



VIOLLET, HENRY

VIOLLET, Henry (b. Paris, 1880; d. Paris, 1955), French archeologist and architect. His father, Paul-Marie Viollet (1840-1914), was an archivist in the French National Archives and member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, who played an important role in his son's career. Henry Viollet was a student at the École des Beaux-Arts from 1901 to 1911. During this period, his first contact with the Orient took place when he traveled to Egypt and Sudan (November 1904 – March 1905), where he produced a remarkable series of photographic portraits. He also carried out three archeological missions in Mesopotamia (September 1906 – April 1907; October 1907 – December 1908, and March – September 1910), financed by the Ministry of Public Instruction with the aim of carrying out research relating to the monuments of the Abbasid period (750-1258).

Graduating from the École des Beaux-Arts on December 28, 1911, Henry Viollet, accompanied by Comte Jean de Moustier, a young cavalry officer, was chosen by the Ministry of Public Instruction to lead an archeological mission to Persia to carry out research on the origins of Islamic Art. From January 24 to April 23, 1912, Viollet and Moustier traveled much of Persia and explored archeological sites in the central and southern parts of the country. Almost a year after this first mission, carried out as a part of the program of the Délégation Archéologique [Française en Iran](#), Henry Viollet was again designated to return to Persia. For this second archeological mission, he was requested to specify new excavations that could be undertaken in Persia from the point of view of Islamic Art.



Viollet, accompanied by his wife Madeleine Besnard, reached Ahvāz on June 5, 1913 and examined and photographed Islamic monuments and ancient ruins in Persia from the southwest to the northeast until December 13th of that year.

According to the documents in the Fonds Viollet (see Bibl.), on his return to France, Viollet sent a report to the Ministry of Public Instruction, and in June 1914 requested a new archeological mission to Persia. A month later, the Ministry announced that Viollet would lead a new mission to [Astarābād](#) in 1915. World War I interrupted this project, but Viollet, rather than competing with the German archeologists in the Middle East, joined the French army against the Germans. After the war, he was designated as architect of the Co-operative of reconstruction of “La Coopérative de reconstruction de Lassigny” (Oise), and resided in Compiègne. He also published part of the results of his missions to Persia. In May 1921, he was awarded the medal of Legion of Honor. In 1937, Viollet was in charge of the construction of the Pavilion of Iran for the World Exposition in Paris. After preparing the model, however, the comment of a journalist who ridiculed the Shah of Iran in an article about this Pavilion: “Il n’y a pas de quoi fouetter un Chah,” caused him to abandon the project. Having come to the end of his career Henry Viollet, who had become an architectural expert in the Court of Appeals in Seine, fell ill and died in June 1955.

Works:

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