

BUTCHOFF

EXCELLENCE IN ANTIQUES

Est. 1964



'DAVID, THE CONQUEROR OF GOLIATH' BY J.A. MERCIÉ

H: 43 in / 109 cm

'David, the conqueror of Goliath'

An Exceptional Barbedienne cast of the statue executed by J.A. Mercié

Of good size, using very finely cast and chased patinated bronze, depicting the young David with the head of Goliath at his feet, on a circular base; signed 'A. Mercié, and inscribed 'F. Barbedienne' and showing the A. Collas mechanical reduction cartouche, the underside numbered 109.

French, Circa 1880

Literature:

Jean Antonin Mercié (1845-1916), a Toulousian, made a plaster cast of the model during his studies in Rome in 1872, two years after the Franco-Prussian war, which was received with great acclaim by the French State, who, casting themselves as the underdogs, looked to avenging the battering they had received, and commissioned a

full size mode, which was installed in the Museum Luxembourg in 1874; the artist was inducted into the Legion of Honour- a great achievement for one so young.

Ferdinand Barbedienne and Achille Collas, who was the inventor of a machine that would mechanically reduce statues, started the F. Barbedienne foundry in Paris in 1838. At first they produced bronze reductions of antique sculptures of Greek and Roman origin. Their first contract to produce bronzes modelled by a living artist was made in 1843 when they arranged to produce the works of Francois Rude. They barely survived the revolution and financial collapse of 1848, which caused many artists and foundries to declare bankruptcy. Barbedienne actively pursued contracts with the many sculptors of Paris contracting with David D'Angers, Jean-Baptiste Clesinger, and even producing some casts for Antoine Louis Barye as well as others.

Achille Collas died in 1859 leaving Ferdinand Barbedienne as the sole owner of the foundry which by that time had grown to employ over 300 workers at their workshop located at 63 Rue de Lancry in Paris. Ferdinand Barbedienne was made the President of the Reunion of Bronze Makers in 1865 a post he held until 1885. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 and the shortage of raw metals caused him to have to stop making sculptures but he did receive a contract from the French government for the production of cannons which kept his foundry open. After the war he resumed his casting of sculptures and put even more effort into signing contracts with various sculptors.

