

**Maria Ludwika Bernhard**  
1908-1998

Professor Maria L. Bernhard, a pioneer in the field of classical archaeology in Poland, was born on August 6, 1908, in Łódź. She was the daughter of a mixed French-Polish family, one of her ancestors having been a Napoleonic soldier who for reasons unknown had settled in Poland. From him she inherited her French citizenship. While cultivating strong ties with France, she remained devoted to Polish affairs until the day she died. Poland was her native land of choice and she played an active part in the political life of the country.

Maria Ludwika grew up moving between Łódź, Paris and Warsaw. In 1928 she graduated from the Cecylia Plater-Zyberk Gymnasium, one of Warsaw's best secondary schools of the period, and enrolled in 1930 to study art history and classical archaeology at Warsaw University's Faculty of the Humanities. Having completed her studies as one of Professor Kazimierz Michałowski's first students in the Chair of Classical Archaeology, which he had founded at Warsaw University, she became his assistant. Her interests in Greek pottery found a reflection in her diploma work which entailed a study of the Greek vases from the collection of a known Polish collector, Erazm Majewski. In 1938, with her typical enthusiasm she threw herself into helping to organize an Ancient Art Gallery at the National Museum in Warsaw; she was to manage it as a curator until 1962. During the war she set herself the task of saving – with success on the whole – the Museum's ancient art collections from sharing the fate of many Polish artworks, that is, shipping to the Third Reich and in the years that followed she set her mind to tracing artworks plundered during the war. In many instances she was able to get these works to be returned to Poland. As curator of the museum collection she was responsible for many permanent and visiting exhibitions. Sensitive to the need for popularizing archaeology, she penned 16 exhibition catalogues and countless texts for the public. She was the *spiritus movens* behind the 1959-1960 perpetual loan of valuable artworks from the Louvre in Paris to the National Museum in Warsaw and then prepared a display of this collection [7].

Maria Ludwika Bernhard's academic career opened brilliantly. In 1937-1938 she held a French government scholarship at the École Française d'Athènes, where she worked under the guidance of Prof. R. Demangel, preparing a publication of amphora stamps from Delos. She took the opportunity to observe French excavation practices, believed at the time to be a model for work in classical archaeology. Sejourning in Greece and around the Mediterranean, she acquired

a first-hand knowledge of various ancient art collections; this was to serve her well in her future writing and lecturing. In 1938 she went to Italy on a three-month scholarship from the National Culture Fund in order to continue her studies of amphora stamps. This was followed by another month at the *École Française d'Athènes*, after which she joined the excavations of the French-Polish Mission in Tell Edfu in Egypt, co-directed then by K. Michałowski and B. Bruyère. Two months before the outbreak of World War II in 1939 she was awarded her Ph.D. degree having submitted for acceptance a thesis on "Ancient Lamps in Warsaw collections", written under the guidance of Professor Michałowski.

Shortly after the Nazis occupied Warsaw in 1939, Maria Ludwika Bernhard joined the underground movement, not just as an academic lecturer, but also as an active resistance fighter. She lectured at the underground university and joined efforts to save the Warsaw University Library collection from being shipped out of the country. She was a courier for the underground Home Army (AK), a military formation of the resistance in Poland, and then headed the Home Army's Underground Communications Department. Arrested by the Nazis in June 1940, she avoided execution only because she held a French citizenship. She took an active part in the fighting during the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944 and after its fall joined the frantic effort to save the collections of the National Museum of Warsaw from the conflagration engulfing the capital.

After the war Maria Ludwika Bernhard returned to her post at the National Museum, and continued to lecture as Professor Michałowski's assistant at Warsaw University. She started teaching at a number of artistic schools: the State Fine Arts Lyceum, State Higher School of Drama and State Higher School of Music. This she did until 1952. Having lost all of her pre-war work and notes, which burned in the Warsaw Uprising, she now set out to reconstruct this material. The text of her Ph.D. thesis, reconstructed and revised, was published in 1955 [1].

In 1954 Maria Ludwika Bernhard was raised to Associate Professor and nominated to the Chair of Classical Archaeology at the Jagellonian University in Cracow. After 1962 she focused all of her lecturing and scholarly activities on the Cracow school. Once again her uncommon energy and uncompromising attitude left its mark. The communist reorganization of academic studies had combined art history with prehistoric and classical archaeology to form one department focusing on the history of material culture. Bernhard now reintroduced the discipline of classical archaeology, referred to as "Mediterranean Archaeology" similarly as at Warsaw

University. Over the twenty years of her chairing this field of studies, 41 of her students received MA degrees, seven completed their Ph.D.'s and 5 were habilitated.

Aware of the deeply rooted classical archaeology and Egyptological traditions in Cracow (the first Polish Egyptologist was Tadeusz Smoleński from Cracow, while Piotr Bieńkowski, professor of classical archaeology at Cracow, worked with Hermann Junker at excavations in Giza in Egypt and in Lower Nubia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century), she embarked on bringing them back to life, firing her students with the same enthusiasm. Her museum background, which had given her an understanding of the role of historical objects in academic teaching and the importance of collections as part of the national heritage, prompted her to undertake a review of the collections of antiquities of the University as well as of the Princes Czartoryski Museum. Numerous diplomas based on these collections were written under her guidance. The search for objects, which had disappeared from the collections during the two successive world wars, brought out in her a detective streak, helping her overcome countless obstacles and trace sources of information dispersed around the globe. Tedious archival studies necessary to reconstruct the provenience of various objects were frequently crowned with success, leading up to the publication of a catalogue of the university collection, edited by Maria Ludwika Bernhard [26].

Archaeological excavations were an important field of her activities. She started out with fieldwork in the Crimea in 1956, where she worked under the supervision of Professor Michałowski and the Russian scholar W.F. Gajdukiewicz, excavating in Mirmeki, a colony of Miletus and later capital of the Bosporan state [9]. Her first independent project was the excavation in 1958 of a fortified settlement at Elizavetovskoje; a year later she was working at Kalos Limen [8]. Together with Professor Michałowski, who could not think of educating archaeologists without practical training in the field, she organized in 1957 the Center of Mediterranean Archaeology in Cairo affiliated with Warsaw University, intended like other national academic institutes in Egypt as a means for supervising archaeological activity carried out in this country. During 1959 and 1960 she spent several months in Egypt and again in 1967, when for a brief time during the Arab-Israeli war she was even in charge of the institution, showing model courage and a sense of responsibility in those difficult and dangerous weeks. That same year she directed the Polish archaeological expedition digging in the so-called Camp of Diocletian at Palmyra in Syria [17].

Much of Bernhard's scholarly work was admittedly devoted to the history of collections of antiquities in Poland. In 1953 she organized an exhibition and accompanying academic session on the works of Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1752-1821), one of the first Polish ancient art collectors, who conducted his own excavations at Nola in Italy [2].

Bernhard's interest in Hellenistic civilization, especially the phenomenon of Alexandrian art, culminated in a symposium that she organized at the Jagellonian University in Cracow in 1976, devoted to the topic of "Alexandria in Polish research". The acts of the symposium, mostly concerning the results of excavations by Polish archaeologists on the Kom el-Dikka site in Alexandria, were published at a later date. Her opening lecture at the symposium provided an innovative look at the phenomenon of the so-called Alexandrian school in ancient art and its creative character, proving that no such thing had ever existed, all the artistic trends identified in this art going back directly either to Athens or Macedonia [28]. Twenty years earlier her idea for comparing Augustus' mausoleum in Rome with the tomb of Alexander in Alexandria was widely applauded in the scholarly world [22, 23].

Notwithstanding these disparate interests, Greek vase painting remained at the center of her studies and she was an acclaimed scholar in this field. Between 1960 and 1994 she published seven volumes of *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, covering the Greek vase collection of the National Museum in Warsaw [6, 10, 11, 16, 19, 25, 34]. She also penned an academic textbook devoted to Greek pottery [15].

To the Polish academic community Professor Bernhard is also known as the author of a four-volume "History of Greek Art", which was published successively between 1970 and 1989 [21, 24, 30, 33]. This work, which covers Greek art from its origins in the Archaic period to its decline in Hellenistic times, is the first Polish-language academic textbook on the subject. The author included all fields of human activity, starting with architecture and sculpture and ending with a discussion of the minor arts. Particular historical periods are shown against a broad political background.

Professor Bernhard was acutely aware of the importance of international ties and cooperation for the development of science as such and students in particular. In the difficult years of the cold war, when Poland's ties with Western centers of learning were severed, her lively contacts, based on her personal acquaintances, helped the Cracow school maintain the quality of its scholarship. Bernhard actively participated in international congresses and

symposia. She worked on editorial committees and authored items for the *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale* [12], *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* [31].

In acknowledgment of her scholarly achievements, Maria Ludwika Bernhard was awarded the prize of the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in 1960. She was also a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin, member of the Committee of Studies of Ancient Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, associate of the Classical Philology Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Arts in Cracow and member of the Archaeological Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow.

Maria Ludwika Bernhard was awarded many distinctions, both Polish and international. Of these she prized the most the *Légion d'honneur* and medals for bravery in defense of Polish independence, including the London-based Army Medal and the Home Army Cross.

During her long life she was for those who had had the privilege of knowing her a personification of courage and uncommon vitality and perhaps foremost – a true lady. Always open to new ideas, she was to her students a source of advice and a mentor, also in personal affairs.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY (select):

1. *Lampki starożytnie*, National Museum in Warsaw, Warsaw 1955, pp. 384, 102 ill.
2. *O sztuce u dawnych czyli Winckelman polski Stanisława Kostki Potockiego*, *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 1, pp. 514-525, figs. 3.
3. *Topographie d'Alexandrie: Le tombeau d'Alexandre et le Mausolé d'Auguste*, *Revue Archéologique* 47 (1956), pp. 129-156, figs. 8.
4. *Zagadnienie ikonografii grobu Aleksandra Wielkiego*, *Studia Muzealne* 2 (1957), pp. 9-35, figs. 8.
5. *L'amphore de Sophilos au Musée National de Varsovie*, (in:) *Aus der altertumskundliche Arbeit Volkspolens. Schriften der Sektion für Altertumswissenschaft XIII*, Berlin 1959, pp. 109-118, 10 pls.
6. *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Pologne – fasc. 4. Varsovie-Musée National 1*, Warszawa 1960, 28 pp., 48 pls.

7. *Sztuka starożytna z Muzeum Luwru*. National Museum in Warsaw. Ancient Art Gallery, Warsaw 1960. 57 pp.+2 nlb, 39+1 pls.
8. *Kalos Limen. Fouilles polonaises en Crimée, URSS, 1959*. Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie 2 (1961), pp. 3-10, 6 figs.
9. *La céramique hellénistique de Mirmeki*. (in:) *Atti del Settimo Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Classica* 3, Roma 1961, pp. 73-79, pls. I-VI.
10. *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Pologne – fasc. 5. Varsovie - Musée National* 2, Warsaw 1963, 27 pp., 54 pls.
11. *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Pologne – fasc. 6. Varsovie - Musée National* 3, Warsaw 1964, 22 pp., 48 pls.
12. *Raccolta d'arte antica – Polonia*, (in:) *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica Classica e Orientale* VI, Roma 1965, pp. 287-289.
13. *Le peintre de l'Amazone*. Études et Travaux 1 (1966), pp. 37-43, figs. 2.
14. *Une péliké de l'atelier du peintre de Darios*. (in:) *Mélanges offerts à K. Michałowski*, Warszawa 1966, pp. 253-260, figs. 4.
15. *Greckie malarstwo wazowe*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1966, 140+1 nlb, 298 figs.
16. *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Pologne – fasc. 7. Varsovie-Musée National* 4, Warsaw 1967, 36 pp., 53 pls.
17. *Fouilles polonaises à Palmyre 1967*. Annales Archéologique de Syrie 19 (1969), pp. 71-76, pls. 3.
18. *Une scène inconnue de l'Iliade*. Revue Archéologique 1970, pp. 49-54, figs. 2.
19. *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Pologne – fasc. 8. Varsovie-Musée National* 5, Warsaw 1970, 36 pp., 44 pls.
20. *Archeologia Grecji*. PAN Cracow branch. Nauka dla wszystkich 106, Cracow 1970, 37 pp.+ 3 nlb, 6 figs.
21. *Sztuka grecka V wieku p.n.e.*, Warsaw 1970. 526 pp.+ 2 nlb, 376 figs., 7 pls. (2nd ed. rev: Warsaw 1975 ; 3rd ed. 1991)
22. *Quelques remarques sur Alexandrie*. Revue Archéologique 1972, pp. 317-320, figs. 2.
23. *Le tombeau d'Alexandre des Arabes*. Études et Travaux 7 (1973), pp. 128-136.
24. *Sztuka grecka IV wieku p.n.e.*, Warsaw 1974. 580 pp., 357 figs. (2nd ed. rev.: Warsaw 1992).

25. *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Pologne – fasc. 9. Varsovie-Musée National 6*, Warsaw 1976, 55 pp., 54 pls.
26. *Historia zbiorów*, (in:) *Zabytki archeologiczne Zakładu Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Katalog*, ed. M. L. Bernhard, Cracow 1976.
27. *Archeologia Grecji* (Jagellonian University study book), Cracow 1977, 196 pp.
28. *Sztuka hellenistyczna w Aleksandrii* (in:) *Starożytna Aleksandria w badaniach polskich*, Warsaw 1977, pp. 13-24.
29. *Les recherches polonaises sur la céramique grecque*, *Recherches Archéologique de 1976*, Cracow 1977, pp. 46-56.
30. *Sztuka hellenistyczna*, Warsaw 1980, 620 pp., 379 figs. (2nd ed. rev.: Warsaw 1993).
31. Seven items for *Lexicon Iconographicae Mytologiae Classicae* (1981)
32. *Proposition d'une nouvelle interprétation des scènes sur un skyphos du Peintre de Lewis*, *Revue Archéologique* 1982, pp. 231-232.
33. *Sztuka grecka archaiczna*, Warsaw 1989, 623 pp., 436 ill.
34. *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Céramique chypriote, Pologne - fasc. 10. Varsovie Musée National 7*, Cracow 1994, 24 pp., 31 pls.

Hanna Szymańska