



PRESS RELEASE

Bayeux, 10 April 2019

Donation from JESCHKE family to the City of Bayeux A new documentary source on the Bayeux Tapestry

On April 10, 2019, the City of Bayeux received an exceptional donation from the descendants of Herbert JESCHKE, a Berlin-based artist sent to Normandy during the Second World War, to make graphic and colorimetric surveys of the Bayeux Tapestry. This unpublished documentary collection, consisting of sketchbooks, notes and black and white clichés, will integrate the museum's collections and will enrich the historical and scientific knowledge of millenary embroidery.

Specialized in the analysis and reproduction of colors, Herbert JESCHKE (1900 - 1964) was commissioned in 1941 in Bayeux to join a team of researchers from the Ahnenerbe. Created by HIMMLER and led by Herbert JANKUHN, this scientific institute was to work on the study and analysis of sites and objects potentially related to the "Aryan heritage" that the Third Reich wanted to promote. Like the entire Ahnenerbe campaign, this work has been forgotten and never published. The 4 notebooks of sketches and surveys, the fifteen layers with watercolor reproductions of motifs of the Tapestry, the sketches of Bayeux and its inhabitants and fifty black and white shots taken in 1941 have so far remained in the family patrimony JESCHKE. Gertrud, Gerhard and Herbert, the artist's children, wish today to donate it to the City of Bayeux, guardian of the 11th century embroidery.

During the various speeches, the members of the JESCHKE family expressed their honor to be able to transmit the inheritance of their father. Herbert and Gerhard said that their father had been sent to Bayeux for his skills and that he had never adhered to Nazi ideologies. When he first came in 1941, he had simply adored Bayeux, the Tapestry, and had developed a deep respect for his keeper of the time, René Falue. According to the two brothers present at the Hôtel de Ville on Wednesday, their father, witness of passage in the history of the Tapestry, would have appreciated having contributed to the enrichment of the knowledge of the work and its preservation, thanks to his observations and his drawing expertise.

The relationship with the heirs of the JESCHKE family was made possible by the intervention of Dr. Shirley-Ann BROWN, a researcher at York University (Canada) and specialist in the study of Tapestry. For several decades she had been searching for works that had disappeared from the Ahnenerbe's Tapestry campaign. She was particularly interested in the photographic campaign led by JANKHUN, which was the subject of a previous donation to the city in 1944 by his widow, and the work of JESCHKE she will see for the first time in 2016 Shirley-Ann BROWN is currently preparing an exclusive publication of Herbert JESCHKE's documents in a forthcoming scientific work on the Bayeux Tapestry. According to the scientist, these surveys are a new source of information for ongoing studies, in view of the future museum of the Bayeux Tapestry. In particular, conservators will be able to follow the evolution of the state of conservation of the Tapestry since the 1940s.