has contributed to its widespread recognition and appeal, with people from all over the world flocking to see it. Nevertheless, recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site is still lacking for Bagnoregio, highlighting the administrative and cultural gap between the board's objectives and today's values.

The study of media portrayal, both on international media like Chinese social networks and local Italian platforms, reveals different stories influencing the perception of Bagnoregio's heritage. In popular culture, the town's presentation on the Internet is a combination of historical respect and current curiosity, highlighting the cultural heritage understanding challenge in the digital period.

Moreover, the investigation into local attitudes towards heritage has uncovered strongly-rooted traditions concerning Bagnoregio's old times among the inhabitants of this city. This knowledge of the town's tourism agenda, community tasks, and dreams of potential UNESCO recognition reveals much about the problems and advantages of the preservation of culture at the local level.

Nevertheless, the distinctions between UNESCO categories and regional perceptions of heritage value draw attention to the demand for conservation approaches that embrace the full spectrum of different cultural stories and social pictures. The community involvement and inclusion that the experiences in Cuenca, Ecuador, and other cultural contexts have demonstrated are essential for giving rise to sustainable heritage management.

Methodologically, this research has conducted an interdisciplinary approach integrating archival research, qualitative analysis, and digital ethnography to capture the multi-faceted nature of heritage discourse in the digital age. Media representations from diverse cultural perspectives facilitate cultural traces discovery and breaking cultural barriers that delineate heritage perception.

Conclusively, the analysis of the heritage of Bagnoregio brings crucial observations about the heritage preservation in the context of an ever more globalized society. The process of connecting past and present, recognizing value attached to modern values and media influence, and adopting inclusive conservation strategies will allow participants to create a place where people can work for a more sustainable and balanced heritage preservation. With the path of the digital era and its problems and opportunities, it is very important to understand the complexity of cultural heritage and the diversity of stories that make the cultural legacy a significant part of our lives in this day and age. With our partnerships and flexibilities, we can trace our way to bring about an inclusive, adaptable, and interesting heritage conservation of the future.

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Appendix A

Interview Transcript: Mayor Luca Profili

Original Version:

“Mi trovo dentro al municipio di Civita di Bagnoregio e sono in compagnia del sindaco, il dottor Luca Profili. Salve, sindaco.”

“Salve. Cerchiamo di capire da cosa è dato il successo internazionale di questo borgo. Si è di fatto tutto iniziato circa sei o sette anni fa quando mancava forse la consapevolezza della bellezza e del valore di questo borgo. Noi abbiamo la fortuna di avere qui nel nostro comune l'allora sindaco Francesco Bigiotti che nel 2013 ebbe questa intuizione e poi, diciamo, gli anni successivi hanno un po' definito geniale, che è quella di inserire un ticket di ingresso al borgo. Inizialmente ci furono anche molte polemiche, interne e anche all'interno dell'amministrazione stessa, però questa mossa, diciamo, poi ha fatto notizia. Quindi, da lì è nato tutto, insomma, una serie anche di servizi giornalistici e questo ticket, che era inizialmente di 50 centesimi, è come se avesse dato valore a questo luogo. È anche negli anni successivi, quando abbiamo deciso di aumentarlo prima a 3 euro e poi a 5 euro, abbiamo avuto veramente sempre una crescita esponenziale del numero di turisti che hanno raggiunto questo borgo, che nel 2019, quindi precedentemente alla pandemia, ha raggiunto circa un milione di visitatori. Proposito di ciò, quali sono state le linee guida per rafforzare anche l'offerta turistica del posto, oltre cioè questo ticket d'ingresso? Immagino che ci siano anche delle linee guida che la sua amministrazione ha seguito e continua a seguire.”

“Sì, assolutamente. Diciamo che gli investimenti in grandi eventi culturali, inizialmente, e poi su altre forme di promozione, per esempio, che abbiamo fatto soprattutto su Roma, hanno portato a questo incremento turistico. Penso anche agli eventi legati al cinema; Civita è stata negli anni la location di tanti film. Qui sono passati grandi attori anche come Totò e Alberto Sordi, quindi diciamo un mix di una grande campagna di comunicazione con finanziamento a eventi culturali che hanno portato quei grandi artisti. Civitarte, Civita Cinema, il Festival del Fumetto e questo mix di cose come portato sicuramente a questo successo. Quindi, vi siete organizzati per il miglioramento proprio dell'accoglienza turistica? Noi lo scorso anno, anzi due anni fa, abbiamo fatto la scelta di aprire una società partecipata che si chiama Casa Civita, che gestisce proprio tutta la parte relativa all'organizzazione turistica. Di conseguenza, abbiamo riorganizzato tutte le varie biglietterie sparse per il paese in questi anni insieme a questa società, nostra perché è una società in house totalmente partecipata dal comune. Stiamo organizzando tutta l'organizzazione turistica è anche quella che è la candidatura Unesco di Civita perché Casa Civita è stata, diciamo, basta, è stata stabilito che Casa Civile il site manager che sta curando la candidatura come opportunità di rinascita. Sì, assolutamente. Diciamo che la candidatura di Civita, nata nel 2015 insieme alla regione Lazio, va proprio in questa direzione. La direzione attuale è quella di passare da un turismo di quantità perché ormai abbiamo raggiunto in questi anni un turismo di qualità quindi migliorare quella che è l'offerta turistica anche ampliando un po' quelle sono le possibilità per le persone che arrivano qui perché comunque Civita è un borgo piccolo e quindi la visita media è di circa due ore, due ore e mezza. Non stiamo cercando anche con gli altri paesi che circondano il nostro territorio di far stanziare qui di più turisti, magari farli dormire e quindi anche in questo senso quali sono stati i canali di comunicazione per promuovere il borgo? Noi abbiamo la Civita, diciamo, di suo ha una grande, grande potenziale social, da questo senza dubbio. Nel 2019 circa il 25-30% di turisti che arrivano qui erano asiatici. Quindi, parti... scusi se la interrompo, durante la passeggiata con la guida mia mi ha raccontato che è amatissima in Giappone. Civita è amatissima in Giappone perché tutto sembra sia nato da questo fumetto di Miyazaki che sembra sia stato ambientato a Civita. E può di conseguenza un po' esplosa anche in Cina. Quindi, non mi sono enormi. Tant'è che nel 2019 i turisti cinesi sono stati gli stranieri che hanno visitato di più Civita, poi via via anche gli Stati Uniti e tutti i paesi europei. Quindi, diciamo che in questo caso abbiamo una grande potenza social e poi abbiamo utilizzato anche forme abbastanza, diciamo, semplici come le pubblicità su un pullman di ATAC a Roma, giornali italiani come La Repubblica e il Corriere della Sera, e poi è stata, diciamo, la pubblicità indiretta appunto come dicevo prima, razziali le sponsorizzazioni di grandi eventi quindi diciamo che queste sono state le i metodi classici. Per esempio, Roma è stato sempre considerato un po' un problema, noto a tutti qui nel Lazio, se non fai parte appunto dell'area metropolitana di Roma, sembra sia un problema. Per noi, invece, è stata una fortuna perché comunque il bacino di Roma, con due milioni di abitanti, a noi ci consente di avere veramente un numero importante di turisti anche, per esempio, nei mesi scorsi in zona gialla quando cioè se vogliamo soltanto l'inter non ha ragione, abbiamo sempre avuto un buon numero di turisti e un po' del lavoro amministrativo quindi faccio una domanda un po' tecnica. Cosa pensa di aver realizzato durante il suo mandato per Civita di Bagnoregio e cosa vorrebbe ancora realizzare nel breve tempo? Io penso che in questi anni, come dicevo prima, abbiamo lavorato molto per raggiungere un numero di turisti e quindi dare a Civita un, diciamo, farla conoscere tutte le parti del mondo. Abbiamo iniziato nel 2015 partecipando all'Expo e quindi oggi penso che i risultati si siano visti. Ora, quello che stiamo facendo e dobbiamo portare a termine tutta una serie di riqualificazioni di alcune parti del paese. Ma che punto siete con la riqualificazione? È assolutamente perché ma tutto questo è stato possibile grazie agli introiti verticali civile nel senso, sicuramente rispetto ad altri comuni, abbiamo la fortuna di avere delle entrate extratributarie dovute al ticket, dovute ai parcheggi, che ci consentono di fare investimenti migliorare quindi quello che il paese per far vedere prima i nostri cittadini residenti e poi a chi arriva a Bagnoregio di trovare un paese sicuramente più bello più organizzato e che insomma questo possa essere poi la pubblicità più grande che possiamo fare. Per quanto riguarda il futuro, adesso stiamo lavorando appunto nella sistemazione, penso, ai bagni pubblici. Partiranno a breve i lavori per la riqualificazione

di tutti i bagni pubblici del paese e poi a questa sfida del PNR che coinvolge un po' tutti a tutti i comuni anche a noi perché per esempio abbiamo presentato qualche giorno fa al nostro progetto per bando da 20 milioni nel del ministero della cultura speriamo di avere queste risorse che poi riguardano un po' tutti diciamo i punti insomma dalla sanità all'ambiente o tanti temi che insomma per noi così come del tutto tutto il paese possono essere importante invece ai cittadini quali sono le richieste più comuni che le fanno ma allora si è legata al turismo è chiaramente qui abbiamo vissuto una situazione insomma di cambiamento forte appunto a qualche anno fa turisti si svegliavano la domenica non trovavano diciamo nessuno e la vita era molto più serena ad esso in alcuni momenti dell'anno sono soprattutto il periodo estivo si trovano a dover ospitare molte persone questo è sicuramente il cambiamento abbiamo dovuto gestire perché poi dal turismo porta i pro che sono molti ma anche qualche contro uno ma perché al discorso dei parcheggi che abbiamo dovuto rivedere totalmente e ad altre ad altre situazioni quindi abbiamo questo compito anche di tifar diciamo sentire la nostra vicinanza ai cittadini proteggendoli un pochino soprattutto nei momenti in cui qui arrivano tantissime persone poi è innegabile insomma che abbiamo portato molta ricchezza al paese l'apertura di nuove attività anzi come la creazione anche di molti posti di lavoro questo senza dubbio e soprattutto il fatto che bagnoregio forse del paese in Italia che è riuscita da ad abolire tutte le tasse comunali perché noi qui abbiamo abolito la tassa ancora prima che lo facesse il governo ha detto le comunali per fa 0 i bambini vanno a scuola con mensa e scuolabus gratuiti i parcheggi per i residenti sono gratuiti abbiamo inserito da dallo scorso anno al bonus bebè pd quando nasce un bambino 1.500 euro e dallo scorso anno siamo riusciti a fare un'operazione che secondo me appunto porte non ha avuto nemmeno un grande risalto ma noi riusciamo a ridare a tutte le donne di bagnoregio un contributo di 50 euro per l'acquisto degli assorbenti igienici e credo che insomma sia una misura di grande civiltà su un tema che viene spesso tocca roma ma poi concretamente insomma si fa poco quindi insomma questo è quello che poi ci ha consentito di fare il turismo la ricchezza che hanno votato invece come avete gestito la pandemia dal punto di vista sociale è stato un momento sicuramente critico ridicolo per noi perché chiaramente essendo ormai un paese a vocazione turistica al blocco insomma totale degli spostamenti ha messo veramente in serie difficoltà grazie a dio ne siamo ne siamo usciti continuiamo a vedere insomma gli strascichi di questa di questa situazione però abbiamo cercato come penso tutti e tutte le amministrazioni e stare vicino ai cittadini che si sono trovati in un primo momento insomma proprio frastornati da questa storia è che nei mesi successivi ci hanno avuto anche problemi economici che abbiamo cercato di supportare sia con gli aiuti e sono arrivati da dal governo centrale sia stanziando per esempio lo scorso anno per le attività commerciali dei contributi nostri però ecco anche psicologicamente abbiamo cercato insomma di far sentire la nostra vicinanza in cosa vuole che ci vita sia diversa nel futuro ma noi ecco anche rispetto a quelli che sono gli obiettivi che si è posto il governo sul pnr r credo che abbiamo una grande sfida che è quella lì ambientale quindi mi piacerebbe per esempio stiamo lavorando già che nei giorni scorsi abbia fatto degli incontri immagino civita plastic free quindi la potenza di civita delle immagini di civita al servizio di un po' di tutti i borghi quindi un po' come immagine che può veicolare messaggi positivi per tutti grazie grazie mille signora poi"

Translation:

"I find myself inside the town hall of Civita di Bagnoregio, and I am in the company of Mayor Dr. Luca Profili."

"Hello. Let's try to understand what has led to the international success of this village. It all started about six or seven years ago when perhaps there was a lack of awareness of the beauty and value of this village. We were fortunate to have here in our municipality the former mayor Francesco Bigiotti, who in 2013 had this intuition and then, in the following years, we could somewhat define it as brilliant, which was to introduce an entrance ticket to the village. Initially, there were many controversies, even within the administration itself, but this move, let's say, made headlines. So, from there, everything was born, in short, a series of journalistic services and this ticket, which initially was set at 50 cents, as if it had given value to this place. Also, in the following years, when we decided to increase it to 3 euros and then to 5 euros, we truly experienced an exponential growth in the number of tourists who reached this village, which in 2019, before the pandemic, reached around a million visitors. Regarding this, what were the guidelines to strengthen the tourist offer of the place, beyond this entrance ticket? I imagine that there are also guidelines that your administration has followed and continues to follow."

"Absolutely, yes. Let's say that investments in major cultural events, initially, and then in other forms of promotion, for example, what we did mainly in Rome, have led to this tourist increase. I also think of events related to the cinema; Civita has been, over the years, the setting for many films. Great actors like Totò and Alberto Sordi have been here, so it's a mix of a great communication campaign with funding for cultural events that have brought those great artists. Civitarte, Civita Cinema, the Comic Festival, and this mix of things have certainly led to this success. So, have you organized for the improvement of tourist reception? Last year, or rather two years ago, we made the choice to open a joint-stock company called Casa Civita, which manages all aspects of tourism organization. Consequently, we reorganized all the various ticket offices scattered throughout the village over these years together with this company because it is a wholly owned in-house company of the municipality. We are organizing all the tourist organization, and also the UNESCO candidacy of Civita, because Casa Civita has been tasked with managing the candidacy as an opportunity for rebirth. Absolutely, yes. The candidacy of Civita, born in 2015 together with the Lazio Region, goes precisely in this direction. The current direction is to move from mass tourism because by now we have reached a level of quality tourism, so we aim to improve the tourist offer, also by expanding the possibilities for people who come here because Civita is a small village and the average visit is about two to two and a half hours. We are also trying

with the other countries that surround our territory to encourage more tourists to stay here, perhaps to spend the night. So, what were the communication channels used to promote the village? Civita itself has great social potential, undoubtedly. In 2019, about 25-30% of tourists who came here were Asian. Excuse me for interrupting, but during the walk with my guide, I was told that Civita is highly beloved in Japan. Civita is loved in Japan because everything seems to have started from this comic by Miyazaki that seems to have been set in Civita. Consequently, it also became popular in China. We had a significant number of Chinese tourists in 2019, who were the foreigners who visited Civita the most, followed by the United States and all European countries. So, we have great social potential in this case, and then we also used relatively simple forms of promotion, such as advertisements on ATAC buses in Rome, Italian newspapers like *La Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera*, and then there was indirect advertising through sponsorship of major events. So, these were the classic methods. For example, Rome has always been considered a known problem for everyone here in Lazio. If you are not part of the metropolitan area of Rome, it seems to be a problem. For us, however, it has been fortunate because the Rome basin, with two million inhabitants, allows us to have a significant number of tourists, even, for example, in recent months, in the yellow zone, when only interregional travel was allowed. We always had a good number of tourists, and some administrative work, so I have a somewhat technical question. What do you think you have achieved during your term for Civita di Bagnoregio, and what would you still like to achieve in the short term? I think that in recent years, as I said before, we have worked hard to reach a number of tourists and to make Civita known all over the world. We started in 2015 by participating in the Expo, and today I think the results are visible. Now, what we are doing and what we have to complete are a series of redevelopments of some parts of the village. At what stage are you with the redevelopment? Absolutely, because all this was possible thanks to the revenues from Civita. Certainly, compared to other municipalities, we are fortunate to have extra-tax revenues due to the ticket and parking fees, which allow us to make investments and improve the village, to show it first to our resident citizens and then to those who come to Bagnoregio, to find a definitely more beautiful, organized village, and that this can then be the biggest advertisement we can make. Regarding the future, we are currently working on the refurbishment, I think, of the public toilets. The works for the refurbishment of all the public toilets in the village will start shortly. Then there is this challenge of the PNR, which involves all the municipalities, including us, because, for example, we presented our project to the Ministry of Culture a few days ago for a 20 million euros grant. We hope to obtain these resources, which concern everyone, from health to the environment, many issues that are important for us as well as for the entire country. What are the most common requests from citizens? It is related to tourism. Clearly, we have experienced a strong change here a few years ago. Tourists would wake up on Sundays and find no one, life was much more peaceful, but at certain times of the year, especially in the summer, they find themselves having to host many people. This is certainly the change we had to manage because tourism brings many pros but also some cons, such as the issue of parking that we had to completely review and other situations. So, we also have the task of making our closeness felt to the citizens, protecting them a little, especially in times when many people arrive here. It is undeniable that we have brought a lot of wealth to the village, the opening of new businesses, indeed, the creation of many jobs, and especially the fact that Bagnoregio is perhaps the only village in Italy that has managed to abolish all municipal taxes. Here, we abolished the municipal taxes even before the government did it. The municipal taxes for children are free, and they go to school with free meals and school buses. Parking for residents is free. Since last year, we have introduced the baby bonus; when a child is born, 1,500 euros are granted. Since last year, we have also managed to give back to all the women of Bagnoregio a contribution of 50 euros for the purchase of hygiene products, and I think it is a measure of great civility on a topic that is often talked about but then, concretely, little is done. This is what allowed us to generate tourism, the wealth that we then used. How did you manage the pandemic from a social point of view? It was certainly a critical moment for us because, being now a tourist-oriented town, the total lockdown of movements put us in serious difficulties. Thank God, we have emerged from it, but we continue to see the aftermath of this situation. However, we tried, like all administrations, to be close to the citizens who found themselves initially stunned by this story, and then in the following months, they also had economic problems that we tried to support both with aid from the central government and by allocating, for example, last year, contributions to commercial activities from us. But even psychologically, we tried to make our closeness felt. What do you want Civita to be like in the future? I think that compared to the objectives set by the government on the PNR, we have a great challenge, which is environmental. For example, we are already working on making Civita plastic-free, so Civita's potential images at the service of all the villages, as an image that can convey positive messages for everyone. Thank you very much, Mayor. Thank you."