



## The importance of poetry in the creation of tourist destinations

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### Abstract

This study explores the importance of poetry in the field of tourism, focusing on how Greek poets engage with themes of travel and the depiction of landscapes in their poetry. Through the analysis of representative poems from various historical periods, the research identifies thematic motifs that connect literary expression with the tourist experience, such as the highlighting of natural and cultural landscapes, the subjective dimension of travel, and the poetic representation of places as cultural signifiers. The study compares different poetic approaches, identifying both shared characteristics and distinct narrative and aesthetic strategies. Particular emphasis is placed on interpreting poetic discourse as a means of shaping and promoting tourist identity. The paper concludes with suggestions for further research into this literary phenomenon within the context of tourism development, emphasizing poetry's role as a cultural tool for enhancing the appeal of tourist destinations.

**Keywords:** Business; Multiculturalism; Tourist Destination; Literary Tourism; Cavafy; Elytis; Seferis; Cultural Entrepreneurship

### 1. Introduction

This paper examines the depiction of travel and landscapes in Greek poetry, highlighting the contribution of poetic creation to the shaping of tourist destinations and experiences. The choice of topic stems from the need to explore a relatively understudied field in which poetry assumes a role beyond aesthetics by shaping perceptions, images, and cultural meanings that influence contemporary tourism culture.

The novelty of the approach lies in linking poetic discourse to the dynamics of tourism, treating poetry not only as a literary artifact but also as a vehicle for cultural identity and tourism promotion. The study aims to demonstrate how poetic representations of travel offer new perspectives on the relationship between art and the tourist experience, while emphasizing poetry's role in shaping travelers' imagination.

The methodological approach is based on the analysis of literary sources, primarily poems by Greek authors from different historical periods, with parallel references to international poetry. Through comparative thematic and stylistic analysis, the study seeks to illustrate how poetry shapes the aesthetic and cultural perception of landscape and travel.

Poetry along with digital technologies and the Internet enhances the ability to present to larger audiences the identity of a place to attract tourism. This is done by digital marketing as well as via education. So, concluding the introduction we underline the importance of digital technologies within the education sector and for training in cultural entrepreneurship. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) facilitate education for all, introduce

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innovative approaches for effective teacher training, enhance knowledge retention, promote collaboration, increase transparency, foster learner-centered methodologies, create novel teaching strategies, and expedite knowledge acquisition. Additionally, they offer new means for knowledge representation and support educational activities and techniques through mobility, virtualization, artificial intelligence, and new learning environments. Specifically, in entrepreneurship training, ICTs have proven to be highly effective, improving assessment, interventions, and educational processes via mobile devices [29-30], which enable educational activities to take place anywhere, as well as through various ICT applications [31], that are fundamental to education. The utilization of AI, STEM, and robotics [32-33], elevates educational processes to new heights of adaptability, innovation, and effectiveness, while gaming transforms education into a multisensory, engaging, and enjoyable experience. Furthermore, the integration and enhancement of ICTs with theories and frameworks of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and emotional intelligence development [34-41], bring mental capabilities to the forefront of educational processes and policies, thereby further enhancing educational practices and outcomes, particularly in business and training for new entrepreneurs [42-48].

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## 2. Shaping Tourist Destinations through Poetry

The Greek poetic tradition has a long history of engaging with travel and landscape, from the Homeric epics to contemporary poetry. In the *Odyssey*, Homer presents travel not only as physical movement but also as a spiritual journey, offering multidimensional descriptions of places and experiences that sustained interest in the geographical and cultural space of the Mediterranean.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, poets such as Kostis Palamas and Constantine Cavafy developed a poetics rooted in national and emotional landscapes, presenting Greek nature and scenery as elements of cultural heritage. Depictions of the homeland and internal travel functioned as mechanisms for reinforcing national identity and, informally, promoting domestic tourism.

In the 20th century, poets like Giorgos Seferis and Odysseas Elytis transformed travel into an inner journey. Their symbolic representations of landscapes and the internalization of movement imbue geographical settings with existential meaning, turning them into spaces of personal experience. In more recent times, poetic engagement with travel and place continues, enriched with ecological, cultural, and sociological dimensions, further strengthening the link between poetry and the tourist imagination (Manola, 2019; Manola, 2020).

### 2.1. Representation of Travel in the Works of Greek Poets

The concept of travel in poetry acquires multiple meanings, functioning both literally and metaphorically. Poetic language not only conveys physical movement but also mediates spiritual, emotional, and existential journeys.

In his emblematic poem *Ithaca*, Constantine Cavafy emphasizes the value of the journey itself over the final destination: "May the journey be long, full of adventure, full of knowledge." Here, the journey is portrayed as a life experience, rich in spiritual and educational significance.

Odysseas Elytis, in his poem *The Winged Ship*, uses the motif of travel to introduce an imaginary, almost dreamlike dimension of escape: "Tonight I will leave for the Moon on the white winged ship."

In 'On a Foreign Verse', George Seferis connects travel with human endeavor and the internal, uphill struggle of life, where personal effort and self-awareness prevail over the idea of simply arriving somewhere.

The metaphorical use of travel in Greek poetry reveals a creative perception of space and identity. Through imagery and symbolism, travel assumes a cultural narrative function, transforming natural landscapes into places of memory, experience, and projection.

### 2.2. The Symbolic and Visible Meaning of Landscapes and Their Depiction

In poetry, landscape does not merely serve as a backdrop; it takes on a profound symbolic and existential role. It becomes a vehicle for emotion, historical memory, and collective identity, as highlighted in relevant studies on literary spatiality (Cosgrove, 1984; Liapis, 2019). The poetic depiction of landscape can be either realistic, emphasizing sensory details such as color, light, and sound, or symbolic, encompassing existential and metaphysical undertones.

Kostis Palamas, in his poem *The Song of the Mountains*, offers a naturalistic and direct portrayal of the Greek mountain landscape: "High mountains, shady mountains, bare mountains, green mountains..."

In contrast, Andreas Embirikos gives the landscape surrealist dimensions, connecting it to the unconscious and inner experience: "When words fall into the body of the night / They resemble ships ploughing the seas" (The Ascent).

Odysseas Elytis approaches the Greek landscape as a vessel of national memory and spiritual purity. In 'The Sun, the Sun-Worshipper', nature is transformed into an idealized homeland: "Crete and Mytilene, Samos and Ikaria / Naxos and Santorini... / on the black rock above the waters."

The imagery employed by Greek poets transforms landscape from a mere geographical entity into a cultural signifier, creating a "poetic landscape" that reflects both external reality and internal consciousness (Tuan, 1977; Dimitropoulou, 2020).

### **2.3. The Influence of Poetry on Tourism**

Poetry can function as a powerful tool for cultural promotion and a source of inspiration for tourism, enhancing place identity and evoking a desire to explore. Through poetic language, writers activate imaginative representations of landscapes, eliciting emotional responses that often translate into travel motivation (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

In Ithaca, Cavafy attributes existential and educational value to the journey, framing the destination not as a goal, but as the narrative point of departure: "May the road be long..." (Cavafy, 1911).

Kostis Palamas, in his poem En Anthos, describes the Acropolis with emotional depth and historical resonance: "And on the Acropolis, on the sacred rock / a single green flower sprouted."

In Axion Esti, Elytis extols the Greek natural world as a carrier of historical continuity and collective memory: "My foundations are in the mountains... / The memory of my people calls you Pindus and calls you Athos" (Elytis, 1985).

The language of poetic discourse offers an alternative kind of "tourist guide," where the landscape is not just seen but felt, experienced emotionally rather than understood only geographically. This kind of representation supports cultural and literary tourism, as seen in efforts to brand national identity through cultural production (Richards, 1996).

George Seferis, in his prose writings, underscores the historical layering of Greek identity: "As you grow older, you feel the weight of your homeland..." (Seferis, 1932).

This dialectic between past and present, memory and experience, contributes to a form of tourism that goes beyond sightseeing, toward an experience of meaningful connection with place.

As Manola (2019) argues, poetry enriches the imagined construction of "the traveler's Greece" by integrating poetic imagery into the cultural consumption of landscape. Poetry thus serves as a "cultural ambassador," fostering interest in a place through the power of literary narrative.

### **2.4. The Application of Poetry and Literature in Tourism**

The connection between literature, poetry in particular, and tourism has emerged as an innovative and dynamic field of cultural exploration and interpretation. Literature functions not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a powerful tool for shaping the cultural identity of a place, strengthening the reader's connection to space, and offering new modes of tourist experience (Manola, 2019; Manola, 2020).

Through its aesthetic force and symbolic resonance, poetry presents place not merely as a physical location but as an experiential and existential destination. As Manola (2022b) emphasizes, the relationship between poetry and tourism is interactive: poetic discourse influences our perception of space, attributing symbolic, historical, and cultural meanings that enhance its touristic value.

Travel is a central theme in poetry, functioning as both a physical and an inner journey. Manola (2022a) analyzes the sea as an existential metaphor that produces compelling narrative imagery, appealing to travelers in search of deeper, more meaningful experiences.

Literature can contribute to the cultural and tourist promotion of specific geographic areas. In the case of Lesbos, the association of the sea with the island's life and literary heritage strengthens its thematic and literary tourism appeal (Manola and Tsagkarellis, 2020). Similarly, Manola (2023) explores literary routes in Alexandria, showing how Cavafy's poetry is intrinsically tied to the city, providing the basis for tourist narratives and literary tours.

Literature as a tourism tool extends beyond traditional forms. Film tourism, for instance, also capitalizes on literature's narrative power (Manola, 2024). The portrayal of a place through literary or cinematic lenses creates an imagined destination that shapes tourist behavior.

Examples such as the city of Matera—presented as a cultural capital and cinematic destination through literary framing (Manola and Tsatambassoglou, 2021; Manola et al., 2020)—demonstrate how a region's literary heritage can be transformed into a significant driver of tourism development.

Local oral traditions and folk literature also contribute meaningfully to the tourism appeal of places like Kea (Tzia), where folk customs and narratives bolster cultural tourism and support a more immersive experience for travelers (Manola et al., 2022).

Even in intercultural contexts, such as the relationship between Shakespeare and Italy, the concept of cultural entrepreneurship provides a useful interpretive and practical framework for leveraging literature in tourism (Maniou et al., 2024). Similarly, the exploration of "journey" in Greek popular song expands the literary approach to tourism into musical and interdisciplinary realms.

In summary, poetry and literature are not merely artistic expressions but powerful instruments for constructing cultural narratives closely tied to tourism. Integrated into cultural tourism initiatives, they can significantly enhance destination differentiation, enrich the authenticity of experiences, and foster a deeper understanding of local identity (Manola, 2022c; Maniou, 2024).

At the same time, the strategic use of literary heritage and cultural creativity presents substantial opportunities for the development of cultural entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as literary parks in Italy—like the Eugenio Montale Park in Milan demonstrate how literature can be transformed into a cultural business venture with tangible socioeconomic impact (Maniou et al., 2024).

The case of Eleusis, designated as a European Capital of Culture, highlights how cultural resources can be incorporated into local development strategies. This fosters innovative forms of cultural entrepreneurship that draw upon mythology, history, and literary tradition (Maniou et al., 2024).

Cultural entrepreneurship also expands into areas such as literary and thematic festivals, the revival of industrial heritage, and the use of digital technologies to promote sites of cultural interest—as evidenced by efforts involving Italian monuments on Kos (Maniou et al., 2024d) and industrial heritage in Lesbos and Lemnos (Maniou et al., 2025).

Finally, literary events and festivals serve as key drivers of local and sustainable development. They reinforce collective cultural identity, promote social cohesion, and create new employment opportunities in the creative and tourism sectors (Maniou and Mitoula, 2025).

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### 3. Research Methodology

This research employed three principal methodological approaches—historical, literary, and comparative analysis—to investigate the relationship between poetry, travel, landscape, and their impact on tourism.

The historical analysis provided essential context for understanding the thematic evolution of travel and landscape in Greek poetry. This approach enabled the conceptual reconstruction of the environments in which the poems were created, while also interpreting the sociocultural factors that shaped poetic expression. Shifts in spatial perception and the role of cultural identity were identified as core elements embedded in poetic discourse, offering interpretive pathways that bridge past and present.

The selection of poetic sources was based on strict thematic criteria, aiming to ensure a representative examination of the relationship between poetry and landscape. Specifically, works by Cavafy, Seferis, Elytis, Palamas, and Embirikos were chosen poets from different generations and literary movements, yet united in their engagement with the Greek landscape and the theme of travel as a literary device. Their inclusion enabled the development of intertextual and comparative readings that highlighted the geographical and cultural dimensions of their poetics.

The literary analysis focused on the exploration of recurring motifs, narrative structures, and symbolic elements, with particular attention to the use of travel as a metaphor for spiritual experience and the representation of landscape as

an experiential space. Poetic landscapes were treated not merely as physical locations, but as meaning-laden environments infused with emotion, memory, and cultural consciousness.

Comparative analysis facilitated the identification of both converging and diverging trends in the poetic portrayal of travel and landscape. By contrasting different works, the study revealed the diversity of literary approaches, reinforcing the view of poetry as a timeless cultural narrative. The comparison of poetic strategies enabled the formulation of interpretive generalizations and enhanced the analytical robustness of the research.

### **3.1. Research Results**

The interpretive and comparative analysis of selected poems revealed three main thematic axes through which Greek poetry influences tourism and contributes to the cultural representation of Greece.

First, Greek poetry functions as a visual mirror of nature. Poems by Odysseas Elytis, for example, vividly depict the natural geography of Greece the Aegean light, the islands, the coastline, and the mountains. These poetic images project an idealized, almost mythical Greece that captivates the reader-traveler, who is inspired to seek out the landscapes described in verse.

Second, poets such as George Seferis revive myths, historical references, and national symbols, weaving them into a poetic narrative that bridges the past and the present. In this way, poetry becomes a carrier of cultural memory, embedding values and traditions that shape Greek cultural identity. This poetic function supports the development of cultural tourism and stimulates interest in exploring the historical and symbolic depth of the country.

Third, Cavafy's poetry particularly in Ithaca redefines the notion of travel, presenting it not merely as a journey toward a destination, but as a transformative process. The journey is portrayed as a pursuit of knowledge and self-discovery. Tourists inspired by such poetic visions are not only drawn to physical locations but seek meaningful and immersive experiences shaped by narrative and reflection.

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## **4. Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated the dynamic interplay between Greek poetry and the formation of tourist imagination. Poetry operates not only as an artistic form but also as a cultural medium that shapes perceptions, stimulates desire, and constructs symbolic meanings around place and travel.

When landscapes are represented poetically, they are imbued with identity and emotional resonance. This poetic framing strengthens the distinctiveness of place, enhancing its appeal as a tourist destination. Through aesthetic evocation, historical reflection, and existential depth, Greek poetry presents Greece not only as a country of natural beauty but also as a site of memory, introspection, and cultural encounter.

In the Greek poetic tradition, travel transcends physical movement—it becomes a personal journey through history, myth, landscape, and inner experience. This convergence of space, self, and culture offers fertile ground for reimagining tourism through the lens of literature.

The connection between poetry and tourism is both creative and underexplored. Its potential to enrich cultural tourism in Greece is significant, offering new ways to showcase poetic heritage and promote experiential travel for both domestic and international visitors.

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## **Compliance with ethical standards**

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The Authors proclaim no conflict of interest.

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