



DÉLÉGATIONS ARCHÉOLOGIQUES FRANÇAISES I. DÉLÉGATION ARCHÉOLOGIQUE FRANÇAISE EN IRAN.

i. DÉLÉGATION ARCHÉOLOGIQUE FRANÇAISE EN IRAN

Archeological research in Persia began with the explorations of the British geologist W. K. Loftus in 1847 and was continued by [Marcel](#) and [Jane Dieulafoy](#) in 1884-86. The main site to catch the interest of these investigators was Susa in Kūzestān, one of the capitals of the Achaemenid empire and mentioned in the Bible as the palace where Esther was chosen queen by Ahasuerus (Esther 2; M. Dieulafoy, 1888). C.** Babin mapped the three major areas of the site (the acropolis; the [Apadāna ii](#); and the “Ville royale”) while the Dieulafoys excavated the Achaemenid palace in the Apadāna. Since their early efforts Susa has remained the largest excavation site in Persia, under the direction of the Délégation en Perse (D.P.), which underwent many changes of name and became Délégation Archéo-logique Française en Iran (DAFI) after World War II. In 1982 the DAFI and the Institut Français d’Iranologie merged under the name Institut Français de Recherches en Iran (IFRI).



In 1312/1895 René de Balloy, the French minister in Tehran, obtained from Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah (1264-1313/1848-96) a French monopoly of archeological exploration in Persia. Two years later [Jacques de Morgan](#), a mining engineer who had already visited Persia in 1889-91 and had advised on the terms of this agreement, was appointed delegate general to Persia from the French Ministère de l'Instruction Publique (ministerial decree, 19 April 1897), and the French parliament allocated 100,000 gold francs for the establishment of the D.P., with an annual budget of F. 130,000.

De Morgan assumed direction of the D.P., which he retained until 1912. His own archeological investigations were focused on the prehistory of Susa and achieving a first appreciation of the stratigraphy of the site (de Morgan et al.). The major discoveries included a prehistoric necropolis with painted ceramics of Susa style A (4th millennium B.C.E.); clay tablets with a proto-Elamite pictographic script that is still undeciphered; Elamite temples from the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C.E.; the stele of Hammurabi, with his law code; the stele of Naram Sin; the Manishtusu obelisk; and a bronze statue of Queen Napirasu. These and other finds, for example, the famed archers' frieze excavated by the Dieulafoys, which Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah (1313-24/1896-1907) had seen in the Musée du Louvre in Paris, led, in 1900, to a convention in which France was granted the exclusive right to excavate in the Persian empire and to keep all the antiquities discovered; the Persian government was to be compensated for gold and silver objects only (Bagherzadeh, p. xv).

An increasing number of investigators were also working at other sites under the sponsorship of the D.P.: Tepe Mūsīān on the plain of [Dehloran](#) (Gautier and Lampre, pp. 92-148), "dolmen" fields in Gilān province, ancient Sasanian irrigation systems in Kūzestān (Graadt van Roggen), fossil fish at Marāḡa in Azarbaijan (de Mecquenem). These investigators included the botanist L.-C. Watelin, J.-E. Gautier, Roland de Mecquenem, Paul Toscanne, G. Pézard, and the hydrologist D. L. Graadt van Roggen. The results of this work were published in the *Mémoires* of the successive avatars of the Délégation (for a complete catalogue of those related to Elamite sites in Kūzestān, see Amiet, pp. 602-06).

Following de Morgan's resignation no successor was chosen immediately; the funds of the renamed Mission Archéologique de Perse (M.A.P.) were allotted to several scholars working in different parts of Persia: de Mecquenem and the architect Maurice Pillet at Susa; Charles Fossey at Hamadān, Ray, and Sar-e Pol; G. and Maurice Pézard at Līān near Būšehr (Pézard). J. V. Scheil and Pillet



edited the various volumes of the *Mémoires*.

Field work was halted during World War I. In 1920 de Mecquenem was named director of the M.A.P., and he and Scheil resumed the work at Susa and in the adjacent region, with funds provided by the French Ministère d'Instruction Publique and the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Between 1920 and 1938 de Mecquenem excavated Elamite levels, the 4th-millennium B.C.E. necropolis, and the post-Achaemenid *donjon*. In 1939 he initiated work at the large site of Čōgā Zanbīl, where he explored the ziggurat (de Mecquenem and Michalon). His assistant Louis Le Breton surveyed small sites of the 6th-4th millennia in Susiana. Meanwhile, outside the Susiana plain more modern methods of research and more controlled exploration of stratigraphy were adopted at Tepe Gīān near Nehāvand (Contenau and Ghirshman) and Tepe Sialk near Kāšān (Ghirshman, 1938).

In 1308 Š./1929 the Persian government renounced the terms of its treaty on antiquities with the French; thenceforth all finds, with the exception of clay tablets, elements of architectural decoration, and valuable objects considered components of the Persian patrimony, were to be divided equally between the Iran Bastan Museum in Tehran and the Louvre (Bagherzadeh, p. xvi).

After a further suspension of activity during World War II Roman Ghirshman became director of the Mission Archéologique en Iran (M.A.I.) in 1946. Until 1951 he focused his own efforts on the “Ville royale” at Susa, dating from the 2nd millennium B.C.E.; he was assisted by the architect Hermann Gasche and the epigrapher M.-J. Steve. Then he turned his own attention to Čōgā Zanbīl, where he continued to work until 1961 (*M.D.A.I.* 39-42); in the meantime other members of the renamed Délégation Archéologique en Iran (D.A.I.) continued the work at Susa, at the acropolis (4th-3rd millennium B.C.E.), the Apadāna, and the “Ville des artisans” (Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian periods; Ghirshman, 1954), and also investigated the Sasanian city of Ayyvān-e Karkā (Ghirshman, 1952, pp. 10-12), Masjed-e Solaymān, and Bard-e Nešānda (Ghirshman, 1976).

In 1968 Jean Perrot became the fourth director of the DAFI and under his guidance close ties of cooperation were forged with the department of archaeology at the University of Tehran, the Persian department of antiquities (Edāra-ye koll-e bāstān-šenāsī), the Persian Center for archeological research (Markaz-e pažūhešhā wa kāvešhā-ye bāstān-šenāsī), and the National organization for the preservation of historic monuments of Persia (Sāzmān-e



mellī-e ḥefāẓat-e ātār-e bāstānī-e Īrān). In 1348 Š./1969 the system of dividing excavated antiquities between the two countries was terminated. All finds, recorded on cards in both Persian and French, are kept in the regional museum at Susa, except for those of greatest importance, which are sent to the Iran Bastan Museum in Tehran (Bagherzadeh, p. xviii).

Beginning in the late 1960s the new staff gathered by Perrot, including archeologists, epigraphers, geophysicists, natural scientists, geologists, and engineers, tended to be more interdisciplinary and more international in composition; for example, it included Persian archeologists and American anthropologists. The goal remained a comprehensive reassessment of the societies of Susa and the Susiana plain from the 6th millennium B.C.E. onward. The excavations at Susa and such nearby sites as Ja'farābād (Dollfus), Jovī, and Band-e Bāl have been focused on establishing a solid stratigraphical basis for the chronology of the region (Vallat, pp. 16-17), the indispensable framework for the study of the natural environment, population trends, shifts in settlement, strategies of subsistence, international trade (see [COMMERCE i](#)), and successive stages of political integration; comprehensive reports of this effort are published in CDAFI, of which fifteen volumes had appeared by 1987. French excavations in Persia were suspended after the Revolution of 1357 Š./1978-79.

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