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DEDICATED TO THE HEROIC ISLAND OF CRETE



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(NOTE: The text of this publication has been prepared before the war but events delayed the edition).

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**ON THE COVER :**

*"The Prince with the fleur-de-lys,, A modelled and coloured relief from the Palace of Knossos. Reproduced by M. Contopoulos.*

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"THE BLUE LADIES," WALL-PAINTING AT KNOSSOS, OF THE MIDDLE MINOAN PERIOD.  
(REPRODUCTION BY EMILE GILLIÉRON)



## MINOAN PAINTING

Crete in the Minoan Age was a little Spain in the centre of the Eastern Mediterranean. This may seem a strange statement; but amongst other points of resemblance, I will confine myself to the mention of two of the most striking *bull-fighting* and *painting*. Were these points of resemblance due to mere chance or perhaps to a common ancestry of the two races? When I visited Spain, a dozen years ago, I was repeatedly struck by the resemblance between the physique of the Spanish people and that of the ancient Cretans, as well as by their common passion for bull fighting and for painting. Just as classical Greece cultivated sculpture and the plastic arts, so Crete and Spain loved colour and expressed their inspirations and sentiments by colour. Sculpture, in Minoan times, played only a secondary rôle; it did not produce but statuettes and bibelots; whereas painting covered, in a masterly style, which recalls the great frescoes of the Renaissance, the walls and perhaps the ceilings of the halls and immense porticos of the palaces at Knossos, Phaestos, Haghia Triada, Mallia and Amnissos. What imposing figures of men and women, what representations of bull-fights, of social gatherings, of gardens, of religious scenes and others! For instance, in entering the great hall of the Heraklion Museum, one sees a large surface of the front part covered with frescoes, in which predominates, the tall and robust figure of the "Rython Carrier," wearing a spotted loin-cloth. The reddish-brown colour of his body reminds one of Africa, of Libya probably, where in the age of fables was born Zeus, father of the Gods, and Athena surnamed "Tritonis," in those regions. It is therefore not improbable that in pre-historic times the Libyans, like the Arabs in the Middle Ages, conquered simultaneously both Crete and Iberia or Spain. A painted relief of a bull's head is a masterpiece. Further on, a bull-fighting scene, in which a man makes the dangerous leap. Then, a great procession of young people is seen carrying offerings to some divinity.

But the naturalism of Minoan painting displays itself fully in the frescoes of plants and of animals (cats, birds, apes). These are jewels of art. Even today, contemporary painting, with all its technical perfections, does not succeed in rendering with more splendor the beauty of flowers and the vivacity of animals!

And what can one say of these three grand blue dames, whose majestic carriage and an aristocratic elegance reminds one of the dames of Napoleon's Empire. One could almost say that they were promenading in the park of Versailles!

All these frescoes in the Heraklion Museum have been restored by the lamented artist Emile Gilliéron (son), whose equal it will take long to find. But one should not mistrust his restoration, for this eminent copyist of ancient paintings had made such a profound study of these frescoes, that he was able to restore them with a precision and a fidelity, that astounds connoisseurs and archaeologists.

Our National Museum at Athens contains a complete collection of copies of these mural paintings of Minoan Crete, which the late E. Gilliéron made at my suggestion. And this collection facilitates very considerably the study of these unique treasures.



BULL'S HEAD IN COLOURED STUCCO, FROM KNOSSOS (HERAKLION MUSEUM).

ΚΡΗΤΗ ΤΙΣ ΓΑΙ' ΕΣΤΙ  
 ΜΕΣΟ ΕΝΙ ΟΙΝΟΠΙ ΠΟΝΤΟ  
 ΚΑΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΚΙΡΑ ΠΕΡΙΡΡΥΤΟΣ  
 ΕΝ Δ' ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΙ  
 ΠΟΛΛΟΙ ΑΠΕΙΡΕΣΙΟΙ  
 ΚΑΙ ΕΝΝΗΚΟΝΤΑ ΠΟΛΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑΣ Τ ΣΤΙΧΟΙ 172-174



THE STAIRCASE LEADING TO THE SECOND STORY OF THE PALACE.

ONE OF THE GOLD DOUBLE AXES FOUND AT ARPALCHORI, SOUTH - EAST OF KNOSSOS.



DECORATIVE FRESCO IN THE PICTURE-GALLERY OF THE PALACE.



THE THRONE - ROOM OF MINOS IN THE PALACE AT KNOSSOS.

PHOTOS L. FRANTZIS

NEAR THE SIMPLE BUT ELEGANT MONOLITHIC THRONE ARE BUILT SEATS FOR THE KING'S RETINUE. ON EITHER SIDE OF THE THRONE ON THE WALLS ARE FRESCOS REPRESENTING TREES AND GRIFFINS.

## THE PALACE AT KNOSSOS

Both the passing visitor and the scientific student of the ancient Cretan world cannot restrain his astonishment, when viewing the palace at Knossos.

Its architecture, with all the combined provisions of the modern builder, with its wide corridors, its well-planned arrangement and its numerous details creates a most vivid impression.

Its very size and tortuous plan, conceived in that age of hoary antiquity, is thought by many to have given rise to the famous myth of the Labyrinth and the Minotaur.

But the deepest impression upon the visitor today is caused not so much by the tortuous plan of the building nor by its long row of store rooms with their huge jars, which show the financial wealth of the rulers who inhabited the palace, nor by the magnificence of its rooms and corridors.

What is particularly astounding is the drainage system of the whole group of dwellings, which make up the palace, the admirable architectural skill in the placing of openings for lighting and ventilation and still more so, the frescoes, which have been uncovered in the throne room, in one of the queen's apartments and in other rooms and which show a refined artistic taste at the height of its development.



PHOTOS L. FRANTZIS

# STEATITE POTTERY



The two famous steatite vases, found at Haghia Triada and belonging to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Middle Minoan Age (1750-1580 B.C.), are amongst the most wonderful specimens of a plastic art, that never used marble and left no great monumental works, but shows an astonishing animation of expression, portrays the most daring movements, which classical art was long in attempting, and betrays an unprecedented understanding in the composition of many-figured scenes. Both these vases are what is known as "rhytons,,(drinking-

PHOTO NELLY'S



horns), with a hole at the lower end, to enable the user either to drink or to offer a libation. The one on the left is covered with four bands of painting, portraying famous boxing-contests and *rushes of bulls*. On the other, to the right, called "The harvesters' vase,, is painted a very impressive many-figured group of men



On their shoulders they each carry something that resembles a pitchfork or a sickle. Intermingled with them are seen women and perhaps priests holding the noisy "seis-tra,, or rattles. The grouping of the figures is such as to emphasize the vivacity of movement; and one can almost think he is looking at a cinema film.

# CERAMICS

The great collection of ancient Cretan pottery ware, that we possess, shows us clearly the evolution of a remarkable school of art, which stands in the front rank of the artistic creations of all the ages. The crystal ware of Venice and the ceramic products of Sèvres have produced no works, which are not rivalled by the pottery of Crete as regards delicacy of execution and fragility, diversity of bold conception and wealth of polychrome decoration.

Even before the invention of the potter's wheel, the Cretans produced delicate handmade vases, of amazing perfection. Some interesting specimens belong to a very remote age and yet might well be ranked as modern, as, for instance (at the right centre) the vessel



resembling a tea-pot, which belongs to the second Early Minoan period (2800—2400 B. C.). Cretan ceramic art developed over a period of nearly two thousand years. During the second and third Middle Minoan period (1900—1500 B. C.) it reached its zenith in the vases of the so-called *Kamaries* style, which are as thin as egg-shells and light as a feather. They bear a wonderful polychrome line and plant decoration; many are very successful imitations of the bronze



vases of the same period. The vases b, c, d, are fine specimens of this ware. In its further development Cretan pottery (*palace style*) has an enriched decoration with marine animals, shells and aqua-



d



a



c



b

tic plants and shows a vigorous naturalism, as seen in vases e, f, g; and only toward the end of the Late Minoan Age does one find a strong stylization of the figures, which shows the prevalence of an entirely different aesthetic taste.

## THE SANCTUARY OF THE GODDESS WITH THE BIRD

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Late Minoan Age (1400 - 1200 B. C.) has given us a series of little clay figurines, that have not the artistic value of the works of the preceding periods but are of great interest as regards the religious worship of the times. *Upper right* A group of dancing girls holding hands and in their midst an old lyre-player who accompanies them. Their dance undoubtedly has a religious significance



FIGURINE OF THE GODDES WITH THE BIRD FOUND  
IN THE PALACE AT KNOSSOS



FIGURINE OF A PIOUS MAN PRESENTING HIS  
OFFERING





the great goddess, whose lower limbs are conventionally represented by a cylinder holds her hands to her breasts; on another (left) she holds her hands raised. A bird, as a sacred symbol, is perched upon her head. A pious man presents his offering.

and is being performed in honour of some divinity, which is symbolized by a bird, placed opposite to the dancers in the place which would naturally be occupied by the unseen goddess.

The other figurines were found in a small room on the south-eastern side of the palace at Knossos which is called «the Sanctuary of the Bird Goddess». On one of them

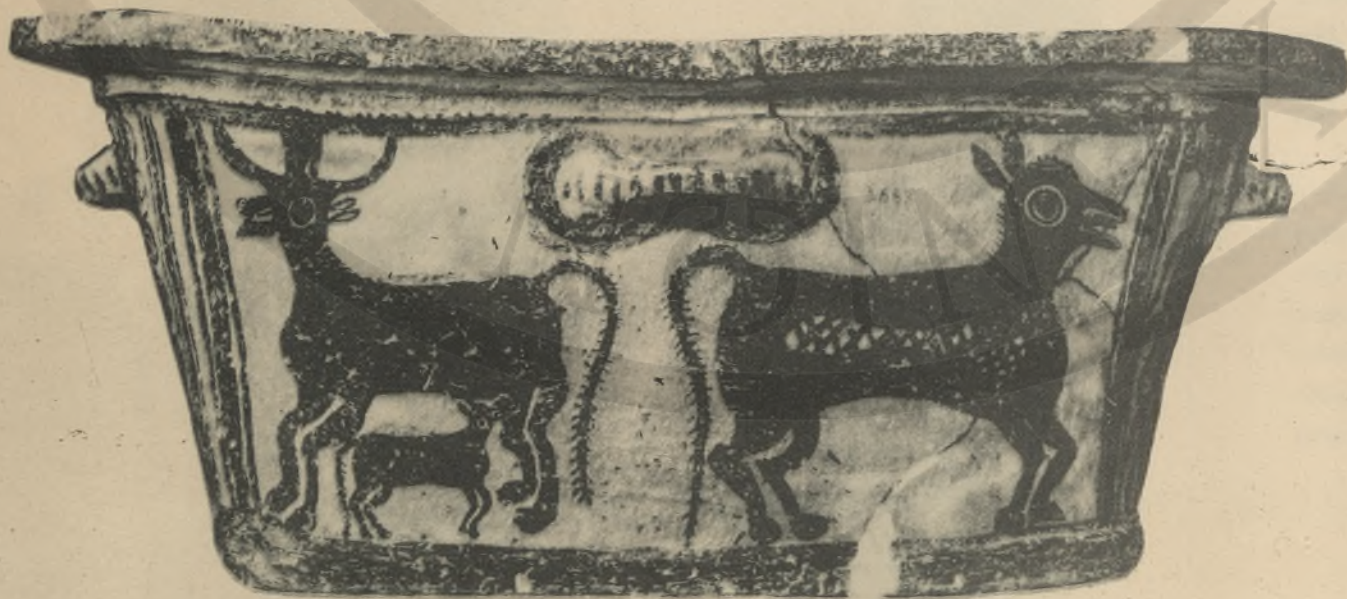


# LATE MINOAN ART

COVER OF A MINOAN CENSER, OF THE 3<sup>d</sup> LATE  
MINOAN AGE  
(ABOUT 1300 — 1200 B. C.)



EARTHENWARE BATH-TUB OF THE LATE MINOAN  
AGE, WITH FIGURES OF ANIMALS.  
(ABOUT 1200 B. C.)





POTTERY VASE IN THE SHAPE OF A MAN'S HEAD. NOTE THE CUSTOM THEN PREVAILING OF SHAVING MUSTACHE AND BEARD, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A CHIN-TUFT AND A FEW WISPS OF BEARD ABOUT THE MOUTH. THIS VASE WAS FOUND IN THE PALACE AT PHAESTOS AND IS OF THE LATE MINOAN AGE.



EARTHENWARE MINOAN SARCOPHAGUS, WHOSE DESIGNS SHOW FLOWERS, SACRED HORNS AND A SEA-SHELL (NAUTILUS ARGONAUTA). THIRD LATE MINOAN AGE. (ABOUT 1200 B. C.)

## Ancient Art of Dorian Crete

Even after the close of the Minoan Age and its civilization, Crete, thenceforth for the most part Dorian, continued to be a place of the greatest interest as regards art, especially of the archaic period. Here we have before us some copper ornaments of pedestals of the 8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century B. C., which show independent representations, that can be ranged together. On the *left*, a chariot, and above it, warriors enclosed in a triangle.



On the *right*: A beautiful representation of a ship with its rowers. In the poop a warrior with his shield is apparently defending a woman; perhaps, it is an abduction, about which there are legendary traditions.

Equally characteristic of this archaic art of Dorian Crete is the adjoining bronze figurine of a cithara-player, strumming his lyre.



# FAIENCE

It appears that the manufacture and sale in Crete of what we now call Faience pottery was a palace monopoly. The raw material doubtless became known to the Cretans through the Egyptians; but the Cretans succeeded in giving to their faience ware a variety of tones of colour. Nor did they employ faience work for ornamental purposes only, but they utilized its tender colours in the creation of an art, which combined plastic elements with the principles of painting.

The faience statuettes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Middle Minoan



period (1750 - 1580 B.C.), which were found at Knossos, representing the great Snake Goddess or her votaries are little masterpieces, that charm the eye not only by their harmonious polychromy and delicately elaborated details, but also by their living and gentle expression, which moderates the chilling aspect of the symbolic snakes. To the same period belong the polychrome faience relief tablets, one of which depicts on a rough stony ground a cow, the other a wild she-goat with her kids.



The clear-cut outline of these animals betrays the sure hand of a master-craftsman following out a lively naturalistic conception. The attitude of the little kid, suckling its mother, is graceful and true to life, while the mother motionless gazes afar off as if to get timely warning of danger. In the other tablet, that of the suckling calf, the mother bends over her offspring in an attitude full of maternal tenderness.





Κοράκια σάν τὰ κρύα νερά ναι σάν τσοι κρύους αἴρες  
ω' ὄρχισούνται σάν τὰ μαρωδά νάθε ναχές ἡμέρες.

# POPULAR DANCES

The Cretans even of today can justify their ancient renown as good dancers and tumblers, mentioned by Athenaeus and attested by Minoan works of art.

Present-day Cretan dances are not «round» but in single file, in which the first man and the one next to him play the foremost part. In many of these dances we find features in common with the dances of the Homeric tradition, especially in the «Jumping Dance», which is so common in the mountain-districts of Ida, where it is danced in a wilder and more primitive manner than in the cities. This dance, as Sir Evans points out, is the same as that mentioned in the Homeric Hymn, where the Delphic Apollo leads the Cretans to the sanctuary of the Pythia and there they stamp the ground to the sound of his lyre and sing paeans of their native isle in his honour.

In some places, in western Crete, the dancers do not hold each other by the hand but by a handkerchief.

The two leaders in the «Jumping Dance» perform wonders in high jumping. Their strength and dexterity are such, that often the leading man, when up in the air, puts his foot on the outstretched hand of the second dancer, turns a somersault in the air and falls on his feet. This reminds us of the tumblers (κυβιστήρες) of the Iliad.

(«πολλοὶ δ' ἡμερόεντα χορὸν  
παριστάθ' ὄμιλος τερόμενοι Διὶ  
δὲ Κυβιστήρες κατ' αὐτοῦς μολπῆς  
ἐξάροντες ἐδίνεον κατὰ μέσους»)

The «Pentozali» dance, on the other hand, the finest of present-day Cretan dances, bears a striking resemblance to the ancient Pyrrhic war-dance, of which the ancient Cretans boasted of having been the inventors.





ΕΝ ΔΕ ΧΟΡΟΝ ΠΟΙΚΙΛΕ ΠΕΡΙΚΛΥΤΟΣ ΑΜΦΙΓΥΗΕΙΣ  
ΤΟ ΙΚΕΛΟΝ ΟΙΟΝ ΠΟΤ' ΕΝΙ ΚΝΟΣΣΩ, ΕΥΡΕΙΗ  
ΔΑΙΔΑΛΟΣ ΗΣΚΗΣΕΝ ΚΑΛΛΙΠΛΟΚΑΜΩ ΑΡΙΑΔΝΗ  
ΕΝΘΑ ΜΕΝ ΗΪΘΕΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΙ ΑΛΦΕΣΙΒΟΙΑΙ  
ΟΡΧΕΥΟΝΤ' ΑΜΗΛΟΝ ΕΠΙ ΚΑΡΠΩ ΧΕΙΡΑΣ ΕΧΟΝΤΕΣ.

ΙΛΙΑΔΟΣ Σ ΣΤΙΧΟΙ 590-594



CRETAN MAIDENS. DANCING THE "PENTOZALI,"

In Crete it is danced only by men and in older times was danced by armed men after the manner of the «Pyrrhichê» war-dance of the ancients.

# Throughout the ages



The golden seal-ring found at Isopata,  
near Knossos.

The dance depicted on it is undoubtedly that used by Hephaestus as a model for the shield he made for Achilles (...«Τῷ ἔκελον οἶον ποτ' ἐνὶ Κνωσσοῦ εὐρείῃ Δαίδαλος ἤσκησε καλλιπλοκάμῳ Ἀριάδῃ») while, on the other hand its movement bears a striking resemblance to many Cretan dances of today, thus manifesting a wonderful continuity from the remotest times down to the present day in the traditions of Cretan art.



MAIDEN OF CANEA, IN THE PICTURESQUE  
LOCAL DRESS, LEADING THE DANCE.

## THE CRÉTAN LYRE-PLAYERS



PHOTO NELLY'S

Even today the Muse sings in every Cretan's heart and song accompanies every Cretan dance. In the present-day folksongs of Crete the «hyporchemes» or choral hymns of the ancients mentioned by Lucian, as the Cretan rhapsodies sung on the sacred soil of Delos accompanied by the lyre and dancing, live once more

Such songs, frequently improvisations, are the present-day Cretan «matinades». In the villages of Crete there are frequent poetical competitions between the improvisator-poets of the people; these competitions occasionally last all night and in them any competitor is considered beaten, who uses the same rhyme twice

Rhyme-songs and those of 15-syllable lines have a melody of their own, in which half of each line is repeated in a peculiar manner. They are sung by choruses, one singer leading off with a solo, which is then repeated by the others. The musical instrument, which accompanies Cretan songs and dances is the lyre; and the lyre-player usually sits on a stool in the centre of the dancing circle. The modern lyre, as compared with the Minoan, is much simpler, having only three strings instead of seven or eight.



# THE CRETANS

CHARACTERISTIC TYPES OF PEASANTS OF WESTERN CRETE



A PEASANT-WOMAN OF THE MOUNTAIN  
VILLAGE ANOGIA ON THE SLOPES OF  
MT IDA

# A SALUTATION TO CRETE

Hail, Crete, mother of genius! Hail, land of inspiration and memories! Hail, sacred isle, cradle of the ancient gods, fatherland of saints of later times, nursery of heroes of our own day! The celestial sea

PEASANTS OF THE VERDANT VILLAGE OF KRASSI  
ON THE SLOPE OF THE MOUNTAINS OF LASSITHION

PHOTO NELLY'S



bathes thy brilliant marble shores; laurel and myrtle, symbols of glory and immortality, give thee refreshing shade; the waves of the Aegean rock thee gently; the perfumed breezes of the Orient caress thee!

CELESTIN ALBIN





THE HARBOUR AND FORT OF CANEA



THE CELEBRATED VENETIAN FORTIFICATIONS OF HERAKLION (CANDIA)



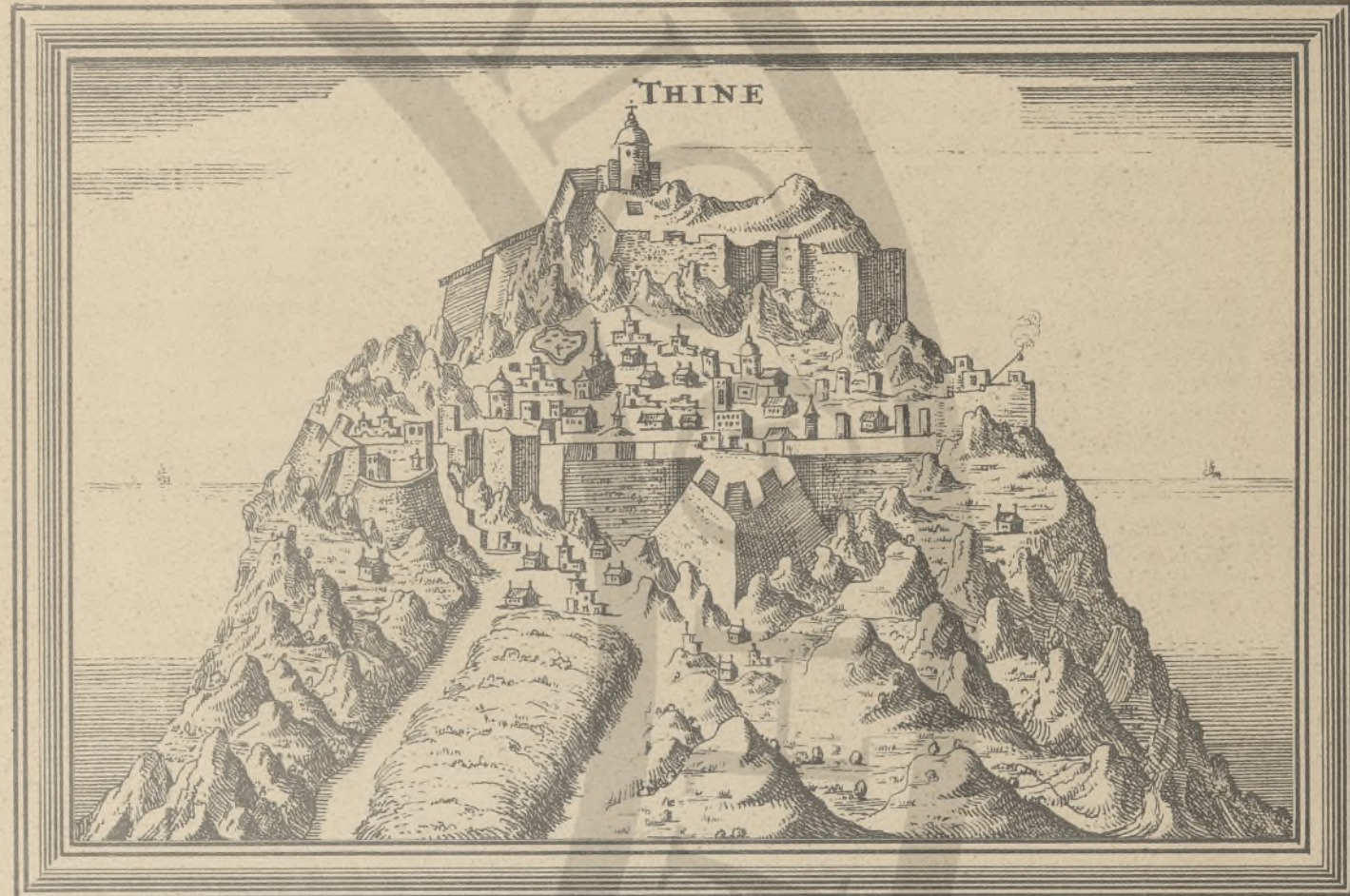
THE TOWN AND FORT OF RETHYMNON

# MEDIEVAL CRETE

The chief harbours of Crete with their fortifications, as shown in an old map of the 17th century drawn by Frederic de Wit and printed at Amsterdam.



The medieval forts in Crete were the scene of the long struggle (1645-1669) between Venice and the Ottoman Empire (at that time the two principal naval Powers in the Mediterranean) for the possession of the island. This struggle reached its climax during the last three years of that period (1666-1669) in the memorable siege of Heraklion. The heaviest artillery of that age and enormous works of engineering, directed by the most renowned engineers of the day, were employed in that siege; and all Europe watched with breathless interest the desperate contest between two worlds. The fearful losses sustained by both sides during this bloody struggle resulted in the final decline of both Powers.



MEDIEVAL FORT AT PHOENIX, SPHAKIA





PHOTO NELLY'S

THIS HISTORIC MONASTERY NEAR THE VILLAGE OF AMNAIOS IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN BUILT IN THE TIME OF THE EMPEROR HERACLIUS (ABOUT 600 A. D.). IT IS INHABITED TODAY BY 45 MONKS.



# THE CELEBRATED MONASTERY OF ARKADI

PHOTO NELLY'S





THE RUINS OF THE EXPLODED POWDER - MAGAZINE AT ARKADI

This monastery is famous for the important part it took in the Cretan struggles for liberty. From the days of Venetian rule it was an important centre of revolutionary activity. But chiefly in the war of 1821 it was the scene of sanguinary conflicts. In each of the subsequent Cretan revolts against the Turks, the insurgents used this monastery as a rendez - vous for maturing their plans and taking decisions. This also happened in the great Cretan insurrection of 1866-1869. From the outset of that struggle the insurgents of Rethymno province made Arkadi their headquarters ; and this drew down upon the monastery an onslaught of a strong Turkish force under Mustafa Pasha. Unfortunately, at the time of this attack there were 650 refugees—old men, women and children—who had taken refuge there and who could not or would not withdraw ; the majority

were the families of the 200 armed men, who with the 65 monks had undertaken to defend the place. 31 The attack raged fiercely for two whole days and nights 12,000 Turks against 265 defenders of the monastery, who performed prodigies of valour and endurance, that were the glory of Crete. When the attackers finally succeeded in battering down the great gate of the monastery and poured into the courtyard, a young Cretan warrior, Constantine Yamboudis by name, who was posted in the powder -magazine with 600 women and children fired his pistols

into the open powder barrels and the whole vaulted chamber was blown up causing havoc in the crowded ranks of the assailants and attackers, defenders and refugees perished alike in the tremendous upheaval. This catastrophe, instead of damping the ardour of the insurgents of Crete, only inflamed and steeled their heroic spirit ; and the unequal contest continued for two more years. But finally the Cretans had to give up the unequal struggle. But the Cretans' unrestrainable thirst for liberty was not quenched and the brave islanders rose in four more revolts, before Crete finally obtained her liberation. Now the monastery of Arkadi has become a shrine of pilgrimage for all Greeks, who come to gaze with patriotic emotion on the scene of the holocaust of 1866.

J. D. MOURELLOS

PHOTO NELLY'S



PHOTO NELLY'S

One can no longer doubt that a very advanced civilization flourished in Crete a thousand years before the Homeric age; and one is astounded by certain marvels.

CAMILLE MAUCLAIR

## The Sarcophagus from Haghia Triada

A part, the extreme left, of the fresco on the famous sarcophagus, found at Haghia Triada (Crete) and belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Late Minoan Age (1450—1400 B. C.). This sarcophagus is of soft bluish-stone covered with a thick layer of stucco, on which the fresco is painted. In the section shown here we see a woman, clad in a priestess' robe resembling the skin of an animal, who is pouring out something from a vase she is holding into another, which stands between two double-axes. Another woman carries on her shoulder a long pole from which two jars are suspended and behind her a man is playing a lyre of seven strings. The whole composition no doubt represents some religious act or rite—probably in honour of a dead person, perhaps of the person buried in the sarcophagus.



## The Parisienne

A bit of fresco from Knossos portrays this lively figure of a young woman, which has been nick-named "The Parisienne,..". It belongs to the 1<sup>st</sup> Late Minoan Age (1580—1450 B. C.), but although so ancient, preserves a freshness and a sensational expressionism, which approaches so much to present-day taste, as to justify its nick-name. The red lips, the clear-cut profile of the face with its small, uptilted, saucy nose, and especially the large almond-shaped eye, which dominates the face, go to make up the charm of this little figure.



Καὶ μωυρααίδες καὶ γυνοὶ μὲ τσοὶ μαυρὲς κεραῦνες  
καὶ μὲ τὰ στήθια τ' ἀνοχεταὶ καὶ μὲ τσοὶ σοδαροῦνες

CHARACTERISTIC TYPES OF PEASANTS OF SPHAKIA

PHOTO NELLY'S





HORA THE CAPITAL OF THE SPHAKIA DISTRICT, ON THE LIBYAN SEA, WITH ITS MEDIEVAL FORT

## SPHAKIA, THE DISTRICT OF GORGES

The most inaccessible district of Crete and also the impregnable stronghold of Cretan liberty. For centuries, Sphakia has preserved unchanged the local Cretan customs and austere traditions. Its name is a very ancient Greek word signifying «the land of gorges or ravines».

# The mountaineers of Sphakia

When one is confronted by the handsome stalwarts of Mount Ida and Sphakia, with their eagle glance and splendid bodies, and hears them still swearing by the name of Zeus ('Ni Zi,, = by Zeus!), one recognizes in them the blood of Minos' ancient sea-farers, who spread their civilization throughout Greece. Their bodies are those of the straight-backed figures of the figurines and wall-paintings of Knossos with their slender waists—the Kouroi, with the pointed archaic beards. Out of the clear lines of their faces ancient Greece looks out upon you. These men, who remind one of the Kouretae and the Eteocretans with their double axes, have preserved unquenched the fire of the Greek national aspirations in the mountain fastnesses of Psiloriti and Sphakia. Here every ell of ground is the resting-place of heroes, every rock is an epic of heroic deeds. What rhapsodies the crags of Sphakia evoke! What phantom warriors wander on moonlit nights through the wild gorges of Nimbro and Samariá! In the ruined Francocastello, which faces the distant coast of Libya, are still to be seen the Venetian gibbets; and the statue of Hadjimichalis, greater than death, passes in review the

PHOTO NELLY'S

MOUNTAINEERS OF MT. IDA AND SPHAKIA



PEASANT FROM THE VILLAGE ASKIFOU  
(SPHAKIA)



batallions of the Dropoulitae. Say what you like about mirages and optical illusions! These are the heroes of Francocastello, rushing to the attack! 37 This is the land of golden citrous fruit, of waxy Sultana grapes, of Cretan oranges, of gold-green olive groves, of strong wine — but also and particularly of *Men!* Men who have never been bent to a foreign yoke, men of splendid physique and eagle eye! They do not walk — they fly upon their native rocks and highland pastures! And the mountain wind, which strengthens them and which rustles in the oleanders, whispers forgotten epics of endless insurrections, martyrdoms and heroic deeds!

ANGELUS TANAGRAS

## THE CRADLE OF ZEUS

In the Lassithion district about 200 yards above the village of Psychro lies the Dictaeon Cave, discernible from afar as a dark hole in the flank of Mount Dictê. It is a natural cavern full of huge stalactites; here according to the ancient fable Rhea gave birth to Zeus and entrusted him to the safe-keeping of the Kouretes and the Nymphs. According to another tradition, Minos came hither and received from Zeus the wise laws, which bore his name.

The cave shows even today traces of the cult of the god; and some maintain that certain of the existing stalactites gleam in the semi-obscurity and produce the illusion of the face of the god in all its divine majesty.

Various votive offerings have been found here and the place was excavated in 1900 by the British School of Archaeology at Athens. These excavations brought to light the foundations of a built sanctuary or altar and many votive offerings, chiefly of bronze, as well as figurines, arms, utensils, etc. and also sacred tablets of stone inscribed with Minoan characters. These finds show that the cave was devoted to some worship in the Minoan Age, which was adapted and adjusted later to myths of the gods and to the cult of the Cretan-born Zeus.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE STALACTITES OF THE DICTAEAN CAVE

THE FAMOUS STALACTITE CALLED "THE MANTLE OF ZEUS,"

STATUE OF "ZEUS OF THE THUNDERBOLT,"  
(National Museum, Athens)

PEASANT—WOMAN OF EASTERN CRETE



«Nature seems to have placed Crete in the most favourable position for the empire over Greece and over the world.»

(Aristotle, Politica, II, 8).

## The table-land of Lassithion

One of the most charming excursions that can be made in Crete is to this plateau.

The roads leading up to it are many and the traveller can choose whichever road suits the time at his disposal and his power of endurance. But from whatever quarter he may approach it, his first glimpse of this plateau will strike him with wonder, especially if there happens to be a wind blowing on that day.

Whatever other beautiful sites the traveller may have already visited in Crete, whatever other beauties of nature he may have seen, whatever high mountains and difficult gorges he may have scaled, he will forget them all when he sees the plateau of Lassithion, for it surpasses them all.



A VIEW OF THE PLAIN OF LASSITHION, WITH ITS PICTURESQUE WIND-MILLS



As a landscape it is of exceptional beauty. A great plain, ringed round about by mountains, that owing to their great distance do not seem to cast any oppressive shadows, stretches out before the traveller. These mountains, smiling though bare of verdure, radiate their varied colouring and form a group of harmonious colour and graceful contour. Within such a frame the Lassithion plateau lives its vigorous life.

At the foot of the encircling mountains, which form the celebrated Dictê range, the whole county of Lassithion lives and moves and has its being. Eighteen villages nestle around its rim, forming a garland about the lower-lying parts. All



PHOTO NELLY'S

PHOTO COUTOULAKI

these villages—clean, cool and tidy—raise the outlines of their white houses and high belfries, framed in the dense foliage of trees, and present that charming simplicity, which is the heaven-sent reward of all life devoted to the cultivation of the land. Each village has its own personality and peculiar characteristics; and the name of each village is associated with a history and is often a puzzle to linguists. But to enjoy to the full the panorama of this plateau, one





PHOTO NELLY'S

HARVESTING IN THE PLAIN OF LASSITHION

must see it from an elevation: All over the great expanse of country there are thousands of windmills (estimated at about 7000), whose white sails turn with the least breath of air. The far-off hum of these mills and the sight of these thousands of revolving sails makes one lose the sense of reality and imagine them to be thousands of white pigeons wheeling about their nests. This illusion is followed by another. Thousands of lines of division, great and small, drawn with mathematical precision, cover the surface of the plateau, giving the appearance of a chessboard. These lines, which



PEASANTS OF LASSITHION IN HARVEST - TIME

even today are called "Liniès,, date from Venetian times and divide the land into sections great and small. And the wind-mills which are placed in these sections, look like chess pieces, which some hand is unsuccessfully trying to move about.

It would seem as if Zeus did not forget this mountain district, which offered him a safe refuge in his infancy and saved him from death at the hands of his father Kronos. When for the first time he came out of the cave, where his mother had hidden him, and, got his first glimpse of the Dictaeon valley, he blessed it and made it beautiful and fruitful.

STELIOS CHILIADAKIS  
Director in the General Secretariate for Tourism

As in the  
days  
of Homer

## THE SHEPHERDS OF THE MOUNTAINS

When the visitor to Crete advances from the Coast towns toward the interior of the island, the most amazing diversity of landscapes and forms presents itself to his eyes. Alternating with olive plantations, orange groves and vineyards he will see the Cretan mountains joining and crossing each other in ceaseless variety, now exhibiting verdant valleys, then



CHARACTERISTIC SNAP - SHOTS OF THE "MITATA,, OR MOUNTAIN DWELLINGS OF THE CRETAN SHEPHERDS

PHOTO NELLY'S



PHOTO NELLY'S

plains great and small, then abrupt ravines and picturesque table-lands. The inaccessible peaks here of the White Mountains, there of M<sup>t</sup> Ida or of M<sup>t</sup> Diktê, the sacred heights, which nurtured gods, dominate the panorama everywhere.

cheese-making are exactly like those described by Homer, and the shepherds, surrounded by the same natural environment and animated by the same mentality, in their loneliness compose verses and epic songs that remind one of Homer.

V. DASCALAKIS



PHOTO NELLY'S

MILKING IN A CRETAN "MITATON,, JUST AS IN THE TIME OF POLYPHEMUS



PHOTO NELLY'S

Within a few miles from the coast the traveller is confronted by the most striking contrasts — the warm sea-shore, where the banana grows, and the cold altitudes of 8000 ft. — the olive-woods and the mountain forest — the luxuriant vegetation of the lowlands and the bare Alpine zone of the pasture-lands.

The same contrasts are to be noted in the life of the inhabitants. Up in the high pasture-lands, life has retained the same peaceful rhythm that it had in the days of the Odyssey and the Iliad, unaffected by any trace of the mechanism of modern civilization. The "mitata,, or dwellings of the shepherds, are built vaulted just like the vaulted buildings of Mycenae or Messara; the methods of



**Above:** One of three panels of a private dwelling at Knossos, to which the name «House of Frescoes» has been given. It depicts a cercopithecus amongst papyrus plants.

**Right:** Section of a frieze, depicting partridges single and in pairs and a pheasant in the midst. This fresco adorned the wall of a building situated near the southern entrance of the palace, by which official visitors entered. It was a small but elegant building named **Caravan-serai**, with a spring of water to the right of its entrance, in which visitors, after washing their feet, rested awhile from the fatigue of their journey, before entering the main palace. Here they were offered a choice refectation; and to this refectation doubtless the fresco has reference.

## ANIMAL SCENES

It is impossible not to be amazed, when one enters the principal hall of the Heraklion Museum and finds oneself face to face with the frescoes unearthed in the Palace of Knossos. The style of these Cretan paintings is very mixed; it consists of some rather stilted conventions and, at the same time, of realistic refinement, of liberty and of aesthetic conventions. In the animal scenes, the Cretan artist recalls, to an astonishing degree, the Japanese, as for instance, in that fresco showing a cat watching a pheasant from behind a bush, or in that other depicting flying-fish. One feels that the stroke of the brush is bold, that it interprets an observation just made, and that nevertheless it tends toward geometrical *motifs*.

JACQUES DE LACRETELLE



# MONASTERIES

PHOTO NELLY'S

THE MONASTERY OF VRONTISSI



The visitor to Crete will find himself amply repaid not only by the varied beauties of nature but also by the many places of historic interest, that the island can offer. Beside its inestimable archaeological treasures of the pre-historic and classical times, the visitor will come upon numerous little rural churches and picturesque monasteries, scattered throughout the island in charming sites. These monasteries, by their ready hospitality, make up for the lack of inns and hostels. In Venetian times they were centres of Greek learning and strongholds of Eastern Christianity. They possessed rich libraries and many of their monks acquired distinction by their learning and rose to high office in the Eastern Orthodox Church. What constitutes the greatest present-day feature of interest in the churches and monasteries of Crete are their wall-paintings and the sacred icons (painted on wood), which adorn their altar-screens. These pictures belong to the so-called *Cretan School*, which was the continuation of the Byzantine traditions of art.



# Damaskinos and Theotokopoulos



The personality of Michael Damaskinos is enshrouded in obscurity. From the meagre information we possess and from the paucity of his preserved works we are unable to form any estimate of the man. He was born in Crete at a time when the island was struggling to bring the Greek element to the surface. The Byzantine tradition was still warm and kept showing itself in spiritual manifestations; but material force was oppressive—a struggle in souls, which feel keenly this antithesis—a bitter struggle. If one feels deeply the meaning of what is happening about him, then one lives his life intensely. The antagonism between the spiritual urge and material force created profound unrest in the minds of two men of the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; and their efforts to find a solution of this problem led them in opposite directions. The one—Theotokopoulos—turned his eyes finally toward the West and he became the greatest master of his age, showing what the Greek soul is worth and capable of. He climbed to the summit with pride in his Cretan descent and signed his canvasses «Dominicus Theotokopoulos, Cretan».

The other, his contemporary Michael Damaskinos, also became acquainted with the new horizons of art, which had opened up in the West. But he returned to his native land. He wished to keep a light burning at the shrine of his country's traditions of art and he gave them a fresh illumination. He understood but too well his tragic destiny; his heart bled in the conviction that the task was difficult and the result doubtful and he attempted a compromise, contrary perhaps to his temperamental belief in the past. Thus he helped to reinforce the traditions of art in his native country, while Theotokopoulos' wings showed up to the world the beauty of the Greek soul.

MARINOS CALLIGAS



ΟΡΑΣΙΣ ΕΓΓΡΑΦΗ  
Η 474

ΜΟΥΣΕΟΣ  
ΒΑΤΩ

ΙΟΗΜΜΙΧΑΝ ΕΛΛ  
ΜΑΚΚΗΣ

PHOTO NELLY'S

THE BURNING BUSH a painting by Michael Damaskinos.



NOLI ME TANGERE (Touch me not) — a painting by Michael Damaskinos.

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI -- a painting by Michael Damaskinos, in the church of st. Minas, Heraklion.

PHOTO NELLY'S



# Minoan



Somewhere about the middle of the so-called Middle Minoan Age, the Mediterranean people of Crete was imbued by a fine naturalism, which for the first time had taken possession of human art in the Eastern Mediterranean—an art full of flowers, birds, sea-shells and flying-fishes. This art could be termed decorative but that is not its essential feature. What is chiefly of interest is the attitude of those remote artists of the second millenium B.C. toward the inexhaustible tableaux of daily life and their tendency to nature-worship, which led them to seek their models in gardens and in the mysterious depths of the sea.

Their keen eye seized upon a bit of life, which had not the ability to create a higher typical composition of life. But this keen glance was intoxicated with the vivid impression of the moment, which sets to work with all the palpitating freshness of a first conception. All the elements — man, the animal, the flower, the rocky landscape — had the same value as artistic units in light and space; and all the subjects — a change of guard, or a goat suckling her young, a prince or a blue bird, a gathering of noble dames or a group of harvesters marching in step with singing — were

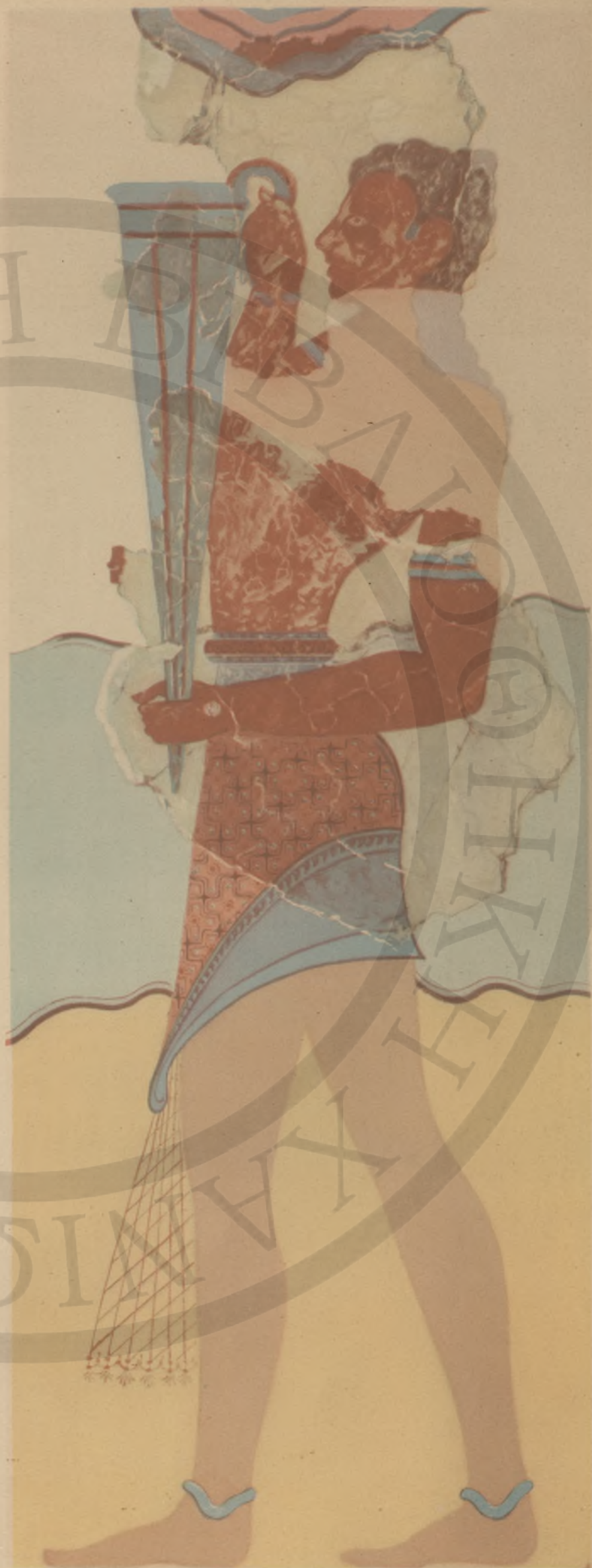
A section of the "Procession of youths,"  
fresco, from the Palace of Knossos.  
(Heraklion Museum)

# Naturalism

equally lawful and useful for the ultimate object. For in the midst of this wealth of themes, this whole art tended irresistibly toward the creation of a general impression. Minoan naturalism had nothing in common with meticulous realism. At the beginning of our century, when Minoan civilization began to be known to us, we did not dream that impressionism, which is considered a creation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had so remote an ancestor. And yet if the general trend of this art is naturalistic, the manner in which it sees and expresses things is — at its best moments — purely impressionist.

The keen, technical glance is seconded by the ready hand of the artist (this is seen chiefly in the frescoes), which executes the conception before the first illusion and intoxication has passed away. The blue child in the fresco gathering flowers gives the impression of a coloured photographic snap-shot; and if his body is coloured blue, that is because the artist's eye noticed the transparent shades of the flowers, amongst which the boy is searching. Let us not talk of imperfections and conventionalities. All is covered over by an impressionist colour-harmony.

J. MELIADIS  
FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE ACROPOLIS



The "Jar-carrier," (ρυτοφόρος). A fresco from Knossos.

(Heraklion Museum).

# Arts and Cretan Handicrafts



Old-fashioned woman's gold betrothal-ring.

Small silver knife, which formerly used to be given by the bridegroom to the bride, as a wedding present.

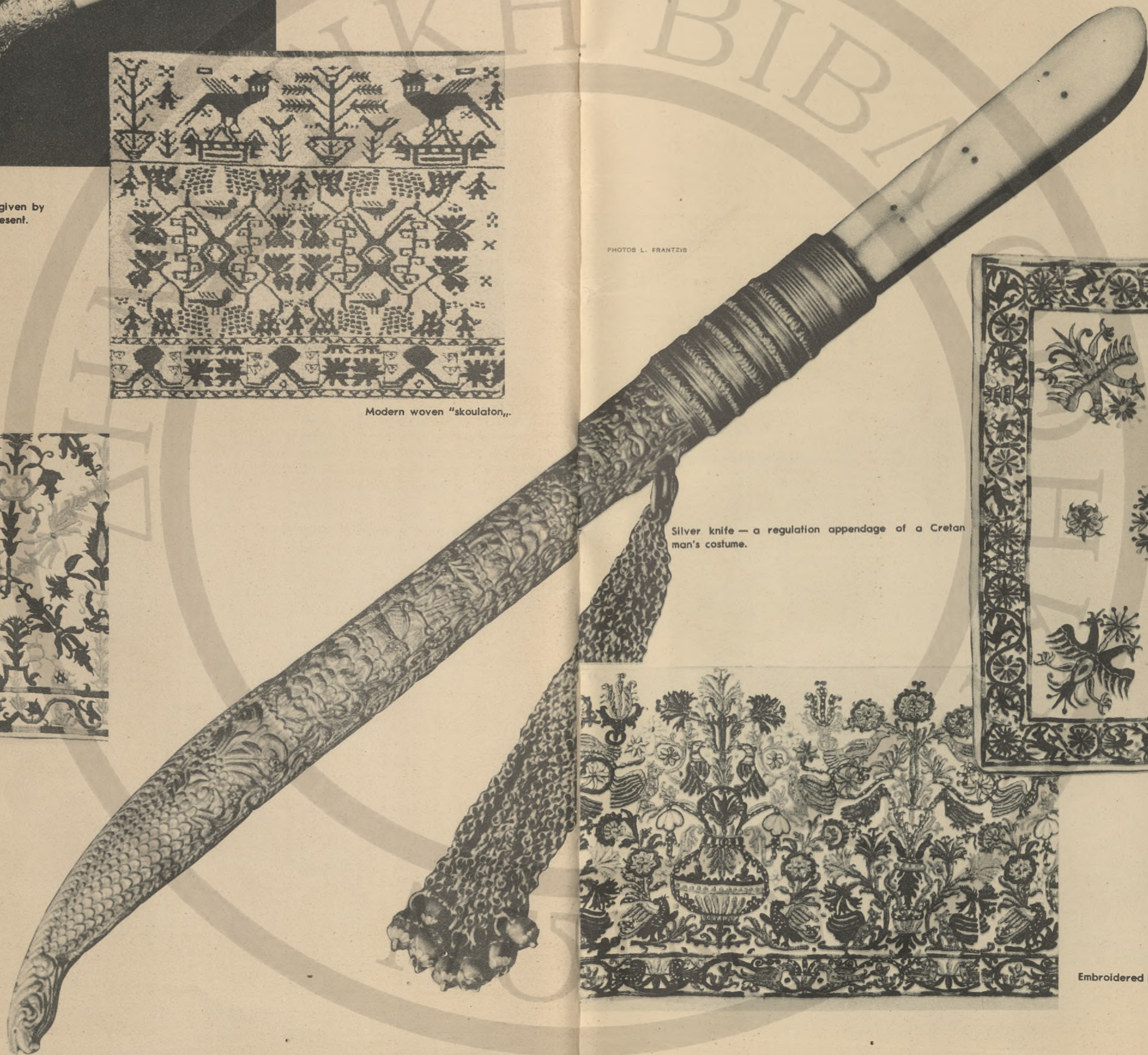


Modern woven "skoulaton".



Section of woven bed-curtain (18th century)

PHOTOS L. FRANTZIS



Silver knife — a regulation appendage of a Cretan man's costume.



Embroidered pillow - case (18th century).



Embroidered hem of an old-fashioned skirt (18th century)



A striking instance of the Cretans' love of the beautiful is to be found in the island's art, which has preserved the old traditions—but is endowed also with a strong innate artistic feeling, that adapts and assimilates the elements of foreign art, which creep in through contact with other peoples.

Household utensils, tools, the fittings of the loom, weapons (silver-handled knives), personal ornaments and even wedding-rings, — all bore, up to the last century, engraved or relief ornamentation. Clothing and textiles of daily use are all decorated also.

The themes of this decoration are ancient or oriental; the Byzantine predominate, owing to the unbroken attachment of these islanders to the Byzantine Empire even when they were under Venetian rule.



This fidelity to ancient traditions is manifest also in the methods of manufacture in many branches of the island's native industries and handicrafts.

Thus, to mention one instance, in the ceramic industry, which is very flourishing in certain districts, excellent ware of all shapes and sizes is turned out by the old-fashioned foot-driven wheel, and is ornamented with engraved, embossed or written decoration; while in the village of Threpsano the primitive hand-driven wheel of pre-historic times is still in use.

The huge, tall jars, covered with parallel circular ornamented bands and used for storing not only cereals and other dried agricultural products but also woolen fabrics packed with aromatic herbs, are usually placed in rows along the walls in the store-rooms of well-to-do farmhouses; and the visitor is in doubt as to whether he has before him a present-day store-room or one of Minoan times.



But what chiefly attracts admiration in Cretan popular art are the old embroideries and the modern woven fabrics for women's dresses and house decoration. These follow age-long traditions as to themes and technique, which are to be met with in fabrics from Greek tombs in the Crimea of the 4<sup>th</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century B. C., in Egypt and at Palmyra—countries, with which Crete had relations from the earliest times.

The embroideries on women's dresses, on bed-coverings, pillow-cases and bed-curtains are executed on white linen cloth in blue or red silk or often in many colours.

The skirt of a woman's dress is adorned along the lower hem with a rich band of embroidery depicting a variety of subjects—often a sort of frieze made of a series of figures of vases, out of which very artistic combinations of flowering branches are represented as growing, and supplemented by figures of small animals (dogs, hares, wild goats) with a variety of birds perched or flying between them in graceful and natural movement. The Byzantine imperial emblem—the double-headed eagle—is also seen very frequently. Very striking, too, are the vase-paintings of peacocks either facing each other or back to back with the head looking backward and their long tails spread out downward, reminding one of early Christian mosaics.

It is not surprising that in the range of subjects the hunt is also included, since that is the Cretans' favourite sport and Cretans are excellent hunters.

The very ancient art of basket-weaving is widely diffused even today in Crete. Baskets of all sizes and shapes are made by men and women for the manifold use of the country-house and the farm.

One of the most charming sights in the Cretan country-side are the files of slender, graceful maidens carrying on their shoulders baskets full of fruit or vegetables and passing through the gardens or picturesque village lanes. Their grace recalls the *Canephoroi* or Basket-bearers of the Parthenon frieze.

ANNA APOSTOLAKIS  
DIRECTRESS OF THE MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ART.



Decorative motif from Knossos.



# VISIT GREECE

Autumn in Greece is a second spring

Tourists usually visit Greece in the spring. Yet all the seasons are beautiful in Greece, especially at Athens. Only those, who can spend an entire year in Greece, will know the incomparable charm of these transitions from season to another, which form the most intimate attraction of this land. But we advise those, who have time of only a short visit, at least not to fail to revisit Greece in the autumn. Then the land decks itself with a second spring of an exquisite and delicate beauty, which often lasts till January and in which one sees the woods recover their verdure and the fields covered once more with wild flowers. That is when the narcissus, the hyacinth, the anemone the cyclamen, the golden crocus blooms and one sees lilacs in the gardens amongst the roses and the orange-trees, which are blossoming anew.

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But what chiefly attracted  
fabrics for women  
technique, which  
B. C., in Egypt  
The embroidery  
white linen  
The skirt of  
a variety  
combined  
animal  
na'

