



DIEULAFOY, JANE HENRIETTE MAGRE

DIEULAFOY, JANE HENRIETTE MAGRE (b. Toulouse, 29 June 1851, d. Château de Langlade, Haute-Garonne, 25 May 1916), French archeologist, explorer, folklorist, novelist, playwright, and journalist. Jane was born into a wealthy and cultivated family of merchants. She studied at Couvent de l'Assomption d'Auteuil (1862-1870) in Paris. In May 1870, she married [Marcel Dieulafoy](#) and joined him in the army of the Loire during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. From that time, she adopted masculine costume and a short haircut in her extensive travels and her mundane Parisian life. They formed a strange couple which later became a favorite target of journalists and cartoonists. She studied drawing and sculpture, knew English and Spanish, could read Italian and Portuguese, and acquired some knowledge of Moroccan Arabic and Persian. During Marcel's appointments at Toulouse (1871-79) as the architect in charge of historical monuments, she accompanied him on his travels in England, Italy, Spain, Upper Egypt, and Morocco. When Marcel obtained an unpaid assignment in Persia, Jane decided to accompany him. From the start, she imposed herself as a "collaborateur" (she used the masculine form purposely). She covered on horseback all the Persian itinerary of the voyage (1881-82) from Marseilles to Athens, Istanbul, Poti, Erevan, Jolfā, Tabrīz, Qazvīn, Tehran, Isfahan, Persepolis, Shiraz, Sarvestān, Fīrūzābād, and to Susa via Būšeher and Mesopotamia. Despite multiple hardships, and notably a serious illness of Marcel and herself, she kept an enthusiastic diary of the expedition. Persia fascinated her. She wrote profusely on history, archaeology, arts, architecture,



handicrafts, ethnology, folklore, geography, economics, etc. She encountered and depicted, with a sense of humor, all kinds of people ranging from the simple muletteer to high ranking officials and the Shah. She managed to penetrate into the *andarūns* and provided us with vivid descriptions of the lives of secluded women of all ranks. This intrusion was facilitated by the fascination of Persians with the camera obscura she carried along with a cumbersome photographic material. Besides all the main monuments and archeological remains, she photographed and processed on the spot many portraits of men, women, various social groups, etc. All drawings and engravings illustrating her travel accounts and Marcel Dieulafoy's publications were made from these photographs.

Upon the return from this first Persian mission, she published the journal of the expedition in *Le Tour du Monde* (45-49, 51) and wrote extensively on Persia in various periodicals. With the help of Louis de Ronchaud, the general secretary of fine arts, the Dieulafoys obtained an official mission for Susa. The team, including the young engineer C. Babin and the naturalist F. Houssay, left Paris in December 1884. After some diplomatic difficulties, excavations were carried out during the cold season (March-April 1885; December 1885-March 1886) despite serious difficulties due to insecurity and the rivalry between Arab and Lor tribes and the Dezfūlis who provided the labor force. Periods of stormy weather and floods hampered the work considerably. Transportation of heavy remains, notably two bull protomes, to the ship on the Kārūn river, was made in scorching heat and constant fear of Arab attacks (March-April 1886). Further difficulties arose from pilgrims of the tomb of Daniel, the 'olamā' of Dezfūl, the governor Moḥsen Khan Moḏaffar-al-Molk, and the customs officers, mainly the Ottomans at Amara. On the other hand, Jane recognized that half of the collection was due to "the generosity of the king and his son Mas'ūd Mīrzā Z̄ell-al-Solṭān and partly to the constant backing of Shaikh Mez'al of Banī Ka'b (*En mission...*, p. 306).

Upon the mission's return to Paris, Jane published in *Le Tour du Monde* the journal of the expedition and prepared the exhibition of the monuments in the Louvre (two rooms were to bear her name), notably the enamelled-brick archers frieze which she entirely restored and reconstructed. At the inauguration of the Dieulafoy rooms, she was awarded the coss of the Légion d'Honneur by President Sadi Carnot (20 October 1886).

While writing her travel accounts she had developed a taste for a literary career. Her first historical novel, *Parysatis* (Paris, 1890), inspired by the history



of Susa, was awarded a prize by the Académie française and was turned into as a lyrical drama by Camille Saint-Saëns (Béziers, 1902). It was followed by historical novels inspired by the French Revolution (*Volontaire 1791-1793*, Paris, 1892; *Frère Pélage*, Paris, 1894). She turned to the psychological novel with *Déchéance* (Paris, 1897), where she took position against divorce, although she was otherwise considered a determined feminist. In 1904, she presided over the jury of “La vie heureuse,” forerunner of the literary award “Prix Femina.”

Aside from their busy daily life in their Paris literary salon, which also featured private theatrical performances, the Dieulafoys remained interested in historical and archeological research. They pursued it in Spain and Morocco (twenty three travels between 1888 and 1914); the Susa mission was given, to their great disappointment, to Jacques de Morgan from 1897. Jane wrote historical, geographical, and biographical works on Spain. In 1913-14, she militated for the enrollment of women in the military auxiliary services. In 1914-15, while Marcel was assigned to public works in the corps of engineers at Rabat, she directed the excavation works of the 12th-century Ya‘qūb al-Manṣūr Mosque near Rabat. She died at the family domaine of Langlade, Pompertuzat, near Toulouse.

Despite her ardent feminism and desire to have “*une vie d’homme*,” her personality remains rather puzzling. She always claimed to form with Marcel an ideal couple. After her death, he claimed as hers half of the honors that had been bestowed on him. She shares Marcel’s responsibility for the positive contributions made to Persian archaeology as well as the errors made, notably in historical interpretations. Her description of Persia and the Persians is not free from obvious mistakes either (e.g., she mistranslated *kadkodā* as “l’image de Dieu and “ Salmān-e Pāk as “Soleiman le Pur,” called Rostam Beg Āq Qoyunlū “une roi mogol,” and took a carder for a harpist; *Une amazone*, pp. 92, 176, 317, 334). She was highly prejudiced against the mullas (ibid., p. 63) and shared Marcel’s feelings that the conditions then prevalent in Islamic countries was a drawback on the progress of “civilization” (Gran-Aymeric, pp. 305 f.).



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