

**Jeanne Marie Therese Vandier d'Abbadie,
Nee 'Abbadie d'Arrant (1899-1977)**

By Marcelle Huet

Jeanne Marie Therese Vandier d'Abbadie was a French Egyptologist, born in Nuremberg, Germany on September 26, 1899 into an old French Protestant family with very artistic talents. She grew up in Paris in an environment of artists and actors, like Sarah A. Bernhardt with whom the family was very close. Following her secondary school years in Paris and having obtained successfully her Baccalaureate of Letters, she was still interested in the theater and acted in small roles under the direction of Mme. Lara, mother of the celebrated Claude Autant-Lara with whom Jeanne would remain friendly all her life.

Jeanne entered the l'Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts in Paris and also the Ecole du Louvre during the period of 1926-1929. There, at the Louvre, she became enchanted by archaeology and took specialized courses in Egyptology from the Egyptologist and Conservator Charles Boreaux (1874-1944), and her fate was sealed.

Continuing her studies at the Institut Catholique de Paris she met her future husband Jacques Vandier who became an eminent Egyptologist. Boreaux obtained for her a stipend to spend one year at Cairo's Museum of Antiquities. There her artistic abilities allowed her to reproduce with much talent the Egyptian inscriptions and drawings from the tombs and ostraca. She married Jacques Vandier, five years her junior, on November 5, 1931 and worked with him in Egypt under the auspices of the French Institute (l'Institut français d'archeologie orientale) based in Cairo from 1932-1936. Since 1922 the Institute had maintained excavations, under the direction of Bernard Bruyere, at the ancient settlement site of Deir el-Medineh on the west bank across from Luxor, and there the Vandiers, together with J. J. Clere and others, worked mainly on the tombs of the artisans who had been employed on the royal tombs in the valley of the kings. Jacques Vandier published (1935) the Tomb of Nefer-Abou for which Jeanne did the drawings. However, Mme. Vandier published on her own the tomb chapel of Kha (1936/37); and her artistic talents were also put to important use in the publication of two volumes of ostraca found at Deir el-Medineh, which bore practice drawings by the royal artisans, and, even more interesting, the informal sketches which are their observations of the life and people of the village.

Back in Paris in 1939 and in anticipation of war, Mme. Vandier helped her former teacher Charles Boreux evacuate the treasures of the Louvre's Egyptian Department to some chateaus chosen for their protective capabilities. All the objects survived the war and were able to be reinstalled under her husband's supervision in 1946, when he advanced to the post of Conservator. Jeanne Vandier contributed a number of articles during the 1950's to French art magazines as well as scholarly journals.

In 1955 Jacques Vandier suffered an attack of polio mylitis and became gravely handicapped in his lower limbs. However, he continued with his work and she hers. In

1963 her biography of Nestor L'Hôte appeared, based on the publication of documents conserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the archives of the Louvre. L'Hôte was a colleague of Champollion's who made several trips to Egypt in the early 19th century and published hundreds of drawings and watercolors of the country and its monuments.

The Vandiers continued to live in Paris and devoted themselves to Egyptology at the Louvre congenially receiving numerous colleagues from around the world until Jacques Vandier's death in October of 1973.

Mme. Vandier's last years were devoted to arranging for the publication of her husband's research and unfinished projects, such as copies of the texts at the Middle Kingdom temple of Tod. However Jeanne did not survive her husband by much time and died in 1977 at Neuilly-sur-Seine.

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