



## Antoine-Louis Barye

**Artist name** Barye, Antoine-Louis

**Cited Artist:** Bicunais, Pierre

**Sex:** M

**Artist occupation:** Sculptor; painter; founder

**Geographical data:** France

**State:** France

**Date of birth:** 1795.09.24

**Place of birth:** Paris

**Date of death:** 1875.06.25

**Place of death:** Paris

**Place(s) cited:** Paris

French sculptor, painter and printmaker. Barye was a realist who dared to present romantically humanized animals as the protagonists of his sculpture. Although he was a successful monumental sculptor, he also created a considerable body of small-scale works and often made multiple casts of his small bronze designs, marketing them for a middle-class public through a partnership, Barye & Cie. His interest in animal subjects is also reflected in his many watercolors. He thus challenged several fundamental values of the Parisian art world: the entrenched notion of a hierarchy of subject-matter in art, wherein animals ranked very low; the view that small-scale sculpture was intrinsically inferior to life-size or monumental work; and the idea that only a unique example of a sculptor's design could embody the highest level of his vision and craft. As a result of his Romantic notion of sculpture, he won few monumental commissions and endured near poverty for many years.

### **1. Training and early work, to c 1830.**

### **2. Mature work, c 1830 and after.**

#### **1. Training and early work, to c 1830.**

The son of a goldsmith from Lyon, Barye learnt his father's craft at an early age and retained some of its values as a mature artist. At the age of 13 he worked for the military engraver Fourier. Soon after he worked in the prestigious workshop of Martin-Guillaume Biennais, goldsmith to Napoleon. In 1816 he studied with the Neo-classical sculptor François-Joseph Bosio; Barye also studied painting briefly with the Romantic history painter Antoine-Jean Gros.

As a student at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris (1818-23),

Barye repeatedly failed to win the Prix de Rome. Nonetheless his experiences there deepened his commitment to the classical tradition and acquainted him with a very broad spectrum of artistic sources. He also read works on art theory and archaeology by E.M. Falconet, Quatremère de Quincy and Emeric-David and studied the engravings of John Flaxman. He studied animal anatomy diligently; reading scholarly essays by the naturalists François Marie Daudin and Georges Cuvier. He made drawings after zoological displays in the Musée d'Anatomie Comparée and after dissections performed at the Jardin des Plantes. He also made a close study of ancient sculptures of animals.

Barye's earliest works, dated c. 1819 to c. 1830, were executed in three divergent styles: painterly, naturalist and hieratic. These are epitomized respectively by his delicately modeled medallion relief Milo of Crotona Devoured by a Lion (1819; Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery), which echoes Pierre Puget's marble group of the same title (1671-82; Paris, Louvre), the humorous trompe l'oeil piece Turtle on a Base and the Stork on a Turtle (both Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery), based on an ancient prototype engraved by Lorenzo Roccheggiani (fl 1804-17).

## **2. Mature work, c 1830 and after.**

- (I) Large-scale sculpture.
- (II) Small bronze works.
- (III) Paintings and prints.

(I) Large-scale sculpture.

Barye's style had become more unified by c. 1830, and his images of predators grew larger, more humanized and more dramatic, as in the Tiger Devouring a Gavia Crocodile of the Ganges (bronze, exh. Salon 1831; Paris, Louvre. This exotic, exquisitely detailed and controversial work is an image of evil in the sense of Victor Hugo's notion of the grotesque.

Astonishingly, it was characterized by the classical critic and follower of David, Etienne-Jean Delécluze, as 'the strongest and most significant work of the entire Salon'. This unforgettable image, of a sphinx-like tiger slowly biting into the genitalia of a writhing and serpentine gavia, launched Barye's artistic career.

Larger but more restrained, Lion Crushing a Serpent (1832; Paris, Louvre) was shown in the Salon of 1833, in its plaster version, and was cast in bronze for Louis-Philippe in time for the Salon of 1836. In recognition of its excellence Barye was named Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur on 1 May 1833. An allegory on two levels, Lion Crushing a Serpent was intended to flatter the King: the lion connotes not only courage, strength and fortitude but also kingship itself as triumphant over the serpent of evil; as a commemoration of the July Revolution of 1830, which had placed Louis-Philippe on the throne, it also represents the lion of Leo, the constellation that 'ruled the heavens' on 27, 28 and 29 July 1830. Indeed, the appellation Lion of the Zodiac occurs in the official documents for Barye's slightly later bronze relief (1835-40s) on the July Column in the Place de la Bastille, Paris. Lion of the Zodiac recalled an

ancient marble relief in Rome, engraved by Pietro Bartoli. Remains of the fallen heroes of 1830 were taken to the July Column cenotaph on 18 April 1840.

Another monumental work of Barye's maturity is St Clotilde (marble, 1840-43), executed for the church of the Madeleine in Paris. This figure is based on the Roman marble of Julia, daughter of Augustus (Paris, Louvre), and is also reflected in a contemporary portrait by Ingres (e.g. Comtesse d'Haussonville, 1845; New York, Frick). Barye also executed the Seated Lion (bronze, 1847; Paris, Louvre), a companion piece to Lion Crushing a Serpent in a less detailed style, and eight colossal eagle reliefs (1849) for piers of the Jena Bridge over the Seine, which echo an ancient oil-lamp relief engraved by Bartoli. In 1848 Barye was named director of plaster casting and curator of the gallery of plaster casts at the Musée du Louvre. He also taught drawing for natural history in the Ecole Agronomique at Versailles in 1850. The same year he submitted two monumental sculptures to the Salon; he had not exhibited there since 1837, when the jury had rejected his ensemble of nine small sculptures made for the young Ferdinand-Philippe, Duc d'Orléans. Jaguar Devouring a Hare (Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery) is a Romantic animal combat reminiscent of his innovations of c. 1830, while Theseus Combating the Centaur Bienor (Washington, DC, Corcoran Gallery of Art) is an academic piece whose figures recall Giambologna's Hercules and Nessus (1594; Florence, Loggia Lanzi). By pairing these two works at the Salon, Barye aimed to reaffirm his conviction that an image of a predator with its prey, encapsulating his own Romantic vision of nature, was worthy to stand beside an academically sanctioned mythological combat.

Around 1851 Barye produced a series of 97 decorative masks in stone for the cornice of the Pont Neuf in Paris; the expressive range and formal variety of facial representations that encompasses the Buddha, Christ and Hercules may be regarded as a virtuoso feat. For the vast new Louvre of Napoleon III, Barye created a stone ensemble of four groups representing Strength, Order, War and Peace (1854-6), which were installed on the façades of the Denon and Richelieu pavilions. He also produced a stone relief, Napoleon I Crowned by History and the Fine Arts (1857), for the façade pediment of the Sully Pavilion. Focal points in the Cour du Carrousel (also known as the Place Napoleon III) of the new Louvre, these works were a pinnacle of Barye's official career, though they were executed in an academic style. Napoleon I Crowned by History and the Fine Arts is a splendid example of imperial propaganda intended to enhance the reign of Napoleon III by recalling the legend and aura of Napoleon I.

In 1854 Barye was appointed Master of Zoological Drawing in the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (where Rodin was among his pupils in 1863), a position he retained until his death. Later monumental works include a classical bronze relief for the Riding Academy façade of the new Louvre, Napoleon III as an Equestrian Roman Emperor (1861; destr. 1870-71), and a tribute to the Emperor's great love of horsemanship. Between 1860 and 1865 Barye executed Napoleon I as an Equestrian

Roman Emperor, a freestanding bronze, for the Bonaparte family monument in Ajaccio, Corsica. Around 1869 he carved four feline predators standing over their prey for the Palais de Longchamp at Marseille, not with the nervous intensity of the 1830s but with a hieratic formality and lordly grandeur of mood, qualities appropriate to this late statement of his favorite theme.

## (II) Small bronze works.

Barye often made multiple casts of his designs, marketing them for the homes of middle-class Parisians through Barye & Cie, the partnership he formed in 1845 with the entrepreneur Emile Martin (see doc. in Pivar, 1974). Small bronzes were his greatest love, as the 230 or so designs offered in his last sale catalogue (1865) amply attest. After 1830 his style became subtler, embracing a wide range of moods, compositional types and themes, albeit within the larger framework of a decoratively detailed realism. He produced many animal portraits from the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s, such as the exotic Turkish Horse and the poignant Listening Stag of 1838 (both Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery). Predators with prey abound. Hunting scenes may include man, as in Arab Horseman Killing a Lion, or animals only, as in the Wounded Boar (both Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery), which depicts a fallen boar with a spear jutting from its side. Scenes from history include an equestrian group in plaster, Charles VI, Surprised in the Forest of Mans (exh. Salon 1833; Paris, Louvre), showing the assassination attempt that triggered the King's lunacy. Among the literary subjects is Roger Abducting Angelica on the Hippogriff (Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery), from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso (1532), a scene made famous by Ingres's Roger Rescuing Angelica (1819; Paris, Louvre). Barye depicted equestrian figures from several periods of history: Charles VII (Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery), General Bonaparte (Calais, Museum des Beaux Arts) and Ferdinand Philippe, Duc d'Orléans (Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery). In mood his works encompass the agony of Wolf Caught in a Trap (New York, Brooklyn Museum), the exuberant vigor of African Elephant Running, the playful dreaminess of Bear in its Trough, the excitement of Bear Overthrown by Three Dogs and the powerfully restrained tension of Panther Seizing a Stag (all Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery).

Barye's designs range from the delicately atmospheric, painterly effects of Lion Devouring a Doe (1837) to the architectural clarity of Python Killing a Gnu (c. 1834-5; both Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery). The latter was one of nine small bronzes (four animal combats and five hunting scenes) executed for Ferdinand-Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, between 1834 and 1838. They were intended as an elaborate decoration for a banqueting table. The Salon jury rejected the models for the ensemble in 1837, and Barye did not again submit works to the Salon until 1850. The Baroque manner of the hunting scenes (all Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery), for instance the Tiger Hunt (1836), contrasts strongly with the classical severity of the tiny reliefs Walking Leopard and Walking Panther (both 1837) and of the freestanding Striding Lion and Striding Tiger (all Baltimore, MD,

Walters Art Gallery). A similar restraint is apparent in the Candelabrum Goddesses, the classical Juno and Minerva and the mannerist Nereid (all Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery). An understated tone and a descriptive realism are evident in the late Caucasian Warrior (Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Gallery) and Horseman in Louis XV Costume (Paris, Louvre), both of which were included in Barye's last sale catalogue (1865).

### (III) Paintings and prints.

Barye's extensive oeuvre as a painter of landscapes and of animal subjects linked with his sculpture awaits further study, though Zieseniss produced an introductory catalogue raisonné of 216 animal watercolors in 1956. Noting that an exact chronology for the wholly undated painted oeuvre cannot be established, he nonetheless distinguished an early and late style, contrasting the emphatic detail, exaggerated drama, confused movement and theatrical chiaroscuro effects of the former (e.g. *Two Tigers Fighting*; Cambridge, MA, Fogg;) with the majestic ease, glowing colour and unity and balance of the latter (e.g. *Two Rhinos Resting*; Baltimore, MD Inst., Decker Gallery).

Barye's tiny watercolors of animals are technically intricate and often combine several media: a single work may show the use of both transparent watercolor and body color as well as pastel chalk, black ink, lead-white highlights, scratched-in lines for whiskers or fur and varnishes of various colors and densities. He developed the surfaces of his watercolors almost as he would patinate a bronze. Most of the subjects of his paintings are the same as those of his small bronze images. These include *Tiger Hunt* (cf. Bengé, 1984,), *Turkish Horse* (cf. Bengé, 1984), *Elk Attacked by a Lynx* (cf. Bengé, 1984,), *Bear Attacking a Bull* (cf. Bengé, 1984,), *Lion of the Zodiac*; cf. Bengé, 1984,) and *Seated Lion* (priv. col., cf. Bengé, 1984). A few creatures, however, appear only in watercolors, for example the *Bison*, the *Rhinoceros* and *Vultures*. The *Dead Elephant* (cf. Bengé, 1984) surely reflects dissection drawings made in the Musée d'Anatomie Comparée. The very precise paintings of serpents must also have been derived from specimen study; by contrast, Barye's *Two Tigers* (priv. collection.) approaches the moodiness and emotional fullness of Delacroix. Cast shadows and a concern with natural light are rare in Barye's paintings. Some of his landscapes have a central area of bright light, an obvious device seen in Barbizon landscapes by Diaz and Rousseau; others range from the depiction of an elaborate tracery of tree limbs above the antlered head of a stag to the larger and subtler systems of craggy rock-fields whose swirling arabesques echo the outlines of a creature.

In Zieseniss's view, Barye regarded his paintings in oil as merely preparatory; he neither exhibited nor offered any for sale, although more than 90 was listed for the posthumous sale of his studio effects, held at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, in 1875. Eleven lithographs and one etching of his animal subjects are illustrated in Delteil.

WORKS Museums

AJACCIO, Place du Diamant: Napoléon Ier en empereur romain, Reiterstandbild, Bronze, eingeweiht 15.5.1865.  
 MARSEILLE, Eingang Jardin du Longchamp: Lion terrassant un mouflon; Tigre terrassant une biche; Lion et sanglier; Tigre et gazelle, Tiger group, Stein, 1869. PARIS, Eglise de la Madeleine: Ste Clothilde, Marmor, 1835-42. - Pal. du Louvre, Porte des Lions: deux Lionus assis, Bronze, 1847/48, 1867, Gipsmodell 1847 Mus. d'Orsay. - Pavillon Denon et Richelieu (Cour du Carrousel): La Force protégeant le travail; L'Ordre comprimant les pervers; La Guerre; La Paix, allegor. Gruppen, Stein (Gipsmodelle 1854/55 im Mus. d'Orsay). - Pavillon d'Horloge: Napoléon dominant l'Histoire et les Arts, Giebelrelief, Stein, 1855-57. - Guichet du Carrousel (Seine-Seite): Le Flot; La Rivière (ehem. das bronzene Giebelrelief "Napoleon III à cheval ..." flankierend), Stein. - Place de la Bastille: Julisäule (Piedestal): Lion passant, Relief, Bronze, eingeweiht 29.7.1840. - Werke im Mus.: BALTIMORE, Walters Art Gall.: u.a. 5 Jagdgruppen vom Tafelaufsatz des Herzogs von Orléans, Bronze, 1834-38. DUNKERQUE, Mus. des BA: Tigre dévorant un gavial (Salon 1831), Bronze casting H.Genon 1834. LE PUY-EN-VELAY, Mus.: Lapith et centaure (Salon 1850/51), Bronzeguß 1852. LISIEUX, Mus. municipal: Lion au serpent, Gipsmodell, sign. "Barye 1832" (Salon 1833). NEW YORK, Metrop. Mus.: Lion au serpent (Salon 1833), Gips. PARIS, Louvre: u.a. Tigre dévorant un crocodile (Salon 1831), H.Genon 1832; Lion au serpent (Salon 1833), Bronzecast H.Genon 1835; Jaguar et lièvre, Gipsmodell (Salon 1850/51); Jaguar et lièvre, Masterbronze, Bronzecast 1852 (Salon 1852, Expos. univ. 1855). Extensive examples of small work. Barye's work is in various Museums in Europe and the USA. BAYONNE, Mus. Bonnat. BERLIN, Nat.-Gal. BORDEAUX, Mus. BROOKLYN, Mus. CALAIS, Mus. CAMBRIDGE, Fogg Art Mus. LYON, Mus. des BA. MONTPELLIER, Mus. PARIS, Mus. des Arts Décoratifs. - Mus. Carnavalet. - Ec. Nat. Supérieur des BA. - Mus. d'Orsay. - Petit Pal. PHILADELPHIA, Mus. of Art. WASHINGTON, Corcoran Gall. of Art.

## EXHIBITIONS

Paris: 1875 EcBA (Kat.); 1876 Hôtel Drouot: Cat. des oeuvres de feu Barye v. 7.-12.2.1876; 1884 Cat. des bronzes de Barye (modèles) v. 24.8.1884; 1886 Cat. des bronzes de Barye v. 27.2.1886; 1889 EcBA (Kat.) / 1889 New York, Amer. Art Gall., Barye Mon. Assoc. / 1909 New York, Grolier Club / 1956-57 Paris, Louvre (Kat.) / 1963 New York, Alan Gall. (Kat.) / 1972 London, Sladmore Gall. (Kat.) / 1972 (Versteigerungen v.16.3.; 9.6.), '73 (v. 13.3.; 19.3.) Paris, Pal. Galliera / 1973 Evry, Ferme du Bois Briard (Cat.) / 1988 Washington, Corcoran Gall. of Art (Kat.). - G: ab 1827 häufig Paris, Salon / 1965 Baltimore, Mus. of Art: The George A. Lucas Coll. of the Maryland Inst. (Kat.) / 1973 Lausanne, Gal. des Arts Décoratifs: Les Animaliers du XIXe s. (Kat.) / 1975 Cambridge (Mass.), Fogg Art Mus.: Metamorphoses in 19th c. Sculpt. (Kat.) / 1978 Los Angeles, County Mus. of Art: The Romantics to Rodin (Kat.) / 1986 Paris, Grand Pal.: La Sculpt. franç. au XIXe s. (Kat.).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY- Citations

Thieme-Becker II, 1908. Bellier/Auvray I, 1882; Champeaux, 1886; Lami I, 1914; DBF V, 1951; ELU I, 1959; Kindler, ML I, 1964; H.Berman, *Bronzes. Sculptors and founders 1800-1930*, Chicago 1974-80. - Delaborde, *Discours prononcé aux funérailles de M. Barye le 28.6.1875*, P. 1875; Ch.de Kay, B., N.Y. 1889 (1974); A.Alexandre, B., P. 1889; R.Ballu, *L'oeuvre de B.*, P. 1890; E.Guillaume, *Discours prononcé à l'inauguration du mon. élevé à la mémoire de Barye ... le 18.6.1894*, P. 1894; Ch. Saunier, B., P. 1925; G.H. Hamilton, *Art Bull.* 18:1936, 248-257; P.Remington (Ed.), *Sculpt. by B.*, N.Y., *Metrop. Mus. of Art* 1940; Ch.O. Zieseniss, *Les aqu. de B.*, P. 1954; *Weltkunst* 26:1956(4)4; Goya 1956(15)204; H.Gérard, *Rev. des Arts* 6:1956, 223-230; id., *Jardin des Arts* 27:1957, 153-158; Van Loo, *Naturalia* 63:1958, 13-20; A.Lengyel, *Life and art of B.*, *Dubuque Iowa* 1963; L.Johnson, *BurlMag* 106:1964, 416-419; J. de Caso, *J. of the Walters Art Gall.* 27/28:1964/65, 66-73; G.F. Benge, *ibid.* 31/32:1968-70, 13-27; id., *The sculpt. of B. in Amer. Coll.*, *Diss. Univ. of Iowa*, Iowa City 1969 (unveröff.); *Minneapolis Inst. of Arts Bull.* 59:1970, 60-63; J.Peignot, *Connaissance des Arts* 243:1972, 116-121; J.Mackay, *The animaliers*, Lo. 1973; St.Pivar, *The B. bronzes*, *Woodbridge* 1974 (1981); W.R.Johnston, *Apollo* 100:1974, 402-410; J.-M. Darnis, *Club franç. de la méd. Bull.* 47/48:1975, 164-169; G.F. Benge, *Bull. of Detroit Inst. of Arts* 56:1977/78, 231-242; id., in: *Art, the ape of nature*, *Festschr. für H.J. Janson*, N.Y.1981, 607-630; J.L. Wassermann, *Sculpt. by B. in the Coll. of the Fogg Art Mus.*, C., Mass. 1982; F.-R. Loffredo, *Bull. de la Soc. de l'hist. de l'art franç.* 1982, 147-157; G.F. Benge, *Atti del XXIV. Congr. internaz. di storia dell' arte. Bo.* 1979, H.6:La scult., Bo. 1984, 103-110; id., *B., sculpt. of romantic realism*, *Pennsylvania State Univ. Press (Philadelphia)*, 1984 (Lit.); Kjellberg, 1987; M.Sonnabend, *B. (1795-1875)*, M. 1988 (Lit.; Quellen). - *Quellen-Mat. v.a. in Paris*, *Arch. du Louvre*, *Arch. Nat.*, *Bibl. Jaques Doucet*, *Bibl. Nat.*, *Cab. des Estampes* (vgl. M.Sonnabend, B., M. 1988). - *Mitt. J.-M. Darnis*, Paris.

## Other BIBLIOGRAPHIES

### Lami

- A. Alexandre: *Antoine-Louis Barye* (Paris, 1889)
- C. DeKay: *Barye: Life and Works* (New York, 1889)
- R. Ballu: *L'Oeuvre de Barye* (Paris, 1890)
- L. Delteil: *Barye: Le Peintre graveur illustré*, vi (Paris, 1910)
- C. Saunier: *Barye* (Paris, 1925)
- G. H. Hamilton: 'The Origin of Barye's Tiger Hunt', *A. Bull.*, xviii (1936), pp. 248-51
- A. Dezarrois: 'Le Monument de Napoléon Ier à Grenoble par Barye: Un Projet mystérieusement abandonné', *Rev. A.*, lxxi (1937), pp. 258-66
- G. Hubert: 'Barye et la critique de son temps', *Rev. A.*, vi (1956), pp. 223-30
- C. O. Zieseniss: *Les Aquarelles de Barye: Etude critique et catalogue raisonné* (Paris, 1956) [z]
- Barye: Sculptures, peintures, aquarelles des collections publiques françaises* (exh. cat., Paris, Louvre, 1956-7) [major

exhibition, excellent documentation]

J. de Caso: 'Origin of Barye's Ape Riding a Gnu: Barye and Thomas Landseer', *Walters A.G. Bull.*, xxvii-xxviii (1964-5), pp. 66-73

G. F. Bengé: *The Sculptures of Antoine-Louis Barye in the American Collections, with a Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols (diss., Iowa City, U. IA, 1969)

J. Peignot: 'Barye et les bêtes', *Conn. A.*, 243 (1972), pp. 116-21

S. Pivar: *The Barye Bronzes: A Catalogue Raisonné* (London, 1974) [incl. doc. forming and liquidating Barye & Cie, 1845-57, and Barye's last sale cat., 1865]

G. F. Bengé: 'Antoine-Louis Barye (1796-1875)', *Metamorphoses in Nineteenth-century Sculpture* (exh. cat., ed. J. L. Wasserman; Cambridge, MA, Fogg, 1975), pp. 77-107

A Barye Bronze and Three Related Terra Cottas', *Bull. Detroit Inst. A.*, lvi/4 (1978), pp. 231-42

Barye, Flaxman and Phidias', *La scultura nel XIX secolo. Acts of the 24th International Congress of Art History: Bologna, 1979*, vi, pp. 99-105

Antoine-Louis Barye', *The Romantics to Rodin: French Nineteenth-century Sculpture from North American Collections* (exh. cat., ed. P. Fusco and H. W. Janson; Los Angeles, CA, Co. Mus. A., 1980), pp. 124-41

Barye's Apotheosis Pediment for the New Louvre: Napoleon I Crowned by History and the Fine Arts', *Art the Ape of Nature: Studies in Honor of H. W. Janson* (New York, 1981), pp. 607-30

D. Viéville: 'Antoine-Louis Barye', 'Napoléon Ier en redingote, 1866', *De Carpeaux à Matisse: La Sculpture française de 1850 à 1914 dans les musées et les collections publiques du nord de la France* (exh. cat., Calais, Mus. B.-A.; Lille, Mus. B.-A.; Paris, Mus. Rodin; 1982-3), pp. 93-7

G. F. Bengé: *Antoine-Louis Barye, Sculptor of Romantic Realism* (University Park, PA, 1984) [crit. disc., documentation, good illus.]

[Furniture](#)

[Sculpture](#)

[Mirrors](#)

[Pedestals](#)

[Paintings](#)

[Clocks](#)

[Lighting](#)

[Objets d'art](#)