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DIEULAFOY, MARCEL-AUGUSTE

DIEULAFOY, MARCEL-AUGUSTE, French archeologist (b. Toulouse, 3 August 1844, d. Paris, 25 February 1920). He thoroughly represented a generation of learned Frenchmen of the 19th century who were without university education and specialized training. But their familiarity with classical civilization combined with technical education led them to take an interest in wide-ranging aspects of history and archaeology.

Marcel Dieulafoy belonged to a cultivated noble family that had also produced an 18th-century playwright. His uncle was a professor of surgery and his older brother, Georges, was a celebrated teacher of internal pathology. In 1863 Marcel Dieulafoy was accepted at École Polytechnique, where he studied civil engineering; he then became an engineer in the French bureau of roads and bridges. In 1868 he took up his first assignment, in the commune of Aumale (now Sour al-Ghozlane) in Algeria; there he discovered the Arabic-speaking orient in association with Roman antiquities, and this combination was decisive for his future interests. In 1870 he was appointed to the navigation service on the Garonne and married Jane Magre (1851-1916; see DIEULAFOY, JANE), a fellow citizen of Toulouse who subsequently played a major role in the shaping of his career. During the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71) Dieulafoy served as an engineering officer at Nevers. After his demobilization he was placed in charge of the supply services for the department of Haute Garonne, then in 1874 of the municipal services of Toulouse. In the latter capacity he

particularly distinguished himself during the serious floods of 1875.

Marcel's leisure activities had already led him to an interest in medieval archaeology. He became acquainted with Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, under whom he worked for four years in the commission of historic monuments and who influenced the direction of his own personal research. As his wife was to explain later, "Marcel was deeply persuaded that Sasanian Persia had had an overwhelming influence on the origins of Islamic architecture and that it was through the study of the monuments of Ḵosrow and Šāpūr that it would one day be possible to substitute for ingenious theories reasoning based on solid foundations." With Viollet-le-Duc's encouragement Dieulafoy left his post in 1880 and requested an unpaid assignment in Persia (Cognat, pp. 5-6).

He took the opportunity to visit Athens and Constantinople en route. When he arrived in Tehran he was seriously ill and came under the care of François Tholozan, the perecited by the Magusaean magi in a real liturgical context. Something about the ill fit of the interpretations with the underlying narratives (especially the first), an allegorical dissonna. From there he made an expedition to Susa, where the traces of the palace explored thirty years earlier by W. K. Loftus remained visible, permitting an immediate comparison with the remains at Persepolis.

On this journey Dieulafoy gathered the material for his great work *L'art antique de la Perse* (5 vols. in folio, 1884-89), illustrated with superb photographs, which remains an indispensable work of reference, especially in view of what has since been lost, notably at the Ayvān-e Kesrā. In the first volume the monuments of Mašhad-e Moŗḡāb (i.e., Pasargadae) are described and discussed: "The tombs and the palace . . . were not original conceptions or copies of monuments built in the countries bordering on Fārs, but rather reproduced, with adaptation to Aryan customs, the previously existing structures of the Greeks in Ionia and Lycia." The second volume is devoted to a description of the buildings at Persepolis, the columns of which Dieulafoy considered to be copies of the Ionic orders. In the third volume the Persepolitan sculptures were presented on the assumption that "both Greek statuary and Persian statuary are derived from the schools of Assyria." In the fourth volume Dieulafoy turned his attention to the vaulted monuments of Sarvestān and Fīrūzābād in Fārs, which he attributed to the Achaemenid period. This error led him to conclude that the vault and the dome had originated in a popular building tradition, which he supposed had then

developed further in the Parthian and Sasanian periods. He put forward this hypothesis in the final volume, drawing upon comparisons with the Islamic architecture of Syria and the medieval architecture of France, both of which he believed had evolved directly from that of ancient Persia.

A brief visit to Susa greatly impressed Marcel, who returned with a wish to resume explorations there. The director of the French national museums, who had just created the department of oriental antiquities at the Louvre, obtained for him a modest sum, which was augmented by the minister of public instruction; the army and the navy also provided material and supplies. The Dieulafoys returned to Persia in 1884, with a team consisting of a young engineer, Chrles Babin, and the naturalist Marcel Houssaye. The Persian government at first refused to authorize the excavations, but the intervention of Tholozan made the difference. Permission was granted on the condition that the tomb of Daniel must not be touched except for repairs, for which the French government would be responsible at its own expense. The antiquities discovered were to be divided between the two countries, with the exception of those made of precious metals, which were all to be turned over to the Persian government. The Persian government subsequently waived its right to share in the finds, however, apparently because they consisted mainly of bricks and stone fragments (Gran-Aymeric, pp. 96, 135).

The work was carried out during the winters of 1303/1885 and 1304/1886. Unlike most archeologists of his time, Dieulafoy was more interested in architecture than in “museum objects.” He wanted to complete the excavation of the great columned hall, which William Kennett Loftus had identified on the basis of an inscription that he had copied there; the hall was identified by the term *apadāna* and said to have been built by Darius (r. 521-486 B.C.E.), then burned, and finally restored by Artaxerxes II (r. 405-359; Cagnat, p. 9)

Dieulafoy’s work was slowed by the discovery of numerous tombs of the Parthian period, which aroused the protests of the workmen, even though they were not the tombs of Muslims. The trenches had been sunk only 2 m before the floor of the building was reached. It was possible to salvage one almost complete capital, consisting of two bull protomes and an element with volutes. Dieulafoy then concentrated his efforts 50 m farther south, where he was seeking the entrance to the *apadāna*, opening a trench 60 m long and 4 m wide. He thus discovered, upside down on the pavement of a court, the enameled-brick wall revetment representing a frieze of lions. In the following year he extended the excavations farther to the west and found there, in a

disordered pile, the enameled bricks that permitted him to reconstruct the archer frieze. Limited finances prevented him from expanding the field of operations farther to the south, which would have led to the discovery of Darius's actual residence; it was uncovered more than twenty years later by Roland de Mecquenem.

A few trenches were also dug in other parts of the site but without much result. In addition, a small building in the neighborhood of Susa was investigated. The discovery there of Achaemenid column bases led Dieulafoy to identify it as an Achaemenid fire temple (*āyadana*; Dieulafoy, *L'Acropole*, pp. 411 ff.). In fact, the plan that was recovered was very uncertain. Nor was it recognized that the column bases had been brought from Susa and were older than the building, which was probably a residence constructed after the Achaemenid period.

The excavations were conducted under difficult conditions. The archeologists lived in tents, exposed to the heavy storms of early spring and to the attacks by robbers and pilgrims who came to make their devotions at the tomb of Daniel, in a region where the central government had little control. Nevertheless, Dieulafoy managed to send the antiquities discovered to France without loss; everything that remained in situ was doomed to destruction.

Dieulafoy confided to his wife the task of publishing the details of the work in her book *À Suse, journal des fouilles* (Paris, 1888); unfortunately, however, she indulged her preference for anecdote at the expense of archeological precision. Dieulafoy himself undertook an elaborate synthesis entitled *L'Acropole de Suse d'après les fouilles exécutées in 1884, 1885, 1886 sous les auspices du Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1893). There he provided a good description of the geography and some historical information on the country of Elam, of which Susa had been the capital. But, having discovered representations of both black and white men among the enameled-brick archers, he was led to conclude that the indigenous population of Susiana had been black; he identified them as "négritos." Although Houssaye's examination of the excavated skeletons did not actually confirm this daring hypothesis, Dieulafoy went on to identify the black archers as the Susianan "platoon" of the Immortals, the royal guard mentioned by Herodotus (7.83), and the whites as Aryan immigrants and thus the Persian contingent of the guard (Dieulafoy, *L'Acropole*, p. 43).

Babin had prepared a new plan of Susa, on which the entire enormous site,

encompassing a total of 123 ha, was identified as the Persian "acropolis," comprising the palace, or *apadāna*, in the north and the citadel in the west. The city proper was supposed to have extended over an immense area to the west. Although the fortifications of the "acropolis" had not been excavated, they were nevertheless reconstructed on the plan with "a wide, deep moat and a triple surrounding wall, reinforced by towers provided with casemates . . .," all purely imaginary. As for the *apadāna*, its southern wall having escaped attention because it was built of mud brick, Dieulafoy thought that it had never existed and that the enormous room, covering about 1 ha, had been open on that side. He went farther: "The model of the *apadāna* walled on only three sides was preserved through the centuries, and . . . the throne rooms of the Parthian palace at Hatra . . . of the Persian palaces of Shah ʿAbbās and his successors at Isfahaŋwere built on this model." This conclusion is obviously incorrect.

It is curious to observe that after the publication of the results of his mission, which had enriched the Louvre with a splendid collection, Dieulafoy practically ceased to be interested in Persia, though he never forgave Jacques de Morgan for reopening the excavations at Susa in 1315/1897. He took a post in the administration of the railroads and also threw himself into biblical studies, for which his training as an engineer had ill prepared him. In 1895 he was elected to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, and from that time on he devoted himself with more competence, though not perhaps with greater success, to research on the history of architecture, notably in a study of the Château Gaillard, built by Richard the Lion-Hearted. He also took a particular interest in the civilization of Spain and Portugal, notably in sculpture and the theater of Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

At the beginning of the World War I Dieulafoy was eager to return to service at the age of seventy years; he was assigned the duties (largely theoretical) of a lieutenant colonel in the corps of engineers at Rabat, which provided the opportunity for some final excavations in a mosque. In 1919 he sent a final communication to the Académie, on the subject of Daniel and Balthazar (ref. Reinach, p. 364). He died early the next year after a short illness.

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