

Dr. Gerstenblith, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear here. My name is Carla Antonaccio, and I am professor of archaeology at Duke University, and the co-director of the American Excavations at Morgantina in Sicily. Today I represent the Archaeological Institute of America and the Society for American Archaeology, the two largest and most important professional archaeological organizations in this country. You have my letter, and in these remarks I want to highlight some of my firsthand experience with looting at Morgantina in the last five years, with local activities and efforts, and my interactions with the Italian authorities in Sicily.

Since the last renewal of the MOU, an archaeological park has been established at Morgantina under the direction of a single individual exercising the authority of the local superintendency and the regional authorities. The return to Morgantina's museum, through the MOU, of trafficked objects has entailed substantial transformations of the site and the local museum, which have seen a very large increase in visitors. The creation of the archaeological park has vastly improved cooperation between archaeologists and authorities, since there is now a director in charge of both site and museum. Within rather severe budgetary restraints, the site is better maintained and presented; and fencing, lighting and signage have all been improved, with cooperation from us Americans and other stakeholders. In addition, this past year, the commune of Aidone has donated a building next door to the museum to serve as study, storage, and conservation center for the excavations.

Unfortunately, illegal activity on the site continues, in part because of its size and the steep and brushy slopes, which make total surveillance virtually impossible. As is the case all over the world, wherever metal artefacts may be found, metal detectors are in use. These instruments require far little labor and risk of detection to return results, and have resulted in incursions in habitation areas that used to be rarely touched. This is because detectorists are after coins, which are found in habitation areas rather than burial zones. At Morgantina they may also be hoping for another spectacular find like the buried hoard of silver objects purchased by the Metropolitan Museum in New York in the early 1980s, and now subject to a complex agreement by which they are alternately on display in Sicily and New York.

Thus, while the fenced area of the park is generally protected, illegal prospecting and digging continues on the site. In my letter I described two particularly egregious cases of incursions in active trenches excavated by our teams only last summer, which were clearly timed to coincide with our reaching ancient floor levels. In addition to these cases, we see prospecting on the slopes and plateau below the site's acropolis, which was the locus of habitation from the 10th to early 5th centuries BCE, and is my particular area of responsibility and interest. The slopes of the area also include tombs from the same periods. This agricultural zone falls outside the formal archaeological park, and is reachable only by an unpaved track. Its remoteness provides an opportunity to dig deeper and more extensively in an attempt to reach burials or find sanctuaries, such as the one in this zone of the site that produced the cult status of a goddess once held by the Getty and other stone sculpture formerly in private hands in this country. In the summer of 2012 we

worked to finish clearing an intramural sanctuary that had previously been investigated in the 1950s and 1990s by other excavators. The unexcavated part of this complex had produced caches of terracotta votive statues and elaborate ceramic dedications and evidence for earlier use of the area in the Iron Age. In the season that summer, we found that no undisturbed contexts remained in the roughly one third of the complex that we hoped to recover.

In protecting the site and responding to looting, the local authorities are aided by a unit of the Carabinieri who are stationed in the town. In addition, local and state authorities and courts have undertaken investigation and prosecution whenever possible. This committee knows of the unique character and importance of the division of the Carabinieri that is devoted to the recovery of cultural patrimony and has been a crucial part of the reduction in trafficking and looting in recent years. But the threat is not over, and I urge you to recommend the extension of the memorandum, including its coverage of coins, so that this country, a major market for antiquities, continues to assist Italy in its efforts to protect its massive and globally important patrimony.