

Christina Mitsopoulou

Archaeologist, Laboratory Teaching Staff at University of Thessaly.
Department of History, Archaeology and Social Anthropology

French School at Athens, Project “Archives Gilliéron”
Email: chmitsop@uth.gr

Title:

Creation, diffusion, perception and reevaluation of archaeological knowledge: the case of the Gilliéron artists

This paper aims to present the case of two artists of major importance for the early phases of Archaeological research in Greece, who contributed fundamentally to the diffusion and propagation of scientific knowledge between the 1870ies and 1939: Émile Gilliéron *père* (1850-1924) and his homonymous son (1875-1939) collaborated with major projects and Archaeologists of their time. For Crete, precisely, the majority of famous iconic images still represented in books, art or souvenirs, was once processed by their artistic skills. The skilled artists produced work in multiple styles, materials, techniques and artistic periods, from Neolithic to Byzantine, or Folklore heritage. They literally translated artistic forms of Greek culture into famous images, recognized by a wide international public and used in education, science, museum exhibits, and the free market (souvenirs, copies, decorative motifs). The grandson Alfred Gilliéron took on the artistic tradition to the third generation, by propagating the artistic repertoire of his peers via the souvenirs market. Many of their images acquired an autonomous “life”, independent from the evolution of scientific knowledge.

In many cases this established knowledge has now to be controlled, reviewed, corrected or updated.

The recent acquisition of their family archive and workshop by the French School at Athens has provided research with the opportunity to launch an interdisciplinary five-year long project, dealing with a multitude of original data: drawings, copies, molds, raw materials for drawing, copying or restoring; archival documents, as photographs, correspondence, invoices, personal data etc.

This project will need state of the art digital tools in order to enhance the diverse data; scientific approach is provided by the collaboration of specialists of conservation techniques. The participation at the CIDOC Conference will provide a valuable experience at an early stage of the project, and may influence the process during the coming years.