

Balkans

Αθήνα
Београд
București
Сарајево
Скопје
София
İstanbul
Λευκωσία
Ljubljana
Подгорица
Tirana
Zagreb

Aliartos
Levadia



1st
International
Conference of
People of Letters

Inter-Balkan Literary Encounters

Understanding the Balkans
Through Literature

25-28 September 2025

CONFERENCE CENTER of
Education and Communication
Evangelistria on Mount Helicon,
Aliartos, Boeotia

Organized by

«Remembering the Vanguard,
Opening New Paths» |
Μνήμη και Πρωτοπορία

with the support of the Hellenic Ministry of
Culture in collaboration with

the Municipality of Aliartos–Thespies
the Municipality of Levadia
Holy Metropolis of Thebes and Levadia
Evangelistria Association "IPPOKRINI"

Maistros Publications | Salt (Scholarly Journal)
The Community of Arts (Literary Journal)
Embolimon (Literary Journal) | LOOX | Masar

PROGRAMME-NOTES

ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Evi (Evangelia) Voulgaraki

President of the Association Mnimi & Protoporia [Remembering the Vanguard, Opening New Paths]. Head of the Programme. Laboratory Teaching Staff (EDIP), Department of Social Theology and the Study of Religion, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). Director of the international scholarly journal *Salt: Crossroads of Religion and Culture*

Eleni Gika

Author, literary critic, journalist, and head of the digital magazine *Fractal*

Agathi Dimitrouka

Author, lyricist, and translator.

Evangelos Intzidis

Laboratory Teaching Staff (EDIP), Section of Linguistics, Department of Philology, NKUA

Angelos Kalogeropoulos

PhD in Musicology, poet, and editor-in-chief of the journal *To Koinon ton Oraion Technon* (The Community of Arts)

Iannis Carras

Associate Professor of Balkan and European History at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki

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Laboratory Teaching Staff (EDIP), Section of Modern Greek Philology, Department of Philology, NKUA

Dimitrios Pisinis

Economist, publisher and owner of Maistros Publications, Programme Manager

Dionysios Skliris

PhD in Greek Studies (Université Paris IV–Sorbonne); Master's Degree in Literature, Philology, and Linguistics (Université Paris IV–Sorbonne); Master's Degree in Late Antiquity and Byzantine Studies, specialising in Philosophy and History (University of London, King's College); philologist and theologian

Niki Tsironi

Senior Researcher, Institute of Historical Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation; IHCLA, American College of Greece; Cultural Association AINOS; Byzantine historian and mental health consultant

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Horia Gârbea

Poet and author, Chair of the Bucharest Poetry Section of the Union of Writers of Romania.

Ahmed Zildzic

Professor of Eastern and Western Literature, University of Sarajevo; author (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Guentcho Banev

Lecturer in Bulgarian Language and Culture, Department of Russian Language and Literature and Slavic Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)

Maklena Nika

Associate Professor, University of Tirana, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Department of Greek Language; author (Albania)

Theodora Dimova

Award-winning and widely translated author and translator (Bulgaria)

Davor Džalto

Philosopher, visual artist, and author; Professor at Sankt Ignatios College, Stockholm (Serbia)

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Evi Voulgaraki

Head of the Programme

Dimitrios Pisinis

Programme Manager

Angelos Kalogeropoulos

Dionysios Skliris

Loukas Ziaras

Fr. Georgios Ganotis

Theodora Paragiou

- The languages of the conference are Greek and English. Translation services will be provided. Next to each speaker's name, G or E indicates the language of their presentation.
- Participation in the conference requires registration. Meals and refreshments are provided for registered participants only.
- Entry is FREE for the public to attend the open afternoon sessions and the evening events of literature and music.

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 25 September 2025

Arrivals

Conference registration

Participant introductions

Welcome session

Informal regional presentations by country

Friday, 26 September 2025

9:00-11:30 Morning Panel (Plenary)

OPENING — WELCOME

LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

Evi Voulgaraki-Pissina E

Literature as Deep Human Communication and the *Balkans* Anthology

Nataša Dragnić E

Quo Vadis, Author? Rethinking Literature in the Contemporary Balkans

Maria Nicolopoulou E

The Experience of First World War in Balkan Literature

Theodora Dimova E

The Trauma of the Totalitarian Past

Dionysios Skliris E

The Theory of the Balkans in Contemporary Serbian Literature

Discussion

11:30-12:00 Coffee

12:00-13:30 **Group Discussions & Workshops**

Interactive session: a game of deeper acquaintance among participants (authors, translators, academics, and publishers) and their work, with exchange of questions concerning their projects as well as thematic issues raised during the morning presentations

Parallel Workshop (in Greek): Reading and Discussion Workshop based on the *Balkans* anthology and selected texts. Coordinator: Stella Synegianni

13:30-17:00 Lunch – Midday Break

17:00 Transfer to Aliartos

17:30-20:00 Plenary Session — Open Conference Meeting at the Aliartos Municipal Conference Center

THE BALKANS AND THE WORLD THROUGH LITERATURE

Roni Bou Saba G

The Balkans and Literary Interactions Within the Wider Mediterranean Basin and Western Asia Today

Vladislav Bajac E

The Balkans and Beyond: Themes of Interaction and Connectivity in My Fiction

Agathi Dimitrouka G

Poetic and Spiritual Journeys from the Balkans to Latin America

Varujan Vosganian E

The Armenians in the Balkans: The Case of Romania. Romanian Writers of Armenian Descent

Pantelis Boukalas G

Anonymous Folk Literature in the Balkans

20:00

Short Reception, light refreshments



20:30

Open Literary and Musical Event in the square outside the Aliartos Municipal Conference Center

Focusing on the theme:

PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP IN THE BALKANS

Authors from across the Balkans greet the audience and read from their works

Music:

Music Ensemble "Pyrofanía"

Vocals, oud: **Ellina Christodoulari**

Lute, vocals: **Angelos Fotopoulos**

Percussion: **Lazaros Savvidis**

At the same time, there will be a **book exhibition** in connection with the theme of the conference.

22:30

Dinner

Saturday, 27 September 2025

9:30-11:00 Morning Panel (Plenary)

ASPECTS AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF BALKAN LITERATURE

Elias Frangkakis G

Cultural Bridges – A One-Way Path to Understanding and the Overcoming of Differences and Confrontations. The Paradigm of the Greek-Bulgarian Association
“Aristotle – Culture Bridge”

Efstathia Dimou G

Balkanity in the Poetry of Mimis Souliotis

Nektaria Anastasiadou E

“You Speak Greek So Well”: Cliché Versus Creativity in Istanbul and Asia Minor Fiction

Iannis Carras E

Balkan peoples of Odesa. Nostalgic cosmopolitanisms and national ideologies in Ze'ev Jabotinsky's *The Five*

Fr. Milan Dordevic E

Exploring Intersections of Theology, Literature, and Cultural Identity in 20th- and 21st-Century North Macedonia

Vaggelis Zafiratis G

Poetic Translation and the "Soul" of Poetry

Discussion

11:00-13:30 Walking Routes on Helikon Mountain. Coffee and group discussion on the mountain

13:30-17:00 Lunch in the village of Evangelistria, Boeotia

17:00 Transfer to Livadeia

18:00-20:00 Open plenary session at the Municipality of Livadeia Conference Centre in Krya

BALKAN PLACES AND MEETING POINTS

Dimitrios Pisinis G

Helicon, Host of the Conference, the Muses and the Reader

Guentcho Banev G

Balkan Literary Dialogue and Intercultural Mediation: Dimitar Shishmanov, Stefan

Gechev, and Greece as Fertile Ground

Horia Gârbea E

Romanian Poetry in the 21st Century

Maklena Nika E

Echoes Across the Mediterranean: A Greek-Albanian Literary Dialogue

Evangelos Intzidis G

Representations of the Balkans in Popular Culture Texts

Angelos Kalogeropoulos G

Poetry and Music on the Balkan horizon

20:00

Short Reception, light refreshments



20:30

Open Literary and Musical Event at the Krya Open-Air Amphitheatre

Focusing on the theme:

BALKANS, NATURE, AND MAN

Authors from across the Balkans greet the audience and read from their works

Music:

Music Ensemble "Pyrofania"

Vocals, oud: **Ellina Christodoulari**

Lute, vocals: **Angelos Fotopoulos**

Percussion: **Lazaros Savvidis**

2nd Musical Ensemble — Main Programme

Vocals: **Kaiti Koullia**

Lute, vocals: **Nikos Venetakis**

Guitar: **Giorgos Makras**

At the same time, there will be a **book exhibition** in connection with the theme of the conference.

22:30

Dinner

Sunday, 28 September 2025

Free Morning Program, with options:

A) Visit to the historic Monastery of Evangelistria, Divine Liturgy, and coffee at the monastery (2-minute walk)

B) Alternatively, a stroll in the village of Evangelistria, in the mountainous area of Helicon, with coffee in the village

12:00 Closing session: conclusions and brainstorming regarding future steps

13:00 Lunch — Departure of participants

HEARTFELT THANKS

to all the volunteers

from the Holy Metropolis of Thebes and Livadeia

from the Municipality of Aliartos-Thespies

from the Municipality of Livadeia

from the Inter-Orthodox Centre of the Church of Greece

from the Cultural and Educational Association of Evangelistria, Boeotia, "IPPOKRINI"

from the Association "Remembering the Vanguards Opening New Paths" (Mnimi & Protoporia)

from *The Community of Arts (To Koinon ton Oraion Technon)*

from Maistros Publications

from the Parish of Saint Andrew, Patision

HEARTFELT THANKS

to the translators and interpreters,

editors, proofreaders, visual artists,

members of the administrative support team,

and the musicians of the two ensembles

SPECIAL HEARTFELT THANKS

to His Eminence Metropolitan Georgios (Mantzouranis),

the Mayor of Aliartos, Mr Giorgos Arapitsas,

the Mayor of Livadeia, Mr Dimitris Karamanis,

His Eminence Metropolitan Ioannis of Thermopylae,

and Fr. Ignatios Papasarantis

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PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

The conference is organised by the association



“Remembering the Vanguards Opening New Paths”
(Mnimi & Protoporia)

in collaboration with the following organisations:

Municipality of Aliartos–Thespies

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Municipality of Livadeia

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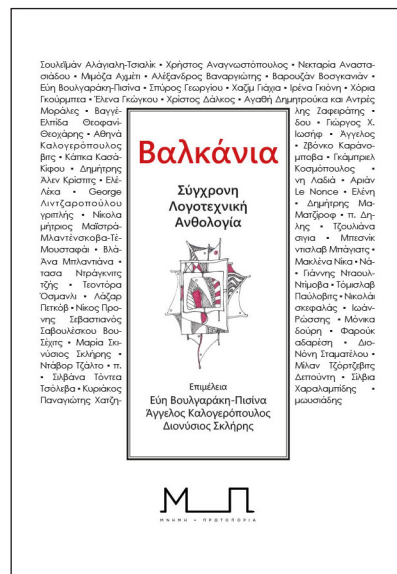
Fractal Digital Magazine (NGO)

Cultural Association AINOS (NGO)

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THE PROGRAMME IS SUPPORTED BY THE HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE

NEW RELEASE



456 PAGES
DIMENSIONS: 15 X 32,5 CM

The anthology *Balkans*, part of the programme,
is published in collaboration with [Maistros Publications](https://www.maistros.info).

A partnership of
Mnimi & Protoporia ("Remembering the Vanguards Opening New Paths"),
To Koinon ton Oraion Technon (The Community of Arts)
and Maistros Publications

56 authors, 12 translators, the languages of the Balkans

The Balkans are not a narrow topic. They are as vast as life itself. They encompass cultural, political, social, and historical dimensions, as well as deeply personal, romantic, and existential ones. The distinguished authors featured in this volume were invited to engage with contemporary European and global currents, the challenges of modern times, and issues concerning the coexistence of Balkan peoples. They reflect on the processing of traumas from relentless regimes, national rivalries, and even armed conflicts. They grapple with understanding the Balkans' place in the contemporary international reality, as well as matters affecting Balkan society—existential and philosophical inquiries, social and economic aspects of life, love, and death—all approached through a distinctly literary, contemporary lens. At the same time, they engage with both recent and distant historical pasts, seeking to understand the present through the processing of memory, and particularly the memory of the future.

The poetry and prose, mostly modern in style and theme, occasionally reference the folk traditions of the Balkan peoples. They express a wide range of emotions and thoughts—sometimes lyrical, sometimes overtly political or social, often dramatic or tragic, occasionally humorous, and frequently deeply existential. They explore peace and war, pain, separation, exile, continual transitions, dreams and their bitter disappointments, or the destruction that relentlessly strikes and devastates decades of life and entire generations, but also hope and aspiration. The anthology presents the Balkans as vibrant, diverse, and captivating, inviting the reader on a journey of exploration and profound emotional engagement.