



The Great Women behind the Great Men

Third workshop on Women in the Archaeology of Greece – Tribute to Maria Ludwika Bernhard

Organised by the École française d'Athènes and the Polish Archaeological Institute at Athens,
with the support of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Greece

12 and 13 March 2025

(Athens, conference room of EFA)

Call for papers

Submission deadline: 20 December 2024

Submission and information: sylviane.dederix@gmail.com

The third workshop on Women in the Archaeology of Greece, jointly organised by the École française d'Athènes and the Polish Archaeological Institute at Athens, will take place on 12 and 13 March 2025. The event will be held in honour of Maria Ludwika Bernhard (1908-1998), a Franco-Polish classical archaeologist, former foreign member of EFA, Professor of Classical Archaeology at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and curator of the Ancient Art Gallery at the National Museum in Warsaw.

For its third edition, the workshop will focus on the women often referred to as the ones 'behind great men', whose behind-the-scenes support helped these men rise to scientific prominence. In particular, it will highlight the wives – and, more broadly, the female partners – of renowned male archaeologists who worked alongside their husbands, helping them build brilliant careers and lasting legacies, while they themselves faded into obscurity, their contributions reduced to mere footnotes. Much like a magician's assistant, whose skills and discretion bring the magic trick to life, these women operated in the shadow of a prominent male figure, either with his success as the sole objective or setting aside their own aspirations as secondary. Their role as devoted wives extended beyond the private and domestic sphere into their spouses' professional

lives: in addition to managing the household and raising children, they took charge of a range of archaeological tasks, such as securing funding, cataloging excavation finds, drawing and photographing objects and architectural remains, writing reports, proofreading and editing publications, and sometimes even directing excavation campaigns in their spouse's name. Some of these women had no formal archaeological education but nevertheless embraced their husband's profession, gradually learning their way into it. Others were trained as archaeologists but renounced (or were forced to renounce) pursuing independent careers – whether owing to tradition, personal choice, or a lack of professional opportunities – and instead dedicated their time, energy, and expertise to supporting their partners. A few managed to continue their archaeological research while contributing to their spouse's projects, which always took precedence over their own. These women often had to lower their professional ambitions and forgo academic positions to avoid competing against their life partners, and as they assisted their husbands, their own work progressed more slowly and resulted in fewer publications. Often deprived of paid research positions, their access to resources was more limited, their professional networks were less extensive, and they did not officially mentor students – all of which prevented them from achieving the same lasting recognition as the 'great men' behind whom they stood.

We are welcoming proposals for biographic presentations (15-20 minutes, in English, Greek, French, or Polish) that shed light on the role, influence and contributions of some of these women whose identity is commonly reduced to that of 'wife-of'. Abstracts (up to 500 words) can be sent to sylviane.dederix@gmail.com until **20 December 2024**. The proceedings of the workshop will be published as a collection of short biographies (in English only; 2000 words each) in a publication venue to be determined.

The organisers: Sylviane Déderix, Maguelone Bastide, Katarzyna Dudlik, Inga Głuszek, Małgorzata Kajzer, Beata Kukiel-Vraila, Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka, Laureline Pop