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*Johann Wolfgang
Goethe*

Caspar Bernhard Hardy

Portrait of Johann Wolfgang
von Goethe





Caspar Bernhard Hardy
(Cologne, 1726 – 1819)

Portrait of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Marble relief; diameter 8.5 cm

SIGNED AND DATED ON THE SLEEVE:
Bernhard Kasper Hardy 1814.

Ebonised wood frame with a gilt metal circlet;
17.7 x 17 cm.

A cartouche on the back of the frame bears the inscription in ink: *Sculptirt in Frankfurth 1814 Bernard Kaspar Hardy*; and a printed label from the celebrated Paris shop *Au coq honoré-Alphonse Giroux rue du Coq Sant-Honoré...Giroux*, one of the most elegant *marchands, tabletiers* and cabinetmakers in Paris, is recorded as working at no. 7 rue Coq Saint-Honoré in that very year, and indeed until his death in 1848. Patrons turned to him also for framing and mounting works of art. He was a purveyor to the royal family under Louis XVIII and Charles X, one of his most important patrons being the Duchesse de Berry (1).

Provenance: Wilhelm M. Döbritz Auction House, Frankfurt, 2 July 2005; Private collection, Italy.

LITERATURE:

Alvar González-Palacios, *A Secrétaire by Theodor Commer with panels containing Wax Figures by Caspar Bernhard Hardy*, Walter Padovani, Milan 2016, pp. 14-15, figs. 2-4, n. 3.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe travelled to Cologne in 1814 and on that occasion he paid a visit to Caspar Bernhard Hardy, a vicar of the city's cathedral. He bought eight polychrome wax reliefs from Hardy – admiring in particular the beauty and harmony of the polychromy – and subsequently hung them in his bedchamber in Tierfurt Castle (2).

In the diary that he kept of his journey, he reports the meeting and vividly describes the ageing wax modeller as an astonishing, vibrant eighty-year-old with innate talent (3). It may well have been as a result of their meeting that Hardy made his only known signed and dated marble work bearing a portrait of the great writer in profile facing to the right, adding the words “Johann Wolfgang Goethe” engraved in the marble along the edge around the portrait. The small tondo, so refined in its execution that it almost has the makings of

Sculptur in Frankfurt
1814
Bernhard Kaspar Hardy

AU COQ HONORE,
ALPHONSE GIROUX,
Rue du Coq Saint-Honoré N. 7, à Paris.
Magasin de toutes espèces de Papiers de France et de
Hollande et généralement de tous les objets utiles à la Pein-
ture à l'Auile, la Miniature, le Dessin, le Lavis et la
Fouille des Bureaux. Escrique de Glaces, Médallions
et Bordures dorées, apprêts pour Tableaux et enca-
drement à l'estampe. Collection choisie de Tableaux
anciens et modernes.

01972 No. *Geigenstein*
Präsident Winkel
Blu
01972

1814

a cameo, captures the effigy of Goethe in his sixty-fifth year with extraordinary sensitivity, his face now a little soft and devoid of definition, his eyelid slightly swollen. His hair is swept back in soft locks, his attire is contemporary. Despite the vast number of portraits that we have of Goethe, we know of no other depictions of the kind seen in this portrait, so we may surmise that it was done from life; by the same token, we know of no oc-

casion on which Hardy travelled outside Cologne – indeed, the sources tell us that he attracted as many visitors to Cologne as a monarch (4). The cartouche with the phrase “carved in Frankfurt”, on the other hand, would appear to suggest that he did travel, but this may quite possibly be a simple error on the part of the unknown writer who penned the words.

The item is in excellent condition.

(1) *Un âge d'or des arts décoratifs*, Paris, Grand Palais, 1991, p. 524.

(2) Alvar González-Palacios, *A Secrétaire by Theodor Commer with panels containing Wax Figures by Caspar Bernhard Hardy*, Walter Padovani, Milan 2016, pp. 14-15.

(3) Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Aus einer Reise am Rhein, Main und Neckar in den Jahren 1814 und 1815*, in *Goethes Werke*, ed. H. Kurz, vol.II, p.165

(4) Angeika von Reimann, *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Goethe – Begegnungen und Gespräche / 1815-1816*, Berlin 2018, p.75.



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