



Bust Of Vespasian By Willem Danielsz. Van Tetrode



12 000 EUR

Signature : Willem Danielsz. Van Tetrode

Period : 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Bronze

Height : 24 cm

Description

Willem Danielsz. Van Tetrode (before 1530-1585). Bust of the emperor

Vespasian. Patinated bronze. Italy, circa 1560.

Our bust is extremely close to a documented bust by Willem Danielsz. Van Tetrode, which formed part of the collection of Cosimo I de' Medici and is now kept and displayed in the Uffizi Museum.

A letter by van Tetrode addressed to Count Cosimo de' Medici in 1562 gives more information on the origin of these bronzes, the artist describes the work he had the opportunity to realize a few years earlier: "a very beautiful and rich ornamentation of small bronze figures, imitated from the antique, for a cabinet that Count Pitigliano gave to Duke Cosimo, - and these figures are: the horse of the Capitol, those of Montecavallo, the Hercules Farnese, the Antinous

Dealer

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and Apollo of the Belvedere, the heads of twelve emperors and others, all well done." Vasari, in his *Lives of the Best Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, who mentions this note, and several works now in the Bargello and the Uffizi, which come from this cabinet, have been attributed to Tetrode thanks to his work. This bust formed part of the series of twelve Roman emperors busts originally created for the decoration of a huge cabinet commissioned from Tetrode in 1559 by Count Pitigliano Gianfrancesco Orsini. These busts did not join the Orsini collection but the collection of Cosimo I de' Medici, which has formed the first part of the collection of the Uffizi Museum in Florence. We know that this cabinet was originally intended as a diplomatic gift to Philip II of Spain, but it never reached Spain and was instead sent to Cosimo I de' Medici. The artist, Willem Danielsz. Van Tetrode is a sculptor of Dutch origin. He lived for several years in Italy, where he was trained and called himself Guglielmo Fiammingo. He was a student of Benvenuto Cellini and went to Florence in 1545 to work in the Florentine workshop of his master where he helped with the restoration of ancient sculptures. He left for Rome, where he worked under the direction of Guglielmo della Porta on the restoration of other antiques and on projects for the Vatican and the Farnese Palace. Since he had collaborated with two of the most famous sculptors of their time, his fame gave him access to the most important patrons of the time. It was during this period that he realized the reductions of the twelve emperors busts. The trust placed in the artist was immense when Count Pitigliano Orsini entrusted him with his commission, since he intended to send it to the Spanish royal court. Tetrode returned to Delft in the years 1566-67 and played a fundamental role in introducing small-scale sculpture to the Netherlands where he entertained collectors taste for the antique. Our sculpture has a quality of execution and patina that allows it to be attributed to Tetrode. The pedestal and its cartouche are

similar to the one in the Uffizi, the features of
Vespasian are also similar, the only differences
are in the right sleeve which stops a little higher
on the arm of our model and in the drapery where
some folds are arranged differently. There is no
doubt that it is a variation of the model made for
Count Pitigliano Orsini. Other versions, of
varying quality, are known from this series of the
twelve Caesars. But our bust is exceptional for its
stylistic proximity to the original model: we know
of only two other examples of busts of equivalent
quality. One was sold at Christie's on December
15, 1998, it is also a bust of Vespasian and it is
similar in every way to ours. A bust of Tiberius
was also presented at Sotheby's on June 30, 2020,
but it shows more variations compared to its
counterpart kept at the Uffizi. Bibliography
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