

Διεθνής Εταιρεία Φίλων Νίκου Καζαντζάκη  
**SYNTHESIS**  
ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΤΙΚΟ ΔΕΛΤΙΟ



Η αγωνία μου έγκειται σε τούτο: ακατάπαυτα ν' αγωνίζομαι της θέσης τούτης και της αντίθεσης να βρω τη Σύνθεση.  
Νίκος Καζαντζάκης, Αίγινα, 12/2/1944

No. 70, April 2026

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## MAIN ARTICLE

In this issue of 'Synthesis' you will find three outstanding events: the successful completion of the reading of *the Odyssey*, the founding of the 'Nikos Kazantzakis' European Routes' association, and important texts by our author that remain particularly relevant today. Also included are the contents of 'The Cretan Perspective', a presentation of the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum, and the activities of our members and friends around the world, to whom we extend our warmest thanks.

### MARATHON READING OF THE ODYSSEY IN GREEK

It began on 18 February 2024, our author's birthday, and will conclude on 23 May 2026 at the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum in Myrtia, Crete, with a reading of the prologue, selected excerpts from the 24 rhapsodies and the epilogue. The event is organised by the International Society of Friends of Nikos Kazantzakis (ISFNK), the Museum and the Region of Crete. The reading will be accompanied by songs, music and a video screening from Nikos Kazantzakis's grave. Each participant will receive, if they so wish, a commemorative certificate of participation.

It is worth highlighting the participation of teachers, university students, school pupils and a knowledgeable and informed audience. We owe the concept and flawless organisation of this reading to Sofia Dalambeki, in collaboration with Katerina Zografistou, Nikos Chrysou and other organisers. We would like to remind you that Kazantzakis believed that the *Odyssey* was written 'for the young and for those not yet born' and that 'he would take it with him to his grave'. For information on future activities relating to the *Odyssey* (conferences, lectures, etc.), please visit: <https://amis-kazantzaki.gr/odyssey/>

[courriel:secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com](mailto:courriel:secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com) or telephone +30 2810 333 993. For information on future activities relating to the *Odyssey* (conferences, lectures, etc.), please visit the website <https://amis-kazantzaki.gr/odyssey/> or contact us by email at: [secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com) or by telephone on +302810.333 993.

### 'NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS' EUROPEAN ROUTES'

In the previous issue of our newsletter, we presented this important project, to which we attach particular importance.

We would like to update you on the latest developments:

On 9 March 2026, the Court of First Instance of Heraklion officially recognised the establishment of the association 'Nikos Kazantzakis' European Routes', which is distinct from the ISFNK. Its headquarters are located at the ISFNK offices in Heraklion (35 Kornaros Square). On 17 May 2026, a General Assembly will be held to elect the Board of Directors, select the logo and determine future activities (public events, visits, Academic Forum, etc.). In accordance with the regulations, our application for accreditation will be formally submitted to the Council of Europe in two years' time. Until then, we have a great deal of work to complete.

We will report in greater detail on the progress of this project in the August 2026 issue of 'Synthesis'.



### LE REGARD CRETOIS, THE CRETAN GAZE, H KPHTIKH MATIA, LA MIRADA CRETENSE

Our annual journal, published without interruption since 1990 in English, Spanish, French and Greek, aims to keep alive the devotion to the work of Nikos Kazantzakis and to broaden its reach through unpublished or little-known texts by the author, studies, testimonies and bibliography. Please do spread the word about the magazine 'The Cretan Gaze' to your friends, as well as to libraries, universities and schools. For further information, please contact us at the following email address: [secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com). We would like to remind you that the magazine is now published exclusively in digital format. Those interested may also contact us at: [le.regard.cretois.siank@gmail.com](mailto:le.regard.cretois.siank@gmail.com)

### Contents of Issue 52 – December 2025

#### Texts by Nikos Kazantzakis

- Sketches of Mount Athos.

## Studies and research

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- Katerina Zografistou: A Pilgrimage to the Greek World (in French, with summaries in other languages).
- Kyriakos Panagiotou: Nikos Kazantzakis's Symposium (in Greek, with summaries in other languages).
- Michalis Taroudakis: Nikos Kazantzakis and Cultural Diplomacy (in English, with a summary in other languages).
- Dr Christina Tsardikou: Borges and Kazantzakis: Two People, One Labyrinth (in Spanish, summary in other languages).

## Testimony

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- Yolanda Terencio: *The Happiness of Nikos Kazantzakis* (French, Greek, English and Spanish).

## Book reviews in Greek

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- Emeritus Professor Michael Paschalis on Basilius J. (Bert) Groen's book: *Struggle for Freedom. Nikos Kazantzakis and Greek Orthodoxy*
- Katerina Zografistou on: *The Child and the Kri-Kri* by Vanna Katsarou; *Lessons from Grandfather Nikos. 'Kazantzakian Whispers'* by Stavros Tzanis; *'Captain Michalis'* by Nikos Kazantzakis, by Konstantinos Paidas.

## Latest publications and events

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The editorial team will shortly publish an Index covering all issues, in English, French and Greek.

## INTERVIEWS WITH NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS

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An interview with Robert Sadoul in 1954 on French radio (excerpts). The full text was published in *The Cretan Gaze*, issue 2, September 1990.

### On the *Odyssey*

*How can one summarise an epic of 33,333 lines in just a few words? I shall mention only the name of Odysseus, and not that of Homer. This is the modern man who, through many adventures, through all the philosophies he encountered and all the emotions he experienced, gave shape to the man of the future, to the man who is yet to come. It is the human being of the future that I have sought to describe in this epic. It is not about historical events, nor even contemporary events, but about events of the future. It is, one might say, a kind of prophecy. What form will the coming civilisation take for me? You know, the Chinese have a proverb, a very strange curse: 'May you be born in an interesting era'. We were born in an interesting era; that is to say, we are experiencing all the anxieties of this era, but at the same time all its hopes. It is these hopes that I wanted to express, as well as all the anxieties of our time. There are two clearly distinct elements: the tragedies that deal with the social, intellectual, political and so on resolution of the problems of our time, and, on the other hand, the future synthesis expressed in the \*Odyssey\*. That is the difference.*

### On his novels

*When I left Greece, I wanted to communicate with my colleagues in Europe and America. The only literary form that allowed me to communicate with my colleagues was the novel, because poetry is never translated. If I had continued to write poetry, no one would have translated it and I would not have been able to find those we call 'brothers'. On returning to France and living in Antibes, I was compelled to start writing novels.*

Interview with Pierre Sipriot, 1957 (excerpt). The full text was published by Éditions du Rocher in 1990.

### On Greece

*Greece has always been a pawn in the hands of the Great Powers. We suffered greatly under the barbaric yoke of the Turks. We suffered greatly, and we are still suffering, under the yoke of the Great Powers. The Greek people are a long-suffering people. All the more so because, for them, the need for freedom is as imperative as the need for bread. They possess an innate sensitivity that makes them vulnerable to any attack on freedom. Not only their own freedom, but any harmful attempt against the freedom of any people. Let me give you an example: when Hitler was threatening to invade Norway, I was on a trip to Crete. I was crossing a narrow pass when, from high up on the mountain, I heard a booming voice calling out to me: 'Stop, my boy, stop.' I stopped, looked up and saw an elderly shepherd leaping from rock to rock. 'How are things in Norway, my boy?' he called out to me, out of breath. 'Things are better, Grandad,' I replied, 'things are better.' 'Glory to God!' he said and crossed himself. 'Fancy a cigarette?' I asked him. 'What would I do with a cigarette? I don't want anything; as long as Norway is doing well, that's enough!' Such are the Greeks. This elderly shepherd certainly didn't know where Norway was. He might not have known whether it was a country or a woman, but he knew what freedom meant. The true Greek miracle is not called beauty. It is called freedom. Every people to whom a mission on Earth has been given raises its own cry. The Jew cries out to God; the Hindu strives to grasp the meaning beyond appearances; the Egyptians, from the depths of their tombs, cry out, begging for immortality. The Greeks were given the mission to transform slavery into freedom. How, then, can a Greek writer fail to devote all his energies to the cause of freedom? How can I look upon the world with indifference?*

### On the role of the novelist

*A true novelist cannot help but live within the reality of his time and, by living that reality, realises his responsibility. He therefore endeavours to help his fellow human beings to confront and resolve, as far as possible, the pressing problems of his era. Although literary works today reflect our times, they are necessarily one of the subtlest and most effective forms of action. Or rather, it can become a seed of action. The novelist, whilst aware of his mission, strives to shape reality into the form he deems most worthy of humanity... Today, a writer, if he is truly active, is a man who suffers and frets at the sight of reality. He is driven to collaborate with all the forces of light that still survive and to help move humanity's heavy destiny forward, even if only a little. If today the writer remains faithful to his mission, he is a fighter...*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### Literary cafés

29 April 2026

Dimitris Stefanakis, writer: 'Nikos Kazantzakis, Jean-Sébastien Bach – *The Last Temptation* and the Passion According to St Matthew'.

13 May 2026

Vangelis Rafopoulos, author: 'Untouched', a historical novel inspired by the life and work of Nikos Kazantzakis.

10 June 2026

Lefteris Giovanidis, director. He directed *The Life and Times of Alexis Zorbas* for the National Theatre of Northern Greece.

## Other events

*Albania, Tirana, 26 October 2026.* The local branch of the ISFNK, in collaboration with the Greek Embassy, will organise an event on the theme ‘An Unquenchable Flame: Kazantzakis Today’.

*Argentina, Buenos Aires, late September 2026.* Christina Tsardikou, President of the Argentine Branch of the ISFNK, will organise a tribute entitled: ‘Reason and Passion: Plato’s Eternal Dialogue with Zorba’

*Armenia, Yerevan.* Over the coming months, Liza Karimian, University Professor and Head of the ISFNK’s Armenian Branch, will deliver a lecture on the contemporary relevance of Nikos Kazantzakis’s work and thought.

*Australia, Adelaide.* Chrysoula Melissinaki, the new head of the ISFNK, wishes to take initiatives to raise public awareness of our author’s work. In particular, she proposes that February be designated ‘Nikos Kazantzakis Month’ in Australia, with annual events and activities dedicated to his life and work.

*Austria, Vienna, 6 December 2026.* The local branch of the ISFNK and the Hephaestus-Wien association are organising an event on ‘The influence of Alexis Zorbas on art’, with the participation of director Kostas Machairas.

*Belgium, Brussels, 9 March 2026.* The Orthodox Church of Belgium hosted a lecture by Professor Basilius J. Groen, a member of the ISFNK, on the topic: ‘The Struggle for Freedom: Kazantzakis and the Orthodox Tradition’; *13 and 14 March 2026.* The Belgian Branch presented ‘A Musical Journey’, inspired by Kazantzakis’s travel writings. Participants: Teti Kassioni (vocals), Giorgos Athanasiou (guitar) and Maria Karachaliou (narration).

*Canada, Ottawa, 25 March 2026.* Sotiria Grafanaki, university lecturer and local representative of the ISFNK, gave a lecture on ‘Captain Michalis’.

*Chile, Santiago.* Mr Konstantinidis, a representative of the ISFNK, is preparing a programme of activities for the current year.

*Finland, Helsinki.* Our branch is organising an event in the coming months.

*France.* Françoise Boussard, a lecturer at the Open University of Nantes, will continue her course of lectures in 2026 on Kazantzakis’s last unpublished novel, *The Ascent*. For his part, Allain Glykos is presenting his two-volume illustrated novel on Kazantzakis throughout France. Finally, Thaddée Meurant successfully continued the run of his play *Je n’ai toujours pas fini mon Odyssée* in *Asnières* on *24 and 25 March*. In the next issue of the newsletter, we will feature further performances in France and Greece.

*Greece. Thessaloniki, 7 May 2026.* International Book Fair. The ISFNK will be taking part again this year. Elena Avramidou, a member of the ISFNK Board of Directors, and Angeliki Taligarou, a member of the Board of Directors of the Greek Branch, will discuss Nikos Kazantzakis’s patriotic drama *Kapodistrias. Komotini, 1 June 2026.* The Komotini Reading Club is studying Kakuzo Okakura’s *The Book of Tea* and the mutual influences between East and West. Vanda Papaioannou-Voutsas, a member of the Board of Directors of the Greek Branch of the ISFNK, will discuss Nikos Kazantzakis’s impressions of the tea ceremony, as recounted in his book *Travelling through Japan and China. Sayada, Thesprotia, 5 June 2026.* As part of ‘World Environment Day’, Haroula Verigou, author and member of the ISFNK, will speak on the topic ‘Nature: from exploitation to respect. Kazantzakis’s environmental ethics’. *Agioi Anargyroi High School*

*(near Athens), 6 March 2026.* Invited by the literature teacher Stella Liatos, Nikos Chrysos, Vice-President of the ISFNK and its Greek Branch, presented the novel *The Life and Times of Alexis Zorbas*. The pupils, having already studied the novel, had the opportunity to discuss various topics. *Lamia, 2 April 2026, STAR TV channel, Central Greece.* Katerina Zografistou and Nikos Chrysos presented Kazantzakis’s work. *Kifissia (near Athens).* A primary school now bears the name ‘Nikos Kazantzakis’. Eleni Plesti, the school’s headteacher, and Katerina Zografistou agreed to organise activities during the coming school year.

*Ireland.* The Branch will continue reading *The Odyssey*, even during the summer, whilst the pupils will study the work *Alexander the Great*. Finally, to mark Bloomsday ’26 [a festival dedicated to James Joyce’s iconic modernist novel *Ulysses*], there will be a discussion of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Nikos Kazantzakis’s *The Odyssey*.

*Italy, Bologna.* The villa of Domenico Arezzo and Betta Ghelli. Angela Peduto, a member of the DEFK and the Greek Community, has agreed to organise a series of lectures entitled ‘Discovering Kazantzakis’; *7 March 2026:* Screening of a documentary on the life of our author; *18 April 2026:* Publisher Nicola Crocetti and Gilda Tentorio, President of the Italian Branch of the ISFNK, will speak about *Zorba the Greek*. The events will continue until the autumn, each time featuring a work by Kazantzakis; *University of Padua, 28 April 2026.* Gilda Tentorio gave a lecture to students of the Department of Greek History on the topic ‘The primordial breath of Crete in Kazantzakis’s work’.

*Russia, Moscow, 9 February 2026.* The Hellenic Culture Centre and the ISFNK organised a musical performance dedicated to the work and the literary and cultural heritage of Nikos Kazantzakis.

*Serbia.* Antonina Kostic, a representative of the ISFNK, intends to organise a presentation on Kazantzakis this autumn in collaboration with the Department of Greek Studies at the University of Belgrade.

*Switzerland.* The Branch will hold its General Assembly in Geneva on *27 June 2026*. It will elect a new Executive Committee and draw up the programme for its forthcoming events.

## **NEW LEADERS OF THE ISFNK**

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- Peru: Georgios Patsias, Vice-President of the Greek Community.
- Poland: Michal Bzinkowski, academic and translator.
- Australia, Adelaide: Chrysoula Melissinaki, Director of the Hellenic Museum of Adelaide; Sydney: Ioannis Theodoridis, lawyer.

## **NEW PUBLICATIONS**

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- Lambros Kouloubaritsis: ‘The Political Philosophy of Nikos Kazantzakis’, Kastaniotis Publications, Athens 2026.
- George Stasinakis: ‘Nikos Kazantzakis (1883–1957): Between Europe and the East’, L’Harmattan, Paris (to be published in June 2026).
- Christos Tsantis: ‘Nikos Kazantzakis: A Bird Above the Abyss’, second edition, Radamanthys Publications, Chania, 2026.
- Georgios Kourakis: ‘Nikos Kazantzakis: The Purpose of Life and Philosophical Origins’, Zitos Publications, Athens, 2026.
- *God’s Little Poor Man*, translated into Bulgarian by Georgi Kufov, Ivan B. Genov and Nadezhda Genova, Enthusiast Publications, Sofia, 2025.

- *Travelling: England–Spain*, translated into Bulgarian by Nicolay Kostov, Enthusiast Publications, Sofia, 2025.

## ARTS

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- The director Manos Karatzogiannis adapted the novel *Christ Is Crucified Again* for the theatre. The premiere took place in Athens on 28 March 2026. As he himself explained, the adaptation was created ‘to mark the 70th anniversary of the awarding of the International Peace Prize to Nikos Kazantzakis’ in Vienna.

- On 15 October, the Greek National Opera will present, for the first time at Carnegie Hall in New York, a unique concert featuring works by Greek composers inspired by the writings of Nikos Kazantzakis. The event is held under the auspices of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Our Society has provided its support for this important event.

## DISTINCTION

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Athens, 4 February 2026. The Association of International Media Correspondents in Greece presented the ‘Euprepi 2025’ Awards to prominent figures active in Greece and abroad, who have contributed to the promotion of values in many areas of public life. Among the award recipients was the Honorary President of the ISFNK, Mr Giorgos Stasinakis. The award was presented to him by Professor Andreas Karamanos and the Union’s President, Efthymios Tsiknis. George Stasinakis thanked them warmly, as well as the members of the ISFNK who attended the event as guests.

## DONATIONS

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Swiss Branch: Euphrosyne Jatou, Mania Hahnloser-Sarpaki, Giorgos Stasinakis. Greek Branch: Ioanna Spiliopoulou. ‘The Cretan Perspective’: Anastasios Papadopoulos (Belgium), Kyriaki Samuelsen-Papadopoulou (Norway).

## NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS MUSEUM (FOUNDATION)

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In Myrtia, Heraklion – the ancestral village of Nikos Kazantzakis – the Kazantzakis Museum has been a dynamic centre for research and culture for over 40 years. It was founded in 1983 by the set designer Giorgos Anemogiannis with the aim of preserving, studying and promoting the life and work of this leading Greek author, whose ideas and writings continue to inspire readers around the world. Its exhibition spaces house manuscripts, personal effects, rare editions and valuable artefacts from the author’s extensive archive, which is kept at the Museum, whilst the foundation also carries out significant academic and educational activities, collaborating with cultural and academic institutions in Greece and abroad.

With an emphasis on innovation and accessibility, it offers interactive digital experiences, augmented reality applications and modern guided tour services that bring Kazantzakis’s work closer to the public.

Centred on the work and philosophy of Nikos Kazantzakis, the Museum is constantly evolving as a contemporary space for culture, research and creativity in the heart of Crete. This summer, Myrtia will once again become a meeting place for lovers of literature and the arts through the 5th ‘Zorbas’ Festival of Literature and Art (29 July – 2 August 2026). Inspired by Alexis Zorbas’s iconic work *Zorba the Greek*, the festival features discussions, artistic events, workshops and concerts exploring Zorbas’s enduring presence in contemporary Greek identity.

The Museum welcomes visitors all year round, with summer opening hours (April–October) Tuesday–Sunday 09:00–17:00 and winter opening hours (November–March) Monday–Friday and Sunday 10:00–15:00.

For further information, please visit [www.kazantzaki.gr](http://www.kazantzaki.gr)

## BECOME A MEMBER OF ISFNK

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You will receive the ‘Synthesis’ newsletter every four months, which is published in various languages. This will keep you better informed about our activities. Finally, you will be contributing to the Society through your moral and financial support. Please contact Sofia Dalabeki, General Secretary of the ISFNK, by email [secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com)

## IN MEMORIAM

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It is with great sadness that we have learnt of the passing of: Dimitris Gionis (Athens), Panagiotis Anapliotis (Kalamata) and Christina Kiroga (Buenos Aires).

We extend our sincere condolences to their families.

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