

CORIOLANUS, KING OF THE VOLSCI

Artists: Marc Franz Van den Planken, Jerome and Marc Comans (Paris, Faubourg St. Marcel)

Date: 1615

Dimensions: 330 x 165 cm

Material: Wool and silk

Inventory Number: 43722

Total Cost € 97.300,00

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

The state of the tapestry presented many different types of previous "network" restoration - weaving with enlarged fibers to fill the gaps, without application of supports on the back. In addition, deposits of dust and dirt cover the surface and are impairing the proper preservation of the ancient fibers.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Scientific and laboratory studies
- Photographic documentation
- Anti-infestation measures
- Disassembly of the lining from the silk and wool fabric
- Cleaning with microaspiration
- Needlework consolidation of the lacerations in both the silk and wool
- Reattachment of the loose threads of the embroidery
- Reattachment of the gilding
- Cleaning and replacement of the original lining by needlework



This wonderful tapestry is part of a series illustrating the stories of Coriolanus, known as the cycle of Coriolanus. This tapestry was completed in Paris in the workshop of Faubourg Saint-Marcel at the beginning of the 17th century. The cycle of Coriolanus was based on drawings dating back to the 16th century, between 1570 and 1590. The subjects were inspired by the Lives of Plutarch, specifically by the French translation by Amyot in 1559.

This tapestry represents the left hand side of a larger work which originally belonged to the National Mobilier of Paris and shows Coriolanus asking hospitality from the king of Volscian, Tullius Aufidio. The original tapestry was a scene divided into two parts by a column and a wall: on one side there is the inside of an elegant room with a large Renaissance fireplace and on the side of this large fireplace Tullius Aufidio is seated receiving Coriolanus. The other side of the tapestry is the portion presented in this Wishbook for restoration: in the foreground there are two soldiers, one of whom is Coriolanus, and a group watching the scene. A Renaissance architectural balcony and a large marble floor is represented in the background. The Vatican tapestry is smaller if compared with the original design and was possibly a copy completed with purposely smaller dimensions in order to fit into a limited space in a room, possibly between two windows.

Five tapestries representing the history of Coriolanus are very similar to the Vatican Museums' tapestry. The horizontal friezes present the same decorations and there is no gold in the network, nor is there a coat of arms of any kind. These five tapestries were donated in 1954 to the Brooklyn Museum by the Hearst Foundation. They had received them from Mr. Charles Foulke who had previously acquired these pieces from the Barberini family in 1889. Thus, it is possible these tapestries belong to the same cycle as the ones ordered by Maffeo Barberini, who later became Pope Urban VIII, for his villa in 1606, without gold or coats of arms. The Nuncio Maffeo Barberini saw the original tapestries that same year in Fontainebleau. Fascinated by the beauty of the theme of Coriolanus, he asked for a series of copies of smaller dimensions and a simpler design to decorate his own house.

