



**CREATION, DIFFUSION, PERCEPTION
AND REEVALUATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
THE CASE OF THE GILLIÉRON ARTISTS**
(Powerpoint presentation, 2. October 2018)

Christina Mitsopoulou
"Archives Gilliéron" Project, EFA

Archaeologist, Laboratory Teaching Staff
University of Thessaly

christinamitsopoulou@academia.edu



ÉCOLE FRANÇAISE D'ATHÈNES
ΓΑΛΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

* Information to the reader

- This PowerPoint was shown during the oral presentation of the paper at the CIDOC 2018 congress in Oct. 2018 in Heraklion, Crete. It has been slightly adapted for the online publication (CIDOC 2018 website).
- It is intended to accompany and illustrate the text, with some bullets, images and charts; it does not stand on its own. Full references and credits are to be found in the article. The PPT may be observed alongside the article, which has been submitted for publication (Oct. 2018).
- Images used are either drawn from old publications and the web, or the Gilliéron Archive of the EFA. For recent publications full references are given.

Abstract

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.

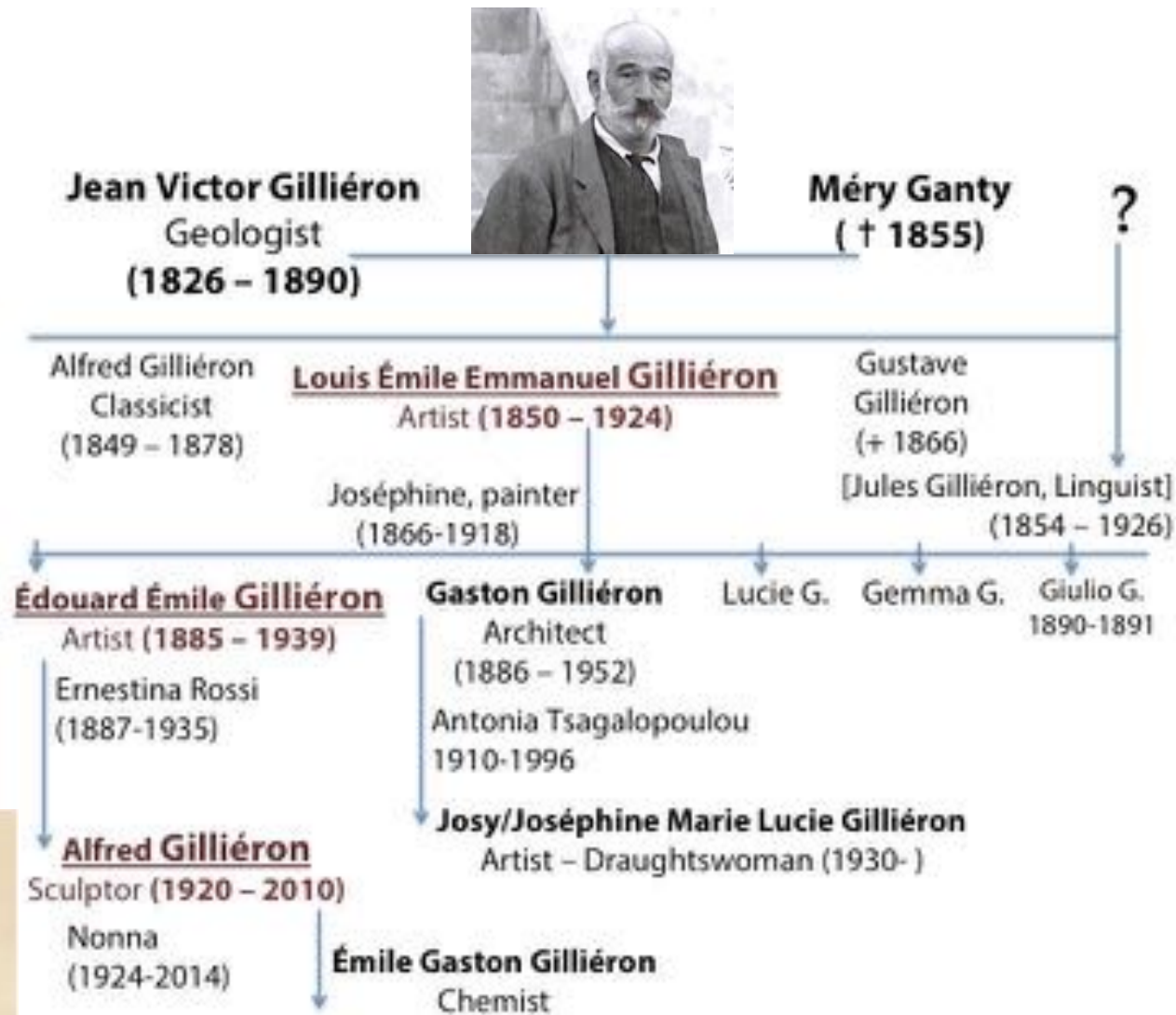
For Crete, precisely, the majority of famous iconic images still represented in books, art or souvenirs, was once processed by their artistic skills. The skilled artists produced work in multiple styles, materials, techniques and artistic periods, from Neolithic to Byzantine, or Folklore heritage. They 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 (1920-2010) 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 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.

Genealogy of the Gilliéron family



Material remains from the Gilliéron workshop,
during classification at the French School at Athens (04.2017)



* It is interesting to observe that souvenir themes related to the Gilliéron artists and dated to the early 20th century are still winners of official design contests and best-sellers on the market ...



25.1.2016

Αυτά είναι τα σουβενίρ του μέλλοντος

Lifo 2016, [link](#)



Souvenirs of the future

Design contest

Archaeological Resources Fund (2016)

Galvanoplastic replicas of Mycenaean gold finds, Gilliéron senior

* Émile Gilliéron made his entry into the replication business with the reproduction of “Mycenaean Gold”, via collaboration with the WMF Geislingen, from 1894 onwards.

Mask of
“Agamemnon”
Galvanoplastic Replica, MET NY



Undated leaflet: Württembergische
Metallwarenfabrik Geislingen-St (WMF)



Products inspired by the “Prince of the Lilies” a relief fresco from Knossos iconic image with autonomous life, beyond scholarship



Souvenir statuette in metal: [link](#)



Ring bezel with Lily Prince, [link](#)



Pillow with Lily Prince: [link](#)



W.-D. Niemeyer, Das Stuckrelief des ‘Prinzen mit der Federkrone’ aus Knossos und minoische Götterdarstellungen, *AthMitt* 102, 1987, p. 65-98, and spec. p. 66.

* The heavily restored relief fresco from Knossos, known as the “Prince of the Lilies” (Heraklion Museum) can be considered the Gilliéron’s most famous modern “creation”.

Albeit scientific criticism, the icon still pursues an independent and ongoing success on the market

Phaistos Disc ([Heraklion Museum](#) no. AE 1358)
firstly replicated by Gilliéron senior

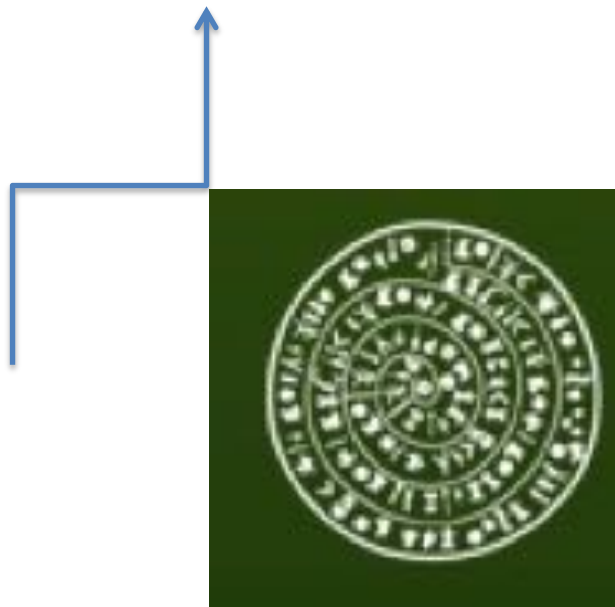


Source: Wikipedia,[link](#)



Source: [link](#)

* The enigma that the disc, an unprecedented example of early “typography”, still presents for archaeological scholars, was probably the reason of its choice by a scientific technological institute; beyond the fact that both are related to Crete, representing the past and the future...



The Phaistos Disc is the logo of the
FORTH Institute in Crete,
co-organiser of CIDOC 2018

Designs for “minoan” souvenirs

All these objects from Knossos, discovered in the early 20th century, have been drawn, restored and /or replicated by the Gilliéron artists



a. Snake Goddess; b. Bull Vase; c. Faience facades; d. *La Parisienne* (after Lifo 2016: [link](#))

Greece, main archaeological museums related to the Gilliérons

Athens, National Archaeological museum



Volos
museum



Byzantine
Museum,
Athens



Acropolis museum(s)



Heraklion
museum



Athens, National Archaeological Museum



The first two Gilliérons are linked to most major sites, monuments and museums in Greece, before WWII.

Taking as an example the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, there may be not a single department (except the more recent section on Akrotiri, Thera, or some private collections), where one of them would not have a related artwork to show. Father or son Gilliéron have touched or drawn famous artifacts from the Neolithic, Cycladic and Mycenaean rooms of the ground floor; they have equally drawn, painted, restored and/or replicated marble statues and polychrome architectural elements, bronze statues and statuettes, vases and their decorative scenes, funerary stelai, reliefs, votives and small finds, as mosaic floors, wooden panels, jewelry or coins ... They recreated works in any artistic style of the Greek cultural heritage, from prehistory to modern times.

Here follow five (5) slides with examples of famous artifacts that are related to the Gilliéron artists, father or son.



Society of the Friends of the NMA ([link](#))
logo by É. Gilliéron *fiis* (1934) [see slide 18]

Selected works from Bronze Age display of the NMA

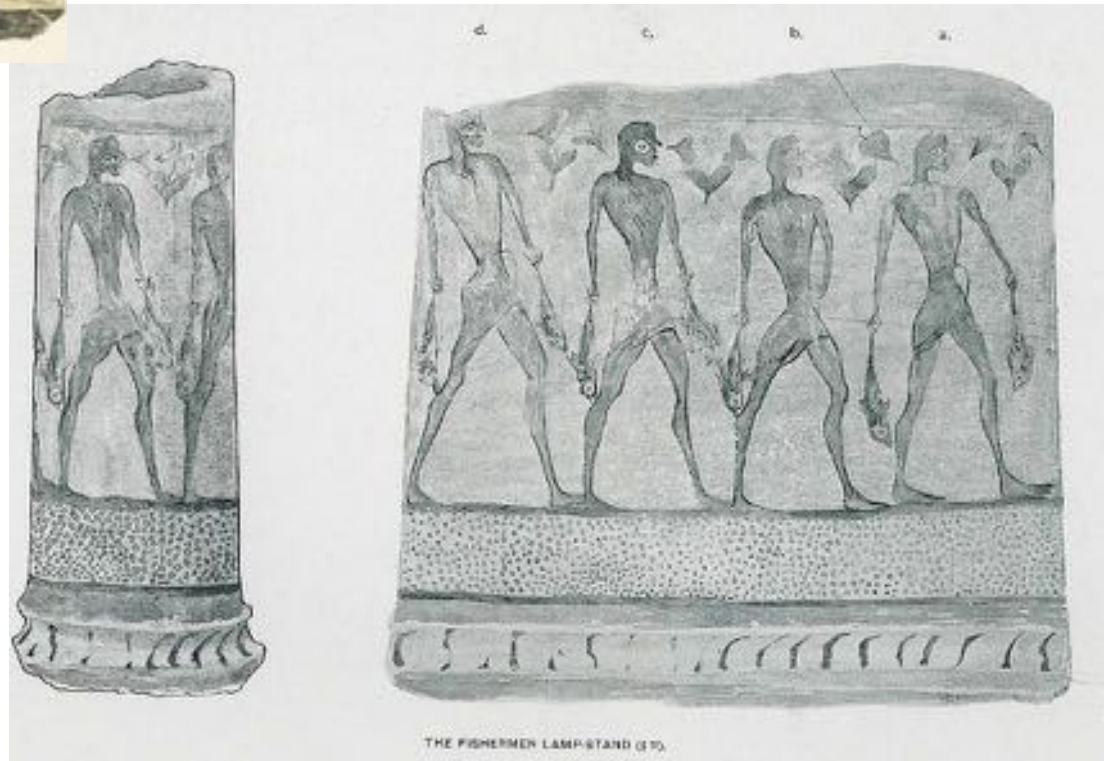


Fresco of flying fish,
Phylakopi, Melos (NMA 5844: [link](#))

C. Bosanquet ,
in Atkinson *et alii*, *JHS* Suppl. IV (1904), pl.
XXII, Phylakopi

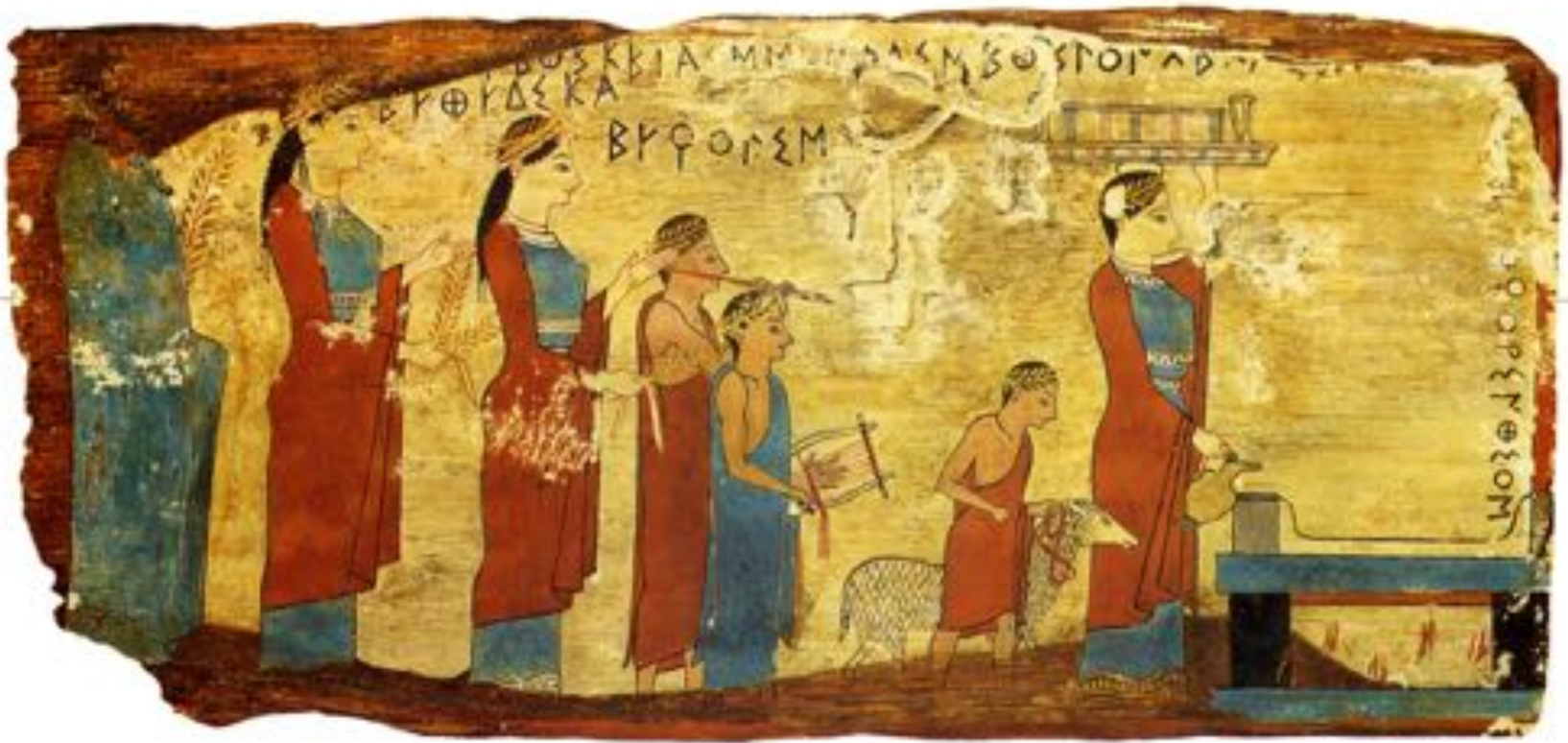
Drawn and replicated by Gilliéron père

Vase-stand cylinder, "Fishermen Vase",
Phylakopi, Melos (NMA 5782: [link](#))



Selected works from Archaic display of the NMA

Wooden polychrome tablets
found in a cave in Pitsa (near Corinth) in 1935 (NMA 16464: [link](#))



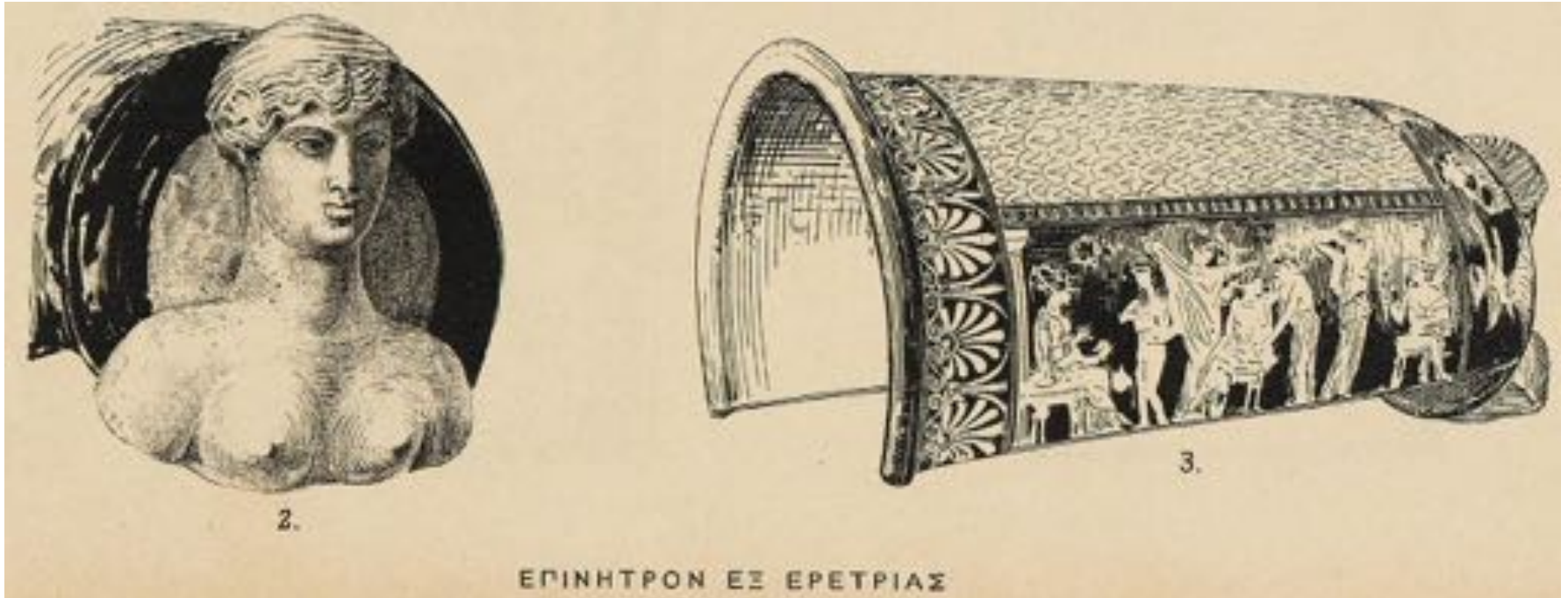
Selected works from Classical display of the NMA

Epinetron, eponymous work of the
Eretria Painter (NMA 01629)



ArchEphem 1897, pl. 9.3

Archaeology & Arts: [link](#)



Selected works from Hellenistic display of the NMA

Gilded silver alabastron

“Palaikastro treasure”, Karditsa (NMA)

Drawing by Gilliéron senior, *ca.* 1910

(A. Arvanitopoulos, *AthMitt* 37, 1912, pl. 2-3)

a. Floral zone, frieze with dancing putti



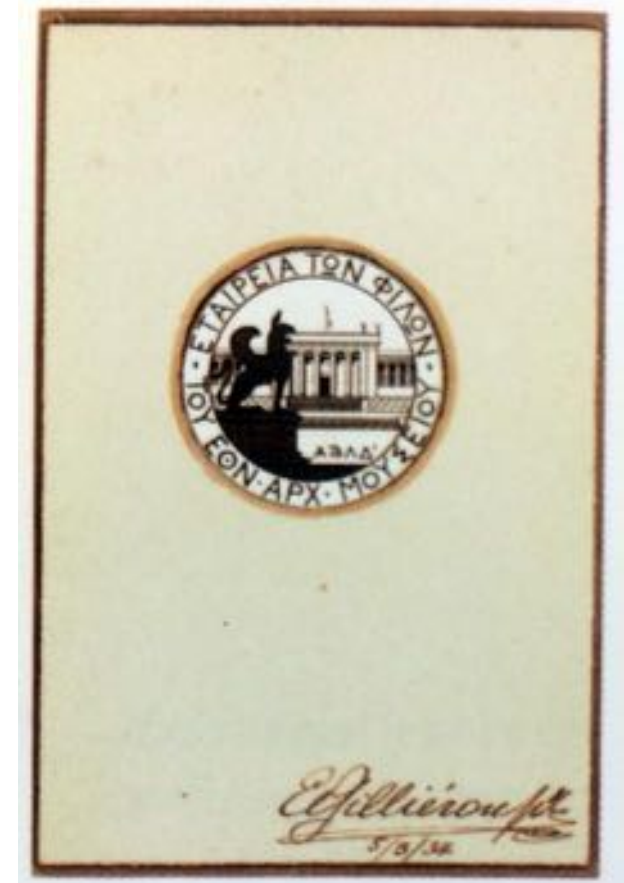
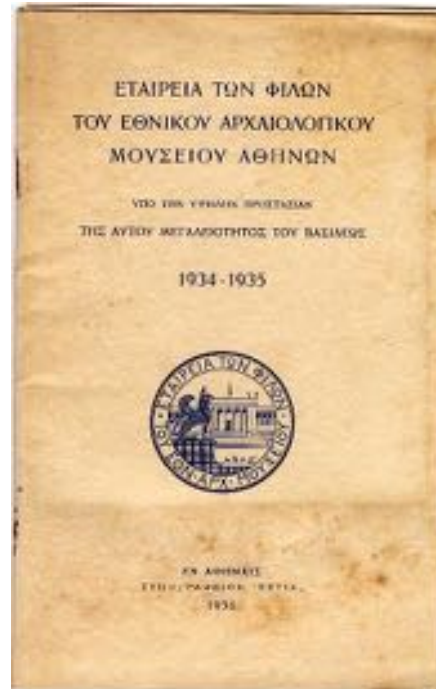
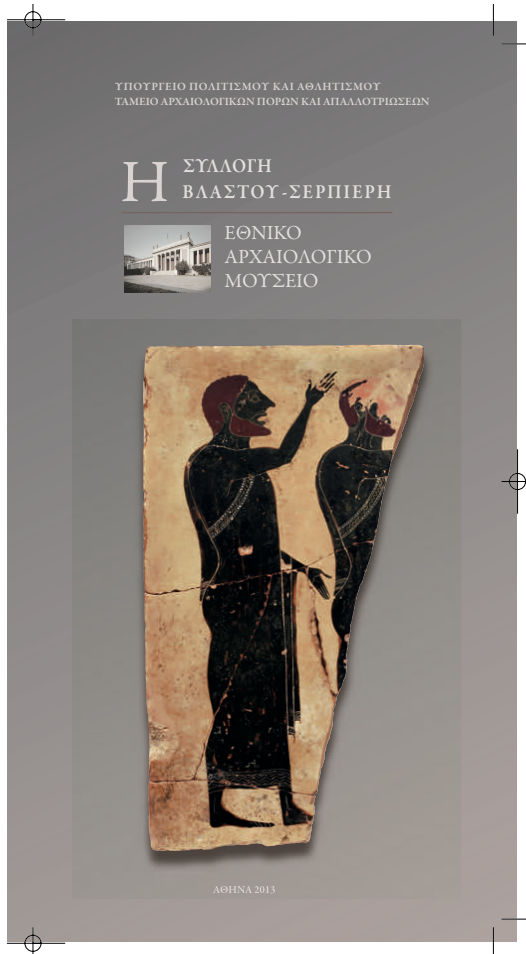
b. Main zone: seated woman with child, maenad and Satyr (?) in forestry landscape



Alabastron republished by colored photograph

in the exposition catalogue *The countless aspects of Beauty in ancient Art*, (M. Lagogianni, 2018, p. 86, nr. 34)

Society of the Friends of the National Archaeological Museum of Athens (5/3/1934)



Original seal by Gilliéron *fls*
(NMA, Gadolou & Kavvadias 2013, p. 12)

Gilliéron artists, father and son

Émile Gilliéron *père* (1850-1924)



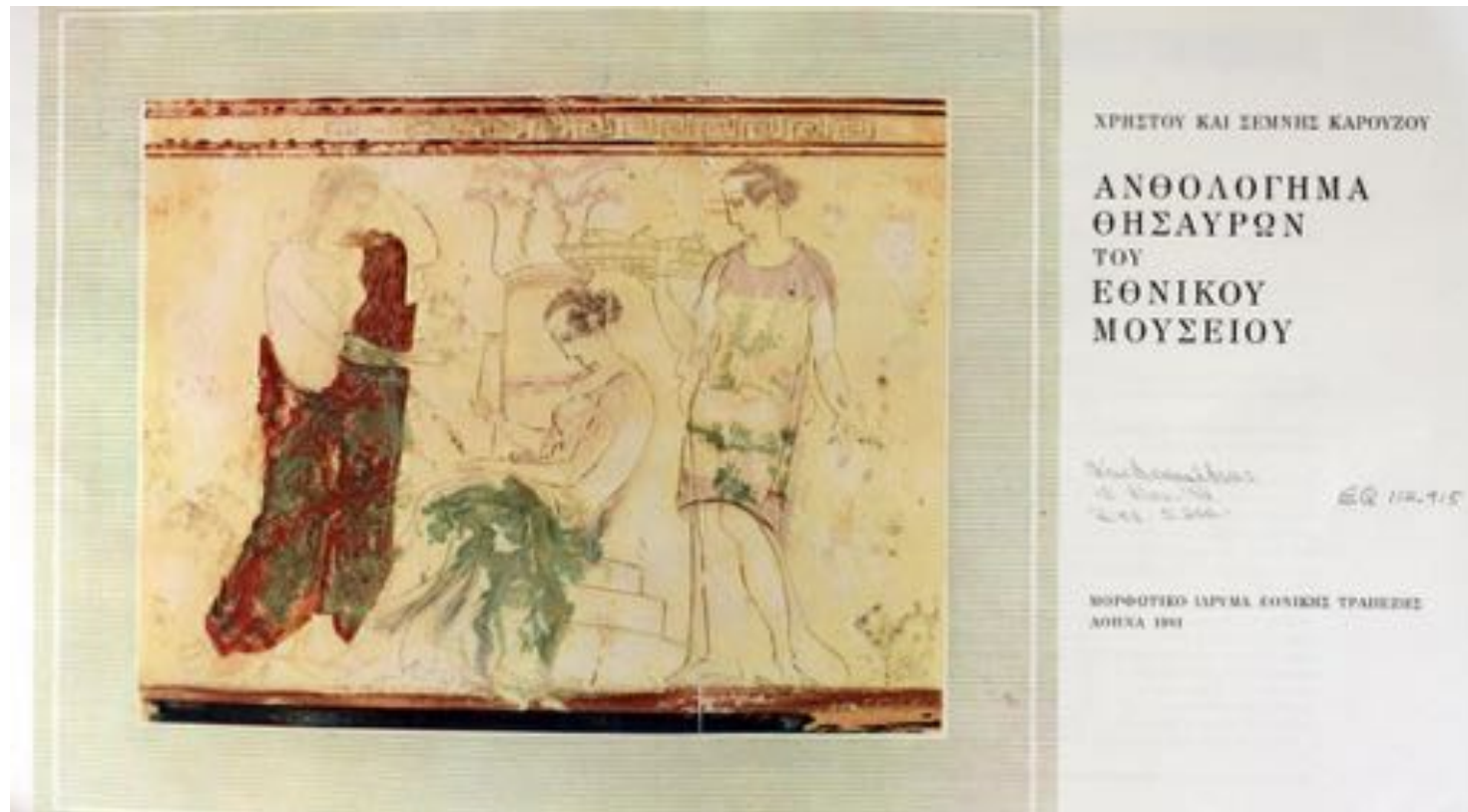
From Lapatin 2017, p. 74, fig. III.14
(Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford:
AN.Heaton.C.16b)

Émile Gilliéron *fils* (1885-1939)



Photo from student card, during his studies at
the École des Beaux-Arts Paris, 1906

Christos & Semni Karouzou,
Selected Treasures of the National Museum, 1981



Even though numerous pre-war artists and technicians are mentioned in the review of the Museum's history (p. 15-17), none of the Gilliéron artists is

Καρούζου, Σ. 1981. "Η Ιστορία του Εθνικού Αρχαιολογικού Μουσείου, p. 9-18.

Procedure of knowledge acquisition

The slow process of knowledge acquisition

may be preceded by

silent years of

research, hesitation, doubt and ambiguities

*** Analyzed in the article:**

The Gilliérons collaborated closely with excavators and scholars studying and publishing the artifacts they were called to draw or restore/replicate. Decisions taken were often result of interpretations, products of specific choices and / or hesitations. The public is confronted with the final results (restored artifacts), but hardly anything concerning the procedures followed, doubts, hesitations or choices made during this process. The Gilliérons participated in fundamental phases of archaeological knowledge establishment in Greece; their case is therefore closely linked to the “production of Knowledge” and individual biographies of famous artifacts of Greek Archaeology

But, what happens with
the uncertainties of the scholar ?

- ***“I do not know”*** ...

is rarely taken as an answer
in academic rhetoric and museum display

It may occur that an Archaeologist cannot conclude his interpretation of an artifact, decide about its authenticity, original form, date or meaning. The Gilliérons, privileged artists of high standard, were often called to work on finds which may be considered as “unique” or unprecedented. Outstanding finds, isolated from series and typological categories, may need decades in order to be fully understood; some still remain at the center of complex debates. Are these uncertainties or doubts integrated into the museum’s display and information for the public ? Is the individual biography of each exposed object fully reconsidered, and at the disposition of the public, or even the scholars ?

An exposition in *LWL-Museum für Archäologie* in Herne, Germany, addressed the topic of both Errors and Forgeries in 2018 ...



“Irrtümer & Fälschungen der Archäologie”
Ausstellung 23.03-09.09.2018



[link](#)

- Which may be our sources of knowledge for the careers of the Gilliéron artists ?
- Here follow two charts, based on the categories of knowledge sources for this study (Archives Gilliéron EFA and other sources)

CHART 1: SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

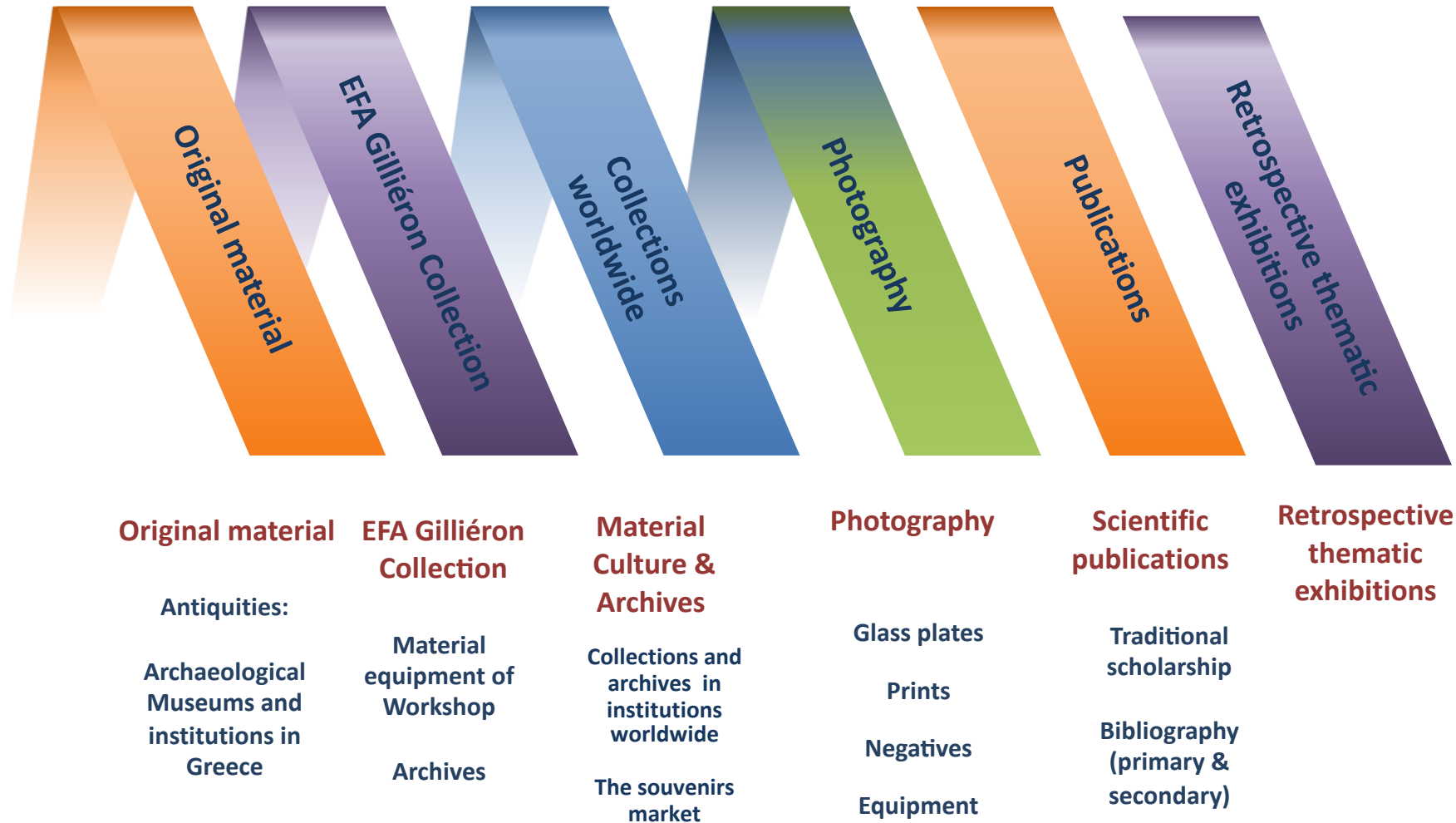
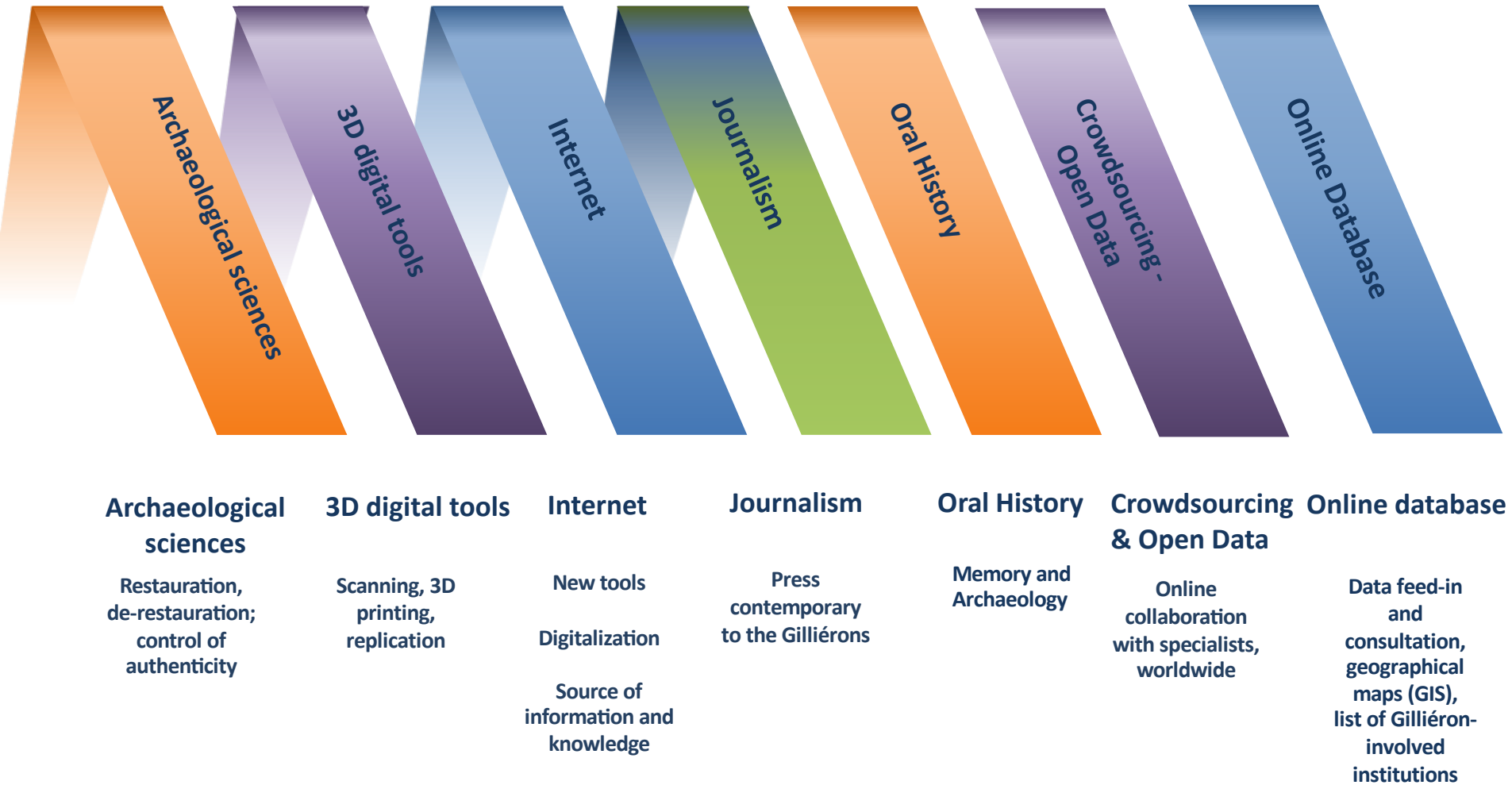


CHART 2: OTHER SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE



One CIDOC anonymous reviewer commented on my draft:

“If we could know
who said what in the past,

we could make

*better informed decision as to whom to trust and
what opinion to form
about the cultures at hand”*

[concerning the biographies of Gilliéron-related artifacts]

The Project “Archives Gilliéron” EFA owes to :



Émile Gaston Gilliéron, descendant of the artists
Alexandre Farnoux, Director of the EFA

Tassos Anastasiadis, Director of Modern and Contemporary Studies, EFA
Marie Stahl, Archivist of the EFA

Research coordination

C. Mitsopoulou (Univ. of Thessaly)
O. Polychronopoulou (Univ. of West Attica)

Team

Conservation studies:

S. Boyatzis, B. Argyropoulou, Th. Katsaros; Students E. Kanellopoulou, K. Kaziani

Archaeology:

C. Mitsopoulou, O. Polychronopoulou, G. Flouda, B. Schiller

The “Archives Gilliéron” project (2017-2021) is situated at the transition
of ancient and modern studies of Greece