



Société des Amis  
du Vieux Reims



*“La vieillesse des villes est chose sacrée”*

**Society of Friends of Old Reims** «*The old age of cities is a sacred thing*»

## MISSIONS AND OBJECTIVES

**Assist in the protection, preservation, and promotion**  
of the historical heritage of the city of Reims

**Enhance and enrich a documentary collection**  
related to this heritage and the artistic treasures of the city

**Raise awareness about this heritage through various means**  
including publications and events  
such as conferences, exhibitions and partnerships



## Presentation of the association

Founded in 1909 by **Hugues Krafft** and **Ernest Kalas**, the «**Société des Amis du Vieux Reims**» is a nonprofit association under French law (known as «association Loi 1901») and was granted public utility status in 1913. It actively contributes to the preservation of the historical heritage of the city of Reims by establishing and managing an archival documentary collection dedicated to this heritage.

It also regularly publishes works (including the journal «*Regards sur notre patrimoine*»), and organizes cultural events.

The association owns the Museum-Hotel Le Vergeur and its collections, along with the museum management entrusted to the «*Direction des Musées de la Ville de Reims*» (Museum Department of the City of Reims) since January 1, 2019.

Its headquarters are located at the Museum-Hotel Le Vergeur in Reims. Its operations are exclusively run by a team of volunteers.

## THE FOUNDERS (1/2)



### Hugues KRAFFT (1853-1935)

Hugues Krafft was born on December 1, 1853, in Paris, into a bourgeois family of German origin. His father, Guillaume Krafft, was a partner of Louis Roederer, and his mother, Emma Mumm, came from nobility. He spent his childhood and adolescence between the townhouse in Reims and the country estate in Toussicourt close to Reims.

Upon the death of his father in 1877 and his mother in 1880, Hugues Krafft inherited a substantial fortune. Not particularly interested in commerce and business, he decided to embark on a world tour with his brother Edouard and two friends, beginning a globe-trotting life that would last nearly 20 years.

On October 31, 1881, they set off on an 18-month journey around the world, visiting India, Ceylon, Cochinchina, Java, China, Japan, and North America. Other journeys followed until 1912, taking him to Greece, Italy, Scotland, Spain, the Maghreb, Egypt, Palestine, and Central Asia. He captured numerous photographs during his travels, which are preserved by the S.A.V.R. Additionally, he was a true artist, skilled in drawing, painting, and watercolors.

Hugues Krafft was a member of various societies and clubs. Locally, he became a full member of the National Academy of Reims. He was eventually consulted by the Commission for Historic Monuments to provide his opinion during the reconstruction following World War I.

In 1909, he co-founded the « Société des Amis du Vieux Reims » (S.A.V.R.) with architect Ernest Kalas - a commitment to actively protect and preserve Reims' heritage. In 1910, he acquired the Hotel « Le Vergeur ». Starting in 1924, Hugues Krafft initiated significant renovations to rebuild his hotel using his own financial resources in addition to war reparations. In 1930, he designated the ground floor for the headquarters of S.A.V.R. and inaugurated the museum in 1932.

He passed away on May 10, 1935, in Reims, bequeathing Hotel Le Vergeur and his personal collections to S.A.V.R.



## THE FOUNDERS (2/2)

### Ernest KALAS (1861-1928)

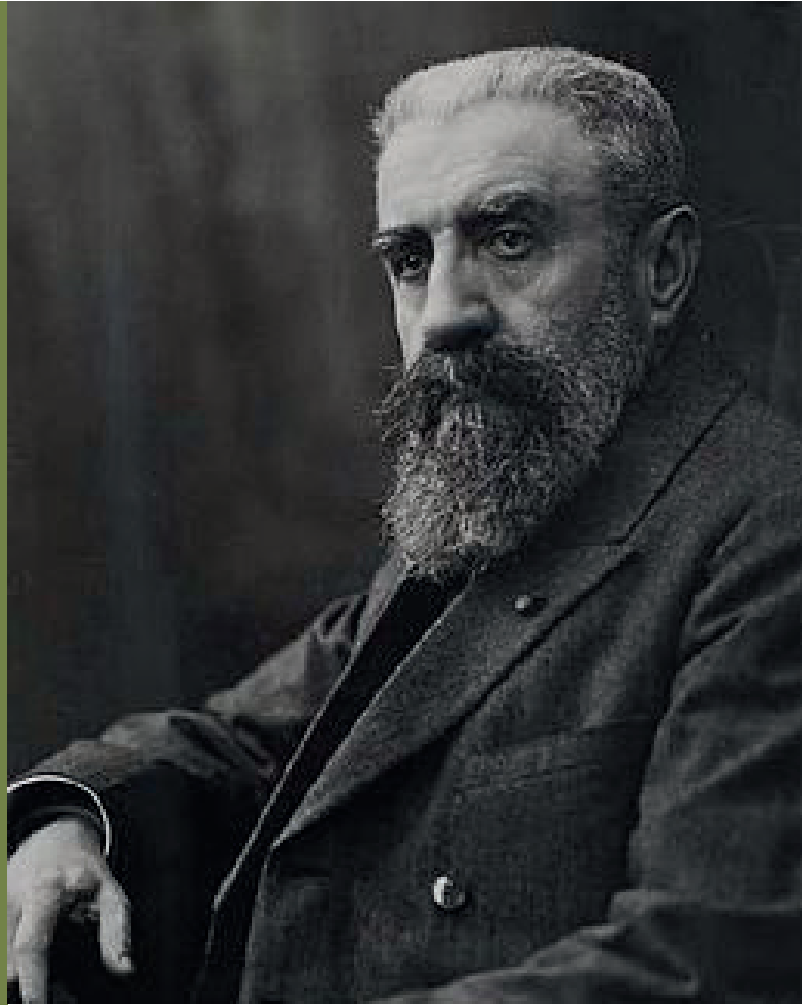
Ernest Kalas was born on February 10, 1861, at 16 Rue de Contrai in Reims. He attended the « Lycée de Reims » from 1872 to 1876 and began studying architecture, painting, and drawing. Initially, he studied in Reims as a student of architect Alphonse Gosset. Later on, from 1880, he studied in Paris under the chief architect of the Prefecture of Police. From 1882 to 1884, he attended the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Back to Reims, he began working as a draftsman in Armand Bègue's office in 1884, becoming his partner from 1886 to 1903 where he oversaw constructing the Palace of Champagne for the 1900 World Exposition in Paris. He, thus, received the gold medal in architecture. Passionate about the history of his city, in 1910, he published « Les aspects de Reims au III<sup>ème</sup> siècle », for which he received the silver medal from the French Society of Archaeology. He also created eleven topographical maps of Reims, documenting the city's history from the arrival of the Romans to 1914.

Ernest Kalas was a staunch defender of Reims' heritage. In 1903, he purchased and restored the Hôtel Coquebert (5 Rue Salin in Reims), built in 1637 by Pierre Coquebert, saving it from abandonment and decay. In 1905, he initiated a campaign to raise awareness among the people of Reims to save « the house of the musicians », whose medieval sculptures were coveted by wealthy foreign collectors.

As a member of the Board of Directors of S.A.V.R., he also served as the curator-archivist of the collections until 1920. In 1919, Ernest Kalas was appointed 'inspector of excavations and historical research in Reims' and was among the first to unearth the ruins of the Place du Forum. In 1922, he founded the « Union Rémoise des Arts Décoratifs », where he worked until 1925. He was also a member of the 'National Academy of Reims', where he served as President in 1913 and 1923.

Ernest Kalas passed away on December 10, 1928, at his residence of the 23th, Rue Gambetta in Reims, the first house reconstructed after the war in 1920 according to his designs.



## HOTEL LE VERGEUR



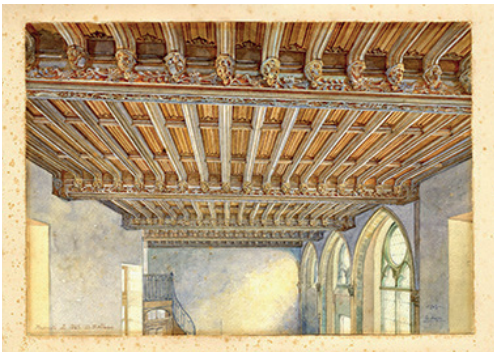
The history of Hotel Le Vergeur in Reims begins in the 13<sup>th</sup> century with the construction of the Gothic building: a large hall that welcomed merchants and traders, located in the Place des Marchés (cloth market and grain market), in the district of the wealthy business bourgeoisie.

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The Hotel saw additions in the Renaissance style around 1523, thanks to its owner at the time, Nicolas Le Vergeur, after whom the hotel is named. Nicolas Le Vergeur was a grain merchant associated with the salt granary in Cormicy; his wealth and positions allowed him to attain nobility status. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Hotel underwent alterations when it became the property of the Coquebert family, another patrician family in the city. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it belonged, among others, to the famous Veuve Clicquot-Ponsardin, then to Count Werlé, before being sold in 1895 to Désiré Belleau. Champagne merchants occupied it, including Champagne Couvert.

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It was in 1910 that Hugues Krafft, a traveler, collector, and co-founder of the « Société des Amis du Vieux Reims », purchased the hotel from Désiré Belleau to save the remarkable 13<sup>th</sup> century painted wooden ceiling of the Gothic Hall from being taken to the United States. Concerned about the preservation of heritage, he took steps to protect facades of houses and church portals in Reims from demolition, which he later displayed in his garden-museum designed as an outdoor extension of his collections. He also acquired mantelpieces, overmantels, and staircases from old houses, thereby safeguarding the heritage of Reims.

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World War I inflicted significant damage on the buildings of the Hotel. Hugues Krafft dedicated a substantial portion of his personal fortune and war reparations to restore his hotel. In 1930, he allocated the ground floor to the « Société des Amis du Vieux Reims » and its collections while reserving the upper floors for his own apartments.

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Upon his death in 1935, Hugues Krafft bequeathed his hotel to the « Société des Amis du Vieux Reims », along with its furnishings, paintings, collections, library, and archives.



## THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTIONS

More on : <https://musees-reims.fr/fr/musees/musee-le-vergeur/>



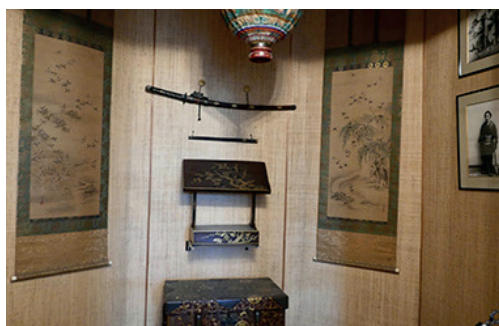
The Museum-Hotel Le Vergeur was inaugurated in 1932. Its collections are exceptional in many fields and have a local, national, and international impact. They are partly composed of Hugues Krafft's personal collection bequeathed to the « Société des Amis du Vieux Reims » upon his death in 1935, as well as numerous donations from Reims families and individuals made to the S.A.V.R. since its establishment in 1909. The collections revolve around two main axes: Hugues Krafft's personal and family history and the history of the city of Reims.



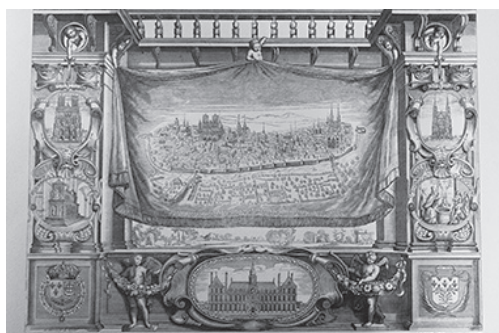
Characterized by their eclecticism, they include nearly 2,400 decorative art objects, including 235 pieces of furniture ranging from 17<sup>th</sup> century Flemish baroque to the Napoleon III style of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fine arts are also well-represented, with nearly 180 paintings dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



The museum also houses a significant collection of graphic arts related to the history of Reims and the history of France, which, due to the extreme sensitivity of the works to natural and artificial light, is only displayed to the public as part of temporary exhibitions. Many regional artists are featured, including Eugène Auger, Paul Bocquet, Isabelle Charlier, Adrien Sénéchal, and Suzanne Tourte.

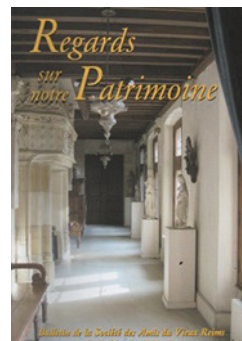


As a prolific traveler in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hugues Krafft bequeathed several hundred glass plates and photographs from his world travels as part of his personal collections, along with a collection of objects brought back from the Far East and Central Asia.



The history of Reims is also illustrated from antiquity to the present day through rare archaeological collections such as the Carnes Monetary Treasure or the collection of Gallo-Roman glassware, as well as through several maps and models that provide a better understanding of the city's evolution over time. To strengthen the museum's dynamic, the management of the Museum-Hotel Le Vergeur and its collections has been entrusted to the Museum Department of the City of Reims since January 1, 2019. The S.A.V.R. remains the owner.

## « REGARDS SUR NOTRE PATRIMOINE »



A cultural journal published biannually since 1996 by the « Société des Amis du Vieux Reims », its aim is to introduce a wide audience to the various forms of local heritage, sometimes vanished, including architectural, societal, human, entrepreneurial, material, or immaterial heritage. « Regards sur notre patrimoine » is lavishly illustrated with materials primarily sourced from the S.A.V.R.'s iconographic collection.

## USEFUL INFORMATION



### Société des Amis du Vieux Reims (S.A.V.R)

Association Loi 1901 founded on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1913  
Recognized of public interests

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