

# PANAÏT ISTRATI. LITERATURE AND SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract:**

*Panaït Istrati's contributions to literature extend beyond his creative works, and this quality is reflected in “Panaït Istrati: Littérature et Société. Literature and Society”, edited by Dana Radler, Aurora Băgiac and Teodora-Anca Șerban-Oprescu, and prefaced by Christian Delrue. All the five sections of the bilingual (French and English) volume (“Panaït Istrati Between Two Literary Formulas”, “Biography – Autobiography – Writing”, “Personal Life and Political Life”, “Hybrid Aspects and Folkloric Imaginary”, and “Panaït Istrati and Artistic Transposition”) will grab the reader's attention from the very first sentence. One of the most complex Romanian writers, born in the Romanian town of Brăila in 1884, Panaït Istrati is equally seen as a French writer. His work is influenced by a strong social message, laying a significant emphasis on the world of the proletariat and the disenfranchised. One can easily notice that, starting from between worlds and writing styles, the incursion in Istrati's world correlates his life and work with names such as Romain Rolland, Maryse Condé, Ahmadou Kourouma, and even George Orwell.*

**Keywords:** Panaït Istrati; literature; society; biography; autobiography; personal life; political life.

Panaït Istrati is a name that might not immediately ring a bell for many, but a literary figure whose impact and

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contributions deserve a spotlight. Born on August 10, 1884, in Romania, Panaït Istrati rose from humble beginnings to become a renowned writer and a prominent figure in 20th-century literature. His life was marked by a tumultuous journey, personal struggles, and a commitment to capturing the human experience through his words. Istrati's literary works invite readers to explore themes of social injustice, human resilience, and the essence of life itself.

Born into a low-income family in a small Romanian village exposed him to poverty and social inequality. This experience would greatly influence his future literary creation. Growing up, he faced numerous hardships, which forced him to fend for himself. Despite these difficulties, Istrati's determination to escape his circumstances remained unwavering. His thirst for knowledge led him to embark on a journey that would eventually shape his writing identity. He travelled extensively, immersing himself in diverse cultures and societies. These experiences enriched his understanding of the human condition. They gave him a wealth of material for his struggles, shedding light on the harsh realities faced by those on the fringes of society.

Panaït Istrati's contributions to literature extend beyond his creative works, and this quality is reflected in *Panaït Istrati: Littérature et Société. Literature and Society*, edited by Dana Radler, Aurora Băgiac, and Teodora-Anca Șerban-Oprescu and prefaced by Christian Delrue. The bilingual (French and English) volume presents five sections: *Panaït Istrati Between Two Literary Formulas*, *Biography – Autobiography – Writing*, *Personal Life and Political Life*, *Hybrid Aspects and Folkloric Imaginary*, and *Panaït Istrati and Artistic Transposition*. Starting from between worlds and writing styles, the incursion in Istrati's world correlates his life and work with names such as Romain Rolland, Maryse Condé, Ahmadou Kourouma, and even George Orwell (the work of Denis Taurel on the last-mentioned connection is of particular interest, exceeding the spaces geographically consecrated when Istrati is discussed).

Each contributor to the volume deserves to be mentioned for the effort of original approaches and exceeding

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the limitations of a mentality exiling Panaït Istrati's in the area of forgotten writers: Frédérica Zephir, Zamfir Bălan, Maria-Mădălina Poiană, Cecilia Condei, Denis Taurel, Alain Vuillemin, Fiorenza Taricone, Elena Dumitru, Alina Andreica, Mariana Perișanu, Panayiota Mini, and Mugur Popovici.

The only inconvenience of the volume is that it reunites papers in English and French and does not offer a bilingual variant for each article, which could facilitate access for solely English or French speakers. A future edition should consider this aspect. Still, it does not cast shadows on this admirable incursion in the universe of Panaït Istrati.

**References:**

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**Cristina Matilda VĂNOAGĂ** is a PhD lecturer at the University of Alba Iulia. Her PhD thesis, *The Significance of Topoi in Andrei Codrescu's Prose*, was published in 2019 by Tracus Arte Publishing House, in its Romanian variant. She is specialised in the analysis of discourse and mentalities in the literary texts. She is a translator specialised in theology and her latest translation is Michael Keiser's *Spread the Word: Reclaiming the Apostolic Tradition of Evangelism*. Her current research interests are contemporary culture and identity in relation with the theories of imaginary, virtuality, and diplomacy.