



Sketch by Takis Kalmouthos, 1929

*My anxiety is found in this: to incessantly strive for this position and from antithesis to find Synthesis..*

*Nikos Kazantzakis, Aegina, 12/2/1944*

No 58 – April 2022

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### MAIN ARTICLE

Despite the known problems, the ISFNK is continuing its activities, focused mainly on the upcoming sessions of the Steering Committee (SC) with a very busy agenda and with the preparation of important events for 2023. You will also find in this issue the new publications, the events of 2022, the access to the graves of Nikos and Eleni Kazantzakis, the situation with the Kazantzakis publications, a text of the great Cretan about Zorbas, the testimonies of Melina Mercouri and Leïla Slimani, the donations and contributions to the review and the ISFNK and the contact information. We wish you good reading.

### SESSIONS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE (SC)

Many SC members who reside in different continents are not able, due to different time zones, to participate in the sessions. The Secretariat has decided from now on to organize now on two online (Zoom) sessions, with the same content. The next sessions will take place on *May 14 and 15, 2022*. The agenda consists of the following:

#### Members and friends

The pandemic and the wars (Syria, Libya, Ukraine) had as a consequence the reduction of many friends' participation in the activities of the ISFNK.

#### Archives of the ISFNK

In the August 2021 issue of «Synthesis» we had stated that all archives (last year's as well as the older ones) had been sent for safekeeping to the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum in Myrtia (Crete). At the memorial at the graves of Nikos and Eleni Kazantzakis on October 24, 2021, the President of the Museum's Executive Board informed us that, due to lack of space, the safekeeping of the archives was not possible. After a request from the ISFNK President, Katerina Zografistou and Sofia Ntalambeki, had proceeded with their transportation to Iraklion.

#### Appointment of two new members to the SC

We welcome Yannis Milidis from Melbourne, the new president of the local chapter of the ISFNK, and Claudette Falatakis, from Geneva, to the position of treasurer, taking over from Dimitris Tzanos, who submitted his resignation, and whom we thank for his contribution.

#### Melbourne Chapter

*March 6, 2022.* On Yannis Milidis' initiative, a philologist, many admirers of Kazantzakis' work got together and re-established the local chapter. They decided to organize on May 20, 2022, a seminar with Emmanuela Yiannoulidou of the Greek chapter of the University La Trobe, about Nikos Kazantzakis' *The Fratricides* and the «*A sangre y fuego. Héroes, Bestias y Mártires de España*» by Manuel Chaves Nogales. Consequently, Yannis Milidis will organize a day of creative writing with poetic content, to which poets will be invited. The proceedings will be published under the title «The poets of Melbourne converse with Nikos Kazantzakis». All the best to all these friends!

#### The Greek Chapter

Its seat will be moved from Athens to Iraklion, the birthplace of our writer, in a location which will be leased by the ISFNK together with the necessary equipment. We will revisit this matter in issue 59 of «Synthesis».

#### «Le Regard crétois/The Cretan glance»

Starting with the next issue of the review, two important changes are foreseen:

- The review will be published in digital form as well. Those interested will easily be able to read it when

payment of their dues is made. We will also restrict the mailing expenses which are substantial.

- The number of pages of each study will be the same in the four languages and the summaries will be more extensive.

### Events in 2023

The next year we celebrate the following events:

- the 140<sup>th</sup> birthday of the great Cretan.
- 85 years since the publication of *Odyssey*.
- the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ISFNK's founding.
- 50<sup>th</sup> issue of «Le Regard crétois/the Cretan glance».

We foresee among other:

- A special edition of the review.
- A presentation of Manos Mountakis' Cretan folk opera, inspired by the *Odyssey*.
- Conferences and seminars with the themes: «Nikos Kazantzakis and the foreign intellectuals» and «How the Greek intellectuals accepted the work of Nikos Kazantzakis».
- Continuation and intensification of our activities in the area of youth.
- Reading clubs of Nikos Kazantzakis' texts.  
The members and friends will be subsequently informed in detail on the above matters.



LEREGARDCRETOIS, HKPHTIKHMATIA,  
THECRETANGLANCE, LAMIRADACRETENSE

Contents of issue 48 – December 2021

#### Texts of Kazantzakis

- Massacre.
- Thoughts, letters.

#### Studies and research

- Charalambos-Dimitris Gounelas (Thessaloniki): *Nikos Kazantzakis and the refugees* (in French).
- Dimitris Kokoris (Thessaloniki): *Nikos Kazantzakis as a poet* (in Greek).
- Pipina Elles (Sydney): *The woman in Nikos Kazantzakis' theatrical work* (in English).
- Christina Tsardikou (Buenos Aires): *Borges and Kazantzakis, two writers, one labyrinth* (in Spanish).

Each study is accompanied by a summary in the other languages.

#### Books

- Studies.
- Translations.

## PUBLICATIONS

### «Synthesis»

The information bulletin is now available in many languages: Greek, French, English, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish on our website, <http://amis-kazantzaki.gr/>

#### Unpublished novel by Kazantzakis in Greek

- *The Ascent*, publications Dioptra, Athens. It will be available next November. It has already been translated into French by René Bouchet under the title *L'Ascension*, by Cambourakis publications, in Paris, in 2021.

#### Translations from Greek to French, published in Paris

- Askitiki, translated by René Bouchet, Cambourakis publications, 2021
- George Stasinakis: «Kazantzakis-Zorbas. A true friendship», translated by René Bouchet, prologue by Yvette Renoux-Herbert, publications L'Harmattan, 2022.

#### Comics

The second tome of Nikos Kazantzakis' biography by Allain Glykos and Antonin will be available by Cambourakis publications the coming September with the title «Kazantzaki : La Rumeur du monde ».

## EVENTS IN 2022

#### Reading clubs of works by Nikos Kazantzakis

- ✓ *Iraklion*. Katerina Zografistou, member of the SC of ISFNK, organized/will organize many events: *January 30 and May 6: Christ Recrucified; May 13: Alexander the Great and At the Palaces of Knossos*. In September, she will organize an International Reading Club event on *Zorba the Greek*.
- ✓ *Larissa, March 17: The friends of Kazantzakis devoted an event to the novel Christ Recrucified* (see pg. 3 of the bulletin). They will organize on *May 15 a new Reading Club event on Travels in China and Japan*. They are also planning the showing of *Aris Hatzistefanou's documentary*.

#### Aris Hatzistefanou's documentary

- ✓ *Thessaloniki, March 20*. This documentary, titled «Last Journey» and the ISFNK' support, dedicated to Kazantzakis' journey to Japan and to its timeliness, won first prize at the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival. Our warm congratulations.

#### Brazil

- ✓ *São Paulo*. Maria Peretto, president of the local committee of the ISFNK, has announced many events: «Six aspects of Kazantzakis, the fiction writer, the dramatist, the poet, the traveller, the translator, the metaphysical»; reading of excerpts from his works and from the new book *The Ascent*, Facebook postings (Meta)...

#### France

- ✓ *Strasbourg, March 26*. Conference on «Saint Francis of Assize, Albert Schweitzer and Nikos Kazantzakis».

It was organized by Jean-Claude Schwendemann, president of the French chapter of the ISFNK and the Association of Alsace-Crete, with the support of the Franciscan brotherhood and the Albert Schweitzer Foundation. Contributions were made by Patrice Kerwyn, a Franciscan, «Saint Francis, from friend of animals, brother of all creations»·Jenny Litzelmann, Director of the Albert Schweitzer Foundation «Albert Schweitzer and nature»· Athina Vouyiouka, special scholar of Kazantzakis, «Nature in Nikos Kazantzakis: nature naturée, nature naturante».

#### Switzerland

- ✓ *Geneva, October.* The Swiss chapter of the ISFNK with president Rozmi Pahlisch and other associations are preparing under the aegis of the Greek General Consulate an event for the writers and poets: Jorge Luis Borges, Albert Cohen, Nikos Kazantzakis and Stefan Zweig.

#### Greece

- ✓ *Larisa, March 17 and 18.* In order to honour the 100th anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe (massacre of Greeks by the Turks and uprooting of the Christian populations), the friends of Kazantzakis in Larisa, the ISFNK, the Cultural Centre of Teachers, the Art Gallery and the French Institute organized seminars dedicated to the novel *Christ Recrucified*, to the showing of Jules Dassin's film «He who must die», to lectures, to the reading of an excerpt from *Report to Greco* and to songs.
- ✓ *Larisa, November 19-20.* The ISFNK in cooperation with the town's Art Gallery and other associations will organize a scientific conference with subject «Nature in the work of Nikos Kazantzakis». Whoever wishes to participate is requested to send not later than June 15 a summary in Greek of 300-500 words and a short curriculum vitae to the email address:

[synedrio2022.siank@gmail.com](mailto:synedrio2022.siank@gmail.com)

Proposals must be original and neither having been read in other events nor published. The scientific committee will study them and will announce the list of the participants.

#### USA and Canada

- ✓ *Ottawa, April 10.* Cathy Dimitriou, coordinator of the local committee, Matina Demeli and Manolis Velivasakis, representatives of the ISFNK in New York and Florida respectively, organized a Zoom event with the subject: «Nikos Kazantzakis, an acrobat over chaos». Manolis Velivasakis was the speaker.

#### Canada

- ✓ *Toronto.* The events that took place on *January 25, February 22 and March 22* were mentioned in «Synthesis» of December 2021.

#### Ukraine

- ✓ *Kiev.* Andriy Savenko, member of SC and professor of Greek at the universities of Kiev and Mariupol, has informed us that N. Morozova, has translated the chapter for the elementary school of the *Report to Greco*. It would have been published in the newspaper «Greeks of Ukraine» but it was postponed due to the war.

## GRAVES OF NIKOS AND ELENI KAZANTZAKIS

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We realize that people with mobility problems do not have the capability to access the graves. For this reason, the ISFNK, the Kazantzakis Museum and Niki Stavrou, the intellectual rights owner to Kazantzakis' work, in a written request on February 24, 2022, asked the Municipality of Iraklion for the installation of an invalid ramp.

## KAZANTZAKIS PUBLICATIONS

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We thank Niki Stavrou, director of Kazantzakis Publications, for informing us that from now on the Greek publications of the great Cretan's books and the televised and cinematic adaptations in Greece will be done by Dioptra publications based in Athens. She will however maintain the rights for whatever is published abroad as well as the tragedies and theatrical productions in Greek and in other languages.

## TEXT OF NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS

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### Zorbas

*«The greatest benefactors in my life have been the journeys and the dreams; out of the people alive or dead, very few aided my struggle. However, if I wanted to single out the people who left their footprint deep in my soul, perhaps I would single out Homer, Buddha, Nietzsche, Bergson and Zorba.[...]*

*If in my life I were to choose a spiritual leader, a Guru, as the Hindus say, an Elder, as the monks of Mount Athos say, for sure I would choose Zorba. Because he had what a writer needs to save himself: the primitive glance that pierces its prey from above like an arrow; the creative and each morning renewed naiveté to see ceaselessly everything for the first time and to give purity to the eternal every day elements – wind, sea, fire, woman, bread; the steadiness of hand, the freshness of heart, the bravery to make fun of his own soul, as if he had inside him a power superior to the soul, and finally the wild gurgling laughter, from a deep spring, deeper than man's insides, that sprang redemptive from Zorba's old bosom at critical moments; it exploded and could demolish – and it did – all barriers – morality, religion, motherland – that man, miserable and terrified, erected around him in order to safely live through his insignificant life.*

*When I reflect with what kind of food all these years the books and the teachers were feeding me, to satiate a starving soul, and what fearless thinking as food Zorba fed me with in a few months, I can hardly bear my bitterness and exasperation. How can I recall without my heart growing wild the conversations we had, the dances that he danced for me, the santouri that he played for me, on a beach in Crete [in reality it was Stoupa in Mani of Messinia] where we lived for six months, with many workers digging supposedly to find lignite. We both knew very well that this practical endeavour was to fool people; we couldn't wait for the sun to set, for the workers to go home, so that we could sit down on the beach, to eat our savoury food, to drink our brusco Cretan wine and to start the conversation».*

*Report to Greco,*

Eleni Kazantzakis publications, Athens 1961

### Melina Mercouri

In her book «I was born Greek» (Zarvanos publications, Athens, 1995) the great actress and irreplaceable Minister of Culture, makes reference to the following event that took place during the filming at Kritsa, Crete, of the film that Jules Dassin produced in 1956 «He who must die», the plot of which is based on Kazantzakis' novel *Christ Recrucified*.

«The mayor talked to Jules. He might be ninety years old but his voice was strong and aggressive. «You are English». «No, American». «Same thing». He said it disparagingly. I must remind you that in 1956, the Cyprus problem had reached a critical point. The Cretans felt a special enmity towards the English. During the war, they took risks and in some cases gave their lives to protect and shelter the English airmen that were pursued by the Germans. And now the British were opposing the Cretan dream of union of all Greece. The Americans were supporting the English. The mayor looked menacingly at Jules through his gleaming dark glasses. «Give us Cyprus back». He pointed at Jules as if he had Cyprus in his pocket. And Jules, thinking that it was an amusing game, said: «No, I think I will keep it». Nobody found it amusing. All smiles and goodwill disappeared right away. A heavy silence spread in the room. Fanourakis [a Cretan painter who helped at the filming] kicked Jules under the table. «Don't joke», he murmured, «give them Cyprus back». The mayor leaned forward, threateningly, provokingly. Jules did not like to be provoked. He shook his head. And the men started approaching the table. Now I was really scared. «Don't be a fool», I murmured in French to Jules. «Give them Cyprus». Perhaps Jules would have relented, but the mayor said: «You will give it back because the Americans are cowards». That was it. Now it was a matter of honour. Jules stood up. He assumed a stance like that of John Foster Dulles. «We need Cyprus for military bases». The mayor stood up. «We want Cyprus». The men approached. There was violence in the air. Jules had gone pale but said: «There is only one way to get Cyprus». He glanced around the room. «Take it». There was an endless tense silence. Fanourakis and Trauner [the decorator] got ready to defend Jules. All eyes turned to the mayor. Then, in a glorious moment, his face brightened with laughter. He took Jules in his arms and kissed him. Afterwards, everything was beautiful. When we left, they showered us with flowers».

### Leïla Slimani

Leïla Slimani, a bright French-Moroccan intellectual, is a writer of numerous literary works and essays. In 2016 she was honored with the Prix Goncourt for her novel «Lullaby». In her book «The scent of flowers at night» (Stock publications, Paris, 2021) she writes about the famed Alexis Zorba and Nikos Kazantzakis.

«I really don't know what impelled me towards these endless journeys, this escape. I would have liked to learn to live in one place, to become one with the world around me and to enjoy the elements and nature, as Camus describes them so

wonderfully in «Nuptials», or Alexis Zorbas, the literary hero of Kazantzakis, who for me embodies an unreachable ideal. This insatiable, charming giant, «this multiply-wounded captain» who doesn't fear anything or anyone and the sense of freedom that he possesses impresses so the narrator of the novel. It's the Aegean Sea that runs in his veins; his body seems to be made of the same rock that the mountains of his birthplace are made of. I was feeling, Kazantzakis writes, looking at Zorba, that the world's virginity is renewed. All that is every day and faded regained the glitter they had in the first days out of God's hands. The water, the woman, the star, the bread, were returning to the primordial, mysterious source.

## DONATIONS

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- Switzerland : Frosso Jatou, Bernhard Hahnloser Sarpakis, Johanna Graziano Von Burg, Philippe Othenin-Girard.
- Greece : Sofia Ntalambeki, Katerina Zografistou, Yannis Vlahakis.
- French, Swiss and Cyprus chapters.

We thank them warmly.

## ISFNK: CONTACT INFO

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[www.amigos-kazantzaki.org](http://www.amigos-kazantzaki.org)

### Facebook

Στα ελληνικά: <https://www.facebook.com/amis.kazantzaki.gr/>

In French:

<https://www.facebook.com/Soci%C3%A9t%C3%A9-Internationale-des-Amis-de-Nikos-Kazantzaki-379350352815580>

In English:

<https://www.facebook.com/The-International-Society-of-Friends-of-Nikos-Kazantzakis-2358603970881508>

In Spanish:

<https://www.facebook.com/siank.mx>

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