

Charles CORDIER (1827-1905)



**MAURESQUE D'ALGER CHANTANT**

Life size bust (1856 ?)  
Possibly in pair with "Mauresque noire,  
buste grandeur nature"  
Bronze, gilt and silvered patina.  
*H : 74 cm, L : 46 cm, D : 27 cm*  
Signed under the shoulder "Cordier".  
**Before 1870**

*Edition details :*  
*Four examples currently identified including this one (3 bronzes repro-  
duced in the catalogue raisonné, 6 marbles including the one at the  
Musée de l'Homme, and 7 half size bronze reductions).*

*Provenance :*  
*Former Claude Nicolas Edouard Tassard collection  
(1807-1888, judge closed to Baron Hausmann)  
then by descendance.*

First ethnographic sculptor in Art History, Charles Cordier focused on creating a serie of exotic portraits with a scientific and artistic spirit which were named "Types nègres", "Types Chinois", "Types arabes", "Type mauresque", "Type juive" by his contemporaries... The sculptor's attention is drawn to the expressions and features of the face, but also to the details of the clothes after his first journey to North Africa in 1853. The sculptor became so important with this category of pieces that he created in 1862 his famous monumental *Atlantes* and *Cariatides* for the Rothschild at the Château de Ferrières.

He is one of the first artists who was interested in colors for sculpture, after 1855-1857 and used different materials for only one model: marble, bronze (usually mixing different patinas, golden or silvery, enhanced by enamels), onyx, etc. Craftman artist, he also attached importance to the quality of his production and especially in the finess of his bronzes. Subtlety of the chiselling, realistic and smart, which was led sometimes to an extreme point, like our bust where we can see the pigmentation of the skin and very fine details for the gaze.

The *Mauresque d'Alger chantant* was sometimes in pair with the *Mauresque noire* or *Mulâtresse*, who wore a very similar costume. While Cordier was interested in the representation of the type, he also identified mixed-race faces: the Musée d'Orsay has a photograph of a marble example of this subject by Charles Marville, given by Cordier to the Ministry and annotated «Métis, singer, Turkish father, Moorish mother»; a similar photograph exists for the *Mulâtresse*. The sculptor kept a marble example of the large size for his own Villa Mauresque in Orsay.

Here, the vitality of the model is reinforced by the Hair and scarf softness with the very fine detailed clothes which contribute to make our example a very lavish one. The richness is emphasized also by the usual double patina for this model in bronze, gilt and silvered. This life-size example is signed in the mould below the shoulder "Cordier" and four examples are today identified with this one (3 bronzes in the catalogue raisonné, 6 marbles including the one in the Musée de l'Homme, and 7 half-size bronze reductions). It was originally part of the collection of Judge Claude Nicolas Edouard Tassard (1807-1888, close to Baron Hausmann) and by descendance to this day.



Cordier, *Mauresque d'Alger chantant*, marble,  
Paris, Musée de l'Homme, inv. FNAC PFH-2633

View of the Villa Mauresque of Charles Cordier  
in Orsay, with the *Mauresque d'Alger chantant*.





