

MOSAICS IN THE BRACCIO NUOVO

Artist: Unknown
Date: 2nd Century AD
Dimensions: 5,60 x 1.50 mt; 5,60x 5,60 mt
Material: Stone
Inventory Number: 45766-45767

Total Cost € 15.980,00

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

The mosaics are in overall good condition, but some tiles are slowly detaching due to time, corrosion and in particular, the heavy travertine support system.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Cleaning of the mosaic surface
- Replacing of the travertine support with a flexible aluminium areolam
- Restoration of the bedding of the tiles

The restoration of these two mosaics will complete the conservation work which has been carried on for some years on the floor of the Braccio Nuovo Gallery.

At the archaeological excavations conducted between 1817 and 1821 in the area of Tor Marancia on the Via Ardeatina, just outside the Porta San Sebastiano, the remains of at least two large residential areas of senatorial families dating back to the 2nd century AD, were found. Some names of the owners, Munatia Procula, Numisia Procula and Fulvius Petronius Aemilianus, still appear on the Fistula aquarium. The archaeological research was carried out by the Marquis Luigi Biondi, butler and superintendent of the property of Princess Maria of Savoy Chablais, daughter of King Vittorio Amedeo III of Sardinia. In her will, the princess left the Vatican Museums a part of her collection, now primarily displayed in the Gallery of the Candelabra. A few of the mosaic floors found during the excavations were placed, highly integrated and reassembled, in the floor of the Braccio Nuovo which opened to the public in 1822.

These mosaics are made with white and black tiles. Their outline is decorated with geometric patterns or clusters with small birds pecking at grapes, while their central area contains more complex figurative scenes: marine courting, some episodes of the legendary wanderings of Ulysses in the Mediterranean and, finally, a large representation of Dionysian scenes. At the corners of the Dionysian scene, tufts of acanthus foliage are depicted. At the four corners there are pictures of young satyrs bearing the typical attributes of Tirso and goat skin garments. At the center there is an older bearded satyr, and a Bacchante with a crown of vine leaves on his head; both are imbued with wine and dance.

