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A most impressive and high quality French 19th century patinated bronze statue of Laocoön and his sons, signed Barbedienne. The bronze is raised by a rectangular base below a stepped pedestal support. At the center is the handsome and richly chased Laocoön fighting off the fierce serpents along with his two sons at each side. Each are draped in wonderfully executed flowing garments with intricate attention to detail. All original rich and warm patina through.

The original statue was believed to have originally been sculpted in the 1st century AD when it was placed in the Palace of Emperor Titus. It was however then lost for a millennium before being found during an excavation in Rome in 1506 when Pope Julius II brought it to have it displayed in the Vatican. It has long been considered one of the most famous ancient sculptures, so important in fact, that Napoleon had the statue shipped to Paris in 1799 after conquering Italy where it was then placed in the Louvre. After the fall of Napoleon, it was returned to the Vatican in 1816 where it can still be found today displayed in the Cortile delle Statue (Statues Courtyard).

Laocoön was a priest in Troy where he tried to convince the Trojan people and Athena that the Trojan horse sent by the Greeks was a trick and that Sinon, the undercover Greek soldier, was sent there to convince them to accept the horse. Athena and Poseidon, who were favoring the Greeks, were angry with Laocoön so they blinded him. Laocoön did not give up trying to convince the Trojans to burn the horse so they sent two great sea serpents to kill him and his two sons.

Aeneas, who heeded Laocoön warning fled Troy which ultimately led to the founding of Rome.





