



A. Delafontaine, Four Wall Sconces "hercules And Omphale," France, Circa 1880

35 000 EUR



Signature : A. Delafontaine

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Bronze

Width : 46

Height : 83

Depth : 37

Description

Signed A. D Beautiful set of four six-light sconces in chased and gilt bronze, forming two pairs. Each sconce is composed of a terminal figure in the form of a herm, ending in a rich cascade of acanthus leaves, from which emerges a delicate stem adorned with foliage and terminating in a seed motif. The male sconces depict a bearded man with vigorous musculature, his head turned upward in a dynamic attitude. Draped across his torso like a sash is an animal skin. This iconography (strength, beard, and animal hide recalling the leonté or skin of the Nemean lion) strongly suggests the mythological figure of Hercules. Its counterpart presents a female figure with a classical profile, her hair gathered into an elaborate antique-style chignon. She likewise wears an animal skin draped across her chest.

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This figure most likely represents Omphale, Queen of Lydia, with whom Hercules exchanged attributes. These figures are placed beneath an arch ornamented with vine leaves and clusters of grapes, and support scrolling uprights from which spring three light-bearing arms highlighted with acanthus decoration, terminating in candleholders adorned with water-leaf motifs.

Biography : A bronze factory existed in the 18th century, directed by Jean-Baptiste Maximilien Delafontaine, master foundryman born in 1750. His son Pierre Maximilien (1774-1860) succeeded him. The factory was first domiciled at 13 rue d'Orléans then, from 1824, at 10 rue Neuve-de-l'Abbaye. In the 1840s, it was Auguste Maximilien Delafontaine who was at its head at 46, rue Bonaparte, then 10, rue de l'Université in 1870. The most fruitful period of the firm corresponded to his direction. Publisher, he entrusted the execution of the bronzes to the Molz foundry, rue de Rennes. Taking up the contracts signed by Duret with the founder Quesnel, he published around 1855, among others, *Le Danseur napolitain*, *Le Vendangeur improvisant*, *Jeune Pêcheur dansant la tarantella*, *La Tragédie*, *La Comédie*. Its catalog of "art and furnishing bronzes" offers works by other artists including Pradier, reproductions of antique statues and various art and furnishing objects. During the sale after Barye's death in 1876, he purchased a certain number of models, notably dogs, of which he made a few editions. The activity was continued by his own son Henri-Maximilien (?-1932) from 1884, until the closure of the company in 1905.