

## DEMETRIOS VIKELAS



**Demetrios Vikelas** (15 February 1835– 20 July 1908) was a Greek businessman, poet and novelist. He was the first president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), from 1894 to 1896.

After a childhood spent in Greece and Constantinople, he found fortune in London where he got married. He then moved to Paris, on account of his wife. Abandoning business, he dedicated himself to literature and history, and published numerous novels, short stories and essays, which earned him a distinguished reputation.

Because of his reputation and the fact that he lived in Paris, he was chosen to represent Greece in a congress called by Pierre de Coubertin in June 1894, which decided to re-establish the Olympic Games and to organize them in Athens in 1896, designating Vikelas to preside over the organization committee. After the Games were over, he stepped down, remaining in Athens until his death in 1908.



During the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Heraklion dominated the headlines worldwide because of the archeological excavations by Evans in Knossos and by the Italian Archeological Faculty in Festos and Gortina.

Demitrios Vikelas had visited Heraklion shortly before his death and witnessed himself the economic growth and the findings from the archeological excavations that had amazed intellectuals. That made him donate his collection of books to the Municipality of Heraklion.

The **Vikelea Municipal Library of Heraklion** is a historical library in Crete. Its main purpose is to provide important collections, useful to its users as well as services and sources of information that will serve their needs and promote education and culture. Demetrios Vikelas had set the example which encouraged other intellectuals to donate their own book collections to the library in the years to follow.

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CRETE**

**ERASMUS+ KA2 PROJECT, “MY HERITAGE, OUR FUTURE”**

***INFORMATION ABOUT IMPORTANT LOCAL PEOPLE OF  
CRETE WHOSE NAMES WERE GIVEN TO STREETS AND  
OTHER CENTRAL LOCATIONS OF HERAKLION CITY.***