

3d Middle School of Heraklion

THE AEGEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN SEA IN GREEK ART AND LITERATURE

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Heraklion March 2026

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THE IMPORTANCE AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDITERRENEAN AND AEGEAN SEAS IN GREEK LITERATURE

The Mediterranean and Aegean Seas have always been part of Greek life. People got food from the sea, used it to travel between islands, and built their cities near it.
Because it was everywhere, artists and writers often used the sea to show freedom, beauty, and Greek identity. Many Greek writers and poets use the seas as symbols in their stories and poems.

➢ The sea in art represents both the beauty and the strength of Greece.
The seas are more than water—they are a symbol of the Greek spirit and history

2. THE SEA IN GREEK LITERATURE
2.1. Ancient Greek poets and authors

Since ancient times, the Aegean and Mediterranean seas have had a very important influence.

Famous poets like Homer wrote about the sea many times. His most famous work, *The Odyssey*, which is known worldwide, presents the sea as a central element of the story. The sea helps heroes travel, fight, and find their way back to their families. Similarly Euripides mainly used the sea as a place of travel, danger, and fate for his heroes.

Many ancient poets and writers saw the sea as a symbol not only of mystery and challenges, but also of love and faith.

For example, Sappho often portrayed the sea as a symbol of love and desire.

- The sea is not just water in Greek literature — it has deep meaning and shows the connection between people and their world.

2. THE SEA IN GREEK LITERATURE
2.1. Modern Greek poets and authors

Even in modern times, the seas continues to inspire writers and poets, and as a symbol of life, freedom, and Greek identity.

- **Giorgos Seferis** uses the sea to express history, memory, and love for the homeland, for example in *Mythistorema.*
- **Odysseas Elytis** presents the Aegean Sea as a symbol of freedom, light, and beauty, for example in *To Axion Esti* and *Monogramma*.
- **Nikos Kazantzakis** in *Zorba the Greek* – shows freedom, life, and the connection with nature and the sea.
- **Nikos Kavvadias**. His poems are set in the world of the sea and focus on the hard life of sailors. For him, the sea is also a magical world that gives strength and love for people.

To Axion Esti:
"And the sea spread its light over everything, and the islands sang with it".

Zorba the Greek:
"I felt alive, like the sea itself, wild and free."

2. THE SEA IN GREEK LITERATURE
2.3. Greek Folk Songs and Traditional Music

- We cannot ignore folk songs as part of Greek literature. They tell stories and express emotions, just like poems and books. Folk songs connect oral tradition with written literature, preserving feelings, history, and Greek identity.
- The sea plays a main role in them, just like in ancient and modern poetry and books.

- In this way, the sea links Greek culture from ancient times to modern times and everyday life.

3. THE SEA IN GREEK ART
3.1. Ancient frescoes & vases



Picture 1. Fresco – Dolphins -Knossos Palace, Crete



Picture 2. Amphora – Octopus
Mycenae



Picture 3.Fresco – The Fisherman
Akrotiri, Thira

- In ancient Greece, the sea was often shown in frescoes and painted vases. Ancient amphoras often show sea scenes, ships, and gods like Poseidon.
- Artists painted ships, sailors, gods, and sea creatures, showing the importance of the sea in daily life and mythology.
- The sea symbolized travel, trade, danger, and divine power.

THE SEA IN GREEK ART
3.2. MODERN GREEK PAINTERS



Picture 4. *Seascape*, Ghikas



Picture 6. *Kalamata's Harbor*, Parthenis



Picture 5. *Gathering the nets*, Volanakis

Modern Greek painters often show the sea to express the beauty and spirit of Greece.
Their works show the life and power of the Aegean and Mediterranean.
Famous painters include Volanakis, Lytras, Maleas, Ghikas, Parthenis and many others..



Picture 7. *The Tide*, Volanakis

4.CONCLUSION

- Greece, as a country surrounded by the sea, has always been influenced by it, and the sea has been part of daily life for its people.
- From ancient literature and art to modern poetry, books, and folk songs, the sea inspires stories, emotions, and identity.
- In literature, the sea symbolizes love, struggle, adventure, and freedom.
- In art, it appears in frescoes, vases, and paintings, showing its importance in daily life.
- Even today, the sea connects the past with the present, keeping Greek culture, traditions, and imagination alive.

THANK YOU

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