

Description of Funded Research Projects

1<sup>st</sup> Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects  
to support Post-Doctoral Researchers



**H.F.R.I.**  
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Research & Innovation

Research Project Title:

**Spatial Dynamics and Settlement  
Patterns in Eastern Crete from  
the Classical to the Venetian  
Period**

**Principal Investigator:**  
**Nadia Coutsinas**



**Popular Title:**  
**Spatial Dynamics and Settlement Patterns  
in Eastern Crete from the Classical to the  
Venetian Period**

**Scientific Field:**  
**Human Sciences**

**Host Institution:**  
**Institute of Mediterranean Studies,  
FORTH**



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Through an interdisciplinary approach (combining a careful reading of historical and archaeological evidence and the spatial analysis offered by new technologies in archaeological research), this project will attempt to highlight the developments of the settlement patterns in Eastern Crete from the Classical to the Venetian period. During more than a millennium, from the 5th c. B.C. to the 17th c. A.D., Crete has known several political and administrative systems. The main goal is to track the transition from ancient autonomous city-states to the medieval dependent cities and villages.

Considering the extended chronological frame of the project, it seemed more effective to focus on a specific part of the island, the eastern one. Geographically, Eastern Crete is separated from the rest of the island by the Dikti, or Lasithian mountains, forming a regional unit that has always, in history, been considered isolated and thus defining a sort of enclave on the island.

The originality of the project draws on the consideration of geographical parameters, otherwise neglected in the humanities. The application of geographical determinants represents a new approach in investigating the archaeology of Classical, Roman, Byzantine and Venetian Crete. The interaction between human agency and intervention in space and geographical features can nevertheless be understood through the use of new technologies in archaeology (GIS, environmental databases, landscape parameterization, spatial analyses, etc.). The project will make use of satellite imagery and digital elevation models for the creation of a GIS framework that will integrate all the topographical criteria associated with the establishment of settlements. The ultimate goal of the project is twofold: to contribute to the study of the history of a particular region, Eastern Crete and, at the same time, to shape a theoretical and methodological renewal of the research of the Mediterranean settled landscape.

The dissemination of project results through the accessed part of the web portal, and a presentation open to the public, will give the social groups that surround archaeological sites and monuments, the opportunity to understand their value. Locals will have the opportunity to learn how human activity through the centuries, has modified the natural features of Eastern Crete and created the modern landscape. The perception of the historical significance of their region will encourage social cohesion in the countryside of East Crete.

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The financing by the HFRI is a great challenge to me. It gives me the opportunity to live and work in the very place that I'm studying, the island of Crete. It also gives me the opportunity to collaborate with field specialists in the island of Crete and landscape archaeology, both at the University of Crete and the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, to which I am affiliated. Finally, it is also a great stepping-stone for my academic career, as much for the Greek (NHRF) or the French (CNRS, University) scientific community.

*The Principal Investigator,  
Nadia Coutsinas*

## Funding

Amount: **169,926 €**

Duration: **36 months**

Foundation: **H.F.R.I.**





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