

THE RECEPTION OF THE «MINOANS» IN THE MODERN ART OF MARIANO FORTUNY Y MADRAZO

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the Minoan inspired motifs in the textile production, mostly scarves and wall-hangings, of Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo, known as «Knossos scarves» and dated between 1906 and 1930. Fortuny's textile creations are examples of conscious reception of Minoan art, as his unpublished notes and some of his sketches have revealed: he wrote some notes about his purpose to print Minoan motifs, as well as he reproduced many sketches of Minoan decorative motifs, declaring his main sources of inspiration. These are various painted pottery and frescoes motifs known from British and Italian excavations (Phaistos, Knossos, Ayia Triada, Zakros, Gournia) and taken from archaeological publications such as the 1906 paper of Arthur Evans named *Prehistoric Tombs of Knossos* and the *Escursioni nel Mediterraneo e gliscavi di Creta* by A. Mosso (1907), but also archaeological periodicals such as BSA, JHS and MonAnt, to which Fortuny came across during his stay in Paris (1901-1906).

Fortuny represents an exemplary case of Modern artist employing the Minoan art and «fashion» to satisfy his needs and desires. Since in the early 20th century, in the context of the Modern Style avant-garde, the recently discovered Minoan civilisation was characterized as a «new» and «modern» culture, Fortuny's textile creations reflect his desire to remind to concepts of freedom and spontaneity, and mostly to the idea of elegance and «modernity».