

Antoine-Louis BARYE (1795-1875)

NÉREÏDE ARRANGEANT SON COLLIER

Bronze, H : 30.4 cm, L : 16.5 cm, D : 13.4 cm

Lifetime cast signed «Barye», Barye studio.

Circa 1865

Provenance :

Former Lemoyne-Baudet collection.

Version of Venus with her necklace and marine tiara, model made for large candelabras in the renaissance style



Minerve, Junon and Vénus are the components of the low part from the nine lights candelabras, adorned with figures, masks and chimeras . Each goddess is depicted with her attributes, Juno with a peacock, Minerva with the owl and sword and Venus with a dolphin. Both first figures are represented in simple and independent gesture, back to the candelabra's pillar, whereas Venus is modelled in a serpentine way, to suit with the other goddesses. Those were easy to isolate, to cast and were included in the Barye catalogues after 1862. They got a great editorial success. The last, Venus was only carefully proposed once, without price in the catalogue in 1862, certainly because of its important moulding and cast complexity.

This is then, by its ascending serpentine line - from the crossing legs, one arm arranging her necklace and one arm holding the mirror - one of the most beautiful female study by Barye. This is, with Angélique from the *Roger et Angélique* group, his most complex female figure and the best circle quadrature approach for a figure. From the belly, the most astonishing is the perfect treatment of volumes and surfaces. Venus became Nereid, with shells and starfishes crowning her head, the dolphin taking importance and the sea waves around the base.

The composition wealth, fine details explain that Barye, in a letter to Marcello, complained of his difficulty and slowness to create, sum up in these words : « Je vois que je suis bien peu de choses, je ne me sens pas capable de remplir mon sujet à ma satisfaction. Ah ! Je voudrais remanier mon sujet de fond en comble, dès qu'il est fait, il faut qu'on me l'ôte de devant les yeux ; on abime, passé un certain moment, et lorsqu'on s'en aperçoit, c'est fait ».

About the edition, none chief-model is listed in the after death sale catalogue in 1876 and two examples are included in the « bronzes inédits » chapter; which means, regarding Barye, that it could be a « bronze cast from the plaster which has served as a model ». Currently, we have identified three lifetime casts, including this one and a posthumous example cast from the plaster.

We wonder what the reality of the edition by Delafontaine is, for we have never seen an example with his mark, perhaps because the model was too complex to cast.



Trois femmes à la vasque,
former UDB collection

