

Charles GASPAR (1871-1950)

Jean GASPAR (1861-1931) C5-L3-T1+2

Jean Gaspar, the second son of notary Alphonse Gaspar, abandoned his engineering studies to pursue a career in art. In 1884, he was apprenticed to Jef Lambeaux, who tasked him with creating sculptures of reptiles as decoration for the Brabo Fountain in Antwerp.

At the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1889, Jean Gaspar won the bronze medal for "L'Enlèvement des Sabines" (The Rape of the Sabine Women). He then left his apprenticeship with Jef Lambeaux and turned to animal sculpture.

In 1895, he married, and he and his wife settled in Arlon. His best-known work was inspired by the forests of the Ardennes: "L'Appel de la forêt" (The Call of the Forest). It was presented to Leopold III and Astrid on the occasion of their Joyous Entry into the province of Luxembourg's capital. After his death, it was reproduced and enlarged to five times its original size to adorn a park in Arlon.

Gaspar exhibited his works widely, taking part in various salons and producing a number of outstanding works. In August 1919, Jean created "Coq Gaulois", which was exhibited in Arlon cemetery. The following year, he created "Jass". This altar of remembrance commemorating the sacrifice of Belgian servicemen is located in front of the town hall. Gaspar found his success difficult to cope with, sank into depression and died in Uccle in February 1931. His body was brought back to Arlon and buried in the family tomb.

His younger brother Charles (1871-1950) abandoned his studies to devote himself to running the family business, in particular his father



Charles GASPAR



Alphonse's notary office in Arlon.

A keen photographer, he became involved in the Pictorialist movement, which gained international prominence between the early 1890s and the First World War. Between 1895 and 1914, he took part in major photography exhibitions in Belgium and internationally.

In the aftermath of the First World War, Charles Gaspar became involved in patriotic movements and social causes. He was one of the instigators of monuments such as the sculptures "Coq Gaulois" and "Jass" commissioned from his brother Jean by Jeunesse Arlonaise. He was a patron of the arts, a passionate collector and a man of conviction.

In a will drawn up in 1935, he bequeathed his house and its contents to the town of Arlon, on condition that it be turned into a museum featuring his brother's works. The rest of his fortune was divided between numerous social projects and the creation of school prizes in memory of his three brothers.

Charles died at home at the age of 79.

Sources : Google / Wikipédia / Chroniques Arlonaises (le « Parc Charles Gaspar », en hommage à un bienfaiteur de la ville d'Arlon) de Valérie PEUCKERT

