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Facade of the old Gréber factory in Beauvais.



Bordez-Gréber's house in Mouy in Oise. The decor of the facade was done by Charles Gréber.



Large ovoid vase by Johann-Peter Gréber kept at the pottery museum at Chapelle aux pots.

Originally from Austria, the **Gréber family**, moved to Beauvais in 1846 where four generations of the family created ceramics, sculptures, and even architecture. The first being, **Johann Peter Gréber** (Bezau, 1820- Beauvais 1898), who moved to Beauvais in 1846 after undergoing studies at the Polytechnicum de Munich and living in Paris for some time. As a sculptor, he worked on decorations (The Episcopal Palace of Beauvais and The Astronomic Clock of Besançon) and restoring buildings; he also made all the stone sculptures on the new church of the Chapelle aux pots. In 1868, he asked for the permission to use a furnace device “in order to cut earthen sculpted objects of art”. He thus opened his “stoneware manufacturing factory in Beauvais” in collaboration with his two oldest sons, Paul and Charles. The region has been known for the quality and durability of its sandstone clay since the Middle Ages. Their first pieces of work alternated between following the local style and the Neo Historic style. They presented their works of art at the Universal Exhibition of 1878 in Paris.
Johann Peter Gréber handed the running of his business over to his two sons in 1880, who worked together until 1899, until the death of their father. Together, they reused old local material. In fact, whilst following the traditional production of stoneware they produced artistic stoneware and tried it on ornaments, garden statues and architectural ceramic coverings.
After this, **Paul Gréber** (Beauvais 1851 – Bonneil les Eaux, 1915) moved to Pont d'Allonne where he produced blue and grey salt glaze, following the Rhine tradition. His oldest son, Edouard (1885 – 1961) was also a ceramicist but in the industrial field. Charles Gréber (Beauvais 1853 – 1935) took on the running of the stoneware factory in Beauvais alone, situated on rue de Calais, in 1900. He was a talented Ceramicist, he expanded the factory which developed an international reputation. He produced flamed stoneware and architectural ceramic covering which became one of the business's specialties. He decorated a number of French buildings, at first in an “art nouveau” style and then, after 1920, in an “art déco” style. In 1933 he handed the business over to his nephew Pierre Gréber (Beauvais 1896 – Cabris 1965), which he ran until 1961, when the factory stopped producing, Pierre Gréber's fault. His ceramic pieces, essentially made out of enameled stoneware, were enhanced by lively and bright colours. He also specialised in the modern use of dishes. It was under his leadership that the “Gréber myth” was born, during the 1950s – 1960s. All marriages, retirements, sporting competitions at the time came with a ceramic Gréber gift. **François Gréber** (Beauvais 1925-1974), only daughter of Pierre, who was a sculptor, ceramicist, painter, did not take on the business despite repeated requests from her father. In 1962, the business closed and the premises were sold. But the classification of the facade and decorated roofs by Charles and Henri as Historical monuments, saved the family's important patrimony.
The other members of the**Gréber family** also inherited this feeling for art and craftsmanship and either became sculptors (Henri Gréber), ceramicists (Edouard Gréber, Gaston Gréber, Pierre Gréber, Françoise Gréber), designers (Léon Gréber), or architects (Jacques Gréber). Across all generations, everyone was somehow involved in the family business, thus sharing an artistic and culturally strong heritage.

See also

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