

January 17, 2015

On. Dario Franceschini
Ministro al Beni e Attivita Culturali e Turismo
ROMA

Egr. dott. Pasquale Cascella
Sindaco di Barletta

Gent.ma dott.ssa Giusy Caroppo
Assessore Politiche dell'Identita Culturale
Comune di Barletta

Gent.ma dott.ssa Maria Carolina Nardella
Direttrice Regionale Beni Culturali
Bari

Dott. Luigi La Rocca
Soprintendente Archeologo
TARANTO

Agli Organi di Stampa
Loro Sedi

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

I have recently learned with great astonishment that the archaeological site of the Battle of Cannae, in the Barletta-Andria-Trani province, has not been included in the system of Regional Museums dedicated to the preservation of the cultural heritage of Italy.

As a professor at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, in the innovative area of Psychohistory—a field dedicated to the determination of the motivations of historical characters—I have spent the past 15 years studying Hannibal and in particular the events and persons involved in the famous Battle of Cannae (216 BCE). It is for that reason that I recently visited, conducted research, and offered a presentation at the archaeological site (August 2014).

During my visit I was assisted and guided by the distinguished journalist, Mr. Nino Vinella, the current Chairman of the Comitato Italiano Pro Canne della Battaglia (of which I am a member), and by Dr. Maria Antonella Doronzo, also a member of the Comitato, who kindly helped as an excellent interpreter and simultaneous translator. I was also honored by being received by the Mayor of Barletta, Pasquale Cascella, and the Deputy Mayor, Anna Francabandeira Rizzi. Together we discussed the importance of the historical battle and the archaeological site.

I regard the preservation and enhancement of this extremely important and unique site as a matter of utmost urgency. Many cities and regions of Italy contain archaeological ruins from the Roman period of varying degrees of importance, but the Barletta area has something no other place in Italy can match, namely the grounds, in the plain of the Ofanto river, on which the greatest battle of Antiquity was fought. This battle, the Battle of Cannae, is still being studied in military academies (including West Point in the United States) and universities around the world. Not only that, but attempts to imitate it, with different degrees of success, continue even into the 21st Century.

Some might argue that it is not worth preserving the site of Rome's greatest defeat, and that Hannibal, being an enemy of Italy, should not be honored. But this is incorrect, for at the time of the Second Punic War, it was Rome, and not Hannibal, who was the enemy of the Italians and had proceeded to subjugate them. Hannibal came as a savior or liberator, to free the Italians from the yoke of Rome, and thus should be seen as a hero and not as a villain in the history of Italy. He certainly was not the criminal claimed by some during the Fascist era.

Others may be concerned with the success or viability of Canne della Battaglia and the associated Antiquarium and Citadel to attract tourism, and thus provide necessary revenues to finance the preservation of the archaeological site. In reality, the site already has the potential to attract scholars, researchers, and tourism, not just from the rest of Italy or from the European Union, but from the entire world. The location of the most brilliant military engagement in history needs to be better advertised, the site needs to be restored and repaired, and with the allocation of the necessary funds it deserves it can easily become one of the best-known and most important sites, not only in Apulia but in all of Italy. Instead of marginalizing it or failing to include it in the regional state structures, it most definitely merits being promoted and featured as a top regional attraction.

Finally, I would like to add that I regard my own personal experience of standing at sunset by the memorial column on the hill of Cannae, looking down on the field where 2230 years ago over 75,000 men lost their lives in history's greatest battle, as one of the most moving and unforgettable moments of my life.

I urge you to do everything within your power to ensure the preservation and development of one of the most important archaeological sites in the world, an essential part of the heritage of humanity.

Sincerely yours,



Yozan Dirk Mosig, Ph.D.
Psychohistorian and Professor
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Comitato Italiano Pro Canne della
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