

Jean-Jacques MENARD

(1837-1924)

C14bis-L4-T11+12

Arlon-born Jean-Jacques Menard had 4 years of primary school education before training as a hairdresser. In 1858, he opened a hairdressing salon at 7 Rue des Faubourgs in Arlon. He later became a local councillor.

A popular writer in his spare time, he wrote poems, songs and plays in Luxembourgish and French. This patois poet, Arlon's local bard, brought success to the "Les Philanthropes" theatre company. The magazine "La Vie Arlonaise" compared him to Jasmin, the Occitan poet and wigmaker from Agen in Gascony, because he composed his verses while styling his customers' hair. In 1871, the printer Brück published the first collections of Menard's work. His grave is unusual as it features an acrostic on the front and a poem in Luxembourgish on the left-hand side.

This is the acrostic:

Mon corps gît sous la terre (My body lies underground)

Et mon âme en ces lieux (And my soul remains nearby)

N'attend qu'une prière (Awaiting a prayer)

Avant d'aller aux cieux (Before ascending to heaven)

Rien qu'un bon « Notre Père » (Asking a simple "Our Father")

De vous, passants pieux. (From you, kind passers-by)

And the poem reads:

*Here lies a man
who needs no praise
He lived on this earth
as Christ desired :
If we live our lives properly,
he will appreciate our worth*



Sources : Google / Luxemburger Autorenlexikon / La Revue Arlonaise (Troupe de théâtre amateur) Arlon centre commercial n°15 - 1974 / Combats pour la langue dans le Pays d'Arlon aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles de Jean-Marie TRIFFAUX / L'indépendance luxembourgeoise 27/12/1898 / Arlon en 1890 de Max KIESEL / Geschwenn n°116 2005

