

MOSAIKON: A regional initiative for the conservation of mosaics in the Mediterranean

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The Mediterranean basin is extraordinarily rich in archaeological heritage, including a vast number of mosaic pavements from classical antiquity. Today, it is considered best practice to conserve mosaics *in situ*, but many significant mosaics were previously lifted during excavation and are now found in museums and storage.

In recent decades, there have been increased national and international efforts to conserve these exceptional remains from the ancient world. However, in the absence of a coordinated strategic approach to the problem, many challenges still exist, needs exceed resources, and important mosaics continue to deteriorate at a rapid rate.

To address this situation, the Getty Conservation Institute, the Getty Foundation, ICCROM and the ICCM came together in 2008 to create MOSAIKON, a strategic regional program dedicated to improving conditions for the conservation of mosaics in the Mediterranean, including both mosaics *in situ* and those in museums and storage. Building on the expertise and experience of each organization, the program seeks to improve knowledge and skills, strengthen the professional network, develop replicable models of best practice and promote the dissemination and exchange of information regarding the conservation and management of archaeological mosaics.

To date, a number of inter-related activities have been developed to realize the objectives of the MOSAIKON initiative. These include regional training programs for conservation technicians as well as archaeologists and site managers; a model field project at Bulla Regia in northwest Tunisia; a research program to develop alternative backing and re-backing methods for lifted mosaics that make use of locally available and inexpensive materials; and the translation and dissemination of important conservation literature in English, French and Arabic. Details of the various project components can be found at: http://www.getty.edu/conservation/our_projects/education/mosaikon/

It is clear that sustained efforts and broad-based partnerships are critical to the success of MOSAIKON. If we are to see lasting changes in conservation practice in the region, it is crucial to create a strong and dynamic community of practice that can train the next generation of conservation professionals and ensure that the Mediterranean's mosaic heritage will survive for future generations.



Paphos, Cyprus. As part of the MOSAIKON initiative, the Getty Conservation Institute collaborated with the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus Department of Antiquities to deliver a course regarding the conservation and management of archaeological sites with mosaics. The course was attended by twenty heritage professionals from 12 countries in the Mediterranean region.
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Bulla Regia, Tunisia. As part of the MOSAIKON initiative, the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) is collaborating with World Monuments Fund and the Institut National du Patrimoine of Tunisia to develop a model conservation and management plan for the site of Bulla Regia in northwest Tunisia. Work has included a complete metric and condition survey of the site's more than 350 excavated mosaic pavements, as well as the creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS). In addition, two important houses on the site, including the Maison de la Chasse, will be completely conserved and presented as models of best practice.

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