


# Cretan Turks at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Migration and Settlement

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## Abstract

The Cretan Turks (and now their descendants) are a group of people who originally had lived in the Island of Crete till 1923 when the Obligatory Population Exchange Agreement signed between Turkey and Greece. Through almost the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of Greek revolts one after another in different times in history and the public order on the island was disrupted, the Cretan Turkish population in fear of their lives left their living places, became refugees and the demographic structure of the island changed in favor of the Orthodox Christians. Among those migrations, the biggest and the most decisive on the political future of the island is the *Heraklion Events* that started in 1897 which resulted in the migration of at least 40,000 Turks. This population movement is particularly important as it caused the expansion of Cretan Turks to very different regions. The present existence of a Cretan community in Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, the Rhodes and Kos Islands of Greece, along with (albeit few) Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, the Island of Cyprus and Palestine happened due to this immigration movement. This article approaches the immigration and settlement process that happened at the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of a revolt in Crete, in a sudden and involuntary manner, in a period where the Ottoman Empire suffered from political, economic and social difficulties. Tracking the official records and by fieldwork where and how immigrants settled, how many and where new settlements were founded for them were analyzed with the methodological approaches of history and historical anthropology.

**Keywords:** Historical Anthropology, Crete, Turk, Muslim, Migration, Settlement

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