

Laroche (Lucienne)  
(1929-1981)

Lucienne Laroche was born in 1929 in Paris. During her studies in oriental archaeology at the Ecole du Louvre, she was distinguished by Professor Andre Parrot, chief curator of the Department of Oriental Antiquities of the Louvre Museum, and she started working at the Museum as "Chargee de mission" in 1953, after she got her degrees, then at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique as collaborator of Parrot. Her qualities of seriousness and understanding, as well as her discreet passion for archaeology made her soon become an indispensable assistant to the curator. Later on she followed Parrot when he became the first Director of the Louvre Museum in 1968, until he retired in 1972.

In spite of a solid knowledge, her modesty stopped her from writing many personal scientific contributions; however, despite her fulltime work at the Louvre, she published two books: *L'art de Sumer/Sumerian Art* (with 24 slides) (UNESCO, Lausanne, Paris, 1971) and *Moyen Orient* (Paris, Fernand Nathan 1979), first published in Milano by Mondadori in 1971 under the title *Art Sumer et Sasanide*. As secretary of the volumes of *Mission de Mari*, she made a considerable work, slightly mentioned at the beginning of the books; she also participated in 1973 to the foundation of the *Association pour le sauvetage de Mari* for the preservation of the palace of the Third Millennium B.C. and she was nominated as the secretary of the French archeological review *Syria*. At a time when a woman was rarely included in French expeditions, she was most happy to be able to go and dig at Mari (Syria) with A. Parrot from 1966 until his last campaign in 1974, and also to Larsa (Iraq) in 1967. There she also revealed her aptitude for accuracy and sense

of organisation. So totally involved herself in militant archaeology she decided to take a certificate of modern arabic, which unfortunately she could practice only for a few years before she died. In 1967 she was awarded the National Order of "Arts & Lettres" for services rendered to French Museums.

When she left the Louvre at the same time as A. Parrot, she went on with the preparation of publications on Mari, until her fatal illness; she died in 1981, at just over fifty. For her numerous friends and colleagues she remains a model of abnegation and devotion to Near Eastern archaeology. The travellers who were accompanied by her in the discovery of ancient Mesopotamia will never forget her enthusiasm to make them understand the culture of the visited sites.

Agnès Spycket. Paris

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