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PASOLINI'S DEFENSE OF ITALIAN VERNACULAR HERITAGE
IN *LE MURA DI SANA* (1971) AND *LA FORMA DELLA CITTÀ* (1974)

Tu difint, conserva, prea:
ma ama i puòrs: ama la so diversità.
Ama la so voja di vivi bessòj
tal so mond, tra pras e palàs

là ch'a no rivi la peràula
dal nistri mond; ama il cunfin
ch'a àn segnàt tra nu e lòur;
ama il so dialèt inventàt ogni matina

par no fassi capi; par no sparti
cun nissùn la so ligria.¹
(Pasolini, "Saluto e augurio," 274)

Abstract: In the 1970s, Pasolini avidly sought to protect and preserve Italy's vernacular heritage in the face of post-war economic development and its encumbering impact on small town life. Despite his outspoken critique of mass media, he chose to televise this message in *Le mura di Sana* and *pasolini e... "la forma della città."* Misunderstandings about their production have entangled the reception of these short films for nearly 50 years. Newly collected archival sources and oral accounts reorder their chronologies, enabling us to contextualize the artist's precocious defense of tangible and intangible heritage and local landscapes. The role which Orte (Viterbo) plays in these documentaries reveals how Pasolini's surrogate home in La Tuscia relates back to his Friulan roots and identity. What emerges is a radical manifesto for an ecosystemic preservation of cultural landscapes.

Keywords: Pier Paolo Pasolini, cultural heritage, cultural landscapes, hill towns, city walls, buffer zones, conservation, social history, La Tuscia, Friuli.

Introduction

Pier Paolo Pasolini saw *i puòrs*, *i.e.* the poor, and their social fabrics as indicators of diversity and guarantors against global homogeneity. In their defense, the artist

¹ Pasolini wrote this poem—"la mia ultima poesia in friulano"—in 1974, the same year he filmed *La forma della città*, and dedicated it to Gianfranco Contini. Italian translation of the three stanzas: "Tu difendi, conserva, prega: ma ama i poveri: ama la loro diversità. Ama la loro voglia di vivere soli nel loro mondo, tra prati e palazzi dove non arrivi la parola del nostro mondo; ama il confine che hanno segnato tra noi e loro; ama il loro dialetto inventato ogni mattina, per non farsi capire; per non condividere con nessuno la loro allegria" ("Saluto e augurio" 274).