

# . AGNEWS .

EST. 1817

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**Louis Leopold Boilly** (La Bassée 1761–1845  
Paris)

*Portraits of four Members of the Hartmann Family:  
André Hartmann and his Three Sons, Frédéric, Jacques  
and Henri*

Oil on canvas

8 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 6 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (22 x 17 cm.), each

Painted c.1814-18



In their original French Empire frames with compositional ornament, original gilding in almost perfect original condition, Paris circa 1800-10

### **Provenance**

Henri-Nicolas Hartmann (1782-1856);  
his son, Jules Henri Hartmann (1820-1881);  
his daughter, Alice Hartmann (1861-1931) who in 1883 married Marie-Alfred de Maupeou (1856-1922);  
by inheritance, the Maupeou family.

It was at the Salon of 1800—a veritable Parisian showcase for the Fine-Arts—that Louis-Léopold Boilly can be said to have officially launched a new prototype for portraits. As any advertising executive worthy of the name would do, he arranged to have inserted in the Salon catalogue: “*Several portraits, under the same number, each done in a two-hour session.*” Despite the number of works exhibited that year, the critical press mentioned these two portraits. While opinion was not necessarily warm, there was agreement on the essentials: the rapidity of the posing session, and their resemblance to their models. The painter and critic

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Charles-Paul Landon,<sup>1</sup> seems to have completely understood the interest of this new type of portrait: “All perfect likenesses.” Through his circles of influence in Paris, Boilly acquired an astonishing celebrity for the realism of his small portraits. Already in 1806, Aubin-Louis Millin de Grandmaison, director of the *Magasin encyclopédique* underlined his fame, insisting on the most important, “Boilly did a great many portraits in a session; he almost never fails [to capture] the resemblance.”<sup>2</sup>

As Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1740-1814) argued in his famous *Tableau de Paris* (1781), the Salon was the best place to examine the very nature of the portrait: “Look at the crowd of portraits at the Salon; they attribute character traits according to facial features. What is revealed by physiognomy can’t be denied.”<sup>3</sup> Boilly indeed devoted himself to translating physiognomy as faithfully as possible, concentrating on the features of the face, ignoring décor, and simplifying the details of dress in favor of the larger truth emphasizing the real personality of the model: in the words of an author in the satirical newspaper *La vérité en riant*, “the only thing they lack is speech.”<sup>4</sup> The number “4,500 minimum” figured for the first time in the foreword of the sale organized by Boilly the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 1829. His reputation for these small portraits of a single size was made, even going beyond national borders. He could boast of being one of the rare artists of the period to have done portraits of Russians, Americans,<sup>5</sup> the English, the Swiss, Germans, the Flemish, Italians and the Dutch during their stays in Paris. There was no doubt about it: for Boilly, doing these portraits in a two-hour session, “lightening quick,” as Landon said, with the realism it is agreed they possess, only increased demand and the success of the artist, making him, so to speak, the veritable precursor of the identity photo. Their very high quality of execution, their exceptional condition, and their impressively consistent provenance over two centuries make our group of portraits ones of the most beautiful of their type known today.

It was in the following terms that André Hartmann, great Alsatian industrialist (Colmar 1746 - Munster 1837) was evoked in the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique* de la France (Tome 9, pp. 337-338) “He was the last of those men of energetic will and invincible consistency who founded Alsatian industry, the survivor of the

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<sup>1</sup> Landon, (*cf.* Bibliographie: Sources imprimées, Livrets des expositions)

<sup>2</sup> Millin de Grandmaison, *Le Magasin encyclopédique*, 1806, p. 349-350.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Baridon, Guédron, 1999, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *La Vérité en riant* ou *Les Tableaux traités comme ils le méritent, en vaudevilles*, No. 2, p 12.

<sup>5</sup> At present, we know of three portraits of American citizens: Sarah Bowdoin (1092 PP), Isaac Cox Barnet (1129 bis PP), Lewis Livingston (1257 PP).

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Koechlings, the Oberkampfs, those we would be tempted to call the Field Marshalls of industry..." Son of a dyer, Hartmann worked for a time in Germany before returning in 1782 to the Munster valley, in the Haut-Rhin region, there founding a workshop producing painted fabric. A few years later he was at helm of a manufacture employing 4,000 workers, having changed the way of life in the region, until then overwhelmingly agricultural.

Considered in Alsace as one of the founders of its industry, Hartmann was the mayor of Munster from 1792 to 1815, and in 1814, received the Légion d'Honneur as the doyen of French industrialists. He also worked to have the Schlucht Road built; finished in 1860, it linked Munster and Gérardmer, opening up the region (*Mémoires de la Société d'Archéologie lorraine...*, 1902, Nancy, p. 175).

Married to Marie-Catherine Waag, he had three sons, represented in our paintings, who worked with him: the eldest, Frédéric (1772-1861), and Jacques (1774-1839), worked with him as of 1792, and were joined a few years later by Henri (1782-1856): "...this second generation of industrialists merits no less the recognition of the country than their predecessors," (*Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la France*, op. cit., p. 338).

Frédéric Hartmann also founded a firm producing painted fabric in Paris. In addition, he was an important political figure in the liberal camp under the Restoration, and was close to Benjamin Constant and General Foy; he was elected as a Député on 3 July 1830, reelected from 1831 to 1842, and named a Peer of France in August 1845.

Another version of the portrait of André Hartmann (Munster, Hôtel de Ville) is known to exist, see the recently published catalogue raisonné of Boilly's work (no. **1203 PP**, p. 778, *Boilly, Le peintre de la société parisienne de Louis XVI à Louis-Philippe*, by Etienne Bréton and Pascal Zuber, Paris, Arthena, 2019).

Stylistically we can compare the present set of portraits with the one of Antoine-Vincent Arnault (**1049 PP**, circa 1814-1815), Edmond-Pierre Barbier d'Aucourt (**1062 PP**, circa 1816), and Léon de Bouthillier-Chavigny (**1089 PP**, circa 1815)