



# The Unwritten Places: Wanderings in the Mountains of Northern Greece

*Tim Salmon*

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When Tim Salmon first set out to explore the remote mountain regions of Northern Greece, he couldn't find anybody, either Greek or foreign, who knew anything about them or had ever been there. This, along with the absence of any books or detailed maps, proved irresistible to the Rough Guide author, travel journalist, mountaineer and linguist. "Those hazy bulwarks seen against a summer sky from lowland roads and tourist routes where the black-caped winter shepherds repaired in spring. Where did they go?" For the next 40 years Tim made it his business to find out. A close friendship, ongoing to this day, with a family of Vlach mountain shepherds lies at the heart of *The Unwritten Places*. The Vlachs are called Arumani in their own language, which today is their principal distinguishing feature. It is a language derived from Latin and is considered to be a dialect of Romanian. Tim has watched his friends' flocks grow in size and seen the road arrive as their children grew into their sophisticated twenties. Tim's final acceptance by these proud and secretive peoples (but never quite their dogs!) is marked by his participation in the annual transhumance of the shepherds and their flocks, walking between winter and summer pastures at a time just before the roads and the lorries took over. A beautifully-written, intimate portrait of an all but vanished way of Greek mountain life, uninterrupted for thousands of years. "He describes the remote parts of Greece beautifully, and comments hauntingly on their despoliation." *The Times Literary Supplement* "He has a sensitive and perceptive eye for mountainscape and skyscape, an eye any landscape painter might envy." *The Anglo-Hellenic Review*

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