

A COUNTRY IN A 'STATE OF DESTITUTION' LABOURING
UNDER AN 'UNFORTUNATE REGIME':
CRETE AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY (1898 -1906)

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ABSTRACT

At the turn of the 20th century, Crete was 'suspended between East and West' in more ways than one. In the aftermath of numerous insurrections, intense ethno-communal strife, and a great deal of human and material destruction, the island passed from direct Ottoman rule to a regime of 'semi-independence'. However, overt Great Power tutelage, a conservative constitution 'with defects of infancy', a weak and depleted economy, and an incessant predilection for the politics of *enosis* did little to enhance the island's path to progress. Undoubtedly, the particular historical juncture that brought about the hybrid Cretan state and Prince George's 'unfortunate regime' was instrumental in turning the island into an archaeological 'El Dorado', with the British at the helm. But the political contingency aside, 'personal factors', I argue, were of equal importance. In particular, the rapport that Chatzidakis and Xanthoudides had established with Evans facilitated the convergence of national (Cretan) archaeology as a means of incorporating the island into European modernity with colonial archaeology, which in turn has left its weighty imprint especially on the appropriation of the 'Minoan' past.