



ProMare, Inc.

ITALY OPERATIONS

Rediscovering Ancient Ventotene Research Project

Recovery of a Roman Statue Ventotene, June 11-18, 2008

The first project that saw an active collaboration between the Soprintendenza ai Beni Archeologici del Lazio and ProMare began in the month of June 2008, with ProMare sponsoring the operation of recovery, initial conservation and restoration of the statue of a Roman magistrate found on the floor of the Roman fishpond. The statue, carved from a single block of white marble, was found in the month of March 2000, and it was immediately evident its artistic value and good state of preservation (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. The statue still in the original resting spot, on the floor of the Roman fishpond. (Photo: Valeria Diana).

The sculpture is 1.60 m tall and 0.70 m wide, and represents a Roman magistrate wearing a toga with the box containing the laws' scrolls to his right side. No dating elements were found in association with this artifact, but, considering its "closed" posture, and the fact that it was produced using one single, rectangular block of marble, it may be possible that it belongs to the first century B.C. – first century A.D. The back side is flat and left purposely unfinished, meaning that the statue was designed to be placed against the fishpond's wall, and to be seen only frontally.

Sand and sediments covered its surface it fell in the pool, hiding it from looters and preventing also the marine borers' destructive action; the magistrate's body is well preserved along all of its length. The head, probably a portrait of the commissioner that was made separately and fitted on a pre-fabricated torso, is missing. It is in the Soprintendenza's plans to make a cast replica of Tiberius' head, currently in exhibition at the archaeological museum of Ventotene and found in the basin of the Roman harbor, to verify if its base fits the statue's neck.

The Roman Statue of Ventotene: Images from the Recovery Operations

The statue was discovered on March 23, 2000. It was located at 3 m of depth close to one side of the larger vaulted room of the Roman fishpond. In June 2008, after moving the artifact from the inner to the outer pool (Fig. 2), the statue eventually left the Roman fishery through a narrow opening (Figs. 3-4) and was transported, by sea (Fig. 5), to the local archaeological museum (Fig. 6). Currently it is undergoing the desalinization process, that will take several months to complete (Fig. 6). Once free of salt, the proper conservative treatment will begin.



Fig. 2. The Roman statue is transported inside the fishpond, using lifting air-balloons.
(Photo: Simone Trigona).



Figs. 3-4. The statue, protected inside insulating material, leaves the fishpond throughout the only narrow opening. (Photos: Dante Bartoli).



Fig. 5: The statue while is carried, over sea, to Ventotene's archaeological museum (Photo: Dante Bartoli).

