



**H.F.R.I.**  
Hellenic Foundation for  
Research & Innovation

**Description of the funded research project**  
1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to Support Faculty Members &  
Researchers and Procure High-Value Research Equipment



**Title of the research project: Hotels and the Modern Subject: 1890-1940**

**Principal Investigator: Anna Despotopoulou**

**Reader-friendly title: HOTEMS**

**Scientific Area: Humanities: Literature and Culture**

**Institution and Country: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece**

**Host Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**

**Collaborating Institution: University of Glasgow**

**Project webpage: <https://www.hotems.enl.uoa.gr/>**



**Budget: 200.000 euro**

**Duration: 2020-2022 (36 months)**

## Research Project Synopsis

The research project focuses on the representation of hotels in Anglophone literary and cultural texts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Examining the hotel as a principal theme and motif in literature of the wider period of modernism, we explore its conceptual load and symbolic extensions. As a site/synecdoche of modernity, cosmopolitanism, transculturality, and transnationalism the hotel becomes an important setting which fosters alternative modes of living while imposing itself on the urban landscape and by extension on theoretical approaches to urban experience. The project looks at the affinity between cultural theory and literature of the period in order to identify thematic strands and key functions of the hotel in Europe and the US. It also investigates the reception of the hotel phenomenon in Greece during this period by examining Anglo-Hellenic literary and cultural relations and the impact of the hotel on the Greek urban experience.

## Project originality

The impact of the hotel on the shaping of the modern subject in the early twentieth century remains underexplored by literary critics. The originality of our research lies in its transcultural and interdisciplinary scope, offering innovative means of reading modernist writing on a larger geographical scale. The project will also, and for the first time, launch a study of the reception of the hotel phenomenon in Greece by examining, firstly, the hotel experience of Anglophone authors at Greek hotels (i.e. small or grand hotels of Athens or resorts) and, secondly, the cultural significance of the hotel for the development of the modern Greek urban identity.

## Expected results & Research Project Impact

The project will:

- a) introduce a new conceptual and literary motif that will enrich the study of space in early twentieth-century studies as well as broaden the scope of teaching in the fields of literary and cultural studies,
- b) contribute to the field of modernist studies as well as to the fields of mobility and space studies,
- c) enhance interdisciplinarity: through a comparative and synthetic approach to the notion of the hotel we aim to bring together a variety of social and cultural discourses which lay bare the transcultural significance of the hotel within the context of the modernist city,
- d) contribute (bibliographically) to academic research,
- e) inspire students and doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to further explore the impact of the hotel on urban life in world literature,
- f) familiarize Greek scholars with the subject and trigger the interest in the history of Greek hotels and their impact on the modern Greek national and cultural identity,
- g) promote thinking across national and generic boundaries, aiming to combine perspectives and insight from a variety of academic fields and cultural or national paradigms.

## The importance of this funding

The HFRI funding is very important as it promotes basic research in the humanities, which in general is an underfunded academic field, and it enables the execution and diffusion of innovative projects. It provides opportunities for research and employment for junior researchers, doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, at a time when academic jobs are scarce. It also facilitates mobility and travel for research collaborations, conferences, and networking with academic researchers around the world. Finally, it raises public awareness worldwide regarding the important academic work and original scientific research conducted at Greek universities.



**H.F.R.I.**  
Hellenic Foundation for  
Research & Innovation

## COMMUNICATION

185 Syggrou Ave. & 2 Sardeon St. 2  
171 21, N. Smyrni, Greece  
+30 210 64 12 410, 420  
communication@elidek.gr  
[www.elidek.gr](http://www.elidek.gr)