

ANTOINE-LOUIS BARYE

PYTHON ENLAÇANT UNE GAZELLE (1840)

Possibly in pair with "Python étouffant un crocodile"(1841)

Bronze, richly shaded clear brown patina.

H : 16,7 cm, L : 39 cm, D : 14,2 cm

First example stamped "Barye 1", the only signed and dated "Barye 1840", artist example probably by his own foundry.

Circa 1840



We find the same qualities of opposition as in the previous model, with the particularity that Barye is almost the only, if not the only animal sculptor to have treated reptiles with such ease. His snakes often possess a theatrical realism and seem to move powerfully within immobile volumes that arouse our curiosity without frightening us...

The presentation in the Besse catalogue dispenses with romanticism in favour of an anthropomorphic analysis with a moralistic conclusion:

"Yet another charming forest dweller who will die under the venomous bite of a nasty snake; it is worse than in the real world, because weakness sometimes finds defenders there, whereas in the forests of our country, no more than in those of the New World or in the desert, no animal ever comes to the aid of the weakest against the strongest [...]"

This cast belongs to the very limited category of examples stamped "Barye 1", for the first proof produced, and is also one of the only ones to bear the signature and date of the model from the mould, in this case "BARYE 1840".

