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 71, August 2026

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Lead article

The most significant event of the year is undoubtedly the conference being organized in October by the association "Nikos Kazantzakis' European Roads." The high turnout, which has already been announced, demonstrates researchers' interest in our author's work. This newsletter also reports on the completion of the "Odyssey" reading marathon, as well as on the new issue of the magazine "Le Regard Crétois" (The Cretan Gaze), featuring its redesigned cover. Below are the activities of *ISFNK* members and friends, as well as an exceptional essay by Nikos Kazantzakis on Saint Francis.

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE ON THE THEME: "NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS'S EUROPEAN PATHS: FROM THE HERAKLION OF YESTERDAY TO THE EUROPE OF TODAY AND TOMORROW"

In the latest issue of "Synthesis," we reported on the recognition of the "European Roads of Nikos Kazantzakis" association by the Court of First Instance of Heraklion. The association's GeneralAssembly, convened to elect the Board of Directors and the Audit Committee, was held on *May 17*, *2026*, and elected the Board of Directors, which was composed as follows: President, Georgios Stasinakis (Switzerland); Vice President and Executive Director, Aikaterini Zografistou (Greece); Secretary General, Sofia Dalambeki (Greece); Treasurer, Emmanouil Zacharioudakis (Greece). Members: Andreas Metaxas (Greece), Head of Public Relations for Europe and Greece; Maria Zachariaki (Greece), Special Secretary; Georg Miltiades Gstrein (Austria), Head of Press, Communications, and Activities in Central and Eastern Europe; Nikolaos Paparoydamis (France), Head of Education, Research, and Activities in Western Europe; Liza Karimyan (Armenia), Head of Activities in the Caucasus Countries (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan). Alternate members: Edith-Adriana Uncu (Romania) and Athanasios Kalamatas (Greece). The Board of Directors appointed Edith-Adriana Uncu as the person in charge of activities in the Balkans and Athanasios Kalamatas as the person in charge of education matters in Greece. Professor Emerita Ioanna Spiliopoulou of the University of the Peloponnese was appointed to the position of Scientific Advisor. Georgios Maglis (Belgium) was appointed Special Advisor on economic and cultural issues related to the Routes. Audit Committee: Chair, Spyros Ntzouropanos (Greece). Members: Iliana Zioga (Greece) and Mauro Rivera Castillo (Spain).

The General Assembly decided to organize a hybrid conference *from October 22 to 25, 2026*, at the Heraklion Chamber of Commerce, with the theme: "Nikos Kazantzakis's European Journeys: From the Heraklion of Yesterday to the Europe of Today and Tomorrow."

According to information available as of August 30, the conference was held under the auspices of the UNESCO Chair at the Ionian University (Corfu), the Interdepartmental Graduate Program "Management & Technologies in Cultural Heritage" at the University of the Peloponnese, the municipalities of Heraklion and Archanes-Asterousia (Crete), the International Society of Friends of Nikos Kazantzakis, and the Kazantzakis Museum. The aim of the conference is to examine the European dimension of the great Cretan writer's thought and work through new readings and interpretive approaches in the light of contemporary theoretical and interdisciplinary tools. In line with the priorities of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Program, the goal is to adopt a European and interdisciplinary approach to Kazantzakis's work and to highlight its timeless relevance to issues of cultural identity, freedom, otherness, sustainability, and innovation. The final program will be published next month. It will include, among other things, a list of sponsors and speakers. An extensive feature on the conference will be published in the December 2026 issue of "Cretan Gaze."

The conference attracted keen interest from scholars and scientists from various countries and academic institutions. A total of 83 presenters from 20 countries are participating, with 66 presentations that fully cover the conference's thematic scope. The presenters, listed by country and in alphabetical order, are:

Armenia: Liza Karimian; **Australia**: Chrysoula Melissinaki; Austria: Georg Gstrein; **Belgium**: Lambros Kouloubaritsis, Georgios Maglis; **Bulgaria**: Velichka Simonova-Grozdeva; **France**: Ilias Giokaris, Nikos Paparoydamis, Allain Glykos, Jean Claude Schwendemann; **Germany**: Hans-Ulrich Seiffert; **Switzerland**: Rozmi Tzanos-Pahlisch; **Greece**: Elena Avramidou, Marianthi Anastasiadou, Ioannis Andronoglou, Marianna Apostolou, Akrive Vagena, Paraskevi Vassiliadi, Aikaterini Vergetaki-Peirasmaki, Fotis Vlachos, Sotirios Gousopoulos, Zoe Gousopoulou, Georgia Dalla, Alexandros Dediliaris, Marina Detoraki, Athanasia Drakouli, Georgios Dritsas, Emmanouil I. Zacharioudakis, Iliana Zioga, Aikaterini Zografistou, Nikos Kagkelaris, Georgia Kakourou-Chroni, Konstantinos Kalaitzakis, Athanasios I. Kalamatas, Fotini Kallianteri, Kleomenis Kalogeropoulos, Spyros Katsarapidis, Ioannis Katsios, Eva Kokkinidi, Dimitris Kokoris, Anna Kyriakaki, Christina-Panagiota Kyriakopoulou, Manolis Ligerakis, Theofanis Malkidis, Ioanna Manthakou, Agathi Markati, Antonis Nikolopoulos (Soloúp), Sofia Dalambeki, Spyros Ntzouropanos, Kyriakos Panagiotou, Evanthia Papaioannou-Voutsa, Leonidas Papakostantinis, Filimonas Patsakis, Konstantinos Pettas, Apostolos Poulis, Ioanna Spiliopoulou, Vasileios Spokos, Ioannis Stathogiannis, Angeliki Taligarou-Gialidou, Tsatsaris Andreas, Tsirigas Spyridon, Tsoulakou Maria, Hatziapostolou Maria, Chrysos Nikos, Psilopoulos Dionysios, **Spain**: Rivera Mauro, **Netherlands**: Groen Basilius J., **China**: Fang Tongxin, **South Africa**: Marilena Piperidou-Triantafyllou, **Uzbekistan**: Odilchoh Ostonovich Bobokalonov, Ramazon Rajabovich Bobokalonov, Obodon Adizova Istamovna, Muborak Xamidova Hafizovna, **Ukraine**: Andrii Malakhiti, Oksana Snigovska, **Poland**: Michał Bzinkowski, **Romania**: Edith-Adriana Uncu, **Serbia**: Dragana Tkalac Popović, **Tunisia**: Chadia Haddad, **Finland**: Eleni Berki, Juri-Petri Valtanen, Jose Canas-Bajo Jose.



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

Our annual magazine, published without interruption since 1990 in English, Spanish, French, and Greek, aims to keep alive interest in the work of Nikos Kazantzakis and to broaden its reach through the author's unpublished or little-known texts, studies, testimonies, and bibliographic references. We invite you to help promote the journal "Le Regard crétois" (The Cretan Perspective) by sharing it with your friends and colleagues, as well as with libraries, universities, and schools. For more information, please contact us by email at: secretary.siank.gr@gmail.com

We remind you that the journal is also published in digital format. Those interested can contact us via email at: le.regard.cretois.siank@gmail.com

The next issue will be released with a new cover and will feature a presentation of an early work by Kazantzakis, studies, book reviews, and a special section on the October 2026 conference.

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Apostolos Poulis: Nikos Kazantzakis's Views on the Language of the Demoticists in Seven Other Countries: Italy, Spain, Germany, England, France, Russia, and China (in Greek, with summaries in the other languages).

Morton P. Levitt: Homer, Joyce, Kazantzakis: Modernism and the Epic Tradition (in English, with summaries in other languages).

Dimitris Stefanakis: Nikos Kazantzakis, Johann Sebastian Bach. "The Last Temptation" and "The Passion According to St. Matthew" (in Spanish, with summaries in other languages).

Conference: "Nikos Kazantzakis' European Journeys: From Yesterday's Heraklion to the Europe of Today and Tomorrow."

MARATHON READING OF THE ODYSSEY IN GREEK

Organized on the initiative of Sofia Dalabeki, Secretary General and Special Advisor on Modern Media at the ISFNK. It began on February 18, 2024, and concluded on May 23, 2026. In previous issues of "Synthesis," we have reported on its progress, which proved to be a real success, particularly among young students. Participants received a special certificate of participation. To continue the reflection and discussion surrounding this important epic poem, the DEFK is planning to organize an international conference in 2028. We thank and congratulate all the participants, as well as the organizing team: Katerina Zografistou, Kyriakos Panagiotou, Nikos Chrysos, Vanda Papaioannou-Voutsa, and Sofia Dalambeki.

ACTIVITIES

World Reading Club

November 29, 2026

Katerina Zografistou will moderate this fall's club meeting on the topic: "From the lived space to the narrative space: Paris in Nikos Kazantzakis's "Broken Souls"."

Literary Cafés

September 23, 2026

This event will be held in conjunction with Ioanna Katsouni's book "Roidis–Kazantzakis", featuring the author and Sefi Michelogiannis, former President of the Greek Branch of the International Association of Kazantzakis Studies (ISFNK) and an honorary member of ISFNK.

October 2, 2026

Basilius J. (Bert) Groen, Visiting Professor at the Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies in Rome, presented his book "Struggle for Freedom, Nikos Kazantzakis and Greek Orthodoxy". The event will be moderated by Elena Avramidou.

November 8, 2026

Giorgos Stasinakis's book "Kazantzakis Between Europe and the East" will be presented in French and Greek. Katerina Zografistou will moderate the event.

November 11, 2026

Elli Lambridi: "It Was Smoke." Her relationship with Kazantzakis. Moderated by Yolanda Hatzis, author.

December 16, 2026

On the book by Giorgos Vlachos, Ph.D. in Literature from the University of Cyprus: "The Journey and the Theological Exercise in Kazantzakis's Dreamlike and Philosophical Texts," Lilia Tsouva, philologist and author, and Ioannis Dimitrakakis, associate professor of Modern Greek Literature at the University of Crete, will speak.

Other events

Belgium, Brussels, September 18, 2026.The Belgian Branch of the ISFNK, in collaboration with Dioptra Publications, is organizing an evening with author Panos Dimakis, who will speak about the odyssey of translating Nikos Kazantzakis's work and about his novel "The Sun with the Eyes of Lions." Participants in the event will include: Nikos Stagios, Michalis Papadakis, Maria Karachaliou, Ioanna Katsagioni, and Thanos Pagoutsos. The goal of the event is to foster a dialogue between literature, language, and culture, highlighting both the global reach of the great Cretan author's work and the role of translation as a bridge between peoples and cultures.

Chile, Santiago, August 2026. During a trip to that country, Elena Avramidou met with Didier Castillo, a distinguished professor and translator of many of Kazantzakis's works into Spanish. During their meeting, she learned that our friend read, via Zoom, last year and continues this year to present Nikos Kazantzakis's "The Odyssey", which he has translated into Spanish, in various countries throughout Latin America.

Greece, Avdira, Xanthi, Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, August 28, 2026. "When Mikis Theodorakis Met Kazantzakis," featuring actor Grigoris Valtinos. The event was held under the auspices of the ISFNK. Board member Vanda Papaioannou-Voutsa delivered a welcoming address on behalf of the ISFNK.

Heraklion, September 6, 2026. General Assembly to elect a new Board of Directors for the Greek Branch.

Komotini, Rodopi, September 15, 2026. The following event will take place at the Komotini Concert Hall: "Getting to Know Kosuke Fukuda: The Japanese Modern Greek Scholar and Translator of Kazantzakis and Contemporary Modern Greek Literature" by the AMTH Cultural Center and the "Thrace Observer," under the auspices of the Deputy Mayor's Office for Culture and Youth of the Municipality of Komotini. Vanda Papaioannou-Voutsa, a member of the Board of Directors of the Greek Branch of the International Nikos Kazantzakis Foundation.

Stoupa, Messinia, September 25–27, 2026. Festival "In the Footsteps of Kazantzakis and Zorba: Land, People, and Freedom in Kazantzakis's Mani." Participants will include Dr. Georgia Kakourou-Chroni, a member of the Board of Directors of the Greek Branch of the *ISFNK*, and Maklena Nika, President of the Albanian Branch of the *ISFNK*, who will speak on the topic "The Timeless Relevance of Nikos Kazantzakis." First presentation of the book by Katerina Exarchoulea-Georgilea, "Nikos Kazantzakis and Giorgis Zorbas: Authentic Testimonies."

Sitia, Crete: December 5–6, 2026. Workshops dedicated to writing, memory, creativity, and humanity, organized by Radamanthys Publications. One of the conferences will be dedicated to the theme: "Nikos Kazantzakis: Gazing into the Abyss. His Thought, His Literature, and Contemporary Interpretations of His Work." The speakers will be: Giorgos Angelakis, Michalis Giannakakis, Charalambos Magoulas, and Christos Tsantis. The *ISFNK* has placed the event under its auspices.

United States of America, Boston, Maliotis Cultural Center, October 23, 2026, and New York, October 27, 2026, Queens College. With the support of the *ISFNK*, Takis Chrysikakos will present a dramatized monologue based on "Report on Greco". The events are held with the support of Dioptra Publications.
France. Thaddée Meurant successfully continued the run of his play "I Have Not Yet Completed My Odyssey" (read his account in the "Arts" section of the newsletter). Several performances are scheduled for the coming months in France and Greece.
Switzerland. The Branch held its General Assembly in Geneva on June 27, 2026. It elected a new Board of Directors, with the following members: Rozmi Tzanos-Pahlisch, President (Geneva); Joanna von Bourg, Secretary (Geneva); Ioannis Alexakis, Treasurer and *ISFNK* representative for German-speaking Switzerland; Maria Argyriou, *ISFNK* representative for Italian-speaking Switzerland. Geneva, November 16, 2026. Invited by the "Greek-Swiss Friendship Association Jean-Gabriel Eynard," Giorgos Stasinakis will present his latest book, "Nikos Kazantzaki (1883–1957) entre l'Europe et l'Orient", (Nikos Kazantzakis [1883–1957] Between Europe and the East) (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2026) and will give a lecture on the relevance of Kazantzakis's work today. Geneva, November 30, 2026. The president of the Branch will give a lecture on "Jorge Luis Borges and Nikos Kazantzakis."

ARTS

On October 15, 2026, 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 Holy Archdiocese of America of the Greek Orthodox Church. Our Society supports this important cultural event.

Heraklion, Conference, October 22-25, 2026. As part of this event, Ioannis Stathogiannis, a visual artist, will exhibit a porcelain sculpture with gold inlays, shaped like a pillow, titled "The Journey of the Soul," inspired by Nikos Kazantzakis's "Reference to El Greco".

We mentioned "Synthesis" in connection with Thaddée Meurant's play. He was kind enough to send us the following note.
"Three years ago, thanks to my Ancient Greek professor, Hélène Bourillon - a member of the *ISFNK* - I had the good fortune to discover the work of Nikos Kazantzakis. In fact, she was the one who suggested I enter the contest organized by the *ISFNK*. Above all, it was an opportunity to discover this leading figure of modern Greek culture, whose unique way of thinking immediately moved me. For several weeks, I immersed myself in his biography and works, discovering a complex personality. Kazantzakis struck me, on the one hand, as a man who was not afraid of being marginalized, ceaselessly challenging established social beliefs and placing freedom above all else; and on the other hand, a man with an active presence in the world and a deep human interest, who empathizes with people and cares about what moves and motivates them - without overlooking his work with the League of Nations and UNESCO. The Cretan spirit permeates his entire body of work, lending it an air of freedom and independence, and the authentic atmosphere of village life particularly touched me, as it reminded me of the spirit of Corsica, which I know well. After spending the first few weeks familiarizing myself with his work, it seemed natural to me to dedicate an ambitious project to this author, as his ideas inspired me and it would have been a shame not to explore them to their fullest extent. So, I chose to write a play- and, more specifically, a tragedy that would combine Homer's "Odyssey" with Kazantzakis's "Odyssey". The writing process took three months. The main challenge during that time was to transform a complex philosophical idea into a theatrical plot. Thanks to *ISFNK*, however, the story didn't end with the completion of the script. For the first prize I won, I had the opportunity to be invited to Crete, where my love for Kazantzakis grew even deeper through invaluable encounters. I will always remember this trip, which is inextricably linked in my memory to the name of Nikos Kazantzakis and to the writing of this play. Once again, I thank *ISFNK* from the bottom of my heart for this incredible experience!

KAZANTZAKIS'S WORK IN POLAND

Michał Bzinkowski, a professor of Greek Philology at the University of Kraków and head of the Greek Cultural Center in Poland, presents the history and future prospects of the great Cretan author's work in his country. Until now, Nikos Kazantzakis's work has been known in Poland primarily thanks to the novel "Life and Politics of Alexis Zorbas" (in Polish, "The Greek Zorba"), which was translated by Nikos Hatzinikolaou (1935 - 2009). The first edition was published in 1971. By 1989, the novel had been published six times. It was republished in 1996 and several more times thereafter. In 2021, a new translation was published, prepared by the renowned multilingual translator Ireneusz Kania (1940–2023). The second edition of this translation was published in 2025
"Zorba" is the only novel by Kazantzakis that has been translated into Polish directly from Greek. His other novels were published in Poland primarily via the French language: "Christ Recrucified" (first published in 1958; reissued in 1978 and in 1992), "Captain Michalis" (1960), and "God's Little Poor Man" (first published in 1962; second edition in 2012). The works "The Last Temptation" (1992) and "A Report on El Greco" (2012) were translated from English. The philosophical essay "Asceticism: Salvatores Dei, by Ewa T. Szyler (1993), as well as selected travel writings from the "Traveling" series, which were published in literary magazines and translated by Michał Bzinkowski and Rita Winiarska in 2017, 2018, and 2019. This year, thanks to an initiative by the Poznań-based publishing house Materia, which is part of the Nowa Baśń publishing group, the novel "The Last Temptation" was published for the first time in Polish, translated directly from Greek by Przemysław Kordos. Next year, the novels "Christ Is Crucified Again" and "Captain Michalis", translated by Michał Bzinkowski, as well as "God's Little Poor Man", translated by Rita Winiarska, are expected to be published.

PUBLICATIONS IN THE GREEK PRESS

In an interview in Greek, published in the Athens-based weekly newspaper "Proto Thema" on April 21, 2026, Mr. Takaki Nemoto, a diplomat at the Japanese Embassy in Greece, referring to Kazantzakis's book "Traveling in Japan", stated: "Upon leaving our country, Kazantzakis said that he had retained two words: sakura and kokoro - that is, cherry blossom and heart - and that he himself had found a deep place in our hearts."
Socrates Argyris analyses the topic "The Dialectic of Nostos: From Homer to Kazantzakis" in an article published in the Heraklion newspaper "Nea Kriti" on March 3, 2026. He notes that: "The issue is not simply to examine how Odysseus changes from Homer to Kazantzakis, but how the very concept of nostos is transformed. From a return to the family home, we move toward the rejection of any definitive conclusion; from the restoration of order to the eternal wandering of consciousness."
Vasilis Adrachtas, a theologian and former president of the Sydney chapter of the ISFNK, in an extensive interview with the Greek weekly magazine "Vimagazino," refers, among other things, to Kazantzakis, describing him as "an author of global renown and the most devout of Greek writers," while also emphasizing the significance of his work".
Journalist Marios Ploritis describes his last meeting with Nikos Kazantzakis in Antibes. The interview was published in the Athenian newspaper "Eleftheria" and reprinted in the Cretan newspaper "Patris" on August 23, 2026. The journalist highlights the author's simplicity and his enduring love for Greece, while, referring to those who opposed him, he quotes his own words: "Why are they shouting? I didn't ask for anything; I didn't want to take anything from anyone…"

TEXT BY NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS

Saint Francis of Assisi (excerpt from "Conversations Between Kazantzakis and Siprios," Kastaniotis Publications, 1990).
In my book "God's Little Poor Man", I sought to blend the celebratory with the geographical. The personality of Saint Francis of Assisi has always moved me deeply. Three years ago, I spent a Franciscan autumn in Assisi. I took walks alone along the road, high

above the holy valley of Umbria, and watched the land stretch out blissfully. It had fulfilled its duty. It had given wheat to the people and barley to the donkeys. It had hung fruits full of honey and shed light on the vines and fig trees. It had brought about the bountiful autumn harvest it had promised the people. One day, while I was walking, I met Jørgensen, the author of a famous biography of Saint Francis. “You love Saint Francis,” he asked me, “why?” “For two reasons,” I replied, “he was a poet, one of the greatest poets of the early Renaissance. He had heard, even from the humblest of creatures, that immortal thing they hold deep within their souls: melody.” Jørgensen was silent. I continued: “Above all, I love him because my soul, through asceticism and love, has conquered matter. What people call reality - hunger, cold, sickness, contempt, ugliness - he managed to transform into a true and joyful dream. The philosopher’s stone sought by the alchemists of his time, Saint Francis found it in his own heart. To me, Saint Francis is the great general who leads people to victory.” “What victory?” “The transformation of matter into spirit.” “That’s not enough,” whispered Jørgensen. “Try to go deeper.” He fell silent again. I followed his advice. I began to delve deeper into his human miracles. A biography based on historical and mythical tradition did not satisfy me. I felt the need to recreate the saint within myself and to bring his life to the depths of my soul. To find, through the truths and myths that surround him, my own Saint Francis of Assisi, who could give me certainty - my own certainty. This story came about spontaneously, under circumstances that were painful for me. I was seriously ill and felt the need to steer my spirit away from death and focus it on an athlete who had conquered death…. I believed that, in the delirium of my fever, I saw Saint Francis approaching my bed and leaning down, smiling, over my face. I understood. I felt deep gratitude toward this man who had rushed to my side, without even realizing that it was I who had called him. As soon as I had recovered a little from this illness, I hurried to recount to my wife the merciless struggle and the great victory of poor Francis. I wanted to thank him for rushing to my aid. I repeat: He is my Saint Francis, Saint Francis of Assisi, just as I saw him during my sleepless nights. I convey the words he spoke, and I attribute to him other words not mentioned in the legend, but which he might have said, for they are, I hope, inspired by his tenderness and his love for all creatures. I tried to rein in my imagination and let nothing but my heart intervene. I wasn’t interested at all in literature while writing this book, nor in psychological analysis. The only emotions I felt were those of witnessing the struggle of a human being frantically trying to climb a sheer mountain, while his feet and hands are bleeding. I wanted to show that within the human soul there are great, unsuspected forces, which - out of laziness, cowardice, or a lack of ideals - we fail to use, allowing them to lie dormant or be lost.

SIGN UP FOR ISFNK

You’ll receive the “Synthesis” newsletter every four months - published in multiple languages - to keep you better informed about our activities. At the same time, you’ll be offering moral and financial support to the Society. For more information, please contact Sofia Dalabeki, General Secretary of *ISFNK*, at the following email address: secretary.siank.gr@gmail.om

IN MEMORY OF

It is with sadness that we learned of the passing of Professor Panos Razis (Cyprus). We extend our sincere condolences to his family.

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Published by the Board of Directors of *ISFNK*, an international, independent, cultural, non-profit association. Legal deposit copy of Issue 71, August 2026. ISSN 1764-6103 Editor-in-Chief: Yvette Renoux-Herbert (Paris). Contact: P.O. Box 1009, GR-71001 Heraklion, Crete, Greece. Price: 2 euros