

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE POLICE INSPECTOR MONTALBANO TO THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OF 'VIGATA'

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### **Tsatalmpasoglou Anna-Irini**

*PhD Candidate, University of West Attica, Department of Tourism Management*  
[atsatalpasoglou@uniwa.gr](mailto:atsatalpasoglou@uniwa.gr)

### **Koltsikoglou George**

*PhD Candidate, University of West Attica, Department of Tourism Management*  
[gkoltsikoglou@uniwa.gr](mailto:gkoltsikoglou@uniwa.gr)

### **Manola Maria**

*Associate Professor, University of West Attica, Department of Tourism Management*  
[mmanola@uniwa.gr](mailto:mmanola@uniwa.gr)

### **Maniou Fotini**

*PhD Candidate, Harokopio University of Athens, Department of Economy and Sustainable Development,*  
[fmaniou@hua.gr](mailto:fmaniou@hua.gr)

### **Abstract**

*According to the 2024 report of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), this activity is one of the main pillars of the economic development of a place, since the inhabitants of a region are the beneficiaries of multiple benefits such as the reduction of unemployment or the improvement of infrastructure.*

*The sustainability of a place through alternative forms of soft tourism development that have a significant positive impact on the lives of its inhabitants becomes a key objective. Literary tourism, a soft form of this activity, is one of the most sustainable forms of this activity as it is developed in areas with a strong cultural identity. It introduces visitors to tangible and intangible cultural heritage sites and promotes the promotion of elements that are often not visible at first sight. Particularly when books are shown on the big or small screen, the tourist destination acquires an additional dynamic as the traveller chooses to visit an area on the basis of the location where his or her favourite book was filmed.*

*In this article, through a literature review and a survey of 150 people, an attempt is made to understand how a tourist following an author's book or a TV series based on it could support the sustainability of a place. What are the reasons that create new avenues for promoting a region and which are based on the sustainability offered by literary or film tourism. For this particular case, the author Andrea Camilleri and the much-loved Inspector Montalbano, a favorite of many readers, are used as an example, acting against the backdrop of Sicily.*

**Key words:** *literary tourism, film tourism, sustainability, detective literature, Montalano, Vigata*

### **Sustainability and literary tourism**

Sustainable development aims to improve people's living conditions by following a model that supports future generations to develop their economy in a socially sustainable

environment. Culture in its many facets can help in this direction. Both at national, European and global level, culture can revitalize entire regions through sustainable development.

Sustainable management is based on four pillars in terms of impact on society, the economy, the environment and culture. Sustainability in tourism is based on forms that are 'soft' in the sense that, as stated in the UN's Environment and World Tourism Program, they prioritize potential impacts on people and the host environment. The specificity of Europe, i.e. its cultural diversity helps its inhabitants to have a distinct identity. Because of this, there is, according to the European Commission, a trend towards raising awareness among the population about the possibility of developing integrated strategic programmes for its promotion.

Fawcett & Cormack (2001) argue that places take on the status of product to propose in literary tourism, which is a soft form of development, the main objective being to attract people interested in associating authors and heroes with the settings and surroundings. This transformation of course needs to be managed in order to avoid negative impacts (Femenia-Serra et al., 2019). In literary tourism, tourists meet an inner need to 'symbiote' with the hero or the writer himself and to experience a little bit of the 'imaginary' in their lives by visiting places mentioned in the books, thus the element of understanding the ways in which a literary tourist can support the sustainability of a place emerges as important. This option is completed by the development of cultural itineraries which, according to Mitoula and Kaldis (2018), are an important tool for the promotion of a place's cultural heritage. A typical modern example is the exploitation of the tetralogy of Ferrante at Naples (Tsatalmpasoglou, 2019). Technology is often a key to support the delineation of policies that could directly link sustainable tourism propositions [Tsatalbassoglou, 2020; Vardopoulos et al, 2023; Tsatalmpasoglou & al 2024; Maniou & all., 2024; Maniou & all., 2025; Maniou & Mitoula, 2025].

Landscapes and sites become carriers of a different vision that acquires character depending on the visitor's psyche. A typical and very successful case of the promotion of an entire region based on literature is Sicily with the "Strada degli Scrittori", which, as we read on the official website, is an initiative that combines tourism and books.



Foto 1: "Sicilian literary itinerary"

Source: [stradadegli scrittori.com](http://stradadegli scrittori.com)

Felice Cavallaro, a journalist from 'Corriere della Sera', proposed the creation of an itinerary (shown in foto nr. 1) with the places where lived or created the six writers, Pirandello, Sciascia, Camilleri, Russello, Di San Secondo and Di Lampedusa, all of them Sicilian, in order to involve local communities, cultural associations and entrepreneurs involved in accommodation, wine and gastronomic tourism. Since then, many tourists have followed the

route, which has been enriched with other activities (even a writer's master has been created) in order to maintain the interest, which has grown even more with the increase in the production of television series. Television and film tourism based on literary works has positive potential as it makes the regions widely known and helps local communities to benefit from this potential. The city of Ragusa and its surrounding area with Modica and Punta Secca have become sought after because of Salvio Montalbano.

Literary tourism can play a vital role in promoting cultural entrepreneurship both in Sicily and globally. By stimulating the local economy and emphasizing cultural heritage, it contributes to sustainable development, nurtures cultural identity, and strengthens the bond between visitors and the destination through literature. The integration of literary landscapes and writing traditions serves as a powerful tool in developing tourism products, enhancing the cultural offer, and driving the economic growth of local communities.

### **Big screen and small screen tourism**

But books are an inspiration for both the big and small screen. People who travel to visit the locations featured in the films and series are the group of film tourists. Like literary tourists, they try to make connections with what they see on the screens, trying to experience experiences and emotions that impressed them in this way.

Croy (2010) even considers that these tourists are divided into two major categories in those who look for the authentic landscapes where the scenes were filmed and those who recognize in their locations fictional worlds. The projected sites are an attraction for tourists as the films and series are an important lever for promoting a place but at the same time they contribute to the valorization of the whole region, especially if there are sites that bring to the fore significant elements of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. A typical case in Croatia is Dubrovnik with the *Games of Thrones* and in Greece *the Island of Spinalonga*. Both Dubrovnik and Agios Nikolaos were areas with developed tourism, but both of these series attracted thousands of new visitors who wanted to see the landscapes and settings up close (Manola, 2019). International productions such as "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" and more recently "Mamma mia" were also filmed in Greece but the potential of film tourism has not been fully exploited because there is no development strategy in this direction so far. It has been pointed out (by Manola & al,2022: idem, 2023) the need to attract production companies in order to promote the country as a film destination with mainly economic incentives as our country has anyway landscapes of outstanding beauty, and a culture that is lost in time (Tsatalmpasoglou & Manola, 2024) but to point out that this should be done with a policy of balance between tourism infrastructure and its interconnection with a sustainable and functional way of tourism development, as the lack of the necessary infrastructure could potentially cause several problems.

Excessive tourist influxes in an inadequately prepared area could lead to environmental disasters and have a negative impact on the quality of life of local populations. The increase in tourists implies, according to Pillai & al (2018), problems that are also related to carrying capacity and relate to issues such as overcrowding, misuse of resources, pollution, poor accessibility, traffic congestion, etc. A typical example is the film 'The Beach', after the screening of which, Maya Bay in the Piraeus Islands became extremely popular, with the result that the coral reef was largely destroyed due to over-tourism. As shown by Tonm (2022). this event provoked a reaction from the local population who saw their environment destroyed not so much for the sake of film tourism as because of the authorities' failure to prepare properly to deal with this massive influx. The need to promote policies to control tourism development with an emphasis on sustainability is therefore of primary importance.

Sustainability makes the most of tourist destinations and makes them competitive (Sigala & Christou, 2013).

A successful case of literary and film tourism development is Sicily, which is leading the way in Southern Europe with the creation of literary itineraries and the transfer of well-known works to the small screen (Barilaro, 2004). Andrea Camilleri helped in this development with his Inspector Montalbano.

### **Andrea Camilleri and Sicily**

According to the official website of its foundation Andrea Camilleri was born in 1925 in Porto Empendocle, a coastal town in the region of Agrigento and was distantly related to Luigi Pirandello. He spent much of his life in Palermo, first as a student at the Faculty of Philosophy, without completing his studies, but where he began to write, and then in Rome where he was accepted as a student at the Academy of Dramatic Art, D'Amico, specifically in the field of directing. He worked at RAI as a director and scriptwriter. Success came in the mid-90s with his first novel 'Inspector Montalbano', which was translated into many languages and brought him international recognition.

His love of Sicily and all that surrounds it, as well as his innate nobility, his appreciation of the world of theatre, music and the arts in general, are elements that dominate his works. His hero is a figure who awakens in readers memories of the customs and traditions of the region with great precision and this made the author particularly beloved as he knew how to interweave fascinating research with nostalgic memories, sounds, colors and tastes. The use of the Sicilian dialect according to Bacci (2015) is not a mere communication tool but reflects his Sicilian identity and is an element, a statement about the position of the local communities and the province in general towards the central state. The use of words that he constructs flourish in his works and even exist because of its specificity dictionaries with conceptual explanations. This extraordinary depiction of the Sicilian province has caused many tourists to want to visit and get to know the areas that inspired the author. Landscapes, towns, villages with traditional architecture, beaches and local cuisine are a major attraction.



Foto2: Camilleri's Book  
Source: Personal collection

Camilleri in his books describes his birthplace but by giving the town the fictional name "Vigata" he has in fact involved the whole south-eastern side of the island, helping to increase tourism in areas that until recently were relatively isolated from tourist flows. Its most important contribution, however, is that it presented the Sicilian way of life and helped to preserve the cultural heritage of its place of origin.

Camilleri was prolific, having written over fifty novels; he died in Rome in 2019 and is one of the most important and beloved Italian writers of the century.

## **The inspector Montalbano**

The television adaptation of Camilleri's works on the small screen is a successful example of combining literary and screen tourism of cinema and television. The series began airing in 1999 and consists of 37 self-contained episodes but linked together by a tenuous plot. Salvo Montalbano is the police chief of Vigata, who, with the help of his partners, investigates and solves the delinquent acts that are taking place in the area. Always in relation to Livia, he is serious and thorough in his work, pays attention to detail, respects his colleagues and friends, and is constantly and intensely tormented by social and political concerns. He is so often confronted with corruption, and injustice that Pardini (2011) considers him not a mere police officer but a critic of the society around him. He loves his country so much that he refuses to follow Livia at north of Italy, he loves Sicily, its people, its good food, the view from his terrace and swimming in the seas of his island.

The series is directed by Alberto Sironi and produced by Palomar. The TV Montalbano looks nothing like the Pietro Germi that the author had in mind when he wrote his novels, the original one has hair, is tall thin and has a moustache. Luca Zingaretti, the screen Montalbano, proved to be a wise choice as he managed to give the hero humanity in the best possible way and gave the character a depth that now makes the relationship between the hero he is portraying and himself unbreakable, gaining a fanatic audience.

A second other point of difference between the book and the serial is that while the fictional Vigata describes the peripheral areas of Porto Empedocle, the series presents the baroque settings of Ragusa and Modica. The inhabitants of Porto Empedocle trying to restore the situation to its original written form, have dedicated to the literary hero a bronze statue, which of course confuses tourists as they are thinking of the TV Inspector

The cities of Modica and Ragusa are mainly promoted on the websites dealing with the tourist promotion of the region, creating more television than literary routes based on the two semi- mountainous towns. The picturesque squares, the narrow streets the particular architecture offer, as the websites mention, a unique experience of touring the world of the Inspector and the seaside Punta Secca where the hero's house is located attract those who want to see the places of their favourite series up close and feel the dynamics of the space and the settings (Di Beta, 2015).

It should be noted here that from 2012 to 2015 RAI1 aired a 12-episode prequel (the word is a neologism which indicate the earliest chronological continuation of a serie) signed by the author, showing us the Inspector at a young age (Il Giovane Montalbano)

Harnessing the potential of Inspector Montalbano actively contributes to the local economy and is an example of how literature and display enhance the local culture and economy.

## **In the steps of Montalbano**

In Greece, the potential for the development of literary tourism can only be limited by the imagination. The rich history, the vast literary production and the magnificent landscapes can provide a canvas on which to develop a gentle form of tourism exploitation that harmoniously links local communities with economic benefit

As a small example, some detective books such as "The Lytra" (The Ransom) by Amyras (2022) and "The Menos" (The Fury) by Michaelides (2024) are presented. The authors compose narratives full of tension and suspense against the background of the characteristic geographical and cultural features of our country. Amyras takes us first to the center of the Greek countryside, to Sterea and Evia, to villages that stand proud, to mountains and valleys and describes people who mirror the landscape and stand up for the honor and the posthumous fame. The landscapes are not only scenic exteriors but also symbolic of the very existence of

its protagonists. 'Menos', on the other hand, has as its title a double role. The English title "The Fury" is referring to the anger but the greek one "Menos" is refeering both to the weather and to the psicological condition of a person. This police thriller is referring to an island while presents a heavenly landscape full of serenity, any small Greek island in the sea and the only thing that can place it in the Cyclades is its proximity to the cosmopolitan Mykonos, the position of which could be taken by any 'Mykonos' and any Greek island, as in turn it is used to show the protagonists' internal transitions as it happens even with the weather. But also in urban descriptions and in Amyras' Athens there is the dipole of the metropolitan area and the neighbourhood as takes us to the city center and the suburb of Kallithea in an inner journey in the psicology of the protagonists. In Mitsos' "Mr. Episkopakis" (2007) the neglected buildings of the Exarchia area, that neighbourhood of Athens center, represent nothing but the decadence of the characters. The same feeling but as a contrast is given to anyone who reads the other side of urban Athens, the expensive shops of Kolonaki in Lakopoulos' "Crime at Da Capo" (2006).

The elements of cultural heritage are not only drawn from expected forms but also from points in the recent history of cities in particular that often feature prominently in crime literature. In the case of several period detective books many buildings no longer exist or have changed use, but the 'place' hides the history.

There are not a few cases where, as mentioned by Tsilika & Vardopoulos (2022), in buildings that have elements of history on them, ensuring longevity, often through a change of use, contributes to sustainable urban regeneration for the benefit of the inhabitants, with a typical example being the famous FIX brewery that now operates as a Modern Art Museum.

Crime literature has been flourishing in Greece in recent years and the routes followed by the protagonists of the works can also function as tourist routes, as a central and alternative setting that highlights the complexity of the landscape and the characters.

## **Research**

In order to find out the interest of tourists in crime literature trails, a survey was conducted in which 150 people, all adults, participated with anonymous responses. Purposive sampling was followed in the survey as were selected people who initially answered positively to the question "have you read even one book of crime literature?" and as mentioned by Durbarry (2020) is used for case studies.

The selection criteria for the survey were:

- ✓ Crime literature as a source of tourism development
- ✓ The possibility of developing literary routes in Greece
- ✓ The expected results
- ✓ To record the response rate of tourists regarding literary tourism with police themes
- ✓ Whether readers of Camilleri's work have visited or would like to visit the Vigata
- ✓ The recording of tourists' opinion on the implementation of similar routes in Greece

## **Survey Results**

The descriptive measures of the statistical analysis show the following:

According to the demographic results 40% i.e. 60 people have declared 'man' , a 58% i.e. 87 people have declared 'woman' and 2% which are 3 people has given as answer the choice "other".

As the ages of the participants. In the age group '18-25' there are 28 persons (18,7%), in the group 26-35 there are 45 persons (30%), in the group 36-

45 there are 38 persons (25,3%), in the group 46-60 there are 29 persons (19,3%) and finally 10 persons (6,7%) have declared an age of more than 60 years.

To the question: "Have you followed literary heroes?", 40 people, i.e. 26.7%, have answered positively and 110 people, i.e. 73.3%, have answered negatively to the question, whether they have followed literary paths.

The results obtained in the question "Have you visited a place because you have seen it on the small or big screen and there was a book adaptation?" are quite interesting because they reveal the tendency of the participants to follow more often literary heroes who have been on the small or the big screen. Thus, according to the answers, we have 76 people, i.e. 50.7% who answered positively

To the question "would you like to visit the Vigata of Inspector Montalbano" 27.3% i.e. 41 people answered positively, 43 people in the sample i.e. 28.7% answered negatively and 'maybe' was the choice of 66 people (44%)

The answers to the question "How often do you think that you could follow the hero of a detective novel?" are various. The answer "never" was given by 12 persons (8%), "rarely" by 26 (17.3%), "sometimes" by 49 (32,7), "often" by 41 persons (27.3%) and the answer "always" was given by 22 persons (14,7%)

At the question "do you agree that tourist routes with heroes from crime literature could be created in Greece?" . 'strongly disagree' was chosen by 6 people (4%), 'disagree' by 25 people (16.7%), 'neither agree nor disagree' by 42 people (28%), 'agree' by 46 people (30.7%) and finally 'strongly agree' by 31 people (20.7%).

For the question "what do you think that could help to achieve this direction?" there are made a series of cross tabulations in order to explore some relationships The first is between the age of the participants and the technological applications. As is shown 'strongly agree' is the exclusive option preferred mainly by the younger age group from 18 to 25 (28 people) and in the age group 26-35 there are 36 people .

The same happens in the case of the creation of spaces such as escape rooms where, as can be seen from graph 8, the ages 18-25 and 26-35 give 'very much' as an option. 75 people (50%) answered 'very much', while 6 people (4%) chose 'a lot', 40 people (26.7%) chose 'moderate', 17 people (11.3%) chose 'a little' and finally, 12 people (8%) chose 'not at all'.

The 'theatrical events' as a choice by age are a popular choice for all ages. In the research 'neither likely nor unlikely' as an option for 46.7% of respondents (70 people) and 'somewhat likely' for 53 people (35.3%)

The "seminars for creative writing" as an axis gave as an option 'very unlikely' for 6 people, in 'somewhat unlikely' 19 as option 'neither likely nor unlikely' there are 114 options (76%) in 'somewhat likely' there are 5 options and in 'very likely' 6 people.

To the question "Do you believe that the new itineraries must be supported by sustainable initiatives?" the respondents' views were quiet positives. According to the results, 'strongly agree' was chosen by 59 people (39.3%), 'agree' by 68 people (45.3%), 'neither agree nor disagree' by 16 people (10.7%), 'disagree' by 3 respondents (2%) and finally 'strongly disagree' by 4 people (2.7%).

## ***Discussion***

It follows from the above that the promotion of the literary heritage and the enhancement of tourist interest can be achieved through the creation of special literary routes and guided tours. These itineraries will allow visitors to discover important places associated with well-known literary works, including crime novels, creating a unique experience that links fantasy and reality.

Technology also plays a key role in boosting tourism interest. Applications can be developed to provide informative messages about literary events or even interactive computer games that help visitors to navigate the history of each region in a fun and educational way (Tsatalmpasoglou, 2019; 2020; Tsatalmpasoglou & al, 2024).

At the same time, the creation of a series of interactive spaces as theme parks is proposed (Manola & al, 2023) and they even respond positively to the prospect of creating a network of escape rooms, where participants will have to solve puzzles inspired by literary/police works, thus highlighting the cultural value of the area.

Cities that have been mentioned in well-known crime fiction books can be linked to a wider network of literary tourism, enhancing their visibility. Thus, a series of routes of several authors according to the example of the Sicilian “Strada degli Scrittori” or regions mentioned by a single author could combine a network of ‘crime scene’ places.

It is also important to organize activities, such as workshops and conferences, which will enable the exchange of views and new ideas in the field of literary tourism.

At the same time, the organization of annual festivals including theatre performances and screenings of small and big screen works with police themes could enhance the overall visitor experience.

For creative inspiration and strengthening of cultural potential, it is useful to organize creative writing seminars and to organize competitions to promote the talent of the participants.

In addition, the enhancement of the natural landscape of the area, combined with the development of agri-tourism or other soft forms of tourism, can attract visitors interested in an authentic experience, developing wider areas that are not usual tourist destinations or relieving areas from the negative effects of over-tourism.

The involvement of local residents is crucial, as the local community can develop its infrastructure and enhance the sense of hospitality, making visitors feel truly part of the cultural history of the area, always with sustainable development as their main concern.

## **Conclusions**

Literary and film tourism is one of the most dynamic forms of alternative tourism, offering new opportunities to promote regions at an international level. The areas promoted are an attraction for tourists as books, films and series are an important lever for promoting a place but at the same time they contribute to the development of the whole region, especially if there are points of natural and cultural interest and bring to the fore remarkable elements of the tangible and intangible culture of a place.

The emergence of routes based on crime literature gives a strong boost, not only to literacy but also to cultural tourism. The adventures of one hero or combined for more than one hero can bring readers in touch with the culture of everyday life in contemporary Greece by following paths of material and immaterial culture.

The impacts of tourism are many and varied, from economic development to the promotion of local culture. However, to ensure that local communities benefit fully from this phenomenon, it is important to have strategies in place that allow for its sustainable development while protecting the environment and cultural heritage of destinations.

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