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Instagram streaming sessions as a form of archaeological communication: the case of the Colombare di Negrar project

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Abstract

What happens if a study day is cancelled because of the pandemic and your excavation team cannot share the latest results of its research through "traditional" formats? You may decide to organise a webinar. Or you may decide to carry out an experiment. We operators of the Colombare excavation site decided not to move our study day to the University's online platform to share our results with the public. Instead, we chose to organise a series of live streaming sessions on Instagram, with three goals in mind: to talk about archaeology in an informal yet scientific way; to increase our followers on the social network; and to reach new groups of stakeholders. In our view, it was a rewarding choice and our goals have all been accomplished.

Introduction

To share new data about ongoing archaeological research with colleagues, students and participating institutions such as local councils, archaeological supervisory authorities, museums and laboratories, you may decide to organise a study day or conference in your university. This has always been common practice for university-related research and the default option not only to share information with your colleagues, but also to justify potential applications for funding or the extension of excavation rights. In summary, it is a key institutional event with both informational and practical purposes, which in many cases precedes (or runs parallel to) public disclosure of results/conclusions through an array of projects.

In order to share the first results of the Colombare di Negrar di Valpolicella (VR) excavation conducted in 2019 and led by Umberto Tecchiati, our intention as the University of Milan's Prehistory, Protohistory and Environmental Archaeology Laboratory (PRECLAB) was to follow this praxis. The excavation staff was meant to take part in a study day held by the University of Milan in Via Noto 8 on Wednesday the 6th of May 2020. Delegates representing partner research institutions, such as the Superintendency of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the provinces of Verona, Rovigo and Vicenza, the Council of Negrar and the Natural History Museum of Verona, were due to attend the meeting. The event was aimed at presenting the prehistoric site of Colombare di Negrar, explaining why archaeological research has resumed at the site after 70 years, and showcasing the results of the 2019 excavation as well as related media and educational projects.

Use of the past tense in this context is mandatory. Covid-19 restrictions completely transformed our original plans. The events are well-known: since the end of February 2020, with the detection of the first cases of SARS-CoV-2 and sudden spike in the epidemiological curve, many activities throughout Italy were preventatively suspended to stop gatherings and the spread of the virus. And when the first lockdown in our history began on the 9th of March 2020, it was clear that things would not be going back to normal in a matter of a few weeks. In response, we had to change our

daily habits and adapt to newly implemented virtual classrooms, as well as cancel all meetings organised before the onset of the pandemic. In summary, it was immediately apparent that our study day scheduled for the 6th of May could not go ahead.

As staff members of the excavation, we asked ourselves what we would do. Give up on the study day to brief our colleagues and students entirely? Postpone it to a later date? Or follow the example of colleagues who had moved all their activities online and organise a webinar instead? The latter was a real possibility, but we were not convinced. In spite of this option, we chose to carry on an experiment: a series of Instagram live streams (Redazione Preclab 2020; Scavo di Negrar 2020). The goals of this operation were essentially four: treat the topic of archaeology in a less formal, albeit rigorous, way; reach a wider audience, beyond that of our university cohorts, including different types of stakeholders (in particular, the residents and private enterprises of Valpolicella, our reference area); increase our Instagram profile's followers; understand how to direct our efforts in the future.

Although the first season of live broadcasts lasted a few weeks, the research related to the use of Instagram is not over. These live broadcasts have been for us a starting point, to learn how to explain our activities to our target audience. Our aim was not to replicate on social networks an experience that we were originally meant to happen in person, but rather taking advantage of the opportunity to experiment with unusual tools and languages in communicating archaeology. While the use of social networks for archaeological or scientific communication is not an absolute novelty, it is however known that with the pandemic this has notably increased, forcing archaeologists and museum curators to plan many more activities on these media, inventing formats and testing their skills as communicators. The pandemic has accelerated the digital revolution of cultural heritage communication, from museums to archaeological excavations, bringing to fruition a series of changes that had been brewing for some time. With our experiment, we wanted to contribute to and be protagonists of this revolution. But why did we choose to move the study day to social media? And why on Instagram? There were three main reasons.

Social media is part of the Colombare project's communication strategy

Firstly, social media is part of the communication strategy of the public archaeology project we are engaged in. Ever since the archaeological staff resumed research in the Colombare di Negrar in 2019, the aim has been to structure a public archaeology project to engage the people of Valpolicella and for people to get to know the site, as well as promote it as a tourism destination, and share data and insights with other researchers. The goal is thus to promote not only the cultural but also the social and economic growth of the territory, using the entire toolset at our disposal.

We know that public archaeology is a "participatory process of building knowledge and identities based on community engagement and a profound analysis of individuals' needs" (Paterlini & Ripanti 2016) and that it is not enough to access the website or social media pages of an excavation site to claim to have truly established a relationship with a wider audience. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that digital communication represents a key part of public archaeology (Bonacchi & Moshenka 2015; Bonacchi 2017, pp. 60-61; Volpe 2020, pp. 71-74) and that social media—by now—are part of the 'toolbox' of the archaeologist (Falcone 2018, p. 18). In fact, for some time now, researchers (Bonacchi 2017, pp. 61-66; Richardson 2013, p. 5) have remarked that the potential to engage audiences in archaeology via digital media and social media has grown exponentially. And that, increasingly often, social networks are valid tools to share academic information amongst researchers themselves and the public (Falcone 2018, pp. 13-17; Williams et al. 2019, pp. 20-23).

To achieve these objectives, however, it is necessary to treat social media as a testing ground for experimenting with new languages and formats while maintaining the expected standards of rigour. For this reason, starting from September 2019, we decided to create two social media pages (on Instagram and Facebook) dedicated to the project, on which we posted images and stories about the excavation, and a section of the prehistory laboratory (PRECLAB)'s website, where we shared stories about the research and data,

theses and publications with those who request them. We decided not to divide the audience into specialists and non-specialists; as Chiara Bonacchi (Bonacchi 2009, pp. 337-341) writes, the public is the whole community.

For this reason, our goal was to use a language that anyone (archaeologists and non) can understand while ensuring that all information was correct.

At the time of writing (August 2021), the excavation site's communication strategy is still being defined and is also the focus of an ongoing thesis that includes an analysis of Valpolicella residents' interest in local archaeological sites. As already said, making archaeology clear and near to people is the main idea of the project. The archaeological language has many specific terms: one of the key points of this work (and in general of the laboratory's communication strategy) is to explain them. Another goal is to explain the excavation method. Only time and an analysis of the community—as suggested by the authors of the *Manuale di management per l'archeologia* (Megale & Monti 2021, pp. 1-31)—will tell us if this is the right direction.

Instagram is a trend and live streaming are too

The second reason for our choice is that we also wanted to be part of a 'trend'. During the lockdown, individuals, celebrities, companies and cultural institutions decided to take advantage of the prospects offered by social networks for their communicational needs. According to a report published in July 2020 (Blogmeter 2020), the social networks that received the most traffic during the pandemic were Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, in that order. According to Comscore (2020), 36.7 million Italians visited social networks in March 2020, at a time when lockdown restrictions were particularly strict. The report shows how users spent an average of 40 minutes per day on social networks, a 53% increase compared to the previous year. The data collected by some museums confirm this attention to social media and in particular to those managed by cultural institutions. Compared to the same period in 2019, during the first months of lockdown (between March and April 2020), the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome increased monthly views on its channels by 44% (ICOM Italia 2021).

Restrictions on movement combined with the unexpected increase in available time led to a boom in popularity for live video streaming as a means to connect with the public and share ideas and information. As a result, live broadcasts, already widely in use by social media influencers and digital content creators, have become an important means of communication for cultural institutions such as museums and archaeological sites. Often hosted by museum directors themselves, live broadcasts have become the preferred means to create a point of contact with potential visitors, carry out digital activities and 'open up' many cultural sites and landmarks temporarily closed to the public.

Engaging the public in 'extreme' situations and reinventing archaeological language

The third and last reason for deciding to channel the contents of the cancelled study day into a series of Instagram live streams is that, even before the pandemic, social media has been effectively used to engage the public in cases in which in-person interaction was not possible, as well as disseminate very specific content in an accessible way aimed at communities of non-experts. Certain notable cases concern other social media platforms—Twitter, Facebook, YouTube—but some analogies can be drawn with our Colombare experiment.

An interesting case is that of Must Farm (Wakefield 2020), a 2015-2016 excavation site on the outskirts of Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire. In this case, the analogy with the Colombare project concerns the sharing of excavation data through social media almost in real-time. To engage and educate citizens, the project's staff began employing 'traditional' communication strategies, such as guided tours and on-site conferences. The specific characteristics of the site, however, made accessing it particularly challenging; and many requests for guided visits had to be turned down.

In order to make the site accessible to those who were 'excluded' and continue communicating the excavation in 'real-time', the project's leaders decided to move part of their communication online, using a website, Twitter account and Facebook page to share new discoveries. Thanks to Facebook's Insights function and analysis of comments, the operation produced a substantial amount of

quantitative and qualitative data that showed how regular posting and tailored social media events increased the page's and therefore the excavation site's visibility, and how posts written using simple yet accurate language as well as continuous interaction with the public through comments favoured people's involvement.

Concerning innovations in language, the experience of ArchaeoDuck, a YouTube channel managed by Chloë N. Duckworth, an archaeological scientist by training, specialized in the investigation of ancient and medieval pyrotechnologies (Duckworth 2019, pp. 190-199), is telling. She adopted a rigorous language, but 'understandable' to non-experts too. It is important not to underestimate the public, but also not to assume that people interested in a site know the technical language of archaeologists. In 2017, after attending a day of training on academic efforts in digital media financed by the British Academy, Duckworth came up with the idea of recording brief videos to explain the themes of her post-doctoral fellowship. The idea soon transformed into a much wider educational project. For the author, the creation of the YouTube channel was the pretext to talk, more generally, about the archaeological method with a non-expert audience. Duckworth thus tried to fill the gap between specialists' formal avenues of communication and the oversimplified narratives presented by traditional media, explaining technical lexicon - such as 'material culture' and 'typology' - in simple and 'pop' terms. For example, she used props such as various edible materials and Legos to explain stratigraphy. The goal was to debunk myths about archaeology, talk about what it means to be an archaeologist and contrast pseudoarchaeology.

The idea of creating live streams is also inspired by the experiences of curators and directors of museums and archaeological sites who, during the first months of the pandemic, used Facebook and Instagram to render their structures 'open to the public'. Among these were Valentino Nizzo, director of the Etruscan Museum of Villa Giulia (Museo Etrusco di Villa Giulia 2020); Christian Greco, director of the Egyptian Museum of Turin (Museo Egizio Torino 2020); Gabriel Zuchtriegel, director of the Archaeological Park of Paestum and Velia (Parco Archeologico Paestum 2020); James M. Bradburne, director of the Pinacoteca di Brera (Pinacoteca di Brera 2020). Often, they conducted their streams without a set program, sometimes using only their mobile phones to capture 'spontaneous' moments. The purpose of these live broadcasts was not only to offer a service to long-time followers, but also to attract new ones.

Like in the cases of the Louvre in Paris, the Museum of Science and Technology in Milan and the National Museum in New Delhi, we decided to conduct live streams from home and to use a specific hashtag to identify the initiative. In March 2020, The Louvre Museum created an Instagram format broadcasted also on its Facebook channel, marked by the hashtag #LouvreChezVous. In these brief videos, the museum curators explained their job in smart working during the lockdown and talked about the section they curate, showing the most important masterpieces. (Musee du Louvre 2020). The goal: show to the public that even if the museum was closed, the curators were still working for the citizens. The curators of The Museo della Scienza e della Tecnologia di Milano used Instagram TV, YouTube and Facebook. They broadcasted, mostly from their home, few videos, live streaming and interviews, marked by the hashtag #storieaportechiuse, firstly to explain the scientific aspects and many curiosities related to Coronavirus and secondly to talk about the collections (Museo Nazionale Scienza e Tecnologia 2020). In April 2020, the National Museum of New Delhi published on its Instagram and Facebook channels few videos marked by the hashtag #MuseumConcertFromHome. This initiative was organized "to connect virtually with museum friends and make the collection accessible to all, while we are homebound" (National Museum New Delhi 2020). The citizens were encouraged to join in a musical journey by recording, from home, their favourite song which was inspired by any of the Ragamala paintings from New Delhi Museum collections.

All these aspects are rather unusual for members of such institutions. A video shot at home or from a mobile phone without a direction, talking directly with the public, marks a greater authenticity in communication, a consequence of the situation that has arisen with the pandemic. It should be noted that even during the second lockdown, museums, archaeological sites and excavation teams

	First episode	*Second episode*	*Third episode*	*Fourth episode*
When	Friday 5th June 2020, 6:00 pm	Monday 8th June 2020, 6:00 pm	Monday 15th June 2020, 6:00 pm	Monday 29th June 2020 6:00 pm
Guest	Umberto Tecchiati, Professor in Prehistory and Protohistory at the University of Milan and Director of the excavation site of Colombare di Negrar di Valpolicella (VR)	Paola Salzani, Archaeologist at the Superintendency of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the provinces of Verona, Rovigo and Vicenza, and Prof. Umberto Tecchiati	Roberto Grison, Mayor of Negrar	Nicoletta Martinelli and Massimo Saracino (Natural History Museum of Verona)
Title	Discovering Valpolicella's Palaeo-Environment	Teaching Environmental Protection	Can Archaeology bring Tourism to Valpolicella?	C'era una volta Francesco Zorzi ("The Legacy of Francesco Zorzi")
Duration	21:25	05:05 and 09:57	09:26	23:56
Views	216	194 and 169	120	139
Interactions	2 positive comments; 26 likes	1 positive comment and 26 likes; 0 comments and 15 likes	0 comments; 24 likes	1 positive comment; 21 likes (2 surely from Verona)
Description	We broadcast live during World Environment Day, talking about the significance of the archaeological and palaeo-environmental research in Colombare di Negrar, future plans for our excavation site as well as its promotion.	Scientific research and environmental protection are two sides of the same coin. With Paola Salzani and Umberto Tecchiati we talked about the agreements, collaboration and common planning between the Superintendency of Verona and the University of Milan. Due to Internet connection problems, we could not host Paola Salzani live. Instead, we posted a pre-recorded interview, which received good feedback from our followers.	We talked about the cultural and archaeological heritage of Valpolicella with Mayor Grison, highlighting the strategies for its protection and promotion, especially in relation to archaeological landmarks' tourism potential.	Francesco Zorzi, who directed the Natural History Museum of Verona in the 1950s, was responsible for launching the first excavation site Colombare di Negrar. We talked with Martinelli and Saracino about his personal archives, the history of archaeological research carried out by the Museum in Negrar and its recent collaboration with the University of Milan. This episode began with a short online interview with Francesca Briani, a member of Verona's City Council responsible for social policy and youth outreach.

Table 1. Episodes 1 to 4.

have settled on streaming as the preferred medium to communicate with the public and acquire followers. Examples are the *Piccoli Musei Narranti* initiative and the activities of the University of Siena in San Galgano (SI). Between November 2020 and January 2021, for example, the Piccoli Musei association invited its members to join the *Piccoli Musei Narranti* initiative (Membrini 2021; Piccoli Musei 2020). The project involved a marathon of live-streamed readings. As many as 150 museums participated, with an average of four video contributions each published on their respective YouTube and social media channels. The operation was meant to encourage small museums to take advantage of their social media pages in order to communicate with the public during closings and to provide teachers with educational material.

In November 2020, during the second lockdown, the Laboratory of Applied Informatics in Medieval Archaeology of the Department of Historical Sciences and Cultural Heritage of the University of Siena used pre-

	Fifth episode	*Sixth episode*	*Seventh episode*	*Eighth episode*
When	Monday 6th July 2020, 6:00 pm	Monday 13th July 2020, 6:00 pm	Monday 20th July 2020, 6:00 pm	Monday 27th July 2020, 6:00 pm
Guest	Luigi Magnini, Researcher at the University of Sassari and Project Director of Scavo, Telerilevamento, Studio dei materiali e del Paesaggio dell'Altopiano di Asiago (STEMPA)	Umberto Tecchiati	Chiara Reggio, Prehistorical Archaeologist and Museum Educator	Stefano Viola, Prehistorical Archaeologist at the University of Milan
Title	What is Space Archaeology?	The Life of Prehistoric Man in Colombare di Negrar	Prehistorical Archaeology for Everyone	About Surveys
Duration	14:33	16:27	12:55	17:03
Views	175	175	154	135
Interactions	1 positive comment; 20 likes	1 positive comment; 21 likes	1 positive comment posted by a citizen from Negrar; 25 likes	0 comments; 30 likes (1 surely from Valpolicella)
Description	We talked to Doctor Magnini about the concept of "Space Archaeology" and some of archaeologists' "tools" in this field, such as aerial photography and the Geographic Information System (GIS). We also discussed the Colombare di Negrar 2019 research's conclusions.	Professor Umberto Tecchiati explained how people used to live 6,500 years ago in Valpolicella, including details about the economy in Colombare di Negrar, what natural resources were available, what food was consumed, and how and why different communities came into contact with each other.	In this episode, we discussed how to communicate prehistorical archaeology to the public and how to involve people in archaeologists' activities in order to create a bond both with the local territory and its prehistorical cultural heritage. We also talked about educational and communicational strategies aimed at implementing public archaeology projects.	With Stefano Viola we talked about the surveying process, and how to discover potential areas of archaeological interest and research sites; surveys prior to the 2019 excavation provided crucial information to understand the Colombare site's extension and functions.

Table 1. Episodes 5 to 8.

produced and streamed content to show archaeologists at work digging the abbey of San Galgano, Chiusdino (SI) (Archeologia a San Galgano 2020; Archeologia San Galgano 2021; Let's Dig Again 2021).

What we did

Mostly inspired by the examples observed in March and April 2020, Colombare excavation site operators decided to turn down the option of moving the study day to the University's online Teams platform. Instead of organising an online conference, we chose to conduct a series of live social media streaming sessions to share our results with the public. While having two social media accounts—Facebook and Instagram, which were launched at the time of the first excavation—we chose to conduct the streaming on our Instagram account (Redazione Preclab 2020; Scavo di Negrar 2020) which

has the most followers, therefore the highest potential for visibility.

Between the end of April and the beginning of May 2020, this author created a publication/posting plan together with U. Tecchiati. We agreed on broadcasting live once a week, from the 5th of June to the 27th of July 2020, hosting a different member of our crew each time. Every episode of the format, titled *Le Colombare in Diretta* (#colombareindiretta), was structured as a brief interview hosted by myself: in addition to having studied archaeology, the author is also a member of Lombardy's Order of Journalists. These hybrid skills, in archaeology and in journalism, surely allowed me to better manage the live broadcasts and ask pertinent but also interesting questions for non-experts. We broadcast 8 live episodes and a pre-recorded video, each episode lasting from 9 to 23 minutes, for an average of 15 minutes each. The live streaming series' schedule of topics

Fig. 1. *Screenshot of the Scavo di Negrar IGTV channel.*

sometimes we had to stage rehearsals before going live. Taking advantage of the social network's accessibility, every episode was posted and saved to the IGTV (Instagram TV) channel linked to the excavation site's profile, each with a dedicated cover image (Figure 1).

Each video was also embedded and published together with a brief synopsis in an article posted in the News section of the PRECLAB website (PRECLAB 2021). Each of these articles was then shared on the excavation site's Facebook profile the following day, to increase visibility. Assigning a dedicated hashtag to each episode, based on the main topic of the day, was part of the strategy to increase visibility. Writing articles and posting on Facebook took about three hours a week.

Results

Were we successful in sharing our research conclusions in an accessible and informal way? Did our social media profile grow in popularity? Did we reach the people of Valpolicella? In our view, our initiative was a very good start.

Live broadcasting on Instagram is like having a conversation. It is not a presentation, as slides or pre-recorded videos cannot be aired. While this may be considered a drawback, for those used to present their research in detail in an academic context, this format allows for experimenting with different languages, given the lack of visual aids. Having to present to a more generic audience composed of many non-experts, all of our interviewees talked about their research in a less technical and less formal, yet scientifically accurate way. As a result of the live streaming of the eight episodes, which were then added to our account's IGTV feed, our social media followers increased. Starting with slightly over 350 followers on the 5th of June 2020, our account grew over 500 followers as of the 27th of July 2020.

The results concerning the number of views deserve further comment: up to the time of writing, we reached an average of 163 views and 23 likes per episode, with the episodes on the topics of the palaeo-environment in Valpolicella and environmental protection receiving the most views, 216 and 194 respectively. What we know about the likes is that two of them come from Valpolicella. This makes it clear how much work still

and guests mimicked that of our cancelled study day. An interview with Roberto Grison, Mayor of Negrar (table 1), replaced formal greetings by our department's Director and the Vice-Rector of the University of Milan. In every episode, we tried to explain a particular aspect of the excavation (what 'space archaeology' means; why the study of the Valpolicella's paleoenvironment is so important; what the survey is; etc). We also explained technical terms, to make it easier to understand our job.

Live streaming did not always go as planned. We faced Internet connection problems which sometimes led to episodes being suspended or having to be filmed all over again.

Moreover, some of our guests did not feel comfortable with appearing on Instagram and
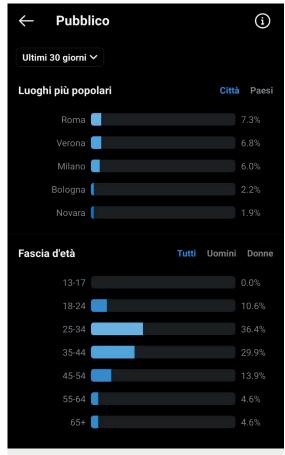
Fig.2. Scavo di Negrar Instagram profile's statistic data.

needs to be done to get the public massively involved.

Of note is the fact that the study day would have been held in a room with a maximum capacity of well under 250 people, therefore the outcome of this experiment has so far been remarkable. Thanks to the views we have reached a number of people almost equal to what we would have reached during the study day, if we had had the largest room available.

All episodes are still available on the account's IGTV channel, hence a further increase in views and popularity—especially on the back of a promotional strategy—is foreseeable.

In conclusion, while we cannot know for certain whether we were truly able to reach and garner the attention of Valpolicella's citizens, what we can say is that 6.8 per cent of our social media followers are located in the area of Verona (Figure 2), where Valpolicella is, the second most significant geographical concentration after Rome and before Milan. We believe we have just begun to overcome communication barriers. Thanks to this format, we think we have presented a possible alternative approach

for those who need to communicate their research results during the pandemic.

In light of this experience and of the data collected, we have decided to structure a second phase of *Le Colombare* live to continue our research and enhance our use of Instagram. These goals are crucial for us to improve the accessibility of our site.

Furthermore, pending the results of the questionnaire drawn up for the research that we have previously mentioned, we have also planned for the creation of an annual Instagram editorial to be modified based on the data. Each year, the live broadcasting season, lasting about four months, will be accompanied by the creation of ad hoc posts with a frequency of at least three a week during the excavation period and one a week after the campaign. The live broadcasts are certainly a good starting point, but by themselves are not sufficient for realizing the full potential of this social network. Maintaining regularity in posts and communication and paying greater attention to the content of the posts will also be fundamental to obtaining analysable results, as suggested by the authors of the *Archeosocial* essay dedicated to the potential of Instagram in archaeology (Todisco & D'Eredità 2018, pp. 74-79).

Each season of live broadcasts will include interviews with the professionals who collaborate with the PRECLAB, focusing on the research being conducted. Interviews with members of the community in which we operate will emphasise the direct involvement of the public. Live streams onsite of the excavation, finally, will follow the example of the staff of San Galgano. Like in the first season, an article will be dedicated to each live broadcast on the PRECLAB website and then be shared on social networks.

At the time of writing, we have applied this format to the first episodes of the program's second season. We are asking the audience to participate more in the live streams. The scarcity of interactions—which, in any case, were always very positive—that we recorded stopped us from conducting a qualitative analysis of the data, learning more about our spectators or dwelling upon topics that were of local interest. This is certainly something to reflect upon. Our aim has not changed: we want to quickly share data not only with the expert community but also with a wider public, focusing especially on the local Negrar community. In addition to

using hashtags dedicated to the single initiative, following the example of the Louvre Museum and the Museo della Scienza e della Tecnologia, we are increasing the use of generic hashtags and tags of local accounts to engage the public we serve.

Phase two also includes another very important point: the monitoring of the time taken each week for the management of Instagram, both by myself and by the students involved in the communication project ever since the 2021 excavation campaign. This analysis will also be extended to the other communication tools used, including Facebook and the website, and will be used to precisely define the resources available to the laboratory and to quantify costs. This will help us to calibrate the communication strategy based on our demonstrable benefits and to quantify its economic value. Even communication, like any other activity linked to the excavation, must be adequately financed and valued to guarantee quality work, with specific resources carefully dedicated to each activity.

In this regard, we foresee the need in the future to organise training workshops with the students involved in the project. Fortunately, the PRECLAB team is already multi-disciplinary: as well as the author, who studied archaeology and is a journalist, and uses digital communication tools daily, some members also have graphic skills.

This would allow us to encourage the formation of hybrid skills (archaeological and communication skills) to continue with the project over the next few years.

Conclusions

Using Instagram instead of a videoconferencing platform to respond to the restrictions imposed to contain the spread of the pandemic was, in our view, the right choice: one from which we learned a great deal and that

gave us a number of useful insights. Firstly, it demonstrated that rigour and authoritativeness can be upheld outside of the academic context. Hesitance in using social media derives from fear of over-simplifying content, but this was not our case. As in the case of ArcheoDuck, during the interviews, we made efforts to explain to a heterogeneous audience of experts and non-experts difficult and peculiar topics, such as remote sensing and space archaeology. The informal language and interview structure made reaching different stakeholders, both internal and external to our university, possible.

We have not given up on the specific terminology that identifies our work. We have explained it to make the comprehension easier for non-experts.

Secondly, by using Instagram, we were able to save every single live stream to our IGTV channel. If we had conducted a live conference, we could only have done so by recording and transcribing each contribution—which, in any case, would have resulted in a more formal type of communication. This experience allowed us to experiment with a different type of language and keep track of the important communication exercises being conducted at the same time. The videos are, in fact, still available, months after having been published. The specific hashtags that accompanied each episode, the embedding of the videos in articles on the PRECLAB website and posting on Colombare di Negrar's Facebook page increased the visibility of the videos, which are available for whoever wishes to consult them.

In conclusion, *Le Colombare in Diretta* was an excellent testing ground for using a versatile medium such as Instagram to share research. The experience, which emerged from challenging circumstances, was useful in understanding what direction to go in with our communication strategy and how to change our language. We can be bolder. The opportunities out there are many. The research will continue.

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