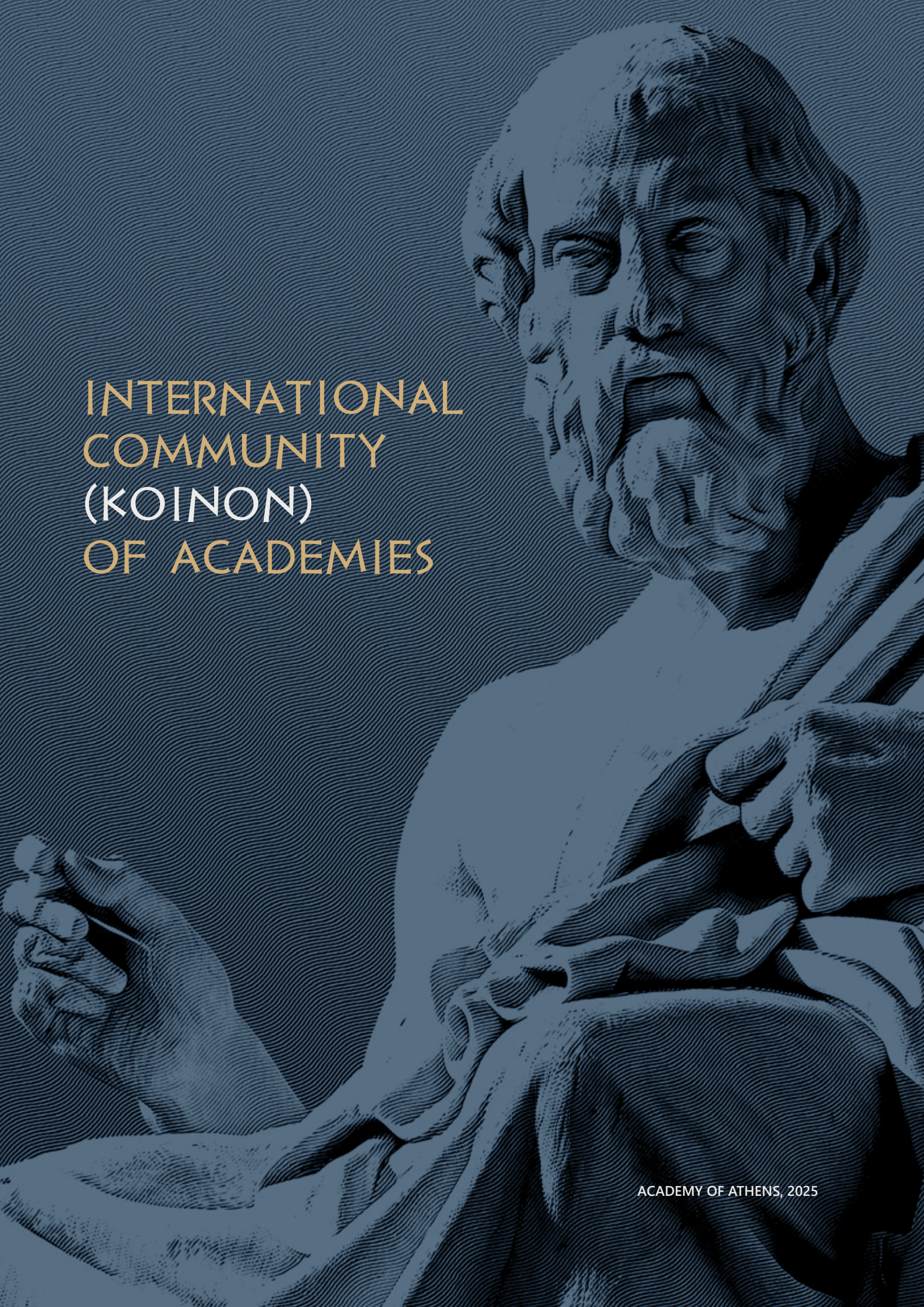
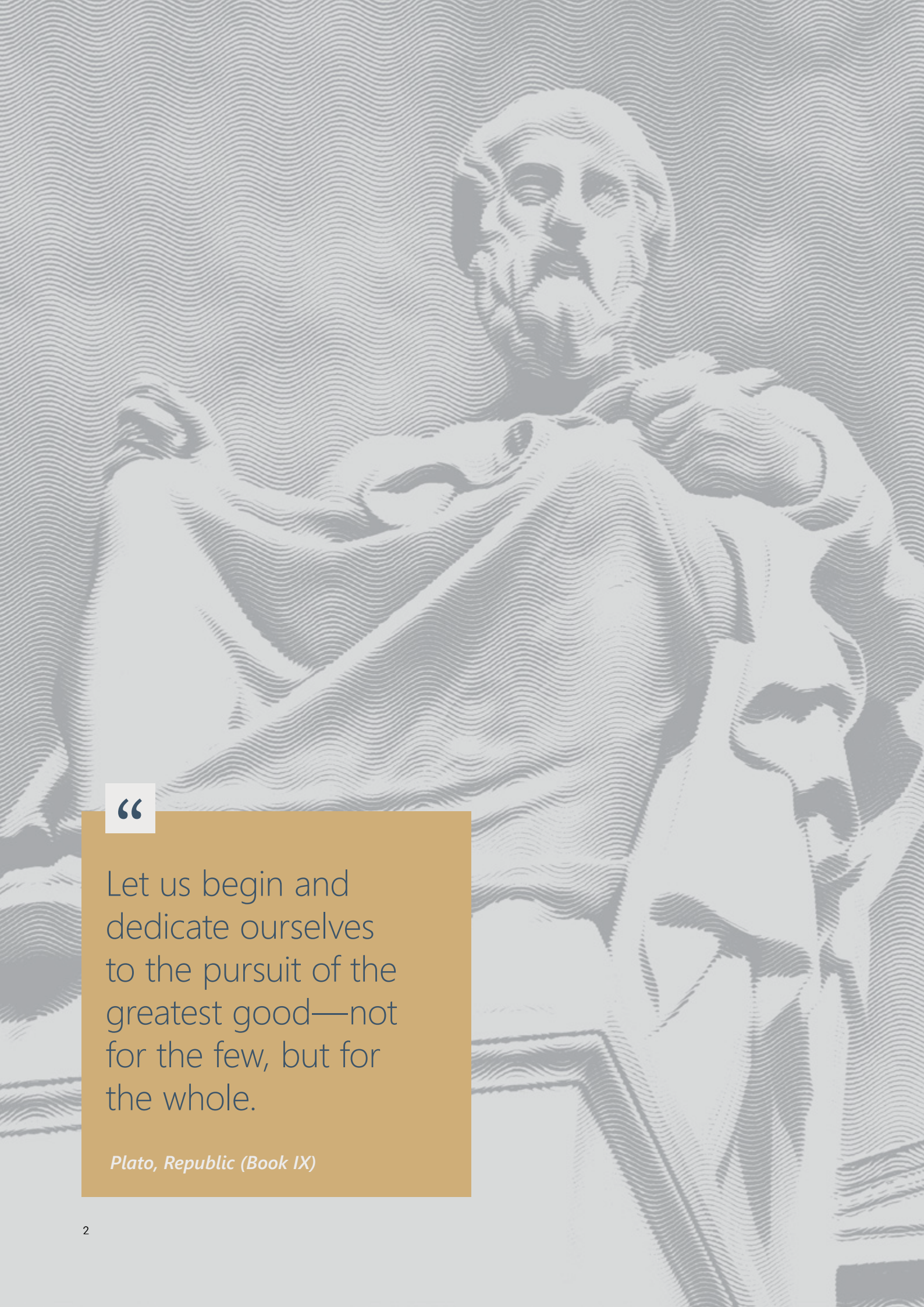


INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (KOINON) OF ACADEMIES

ACADEMY OF ATHENS, 2025



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Let us begin and dedicate ourselves to the pursuit of the greatest good—not for the few, but for the whole.

Plato, Republic (Book IX)

The International Community (Koinon) of Academies

The *International Community (Koinon*[1]*) of Academies* was founded by the Academy of Athens and its members in accordance with Article 78 of Greek Law 5120/2024. This initiative fulfills the legacy of the late philanthropist Panagiotis Aristophron, who bequeathed his property for the creation of an international organization dedicated to the global cooperation of Academies, distinguished scientists, artists, writers, and academic and cultural institutions. The property is located at the ancient archaeological site of *Plato's Akademia* in Athens (Akademia Platonos).

1 The term *Koinon* derives from the Ancient Greek adjective *koinos* (common), and historically referred to a commonwealth, alliance, league, or association

The Park of Akademia and Plato's Akademia

Boundary stone bearing the inscription "ΟΡΟΣ ΤΕΣ ΗΕΚΑΔΕΜΕΙΑΣ" (Ephorate of Antiquities, City of Athens)

The area named *Akademia (Ἑκαδήμεια)* took its name from the legendary Greek hero Academus. This area was located in the most beautiful suburb of ancient Athens with a sacred olive grove dedicated to several gods, including the goddess Athena. The lot was bounded by the famous river Kifissos, which flowed in the northwestern outskirts of the city. Plato acquired an orchard adjacent to the *Akademia* Park, where he established his "Akademia" in 387 BCE.

Plato's Academy is considered the first institution of higher learning, where philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, and other disciplines were explored. However, rather than a formal educational institution, it functioned more as a society of thinkers. Plato died in 347 BCE and was buried in the *Akademia* - likely within his orchard, the precise location of which still remains undiscovered. The site was destroyed by the Roman general Lucius Sulla in 86 BCE and in its place a Neo-Platonic Academy was later established and operated until Emperor Justinian permanently closed the Academy in 529 CE.

Systematic efforts to locate Plato's Academy began after the establishment of the Modern Greek state in the 19th century. Guided by ancient texts, archaeologists focused on the area near the Hill of Hippeios Colonus, around 1.5 kilometers northwest of Athens' Dipylon Gate. Major excavations were carried out much later, between 1929 and

Plato's Academy Mosaic (Villa of T. Siminius Stephanus, Pompeii, ca. 100 BCE, Archaeological Museum of Naples)

1939, by architect and philanthropist Panagiotis Aristophron, under the auspices of the Academy of Athens and the supervision of its member, archaeologist Konstantinos Kourouniotis. In 1966, a boundary stone was found in situ bearing the inscription "ΟΡΟΣ ΤΕΣ ΗΕΚΑΔΕΜΕΙΑΣ" (ca. 500 BCE), confirming the park's historical location and name.

Today, the ruins of the ancient *Akademia* remain in its original site, now a densely populated Athens' neighborhood still called *Akademia Platonos (Plato's Academy).* Declared an archaeological site in 1939 and an archaeological park in 1979, the area is protected by Greek cultural heritage laws. The tall trees and shaded walkways continue to reflect the spirit of Plato's time.

The neoclassical building of the Academy of Athens designed by Theophil Hansen, 1859.

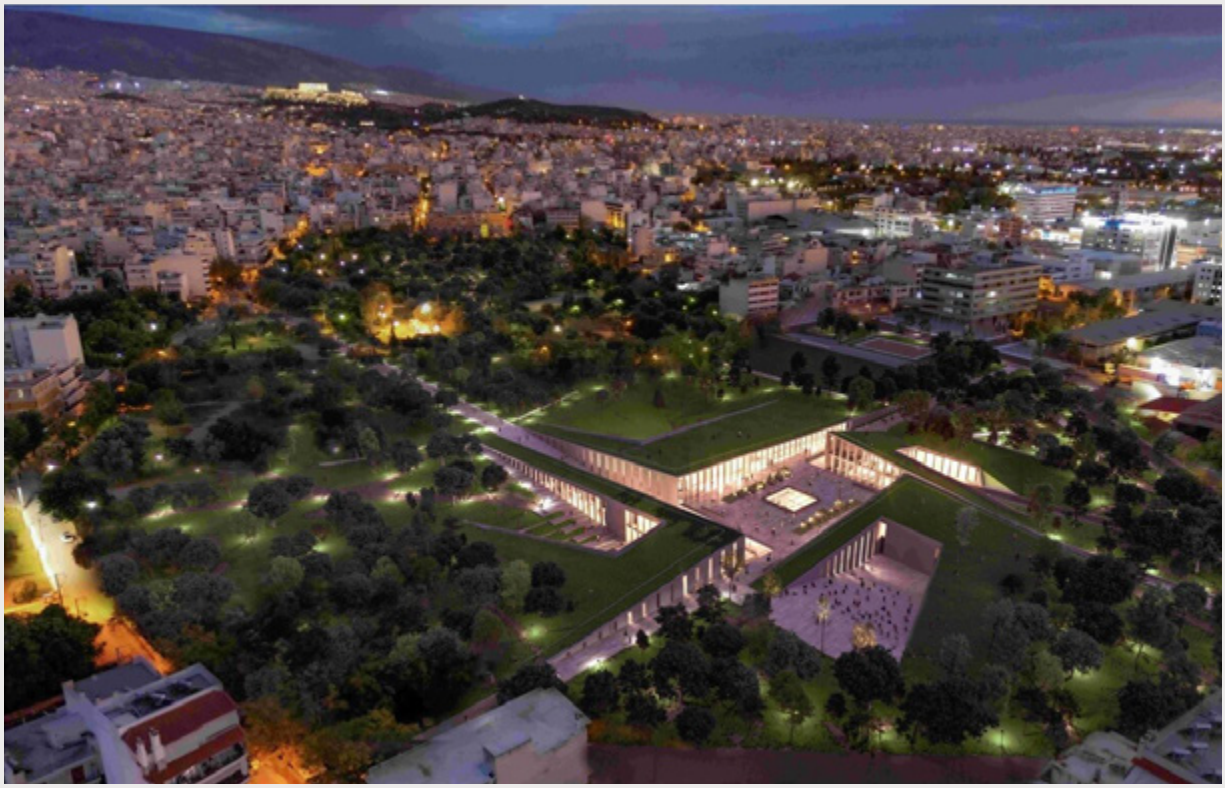
The Academy of Athens and the Legacy of Panagiotis Aristophron

The neoclassical building of the Academy of Athens was designed in 1859 by the renowned Danish architect Theophil Hansen and was fully financed by the philanthropist Baron Simon Sinas. The Academy of Athens, founded by constitutional decree on March 18, 1926, is Greece's National Academy for the Sciences, Humanities and Fine Arts, in honor of Plato's original Academy. Panagiotis Aristophron, a renowned architect and philanthropist, deeply inspired by Plato's vision, purchased an estate in the *Akademia* area with the aim of uncovering and restoring the ancient Academy. He led and sponsored the first systematic excavation in the area, which was conducted between 1929 and 1939, under the supervision of archaeologist and academician Konstantinos Kourouniotis. Excavations revealed a large gymnasium complex, including a rectangular court and portions of a square peristyle.

Unfortunately, due to the onset of World War II, Aristophron left Greece in 1939 for Alexandria, where he passed away in 1944, before his work could be completed. Excavations resumed between 1956 and 1963, led by archaeologist Phoebus Stavropoulos with the financial support of the Academy of Athens. These excavations uncovered the so-called "House of Hekademos" and the Sacred House. Further archaeological work continued between 1990 and 2002 under the Greek Ministry of Culture, sponsored by the Academy of Athens.

In his 1937 will, Aristophron bequeathed approximately 50,000 square meters of land in and around the archaeological park to the Academy of Athens. As stated in his will, his expressed intent was to establish an *International Community (Koinon) of Academies* - a collaborative venue for global academies, universities, and research institutions, reviving the spirit of Plato's Academy on its original grounds.

Construction of the Facilities for the Koinon at the New Museum of the City of Athens



The photorealistic rendering and the architectural study of the Archaeological Museum were carried out by the architect Georgios Tsolakis

In June 2022, the Greek Ministry of Culture, the Academy of Athens, and the Municipality of Athens signed a cooperation agreement to continue excavations at *Akademia Platonos*. The plan includes the construction of the New Museum of the City of Athens and establishing offices and conference facilities for the *International Community (Koinon) of Academies* on a 26,000 square meter plot owned by the Academy, as per Aristophron's will. This initiative envisions an environmentally sustainable, bioclimatic complex that serves both as a museum and a hub for the *Koinon's* global activities. Following the amendment of the Academy's Organizational Charter in November 2024 via Greek Law 5120/2024, the Senate of the Academy of Athens unanimously approved the establishment of the International Community *(Koinon)* of Academies as a nonprofit association.

The International Community (Koinon) of Academies, its Objectives, Governance and Membership

The *International Community (Koinon) of Academies* (hereafter *"Koinon"*) is a nonprofit association, legally founded under Article 78 of Greek Law 5120/2024 and registered with the First Instance Court of Athens, in accordance with the Greek Civil Code.

Objectives

As outlined in its **Articles of Association**, the *Koinon* aims to:

a. *Promote the founding principles and values of Plato's Academy through cooperation with accredited Academies, distinguished scientists, artists, and cultural institutions worldwide.*

b. *Organize quadrennial international Symposia with the participation of all members.*

c. *Foster collaboration, joint programs, and the exchange of ideas with Academies, universities, research institutions, and international organizations.*

d. *Host scientific and cultural events in Athens and abroad under the auspices of participating Academies.*

e. *Announce and confer international awards and honorary distinctions, with or without financial prizes.*

f. *Support the construction and development of the Koinon's facilities at Akademia Platonos.*

Governance and Membership

The *Koinon* is managed by a five-member Board of Directors, elected from among its **Full (regular) Members**. The Board represents the *Koinon* in all legal, administrative, and organizational matters.

The *Koinon* has full (regular), honorary and meritorious members, who are admitted by decision of the Board of Directors, upon their application, and specifically:

a. Full (regular) members are those ordinary members of the Academy of Athens who have signed the Statutes, as founding members, and any other ordinary member of the Academy of Athens, provided they apply and accept the Statutes.

b. Honorary members are recognized academies of sciences, arts, and letters, provided they apply and accept the Statutes.

c. Meritorious members are the corresponding and honorary members of the Academy of Athens as well as the internationally recognized representatives of the sciences, arts and letters, provided they apply and accept the Statutes.

Rights and obligations of full members

- Full members have the same rights and obligations.
- Full members have the right to participate in the General Assemblies and the committees provided for in the Statutes, to vote in them, to elect the Board of Directors of the *Koinon* and to be elected to it, as well as to exercise any other right deriving from their membership as full members, as defined in the Statutes and the Internal Regulations.
- Full members are required to contribute to the fulfilment of the *Koinon* objectives, to participate in its events and actions and to cooperate with other full and meritorious members within the framework of the objectives of the *Koinon* and in order to fulfil them, as well as to participate in Symposia.

Rights and obligations of honorary members

Accredited Academies of Sciences, Humanities, and Fine Arts may join as **Honorary Members**. This honorary member status was chosen to exempt foreign Academies from legal obligations under Greek law, while still granting them participatory rights.

HONORARY MEMBERS:

- Participate in the Committee of Honorary Members and other committees with full voting rights.
- Contribute to activities and initiatives of the *Koinon*.

- Attend the quadrennial Symposia through appointed representatives.

Participation fees or financial contributions may be introduced only by a majority decision of the Committee of Honorary Members.

COMMITTEE OF HONORARY MEMBERS

This body functions as the plenary assembly of all Honorary Member Academies, each represented by one delegate. In the first Plenary meeting, the Chair of the Committee of Honorary Members is elected to serve until the end of the Symposium year. The Committee meets at least once, during the Symposium years, with additional meetings called by its Chair as needed. The Board of Directors of the *Koinon* will provide all related necessary facilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Approving the Symposium budget and member contributions.
- Reviewing the Executive Committee's annual report.
- Establishing guiding values and issuing relevant resolutions.
- Expressing opinions on matters of global scientific and cultural concern.
- Awarding distinctions based on the Executive Committee's recommendations.
- Supporting scientific and cultural events globally.
- Electing standing committee members and forming additional working groups.
- Advising and consulting with the Board of Directors.
- Approving or amending internal regulations and bylaws.

A quorum is reached when at least half of all Honorary Members are represented.

All representatives may propose discussion topics or announcements at any meeting. These may be addressed immediately or scheduled for a subsequent session, at the discretion of the Committee Chair.

Resignation from membership is allowed at any time and takes immediate effect.

Rights and obligations of meritorious members

- Meritorious members have the same rights and obligations.
- Meritorious members have the right to participate in fulfilling the objectives of the *Koinon* and to participate in its events and actions, in compliance with the terms of the Statutes, as well as to attend Symposia.
- Meritorious members are required to co-operate with full members within the framework of the objectives of the *Koinon* and their fulfilment, and to pay the cost of participating in Symposia.

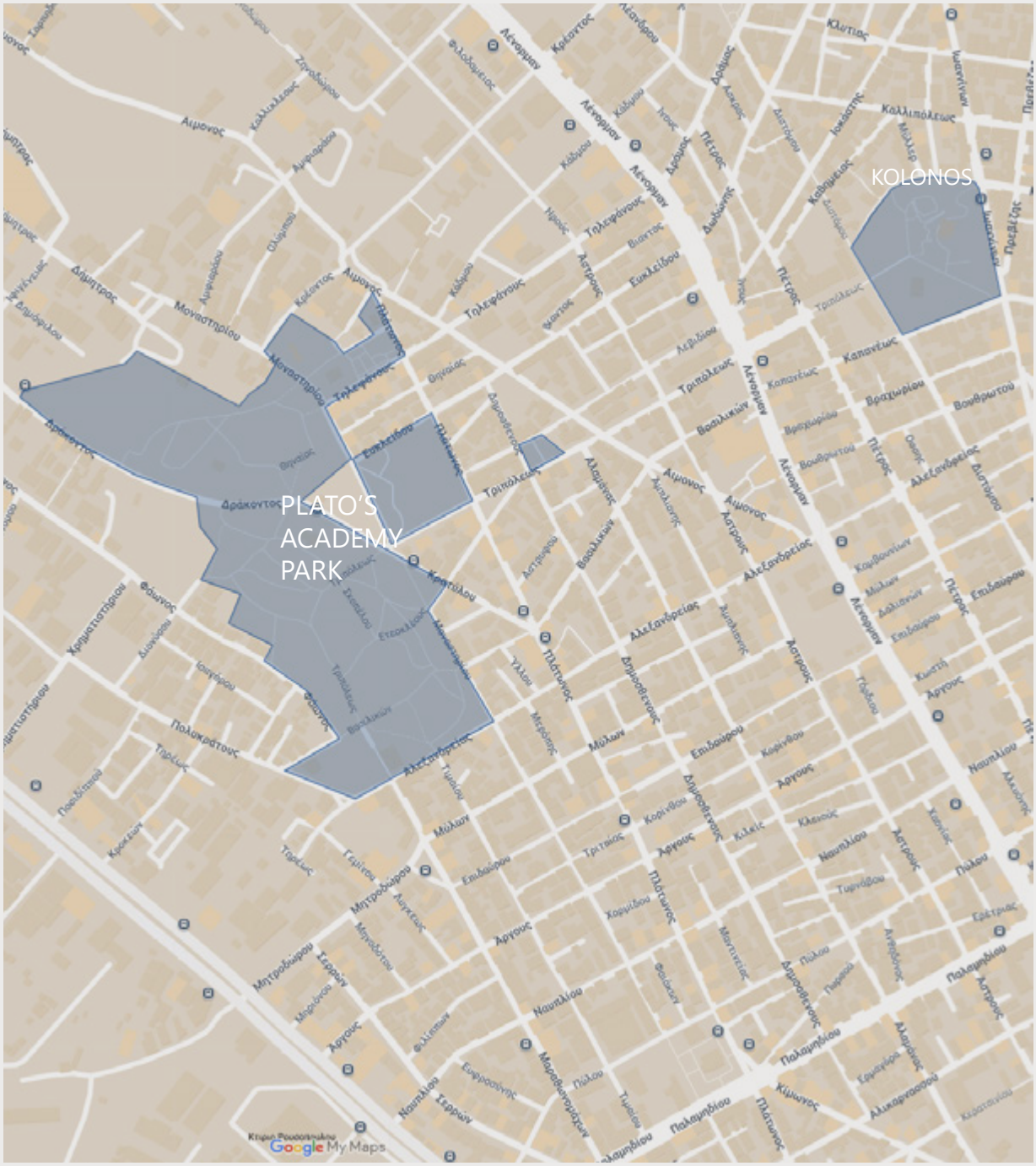
Plato's Apotheosis depicted in a specially crafted pedestal clock by Sylvestre and Suisse. The watch mechanism was manufactured by the famous Swiss house Montres Breguet S.A. for the Academy of Athens (1930).

Location

The *Koinon's* headquarters will be located at the *Akademia Platonos* district of Athens, on the estate inherited from the benefactor, Panagiotis Aristophron.

Engraving showing the area of Plato's Academy by M. Barbié du Bocage, May 1784, from *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis.*

Until the completion of its permanent facilities, the *Koinon* will be housed at the Academy of Athens. The *Koinon* may also establish satellite offices in Athens or other cities in Greece and abroad.



Modern map of the area of Plato's Academy in downtown Athens (Google, 2025).

Raphael. (1509–1511). The School of Athens [Fresco]. Vatican City, Italy.

Summary

The *International Community (Koinon) of Academies* stands as a modern echo of Plato's ancient Academy, where wisdom once walked beneath the shade of the olive trees. Rooted in the sacred soil of Plato's Academy *(Akademia Platonos)*, on land entrusted for the union of minds and cultures, the *Koinon* seeks to rekindle a timeless dialogue among the world's great modern Academies.

The *Koinon* is a nonprofit association created in accordance with Article 78 of Greek Law 5120/2024, based on the will of Aristophron, who donated approximately 50,000 square meters of land at the archaeological site of Plato's Academy in Athens. His goal was to create an international organization to promote cooperation among Academies worldwide and collaboration with distinguished scientists, artists, and institutions. With plans to construct a new bioclimatic facility alongside the New Museum of the City of Athens, the *Koinon* will operate from its present offices at the Academy of Athens.

The *Koinon* is governed by a Board of Directors and includes full (regular), honorary and meritorious members. Accredited Academies join as honorary members and participate in the Committee of Honorary Members, which functions as its plenary body. The *Koinon* aims to promote the principles of Plato's Academy through international symposia, scientific and cultural events, global awards, and joint activities with academic institutions worldwide. It is a gathering place for scholars, artists, and thinkers—honoring the pursuit of truth, the beauty of knowledge, and the harmony of global collaboration. The *Koinon* will serve as a lasting hub for elite events of human minds and souls in the Anthropocene.

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INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY
(KOINON)
OF ACADEMIES

The Academy of Athens headquarters. Watercolour by Theophil Hansen (1856, Academy of Athens)