



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. 69, December 2025

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MAIN ARTICLE

ISFNK continues its activities in neighboring and distant countries. Since last August, we have held the following events: Our initiative to include Nikos Kazantzakis in the Council of Europe's "Cultural Routes"; the grand tour of China; the reading of *The Ascetic* in 18 languages in Vienna; the round table in Geneva entitled "Echoes of Humanism"; the first event in Bosnia-Herzegovina; the literary café, the continuation of the reading of *the Odyssey*. Below you will find details of other events that have taken place or are planned (Egypt, Montenegro, Tunisia). We hope you enjoy reading!

"EUROPEAN ROUTES OF NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS"

The Council of Europe has established a network called "Cultural Routes." It has entrusted this effort to The Institute of Cultural Routes, based in Luxembourg. The aim is to highlight and promote the routes of personalities or institutions in the 27 member states of the Council of Europe that serve history, cultural heritage, diversity, cultural tourism, youth, etc. Nikos Kazantzakis, a writer and poet widely known and particularly beloved in Europe, who highlighted cultural, spiritual, social, and historical issues in his work, fits perfectly into this context.

Indeed, he is one of the few writers who has dealt with all literary genres and has lived or traveled in the following 25 countries, which are now members of Council of Europe: England,

Azerbaijan, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, North Macedonia, France, Germany, Georgia, Denmark, Switzerland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Croatia, Cyprus, Monaco, Portugal, Czech Republic, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

The ISFNK decided to propose to the "Institute of Cultural Routes" the inclusion of the great Cretan in the routes. To this end, Katerina Zografistou and George Stasinakis traveled twice to Luxembourg and presented, with the help of documents, a proposal for participation in these routes. Following an invitation, they also participated in a forum in Visegrad, Hungary, where they presented our proposal, which was warmly received by several delegations.

The World General Assembly of the ISFNK, held in Heraklion on July 28, 2025, approved this plan and decided to create an association independent of the ISFNK (this was a prerequisite of the Institute). On December 21, 2025, at the meeting of the founding members, its Articles of Association were approved. Both natural and legal persons will be able to register. The Articles of Association were filed with the Court of First Instance of Heraklion. After its approval, we will proceed with elections to appoint the Board of Directors. The first event of the new association will take place in February 2026, in Heraklion, with the theme "Kazantzakis and Zorbas" (see following pages). In two years, our application will be officially submitted to the Council of Europe for certification.

We would like to express our warmest thanks to the Greek Ministry of Culture and Ms. Sofia Dalabeki, Secretary General of the ISFNK, for their valuable assistance.

MARATHON READING OF THE ODYSSEY IN GREEK

It continues to be successful, judging by the participation, especially of young people, as well as friends living in many cities and countries. Our friend Ms. Sofia Dalabeki reminds us that by the end of December 2025, 27,684 verses out of 33,333 had been read. The next dates set for 2026 are: *January 22, February 22, March 22, April 26, and May 24* (completion of the reading). In October 2027, the ISFNK will organize an international conference. You can find all the information on how to participate in the readings (via Zoom or YouTube) on the ISFNK website <http://amis-kazantzaki.gr/odyssey> or by emailing secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com.



LE REGARD CRETOIS, Η ΚΡΗΤΙΚΗ ΜΑΤΙΑ, THE CRETAN GAZE, LA MIRADA CRETENSE

Our annual magazine has been published continuously since 1990 in English, Spanish, French, and Greek. It aims to preserve faith in the work of Nikos Kazantzakis and to enhance its impact through unpublished or little-known texts by the author, studies, testimonials, book reviews, and bibliographies. Please share *Le Regard crétois* with your friends, as well as libraries, universities, and schools. You can contact us at email secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com.

We remind you that the magazine is now also published in digital form. Those interested can contact us at: le.regard.cretois.siank@gmail.com.

Contents, issue 52 – December 2025

Texts by Nikos Kazantzakis

- Sketches of Mount Athos.

Studies AND research

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

Testimony

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

Book reviews in Greek

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

LETTER FROM NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS TO BORJE KNOS (1)

Antibes, June 21, 1954

My dear friend,

Our friend "Zorbas" won the award for best foreign book, printed in France. I can imagine how much fun he'll have at Paradise, where will be. However, "Fragiskos" is published in a column in one of the best Athenian newspapers... From my sunny solitude here, I watch with amazement the passions of people; and I continue my work—dreaming of a better humanity and struggling to express it; by expressing it, I believe I facilitate its coming. The American poet Friar arrives in Antibes the day after tomorrow... My publisher in New York is sending him and paying him for six months to stay with me and translate the *Odyssey*. All my works are side projects. That is why I agreed to make this sacrifice, to lose six months...

(1) Translator of Kazantzakis into Swedish.

LATEST EVENTS OF THE ISFNK

Literary café

Heraklion, December 10, 2025

Kostas Akrivos, philologist and author of many works, presented his book "The Name of father Danube" (the life of Panait Istrati). The talented author clearly recounted Istrati's biography and his close friendship with Kazantzakis, their joint activities, travels, and quests through the novels of the Greek-Romanian author. You can find the event on YouTube and on the ISFNK website <https://amis-kazantzaki.gr/cafélitteraire>.

Vienna, November 2, 2025

The *Ascetic*, Kazantzakis's magnum opus, was published 80 years ago. To mark this anniversary, the association "Hephaestius Wien-Osterreich/Griechischer Integrationsverein" and the ISFNK organized a unique event. Representatives of the two organizations, educators, translators, and young people read the prologue to the essay in 18 languages, something that has never been done before for a work by the great Cretan author. It is worth noting that the essay was read in Guaraní (the official language of the indigenous people of Paraguay) and Zulu (the most widely spoken native language in South Africa). The Greek Embassy in Vienna and the Cypriot Minister of Education, Sport, and Youth placed the event under their auspices.

Other events

Australia, Perth, December 2025. To mark the end of the school year, students at the Greek school read excerpts from Nikos Kazantzakis' works *Adelfofades* and *Report to Greco*. *Sydney, April 12, 2025*. The sub-branch continued its work this year, headed by Vasilis Adraktas as president. It devoted some of its activities to the study of spirituality and Buddhism in Nikos Kazantzakis. During one of its meetings, it decided to assign new positions of responsibility to young people. Vasilis will take on the duties of secretary.

We would like to thank him warmly for his dedication and numerous activities over the years. We would also like to thank the Pan-Nafpaktian Association of New South Wales for its hospitality. Another activity of the sub-branch that is worth mentioning is the following: On *October 27, 2025*, a round table discussion was organized on Nikos Kazantzakis' novel *Captain Michalis*, as well as a screening of Costas Charalambous' film *Captain Michalis*. This was followed by an interesting discussion with Alfred Vincent and Yiannis Theodoridis. Thanks to AHEPA-Sydney and Nia Gitsas. Finally, on *November 2, 2025*, during lunch, the winners of the raffle by artist Ouresis Todorovits were announced (see ARTS section). Thanks to Katerina Vetsika. Over a hundred people attended the event. *Melbourne, May 8, 2025*. The Greek Community organized a lecture by Vasilis Adrachta on the religious element in Kazantzakis' work, with particular reference to Buddhism.

Belgium, Brussels, October 19 and 20, 2025. Our friend Tasos Papadopoulos, President of the Belgian Branch of the ISFNK, informed us about the successful screening of Spiros Tsiftsis' documentary "Nikos Kazantzakis, the Ecumenical." The director honored the event with his presence. Katerina Mandroni, professor at the European School Brussels III, developed the theme "Nikos Kazantzakis, a different writer." The event was presented by Maria Karachaliou, member of the Belgian Branch of the ISFNK; *November 2025*. The exhibition "1821, Crete in the Greek Revolution," organized by the Greek Embassy in Belgium in collaboration with the Association of Cretans in Belgium and the Annex of the ISFNK, was a real success.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, University of Pale, November 7, 2025. We warmly thank Ms. Ioanna Efthymiadou, Ambassador of Greece, and her colleagues, Professor Vladan Bartula, as well as the large audience, for organizing and participating in the lecture by George Stasinakis and the screening of the documentary by the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum "I Am Free."

China, November 28 - December 5, 2025. Katerina Zografistou, Elena Avramidou, member of the Board of Directors of ISFNK, and George Stasinakis gave lectures on the following topics: "The global impact of Nikos Kazantzakis," "Kazantzakis and China," and "Tribute to Chenggui, translator of Kazantzakis," at four universities: two in Beijing - University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) and Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), in Chongqing - Center for Ancient Greek and Chinese Culture (KELKIP), and in Shanghai - Shanghai International Studies University (SISU). At the same time, the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum video "I Am Free" and Yannis Smaragdis' film about the great Cretan were screened. The events were held under the auspices of the Greek Ambassador, Mr. Eugene Kalpyris, who was present in Chongqing and gave a speech. Mr. Spyridon Kritikos, Consul General, and Mr. Dimitrios Foukis, Head of the Office of Public Diplomacy, also participated in Shanghai. Deans, professors, and numerous students (all Chinese) warmly welcomed representatives of ISFNK, presented their work and watched the events with great interest. We found that the students spoke excellent Greek and expressed their love for Kazantzakis' work and for Greece. When we asked them why they were learning Greek, the answers were impressive: Yiannis (they all have Greek names): "To

"To be honest, when I started learning Greek, I did not realize how much I love Greek culture and the Greek mentality." Ourania, for her part, said: "I started by chance. But now I love everything about Greece."

Greece, Athens, November 6, 2025. 51st Conference of the Panhellenic Union of Philologists. Georgia Kakourou-Chroni, member of the Board of Directors of the Greek Branch of the ISFNK, presented a paper on our author's book *In the Palaces of Knossos; Athens, University of West Attica, December 19, 2025*. A one-day conference was organized by the above University, the ISFNK, and Dioptra Publications on the theme: "Kazantzakis in the 21st Century. Mapping his travel books." Speakers included: Katerina Zografistou on "Nikos Kazantzakis: the contribution of the ISFNK to the global impact of his work," Nikos Chrysos, vice president of the ISFNK, on "Nikos Kazantzakis travels through the world of ideas and art," as well as ISFNK members Spyros Ntzouropanos and Kleomenis Kalogeropoulos on "Kazantzakis the traveler." The Nikos Kazantzakis Museum documentary "I Am Free" was also screened. *Komotini*. Vanda Papaioannou-Voutsas, member of the Board of Directors of the Greek Branch, gave the following lectures: *November 19, 2025*, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Cultural Association of the Byzantine Fortress of Komotini, on the topic: "We dream and travel with the ecumenical Nikos Kazantzakis as our guide"; *December 22, 2025*, at the Art School, on the topic: "The universe of Nikos Kazantzakis, the driving force behind creative writing."

Switzerland, Geneva, October 2, 2025. In the presence of the Consul General of Greece, Mr. Alexandros Gennimatas, and a large audience, the ISFNK presented for the first time in French an adaptation of Nikos Kazantzakis' novel *The Snake and the Lily*, with actors Anne-Lise Fritsch and Michel Kühne and musician Raphaël Daniel. Marcel Cottier presented paintings inspired by the novel. The event was held under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in Geneva; *Geneva, November 11, 2025*. Round table discussion on "Echoes of Humanism. The timeless legacy of Jorge Luis Borges. Albert Cohen, Nikos Kazantzakis, and Stefan Zweig." The evening was organized by the Jorge Luis Borges International Foundation, the Albert Cohen Foundation, the ISFNK and the Stefan Zweig House; *Zurich, November 15, 2025*. The Greek Community of Zurich and the Swiss Branch of the ISFNK paid tribute to Kazantzakis. The event began with a visit to the building of the former Consulate General of Greece, on the facade of which a commemorative plaque has been placed for several years. This was followed by a large event at the Cultural Center of the Greek Church, which included a video screening and a speech by Rozmi Pahlisch-Tzanos, President of the Swiss Branch of the ISFNK, on the topic "Kazantzakis in Switzerland." This was followed by dances and songs performed by the choir of the Greek Community. Ms. Aikaterini Simopoulou, Ambassador of Greece to Bern, and His Eminence Bishop Fanourios honored the event with their presence.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Literary café

- *January 21, 2026*: Lefteris Giannakoudakis, author, director, and educator, will present his book:

"You have the words, you have the stage" (an approach to the work of Nikos Kazantzakis using the techniques of creative writing and theater).

- *January 22, 2026*: First literary café in French, organized in Geneva. It will be dedicated to *Ofis and Krino*. Katerina Zografistou, Michel Kühne, actor, and Rozmi Pahlisch-Tzanos, President of the Swiss Branch of the ISFNK, will speak.
- February 9, 2026, World Greek Language Day, speech by Vanda Papaioannou-Voutsas to two classes of the 2nd year of the 2nd Lyceum of Komotini on the topic: "The work of Kazantzakis: a reservoir of linguistic wealth."
- February 10, 2026, Lecture-discussion by Vanda Papaioannou-Voutsas in the Creative Writing Department of philologist Lena Hatzis at the Komotini Concert Hall-Cultural Center on the topic: "The influence of Nikos Kazantzakis on my personal writing."
- *February 25, 2026*: Lecture by Lambros Kouloumbartis, professor emeritus at the Free University of Brussels: "The question raised by the political evolution of Nikos Kazantzakis," on the occasion of his forthcoming study: "The political philosophy of Nikos Kazantzakis."
- *March 25, 2026*: Isidoros Zourgos, author, will speak on: "On the journey of adolescence – An oral confession."

World Reading Club

Greece, Sparta, April 22, 2026. Georgia Kakourou-Chroni will present the topic: "Nikos Kazantzakis and Nikiforos Vrettakos. Two creators converse through their work."

Other events

Canada, Ottawa, March 25, 2026. Our faithful and beloved friend, Kathy Dimitriou, will present Nikos Kazantzakis' book *Captain Michalis* and the historical context of his era to the Greek Community. Thank you, Kathy, for all your work and for your many years of dedicated effort to make our author known in Ottawa.

Egypt, Cairo, January 16, 2026, Hellenic Cultural Center of Cairo: Lecture by George Stassinakis on "Traveling in the Middle East with Nikos Kazantzakis"; *Abeteios School of Cairo, January 17, 2026*: Screening of the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum documentary "A Restless Traveler" and lecture by Katerina Zografistou on "The Life and Work of Nikos Kazantzakis."

Greece, Heraklion, January 31, 2026. As part of the University of the Aegean's Study Program, Sofia Dalambeki will present her master's thesis on: "Cultural and literary tourism. Traveling literally and metaphorically through the literary texts of Nikos Kazantzakis"; *February 17, 2026*: an evening dedicated to "The Real Zorba and his ties to Kazantzakis and Heraklion." George Stasinakis, author of the book "Kazantzakis Zorbas, a true friendship" (published by Kastaniotis Publications, 2017), will speak on the topic "Nikos Kazantzakis and Giorgos Zorbas." This will be followed by testimonials from: Evita Kechagia-Varela (great-granddaughter of Georgios Zorbas, Xanthi) on the topic "Nikos Kazantzakis – Giorgos Zorbas: an ecumenical spirit converses with a Balkan citizen." Katerina Exarchouleas-Georgileas

(freelancer, researcher, Kardamyli, Mani, Messinia) on the topic "The Kazantzakis-Zorbas lignite mine in Prastova, Mani." Katerina Zografistou will coordinate the event.

Lamia, March 29 – April 3, 2026. The television channel Star Central Greece will organize STARFORUM 2026, with Kazantzakis' phrase "Go where you cannot go" as its central message. ISFNK will participate in the conference proceedings on the panel entitled "The Modern Apostles of Nikos Kazantzakis."

France, 2025-2026. Françoise Boussard, lecturer at the Open University of Nantes, gave lectures in 2025 and will continue in 2026 on Kazantzakis' last novel, *The Incline*: 1) "From Nikos to Kosmas, from Kosmas to Nikos. *The Ascent* creative writing workshop"; 2) "In Crete with Kosmas: The Shadows of History"; 3) "The dilemma of a Cretan: From *The Ascent* to *Freedom or Death*"; 4) "The English experience: travel diary and fictional transformation"; 5) "The experience of England: a journey of demythologization"; 6) "Nikos Kazantzakis and Shakespeare"; 7) "The motif of ascension in Kazantzakis' work."

Montenegro, Podgorica, French Institute, March 19. Under the auspices of the Embassies of Greece and France, George Stassinakis will speak about Nikos Kazantzakis and his ties to France.

Russia, Moscow, February 9, 2026. Our friend Dora Giannitsis, President of the Hellenic Cultural Center, Ms. Aikaterini Batalia, President of the International Society of Men of Letters, and the ISFNK will participate in the World Day of the Greek Language.

Tunisia, Tunis. An event is being prepared for the coming months. Thank you, Chedia!

ISFNK OPERATIONS

General Assembly via Zoom

It will take place on *March 1 or 8, 2026 (repeat)*. Please log in to
zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/886525585275?pwd==23gDaoNkL35utgli6nhx41cAiAiSdVv7.1>

New Coordinators

- Canada, Ottawa: Sofia Grafanaki, University Professor.
- Serbia, Belgrade: Antonia Kostic, University Professor.

PUBLICATIONS

- Ioanna Katsouni: "Emmanuel Roidis, Nikos Kazantzakis, contemporaries and misunderstood," Radamanthys Publications, Chania 2025 (in Greek).
- George Vlachos: "Traveling and the exercise of divine knowledge in Kazantzakis' dreamlike and philosophical discourse," Grafi Publications, Trikala 2025 (in Greek).
- Lambros Kouloubaritsis: "The Political Philosophy of Nikos Kazantzakis," Kastaniotis Publications, Athens (in Greek – to be released in 2026).

- George Stasinakis: Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957) between Europe and the East, L'Harmattan, Paris (in French, to be published in 2026).

ARTS

- From April 22 to 27, the DEFKF Annex in Sydney presented an exhibition of paintings by Associate Professor Ouresis Todorovich, featuring works inspired by the spirituality in the work of Nikos Kazantzakis.

- In October 2025, the Municipal Gallery of Aegina presented an exhibition dedicated to the great painter Takis Kalmouchos, a friend of Kazantzakis. It should be noted that in 1927 they traveled together to Egypt, to the Monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai. Kalmouchos painted a portrait of our author, which adorns the cover of our newsletter "Synthesis."

- Melbourne, Greek Film Festival. In October and November 2025, Kostas Papacharalambous' film "Captain Michalis" was successfully screened for two weeks.

- Canada, Ottawa, March 25, 2026. Kathy Dimitriou informs us that the aforementioned film "Captain Michalis" will be screened in the Canadian capital.

- Thodoris Papadoulakis began filming "Xanastavroise" in Chania, based on Kazantzakis' work "Christ Recrucified."

- The play in French "Je n'ai toujours pas fini mon Odyssée" by Thaddée Meurant, which won an award in the competition organized by the ISFNK in 2023, will be presented at the Collège Saint-Joseph in Asnières (France) on March 24 and 25, 2026.

IN MEMORIAM

- On October 19, 2005, Giorgos Anemogiannis, a great man of the theater, founder of the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum, a man of integrity and simplicity, passed away. He participated in the creation of the ISFNK at the University of Geneva, together with Eleni and a few admirers of the work of the great Cretan. He never ceased to offer us his active support in our activities. You will always remain in our hearts, George!

- In the previous issue of Synthesis, we reported on the death of Professor Chrysostomos Stamoulis. Mr. Athanasios Kalamatas, an educator in Mytilene, writes: "Nowadays, there are still people who live with their eyes open. These are people of intellect who overcome disappointment. They often observe the reality around them and wonder where our culture is ultimately headed. One such intellectual was Chrysostomos Stamoulis, who passed away unexpectedly this August at the age of 61. Chrysostomos put the combination of theology and literature into practice. Like his unforgettable teacher Nikos Matsoukas, he was also a teacher to those of us who graduated from the Theological School of Thessaloniki. The writings of Nikos Kazantzakis occupy an important place in Chrysostomos's work. Today, eighty years (1945) after the first complete edition of *Asceticism*, Chrysostomos has left us with an extremely important approach to it. From a theological perspective, he explains why the subtitle *Salvatores Dei*, "that is, Saviors of God," refers to patristic literature, mainly to

holy Cyril of Alexandria. A study of his, "postscript," entitled "The Man Who Saved God. A commentary on Nikos Kazantzakis' *Asceticism*," in his book "Love and Death," comments on why in "classical Christian soteriology," which knows "that man is saved by God," the opposite, that man could save God, is "scandalous." He argues that St. Cyril's "Greetings" to the Virgin Mary "say nothing less than that the Mother of God sanctifies the Holy Trinity," which is clear since "Cyril's attribution of the sanctification of the Trinity to the Mother of God clearly refers to the fact of her ministry of incarnation." What does St. Cyril write? The following: "Rejoice, O holy virgin who bore the unborn in your womb; through whom the Trinity is sanctified; through whom the cross is called holy and is worshipped throughout the world..." Here, I should also note what Pavel Evdokimov mentions in his book "Woman and the Salvation of the World": "If Christ saves the world, the Mother of God is the one who protects it and brings the tenderness of grace into its 'inhumanity'." For Stamoulis, Kazantzakis is not the only writer who is inclined to show that man saves God. We find the same position in the poets Giorgos Themelis and Tasos Livaditis. The great Cretan "demonstrates the tragedy of an existence that struggles to save God in order to be saved by him." To the question posed by Stamoulis, "what do we have to counter this burning existence today," he gives the following astonishing answer: "If we are at least honest and want to save what can be saved, we must at least say, standing respectfully before human suffering, before the drama of an entire civilization, that the Cretan is not trying to play God. It is not, as many argue, an attempt to take God's place, but a search for man's place. A struggle against any inhuman and therefore certain theocentrism, which, leaving man outside the fence of God, ignores that his true essence, if it is to be true, can only be deeply human. Or rather, redemptive and divine. An essence open to wonder and hope, an open city facing expectation, struggling to believe that: "In the most critical moments, Love captivates and violently brings together people, enemies and friends, good and bad; it is a breath superior to them, independent of their desires and deeds. It is the breath of God, his breath, upon the earth." Chrysostomos Stamoulis does not violate the eternal mystery of human salvation. With an enlightened conscience, he honestly professes his faith in God, in man, and in life. For Orthodox Theology, the first move of man, who is conscious of his existence, is to know and be reconciled with God. It is a loving and intoxicating relationship between man and God, an opening of himself to Him.

- We were saddened to learn of the deaths of George Kressos (Toronto), Jean-Paul Sorg (Strasbourg), and Paschalis Tsalikoglou (Nice, Greece). We extend our sincere condolences to their families.

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