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I • AT LAW SCHOOL IN ATHENS

To His Father

—Manuscript in Historical Museum of Crete, Kaz. 2, A/A 1; printed in Parlamas 1959 (incomplete), pp. 205–6, and in Alexiou and Stefanakis 1983, pp. 335–38.

Athens, 21 September 1902

My dear revered father,

I arrived here just yesterday and sent you a postcard in order to announce to you that I arrived here excellently; I really never had a better journey—I didn't get seasick, nor was I cold. My only sorrow (though great) was that I was going far away from you, far away from paternal and maternal love. I am now very sad because of this, since I am not near you.

A quite sufficient consolation amid my sadness is that the family with whom I'm staying pleases me exceedingly. Their consideration is great and, above all, not just a pretense. As soon as I arrived, they had soup ready, as well as milk, coffee, and lots more. I especially like the cleanliness and fine quality of their meals. When I got up today, they brought me milk and then asked me what I wanted them to cook today. In a word, they consider me as one of their children.

The room in which I sleep has been very nicely refurbished. They bought a new bed. I have my wash basin there, my desk, another table on which I place my books, a wardrobe for my clothes, and in general everything that's needed. No one enters. I have quiet for studying. Another of this family's advantages is that they are of a very good class and therefore able to connect me with very fine acquaintances. Their son, the same age as me, is in the Polytechnic University studying engineering. He is very calm, another Grammatikakis, and studies a lot. He knows German. Since I, too, want to learn that language because it will be exceedingly useful to me, I have decided for that reason to benefit from the opportunity and to get him to give me lessons. He accepted with great pleasure, and I'm going to start German on 1 October. In this way I will avoid the monthly stipend for a teacher I would have needed to employ.

Mr. Stagalis is fifty to fifty-five years old and very educated. He is a talkative, first-rate person. He is very orderly. He has arranged for us to be at table for midday dinner exactly when the bell rings, and in the evening at eight o'clock. He wants me to return around eight in the evening. When I go out afterwards, I must go for a stroll with the family. I like this very much; it's a

1902 Letters

way for me to avoid many dangers. He has something else that is bound to please me above all: he is a great lover of fruit.

Mrs. Stagali, about forty years old, takes good care of me. Right now that I'm writing you, she is making my bed. Her characteristic is that she takes great care regarding health in the house. Last evening I wanted to go out on the roof in order to sit a little in the fresh air, and she made me put on my jacket and button it. When I went out, it was a bit damp, so she made me come back down and sit in the living room, which was warm. She knows Italian very well; consequently, I'll benefit from that as well.

I'm writing you still tired from walking everywhere yesterday. Today I intend to go up to the Acropolis; thus, I'll see the best sections of Athens and, when university begins, I'll be able to go to class regularly, without other disturbances because, my revered father, as I have told you previously, I want to work. Fortunately, the son of the family with which I am staying will provide an example, since he is the best in the Polytechnic.

As I'm writing you, I hear the noise of this very large city through my window shutters. A person here truly feels that he is in a megalopolis. Newspaper vendors shouting as they go up and down; grocers, milkmen, carriages; trams continually racing here and there.

Tomorrow—Sunday—I am going to visit Professor Mistriotis. As you see, dear father, five or six days need to go by for someone to settle in and get used to this new life.

Please tell mother not to be sad because I am far away. This separation had to take place and, besides, I've had the great good fortune to manage to find here, too, lots of almost maternal care. In addition, convey my every kind wish to my sisters.

It really is, revered father, very sad for someone to go far away from his father, mother, and siblings; however, this had to happen since you want me to become a true human being one day and not to be ashamed of calling myself your child.

So, my dear parents: patience! My love and respect for you increases here away from home. In addition, you'll have letters from me on a regular basis, and I hope that they'll always tell you that I am in good health and doing fine.

I wanted to write you more, but what? I've already told you what is most important: I am pleased with the family.

My kind wishes to my dear Uncle Manolakis. I was very moved when he bade me farewell and am certain that he loves me more than all the other uncles do. Best wishes as well to his wife, Aunt Lenaki, and her entire family. To Aunt Chrysanthi and Theoharis; to Uncle Nikolakis; to Mr. Theakakis and his wife. Especially to Nikos, whom I ask to please write to me sometimes if he so desires. Best wishes as well to Mr. Ioannis—I'm very sorry because I saw him only when I was leaving; his care for Akladha cannot be easily forgotten.

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Best wishes to Yannis Karouzos, to Mr. Ioannis Kasimatis, and generally to everyone I know. (I might be forgetting someone at this moment.)

Especially my very best wishes and most heartfelt respects to my dear mother. She must not cry. I'm doing fine here and, besides, it won't be long before I see her again—the months go by quickly. Also to Anestasia and Eleni, whom I miss very much. Also to Yannis, who loves me so much; also to Despina.

Again, best wishes to all my acquaintances; I might be forgetting someone now.

At the present time I don't have anything else to write you.

With the most ardent hugs and kisses, your loving son, Nikolaos

P.S. The moment when I was signing the letter Mrs. Stagali asked me please to write best wishes on her behalf and on behalf of her husband. My address is:

Mister Nikolaos Kazantzakis Law Student Alexander the Great Street, no. 46A Athens

• his father: Kazantzakis's revered (and feared) father, Mihalis Kazantzakis (1856–December 1932), was from a family that inhabited the village of Varvari (now renamed Myrtia), 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) from Iraklio. The Kazantzakis Museum is located here, in the public square. \Rightarrow 21 September 1902: This and other dates of letters written from Athens in these early years of the twentieth century are of course in old style (o.s.). Add thirteen days for new style (N.S.), which did not go into effect in Greece until 16 February 1923, which became 1 March. (For o.s. dates in the nineteenth century, add twelve days for N.S.) SGrammatikakis: School friend, also fellow student in university. ⇒ go out on the roof: Many homes had flat roofs on which one could sit or even sleep in hot weather. \hookrightarrow *Professor Mistriotis*: Georgios K. Mistriotis (1840–1916), professor of ancient Greek literature and rector of the University of Athens, specializing in Homer; adjudicator in competitions; editor of ancient texts; a great supporter of katharevousa and opponent of demotic. dear mother: Maria (Marigo) Christodoulaki (1862–March 1932), from Mylopotamos, a small village 45 kilometers (27.9 miles) from Iraklio and 40 kilometers (24.8 miles) from Rethymno. Anestasia: More properly: Anastasia (1884–1967), Kazantzakis's sister, later Mrs. Saklambani. ⇔ *Eleni*: Kazantzakis's sister (1887–1992), later Mrs. Theodosiadi.

• 1902 Letters

To Andonis Anemoyannis

-Manuscript in Kazantzakis Museum; printed in Dimakis 1979, pp. 26-30.

Athens, 16 November 1902

My dear Andonis,

O speak to me, speak to me without cease! I want to feel life once again through your speech and writing, to see the Homeland once again, to spread throughout the boundless depths of my soul that sea breeze which, enclosed in your letter, comes to me from Crete, from my sweet Homeland.

Write to me, Andonis. I want to allow my heart to listen to your every syllable—as though hearing faraway harmony arriving from there in the distance, from there where waves purl and heaven laughs more gaily. I want to see your letter, Andonis, and to say—I who live far from home—that it comes to me from the Homeland, from that land which encloses within it everything I have loved in the world, from that land which birthed me and rebirthed me with life and love.

I don't want you to say, my friend, that I am starting to daydream again. Nevertheless, my soul is seething, agitated by a certain vague desire, an incomprehensible soul-fluttering, a magical attraction, a hidden pain:

-nostalgia!

I go up to the Parthenon to lean my head against the marble and to plunge my sight down below—where, Andonis, I barely discern the sea shining blue, there where I surmise, beyond the indistinct depths of the horizon, my sweet Homeland, just as one discerns a star inside a cloud, beauty beneath a veil.

Ah, Homeland! Sweet word! One needs to go far away from it to sense all its charm. Everything to which you are now indifferent—sky, roads, houses, trees, leaves that you watch piling palely on the ground when you go to school, that Myros standing at the door, Aristides rubbing his hands together, Kolokythopoulos gabbing, the tricks you play in the classroom, all those schoolchild emotions—all, all those eyes of the Homeland that open up new worlds in your soul, all of them, Andonis, you'll feel deep down and will crave them when you know the pain of living in a foreign land. Oh! if only I could place a bit of my soul inside this letter, Andonis, so that it could leap out in front of you when you opened the letter and could stretch out hugely over the immense Homeland! Oh Andonis, my friend, enjoy your current life, enjoy it! A day will come when you will leave high school, when, in other words, you will separate yourself from joy and will declare, as I now declare: Oh! why should I not enjoy all the delights of the schoolboy's life?

How fortunate you are! When you finish reading my letter, you'll go out to play tricks on Markatatis, to joke with Meïmarakis, to step on the desks, to sit in the teacher's chair. As for me, when I finish writing this letter, I and my

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melancholy will take a walk to Syntagma and the Parthenon, or I'll shut myself up in my room and will allow my pen to copy my heart into my diary.

In Athens, yet unable to enjoy myself!

It's as though I were hearing you now say, "Oh, I'm not made for pleasure!"

When I see some friend of mine, my laughter is thunderous, and thunderous as well is my walking stick striking the pavement. But when I go about by myself, alone, then boundless sorrow nests in my soul.

But there are pleasures here. Behold! Observe how gracefully the Athenian goddesses raise their frocks! You would think that something elastic, infinitely delicate, some gently undulating jewel constitutes their bodies. They have about them something from Athena's heaven: the same grace, the same beauty. Dawn rises from their lips; sunrays scatter from their glances. They are all statues—statues!—yet delicate, artistic, fleshly. Nevertheless alive, with all of a woman's desires, all the shivers of sensuality. You'd think that all fathers here were Phidiases. You go for a walk. Suddenly something passes nimbly in front of you. Turning, you see nothing; you merely sense the air perfumed with the delicate aroma of violets. It was Atthis who passed. Enjoy yourself, my friend—do you like them? Unfortunately, I do not. O yes—unfortunately! Because I, too, would like to drown my sorrows even if in slime—to suck forgetfulness from lewd lips, to embrace happiness together with a whore.

How carried away I'm getting, dear Andonis!

I want to answer your letters, and I loosen the rein on my thoughts and sit here and write to you without realizing how boring to the other person are someone else's daydreams. Nevertheless, don't worry, my friend. Write me a lot, really a lot, and I give you my word that another time I won't do this again. I'll send you decent letters. OK? Agreed?

First of all: I did receive both of your letters. Goodness gracious, dear brother! What are you trying to do with those margins and those half sheets? Write me full sheets, Andonis! You're not busy, whereas I (!) have two or three hours at the university in the morning, Italian with a private teacher every evening, also French. On my own I study German. And as though all that weren't enough, I correspond with fifteen individuals! I'm drowning, drowning.

Whereas you! Whenever you have anything to say, write to me instead of finding me on the promenade or during school recess. Devote ten minutes a day to a person who thirsts for letters.

So, Andonis, enormous letters!

a. Why do you say seven months? Five are correct. I'll be leaving here on Easter Wednesday—just like the day after tomorrow! On Easter Thursday I'll call at your house in the morning, pale, still staggering from the ship's stink. On Easter Thursday in the evening, wrapped in my overcoat, I'll be standing behind the column at Saint Minas's Cathedral for the nighttime vigil and once again we'll listen to the twelve gospels together.

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 - b. Grammatikakis is in university, Fanourakis in high school.
- c. I'm going to be introduced to a newspaper now. But will they publish my nonsense? It's doubtful. Anyway, perhaps this year I won't write anything. I can't do it in time.
- d. An employee in an office? No. I don't have time, and there's no need this year.
- e. So there's an essay exam? O Andonis! How many emotions you students have! Oh, if only I were among you! If only I, too, were sitting at your desks and hearing once again—I, too—the high school student's joy in my heart!
 - f. I'm sending you the notes concerning one's duties.
- g. You've suggested so graciously, dear Andonis, that I might like you to send me something from Crete. Oh! Can you give me a bit of sky and a sip of air from my Homeland?

Next time: large sheets of paper, filled up! Don't forget! Clytemnestra, Orestes, or Electra? Ah, I don't have time to read Electra carefully in order to tell you my opinion with conviction. However, do you need my advice? Certainly the major role—the most skillful and submissive—is Electra's. If you insist on my giving you my opinion, write me, and I'll study the play again and will tell you. Oh! if only I could come there for a moment to find you!

Greetings to everyone. Very many to Myros. To Markatakis, Meïmarakis, Fotakis, Vernardos, Geronimakis, Atsalakis, Kastrinakis, Tsouderos, Karouzos, Antoniadis. Can I remember them all? Au revoir, dear Andonis. Oh, when will I return to set foot my homeland's soil? Write me at least. I still have that consolation.

I kiss you sweetly, sweetly, Nikos

Andonis Anemoyannis: Fourth-year student in high school in Iraklio; his family came from Varvari, the ancestral village of Kazantzakis's father, paternal grandfather, etc. For more on the extended Anemoyannis family, see the note on Tea Anemoyanni following the letter to Emile Hourmouzios of 15 May 1946. Syntagma: Constitution Square, the central square in Athens then and now. A Phidias: Considered the greatest Greek sculptor (ca. 490-ca. 430 B.C.); active during Pericles' rule (ca. 461-429 B.C.); created the statue of Athena (438 B.C.) in the Parthenon and the statue of Zeus (ca. 430 B.C.) in Olympia, considered one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, and the model for the statue of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Atthis: Mythological daughter of Cranaus; she died before marriage, and her father renamed his kingdom Attica in her honor. Easter Wednesday: Easter in Greece in 1903 was on 6 April. Easter Wednesday would therefore have been 2 April, less than five months from the date of this letter. * twelve gospels: On the Thursday of Easter week, in Greek Orthodox churches, there are twelve readings from the Gospels, as

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follows: (1) from John 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17; (2) John 18:1–28; (3) from Matthew 26; (4) John 18:28–40, 19:1–16; (5) Matthew 27:3–32; (6) Mark 15:16–32; (7) Matthew 27:33–54; (8) from Luke 23; (9) John 19:25–37; (10) Mark 15:43–47; (10) John 19:38–42; and (12) Matthew 27:62–66, ending with the expectation that the crucified Jesus will be resurrected on the third day.

To Andonis Anemoyannis

—Manuscript in Kazantzakis Museum; printed in Dimakis 1979, pp. 31–36.

Athens, 17 December 1902 8 P.M. Tuesday

My dear Andonis,

It's evening, and I'm allowing my tired thoughts to wing their way close to you through my room's open window.

My soul is asleep. I'm inclining my mind toward you a little bit at a time, Andonis, lest I awaken it—because my soul is like those unruly children who eventually fall asleep and whose poor mother does not wish to rouse them because she knows that they'll start to bawl and scream again as soon as they wake. That's why I want my soul to lie drugged, as it is now doing, without dreams, without desires. I don't desire anything right now. My desires have frozen in my breast. A lethargy is killing my heart. I'm writing you not because I feel the need to sip up some life from friendly breasts, but without any reason. I'm writing you because I can't be bothered to take a few steps in order to lie down on my bed.

I'm not thinking of anything. I sense nothing except dreams shuffling along soundlessly at one end of my breast—dreams and also desires, those unpacifiable desires of mine, making my head droop with sleep's heaviness. And I sense the soul's death and the complete stupidity of hugging my thoughts and halting every flight of the mind.

Tell me, Andonis, have you ever felt spiritual torpor?

18 December, Wednesday, 11 A.M.

I've just finished reading Michelidakis's dull speech as well as Dionysios's inappropriate, monotonous words. O my friend, I have so much rage inside me regarding those political factions of yours! I hate them all equally. Pity the blood that adorns those famous crags of ours! Venizelos's megalomania and egotism plus the petty personal passions of the others will destroy our Crete. O sweet Homeland, Homeland only for those in exile: when wilt thou, too, experience the sweetness of good fortune?

I don't want to write more. Unfortunately, you are a fanatical party leader and you contribute as much as you can to your Homeland's ruin. Oh, if only

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I could apportion my soul to ten Cretan breasts! But alas! alack! I cannot do anything now. I see this struggle of yours only from a distance, and I have nothing but tears to shed for my Homeland, my head bowed—nothing but tears, Andonis.

Please, my friend, if you belong to one of the parties or to the other, to one or the other of the hands that wound our Homeland, do not write me anything partisan in your letters.

Thursday, 19 December, 7 A.M.

I've just gotten up. I still haven't washed. Nevertheless, my first thought—the sunrise of my mind, one might say, Andonis—has covered your beloved face with gold. About whom do you want me to write you now? Ah, let's talk about E. K. Well, my friend, are things really so serious? Do love, my friend. Are you fond of youth without love? Are you fond of springtime without roses, lips without kisses?

But I'm starting my usual stuff again. OK, let's quit this subject, which should not be written about in letters that can be mislaid. When we meet, I will devote howsoever many days you'd like us to talk about it together. Agreed?

Oh! When will I come to my Homeland?

Evening. I just returned from the university.

Dimaras was lecturing about the right of possession. One of my strangest moments is when I sit at one of the desks in law school with my eyes pinned on the professor and my mind fluttering through a thousand and one things: my Homeland, my friends, everywhere—everywhere except the lesson. I'm trying to like the law because I feel such ambition inside me that I have a need to like it, an inexorable need. I try to drive poets away from my desk, poetry away from my heart. Let Paraschos give way to Dimaras, Hugo to von Savigny, Lamartine to von Jhering, poetry to reality. Yet! Open in front of me now that I'm writing you are Dante and Manzoni, while my desk is adorned with Hugo and Solomos.

Yet there is a need: I must become a lawyer. Inside me is a terrible battle. I hope to like the law, yet poetry bewitches me. It's like a marvelously beautiful enchantress and mistress in whose breast one forgets every pain and in whose glance one feels the shudder of voluptuousness.

My pen slides and slides, Andonis, writing before thinking. So, let's change the subject.

How are you getting along now? Are you eager to experience university life? Are your dreams the same? Has Iraklio changed at all? Are the Three Arches still full of people every Sunday? Does our society continue to have its hatred and baseness? Have the trees shed their leaves? Has the crack in the walls gotten larger? Can one still see the clear sky from the balcony of our

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high school, and the hill off to the right with those unforgettable mountains opposite and the file of camels still interrupting the silence with the sound of their bells?

Friday, 20 December 1902, 8 A.M.

At last I need to finish this letter. What have you asked me? Ah! If I have friends? Friends in Athens? Are you serious in asking this, Andonis? Everything here is unstable: sky, friendship, weather vane, love. Love—that's a flame you seek in vain in Athenian bosoms, Andonis. The Atthis-girls have nothing but breasts in their bosoms. Oh! would that every evening when I return sadly to my room, exhausted from the life of a day, would that I could rest my forehead on friendly breasts and scatter my tears on a loved one's bosom!

So-no friend. I have no one.

Now, another answer. You ask me about journalism. Eh, I see in this interest of yours all your passion for this matter. It's really nice, isn't it, for a person to scatter his thoughts in a newspaper and to be read out there in his Homeland by people he loves? But I do not dare. I'm afraid I might fail. I need a strong mentor. That's why I've written to be sent a letter of recommendation to I. Kondylakis, who writes every day in *Embros* under the pseudonym Wayfarer. Will I obtain that letter? And if I do obtain it, will I write something right and proper? I'd like to start with the new year. If you could supply a letter of recommendation of this sort, I would beg you to do so.

I saw your father the other day. Need I tell you my emotion? He told me to tell you that you must acquire a firm basis for university. Is there any need for me to give advice about this to you who are so ambitious?

How is everyone doing out there? Is Androklis still the same? How is Georgiadis faring? If he's ill, do me the favor of stopping by at his house and wishing him a speedy recovery on my behalf. (Forgive me! I had written $\kappa\alpha\lambda\dot{\eta}\nu$ ανάρρωσιν, as though I were a pedant.) My final entreaty: Why don't you write me longer letters?

N

Michelidakis: Andonios Michelidakis (1843–1926), fought in the risings of 1866 and 1878; headed various revolutionary committees; president of the Cretan legislature in 1901, 1903, and 1905, where he opposed Venizelos and supported Prince George; prime minister of Crete in 1908. *Dionysios*: Perhaps the bishop of Rethymno (1856–1910). *Venizelos*: Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936), Greece's preeminent statesman in the twentieth century. Born in Crete, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire, he led the movement for union of Crete with Greece. This could not happen yet; instead, as a compromise, Crete became an autonomous state under the

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suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan, an arrangement in which Venizelos played an important diplomatic role. Prince George of Greece was appointed high commissioner, arriving in 1898, but Venizelos, his minister of justice from 1899 to 1901, came to disagree with the high commissioner, was dismissed, and then assumed leadership of those opposed to him. This was the situation at the end of 1902, when Kazantzakis expressed his negative opinion regarding Venizelos. \Leftrightarrow E. K.: Eleni Karouzou, Anemoyannis's future wife. → Dimaras: Nikolaos Dimaras (1856–1906), professor of Roman law; studied in Germany under Jhering (see below). A Hugo: Victor-Marie Hugo (1802-85), French poet, novelist, playwright, author of Les Misérables and The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Paraschos: Achilles Paraschos (1838–95), Greek poet. Savigny: Friedrich Carl von Savigny (1779–1861), German jurist who wrote a famous treatise on the law of possession.

Lamartine: Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869), French poet and politician, considered to be the first French romantic poet; an influence on Verlaine and the symbolists. Significant Jhering: Rudolf von Jhering (1818–92), German jurist whose influence in the second half of the nineteenth century eclipsed that of Savigny in the first half. author of the Divine Comedy. It is interesting that this great favorite poem of Kazantzakis's was "open on his desk" even in 1902. The Kazantzakis Museum possesses the copy of the complete Divine Comedy that Kazantzakis often carried with him. On the inside front cover, he inscribed "Nikos Kazantzakis servus diavolicus Dei"! " Manzoni: Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873), Italian poet and novelist, author of *I Promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed*). ⇔ **Solomos:** Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857), considered the father of modern Greek poetry. Three Arches: Τρεις Κάμαρες, the old name still used for Iraklio's Eleftheria Square, because on this site there was an aqueduct with three arches built in 1628 by the Venetians in order to bring water from Archanes, beyond Knossos, to the Morisini Fountain, the famous "Liondaria." The aqueduct was demolished in 1892 owing to the construction of an underground water system. → Kondylakis: Ioannis Kondylakis (1862–1920), Cretan short story meaning is the same, but the language is much more formal and pedantic than Kazantzakis's initial expression for "speedy recovery," namely περαστικά. We see here perhaps the beginning of Kazantzakis's later crusade against katharevousa (the official, "purified" Greek of scholars and politicians) and for demotic (the spoken Greek of the common people).

To Andonis Anemoyannis

—Manuscript in Kazantzakis Museum; printed in Dimakis 1979, pp. 38–41.

Athens, 7 February 1903

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My dear Andonis,

How can I tell you! Do you know where I was yesterday? Where do you think? At the theater, the Acropolis? No way!

"Then you were with some lady!"

"I'm moral, dear sir!"

"Well, how the devil should I know where you were?"

"So, since you're unable to guess, let me tell you right now that I'm in my right mind. (Who knows if my soul isn't going to begin daydreaming again soon?) Well, my friend, listen! Yesterday I put in an appearance at the prime minister's together with others who wanted to support Venizelos! Will you believe it? Listen: don't start rejoicing that I've joined your party! No way! But I went for fun, to see Deligiannis, to see Cretan students supporting Venizelos, etc. Well, I was sitting in a café eating my sweet when suddenly Fanourakis enters (he's a genuine Venizelist) and grabs my hand:

"'Come on, get up,' he shouts at me. 'Demonstration. Venizelos. Everybody. Deligiannis.' 'Hey, tell me clearly what's going on. You're out of breath. What do you want?' 'Let's go to Deligiannis's. All of us Cretan students who support Venizelos are going there.' 'But I don't support Venizelos, kiddo!' 'So you want me to go by myself?' 'OK, I'll go—for fun.'

"So I put on my hat, wipe clean my eyeglasses, take my walking stick, and off I go. We get there and see about twenty Cretans, some students, some not. Mihalis Kounalakis with his frock coat, brand new cravat, his face shaved and polished, ready to be the spokesman and to orate. Andreadakis, Asariotis, Zoudianos, Loukakis, -akis this -akis that. (Do you think I know them all?) Then it was rumored that Deligiannis was going to postpone the audience. 'Let's get going,' we shout; 'he's got to hear us!' Out in front, we bang our walking sticks on the ground. What's the Old Man of the Morea going to do? He received us. A geezer, my friend, an aged nincompoop. His face is no longer pale; it's yellow, like wax. He was on his feet when we came. Kounalakis stood in front of him and began, not by lecturing him but simply by chatting. The Old Man listened without moving. I kept trying to make out something in his expression, to 'psychologize' him, as some Cretan gendarme would say these days. Nothing! He just listened, my friend, unresponsively. You can guess what they must have been saying to him: 'There aren't two views; everyone wants union with Greece. Papad. is the evil demon of Crete, and so forth.

"'Gentlemen,' replies the Old Man, 'are you all from Crete?'

"'You bet we are!'

"'I've been asked by Mr. Venizelos and Mr. Papad. to study this question, but I always notice something missing. Why doesn't Mr. Venizelos declare officially that he renounces his idea?'

"'But, Mr. President,' replies G. Loukakis, 'he did declare this in the *Herald*, and signed it.'

"'Do you have this issue of the *Herald*, sir? Can you give it to me? Does it have the signature: E. Venizelos?'

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"'Yes, it does. But I don't happen to have that issue now."

We left. What a disappointment, my friend, what a disappointment! Deligiannis came out publicly and clearly against Venizelos. It was decided to keep this visit secret so that others won't learn about it and start ridiculing Venizelos and the rest of you. Thus, I tell you all this under two conditions:

a. That you don't say a single word about politicians in your letters, allowing only me to write impartially, since I don't belong to any political party. If you do refer to politics in your letters, you will be more severely punished than you were by the high school principal. You'll wait an entire month before receiving another letter from me! Yes, you will!

b. That what I'm writing you remains confidential.

My friend, you are right about the two bad possibilities under discussion, etc., but who tells you that you are required to follow either the one or the other? Must you adjust your own ideas to those of the other two? Ah! Odysseus should have had wings. Instead of being forced to crash into either Scylla or Charybdis, he should have proudly spread his invincible pinions and passed disdainfully overhead. Let him! But since nature is a stepmother to certain people, let's bow our heads and proudly keep a stiff upper lip. But heaven is not only unjust; it is also malicious. It's not enough for it to skimp in distributing its gifts to you; it mocks you by giving you ferocious, untamable dreams. You feel your heart lash out against your breast. It is carried away by desires—fierce desires—and you bring your hand to your brow and see your mind powerless to attain your dreams. You sense a pallid, flickering spirit burning like a gloomy oil-lamp next to your heart's conflagration.

Oh, my friend, there are times when this distance between my dreams and my capabilities makes me so furious that I want to die—to die from spite and also from grief.

Pretentious idiot!

Tell me, Andonis, is there any greater torture?

N

⇔ *Deligiannis*: Theodoros Deligiannis (1826–1905), prime minister in 1885–86, 1890–92, 6 December 1902–27 June 1903, 29 December 1904–13 June 1905, when he was assassinated by a professional gambler in revenge for measures taken by him against gambling houses. ⇔ *Mihalis Kounalakis*: Lawyer from Iraklio very involved in Cretan politics. ⇔ *Papad*.: Presumably Ioannis Papadiamantopoulos (1841–1909), minister of war in the Deligiannis government.

To Andonis Anemoyannis

—Manuscript in Kazantzakis Museum; printed in Dimakis 1979, pp. 42–44.

Athens, 1903 [18 February 1903]

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My dear Andonis,

Perhaps my letter will be somewhat annoying during these days. Just imagine: a letter suddenly arrives that talks to you about Athens, love, friends, and fatherland while you are in the middle of the turmoil of political parties, the fever pitch of your partisan passions!

Iraklio must be seething, eh? But let's forget about party politics—it's still early—and speak about other things. Aren't you going to ask me how I fared during Carnival? Marvelously, my friend! Ah, you'll be here for next year's, won't you? You'll see real life! You'll forget, Andonis, all the ignominiousness with which our petty, jealous, trifling society surrounds you.

To see matchless beauty spilling out from heaven; to see the quiver of voluptuousness dawning from Attic lips! Everything! All that the spirit might covet and the flesh crave: the Parthenon, Atthis, statues, walks, lectures, kisses.

Ah, I'm an enthusiastic devotee of the *ἰοστέφανον ἄστυ*.

I was ill a little while ago and hadn't seen Athens for two or three days. Can you guess what I felt yesterday when I went outside? Do you know what a lover feels when he sees his chosen one after having been parted from her? I boarded the tram to go from Omonoia to Syntagma and, standing there, I ardently gulped down all the Athenian air, all the looks focused on me from here and there, all the aromas emitted as I passed.

I kept thinking that I was sensing once again that virgin shudder that I felt when I saw "the heart of Greece" for the first time. Those violets that flooded the streets, the men's hands, women's breasts—those inimitable breasts of Athenian women!—all that grace, all the movement, all the shifting colors of the sky, all bewitching sunsets that have been deeply imprinted in my soul's most secret depths. Oh, how very much I love Athens! I love it as one loves the Homeland of beauty, as one loves poetry, or fragrances. Its Parthenon rises into my soul beautifully enmarbled; its women smile in the depths of my heart, and its scattered violets perfume my memories with myrrh.

It is even more beautiful, Andonis, to have a lover or girlfriend in the evening when nighttime is born.

It's because you feel at that hour, my friend, the need to turn your soul toward some other soul and quietly to sing to her there beneath the first night-time shiver, across from the Parthenon—to sing to her about beauty, love, virtue, to tell her how much the declining sun pacifies your heart, how much birdsong at eventide engenders kisses on your lips, kisses that are eager to fly off, to touch other lips, and die.

Oh, this is true pleasure, Andonis! Behold Eros! Not in Iraklio, where you see nothing but shops or garbage on the meager streets and are surrounded by spies and jealousy—no, not there, but here where perfume encircles you, invisible kisses wing their way around you, trees whisper their evening prayers, and the moon appears with additional whiteness in order to embellish statues

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and Attic lovelies, to beautify the hoary forehead of Penteli or the pediments of the Parthenon.

Now I transfer my thoughts most beautifully to E.K., your chosen beloved. How is she doing? Will she ever come to Athens? And will you come, too? Without fearing happiness's burden? Oh do come, Andonis!

Your mind will encounter new worlds of beauty, pleasure, virtue. You will become a better person, increasing your love of glory, of the good, of scholarship. A certain precaution is required at first because there are sirens. Yes, sirens—who sing, kill, and murder!

Tell me now about anything new. Do you still love her, and in what way? But take care: not a word about political parties!

What have you finished doing at school? How goes it?

Is Tamiolis in his second year at the Varvakeio?

Spetsiotis buys postage stamps opposite Parliament. Yesterday was the various Saint Theodoroses' name day. Tell Hairetis "long life" on my behalf. How is Markatakis doing? I dreamed about him yesterday. Are you studying French with a private teacher?

My oh my! My thoughts are a mess. Maybe because I feel dizzy from yesterday's fever.

Write me a lot in your turn. You cannot imagine how sad you made me when I saw that half of your page was blank.

Thanks for Dafotis's talk. I admire the man, but surely without being obliged also to admire his words, n'est-ce pas?

N

Carnival: Carnival ran for the three weeks before the beginning of Lent, which began on 17 February in 1903. ເອ **ἱοστέφανον ἄστν:** "Violet-crowned city." Kazantzakis's quote seems to recall Έν ταῖσιν ἰοστεφάνοις οἰκεῖ ταῖς ἀρχαίαισιν Ἀθήναις (He lives in the violet-crowned Athens of old) from Aristophanes' $I\pi\pi\eta\varsigma$ (*Knights*), line 1323. \hookrightarrow **Omonoia:** Concord Square, about sixteen blocks (1.1 kilometer, 0.7 miles) from Syntagma. Penteli: Mountain, about 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) northeast of the center of Athens. → Varvakeio: The Varvakeion Lyceum (high school) in Athens was endowed by Ioannis Varvakis (ca. 1750-1825) and completed in 1859. ⇔ Saint **Theodoroses' name day:** One saint is celebrated on 17 February, another on 8 February. Because this letter seems to have been composed after Carnival, I suspect that its date is 18 February, not 9 February. Actually, the date for the name day varies because it is pegged to the date of Easter. In 1903, with Easter on 6 April, the general name day for Theodoros was presumably 22 February. Thus, the letter perhaps should be dated 23 February. \Rightarrow *Dafo*tis: Three different Dafotises were active in Cretan revolutionary risings at the end of the nineteenth century: Andonis (1845–1914), Ioannis (1868–1927), and Nikolaos.

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To Harilaos Stefanidis

—Manuscript in Demosthenes Stefanidis family archive, Iraklio; printed in Aposkitou-Alexiou 1978, pp. 122–24.

Athens, 10 March 1903

Very dear Harilaos,

How very much I like to sit all alone in my room, to forget Athenian life, which surrounds me, and to chat with you. I become better then, Stefanidis; my soul becomes cleaner, gaining beauty amid past time's memories. Oh, would that I could bow my head and tell you my heart's strange history, sitting with you in the deserted countryside beneath the trees' foliage! I would give you a sense of myself, Harilaos. Sometimes my soul is flooded, flooded by strange feelings, and my breast is swollen with peculiar throbbing. Today, too, I don't know what's wrong with me. I have just reread your letter. How melancholy you are, my friend. How sad you seem. Oh that you'd come here, to see how much you would change! I, too, was sad yesterday, without knowing why. So I go straightway to the opera. They were doing Wagner's Lohengrin. You've never heard that opera? What a shame, my friend. Its music is incredible, out of this world. You forget everything, all your pains, and bewitched—allow your soul to be surrounded by billows of harmony. Athens! How many pleasures one is given! And when the music pauses for a moment, you direct your eyes to the stage, where another kind of pleasure awaits you: Italian dancers occupy the stage. How beautiful they are with their protruding breasts and those most delicate veils thrown over their shoulders and head—like Neapolitans—with their glances seeking shortlived experiences of bodily sex and short-lived kisses in youthful gazes! But above all with impudent breasts, a bouquet of violets directly over the heart. "But just look, Fanourakis, for the love of God!, just look at that Italian girl." "Hey, what a piece!" The blood boils! And when the music begins again, the body's wanton cries subside and my soul ascends once again into heavenly daydreams.

11 March 1903. I cut short yesterday's letter; I had an Italian lesson. In the evening I went to dance class until eleven because, as you know, Fanourakis, Grammatikakis, and I are learning how to dance.

In three more weeks I'll be returning to the Homeland! These last days, what feelings are wrestling inside me! I've fallen in love with Athens, Harilaos, and a boundless sorrow is flooding me now that I'm about to leave. I'll be returning to my parents, to my friends, to the places where I spent twenty years of my life, but what will become of me after the initial sweet emotions have passed? Our society is so small-minded, Harilaos, and hides such hatred in its breast. When I raise my eyes, I will no longer see the Parthenon, the Acropolis's glorious rock, Apollo on the Academy's building, Rigas Feraios or

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the Patriarch in front of the University. And the perfumes of Attic beauties will no longer spread all around me.

How many strange things clash inside me! All of us should be here. I was saying that to Grammatikakis exactly last night. Just think, I said, if our entire class were here, if we constituted a club gathered together in some room in order to have Stefanidis play violin for us. Do you still remember that Cretan tune that we used to beg you often in class to play for us and you hesitated and then played it at last, owing to repeated entreaties? Do you still remember it? The idea to come and find you when I go to Crete is stuck in my mind. How very much I'd like you to play that tune there, in the forest, with us together again!

I'll go right away to buy you various pieces of music, melancholy ones, the kind you like.

Torakis arrived the other day and enrolled. Very fat, with a rotund face, fed like a "fatted calf." Papatheodorou also came. I saw him for a moment but then lost him. Vernardos did not enroll. I wonder why.

Well, my friend, Kanetakis left. I saw him the other day on Aiolou Street hurrying along with a book in hand. "Hey, Mr. Kanetakis," I shout at him from the opposite sidewalk, "how're you doing?" He condescended to stop for a bit, rubbed his hands together, placed a smile on his lips, and said to me, "I'm leaving." "Leaving for the Homeland?" "Yes, what can I do here?" "Ah, you rascal, you're leaving in order to vote. You'll make a new mess of things over there. Who won't come on your side, you a high-class physician?" "What are you saying, poor thing? I mix with politics?" "OK, OK, if I don't see you again, have a good trip." And he left. What goes on with politics in Crete today! How dismal that situation is, my friend! I fear for Crete. I'm neither for Venizelos nor for Michelidakis. And I weep because of the audacious egotism of the one and the small-mindedness of the others. What a pity that so much blood ornaments our fatherland!

How are you doing now? Write to me, Stefanidis, but very much, really very very much. You have time, whereas I—I've got so many to write to today and can't keep up.

We're doing well here. Splendidly. Tell me, will you come here next year? Let's hope.

Very often the three of us here take our walking sticks, and off we go all of a sudden to Patisia in daytime or to other places at night. There we drink two or three okades of beer, drink to the health of our fellow students, our friends, and our—girlfriends.

The other day we came back from our beer drinking. I remembered there in Kifisias Street how Grammatikakis once upon a time was our "director general." Remember what happened then: he really got slapped all over the place. Do you recall when you spilled the beans to me? And plop! Off comes the top hat!

I'm going now to Pallis's to buy crayons for you. Because they're not yet yours, permit me to tell you how much they cost. But do not dare to ask me the price when it's a question of your own things.

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What do I want from you? To write me lots and lots. Hugs and kisses from Fanourakis and Grammatikakis. I kiss you on both cheeks, my dear Harilaos.

N

→ Harilaos Stefanidis: Stefanidis (1887–1954), a high school friend of Kazantzakis's, trained as a pharmacist and from 1922 ran a pharmacy that became a gathering place for writers until it failed in 1930, after which he returned to his ancestral mansion in Vori and led the life of a feudal lord, often helping Kazantzakis with expressions in Cretan dialect. The family archive is now controlled by George Stefanidis, son of the late Demosthenes, who was Harilaos's nephew. Academy's building: The Academy of Athens' impressive building on Panepistimiou Street, next to the university, was begun in 1850 and completed in 1885. The Academy's regular membership is limited to sixty individuals judged to be the cream of Greek scientists, artists, writers, and thinkers. Kazantzakis was denied membership in 1945, receiving only fifteen of the eighteen votes required. The whole sad story of Kazantzakis and the Academy is related in Bien 2007a, pp. 252–53. Signar Rigas Feraios: Rigas Velestinlis (1757-98), Greek revolutionary forerunner who, living outside of Greece, developed a plan for liberation and formed a secret society for its implementation; martyred by the Turks as he was attempting to return to Greece. ⇔ the Patriarch: Gregory V (1749–1821), patriarch of Constantinople, hanged by the Turks on Easter Sunday at the outbreak of the Greek Revolution. Interestingly, there is a third statue in front of the University that Kazantzakis does not mention: that of Capodistrias, about whom Kazantzakis wrote a moving play in 1944. • fatted calf: From Jesus's parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), a calf fattened for slaughter, in order to be eaten at a festive celebration. $\rightarrow Patisia$: Section of Athens about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from the downtown university; semirural ca. 1903, with kitchen gardens, etc. • okades: Plural of oka; Turkish system of measuring solid and liquid weight used in Greece until 31 March 1959, when it was replaced by the kilo. One oka equals 1.282 kilos or about 2.8 pounds.

To Andonis Anemoyannis

—Manuscript in Kazantzakis Museum; printed in Dimakis 1979, pp. 56-57.

2 December [1903], 11 P.M.

How quickly time flies, how monotonously! How much laughter occurs as it passes, and how much weeping and seasickness! To be alone with the desert or the sea stretching out boundlessly in front of you, the water calm, and for you not to be thinking anything as you sit cross-legged on the shore—devoid of love, hate, dreams, and heartthrobs—and, like another Hindu, you await

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the rosy-fingered dawn of death, yearning for "the azure expanses of infinity, Nirvana." Do such thoughts ever enter your head, Andonis? I have a friend here who exhibits such strange feelings. But what interest does any of this have for you? It's strange: I'm looking for something around me, trying to find something interesting to write you—but what? Everything is commonplace and vulgar. What do you expect me to speak to you about that has the freshness and grace of originality? Of the unknown? Of the not understood?

You'll read my letter, perhaps will even open it with a certain expectation; you'll toss it afterwards into some corner; it will be torn, perhaps will fall into other hands, and someone else afterwards will read what right now in this strange spiritual moment I am sitting here and writing to you. Besides, I don't have anything to say. If it was last year, in the good old days when I was young, I would have written you lyrical phrases, magniloquent words, and lots of melancholy unknown to others. But now? If I write you that I am reading, someone will call me pedantic; if I write that I have dreams, I'll be called conceited; if pompous sentences, a plagiarist; if thoughts, an egotist. Now that I'm telling you that I feel nothing, am indifferent to everything, lack both hatred and love, even dreams—that disgust with life sits on my lips, that I am being choked by satiety, a glut of dreams, ideas, and love, if I write that my entire soul is convulsed with a supreme paroxysm of disgust, either I will not be believed or I will be called an egotist again or else an egotist because plagiarist, conceited narcissist, and pedant. Perhaps even you, Andonis, will not believe me. And you'll be right. In this sinful city, amid exhalations from the widespread stench of voluptuousness and beauty, beneath that "poem in marble," the Parthenon, surrounded by the smiles of heaven and Athenian lovelies, how can anyone be disgusted?

On the other hand, Andonis, amid this swirl of aromas, the fallen rose petals, the heavy atmosphere of flesh, the whisper of bodies, and warble of kisses, disgust tears open my heart with an angelic smile.

N

• rosy-fingered dawn: The oft-repeated Homeric figure, as in *Iliad* 1.477, *Odyssey* 3.404.

To His Mother and Sisters

—Unable to locate the manuscript; printed in Eleni Kazantzaki 1977, p. 41.

[Athens, 1904]

Dear mother,

I am extremely pleased with our living arrangements. We hired a cook the other day, and she cooks for us. Today we have stuffed eggplant and stuffed

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zucchini. So badly cooked! I come home at midday and see some thick eggplants filled with half-done rice as hard as bones. The zucchini is all mushy not a trace visible. So I become furious: "Angeliki, what kind of meal is this? Come and ask me next time, since you don't know how. The eggplants should be thin. Put them in the bottom of the pot with the zucchini on top so it won't be mushy."

It's really strange, Eleni, to see us in the kitchen. When we return from university, we race to the cooking pot. I'm the one who uncovers it and smells, while the other two, standing over me, ask: "Is it OK? How does it seem to you?" I taste a forkful or two, pretend to be thinking, and tell them (if I'm hungry), "Ugh, disgusting!"—in order to get Angeliki to put more on my plate, without the others beginning to complain.

I'm making them follow a diet. Vegetables every day.

"Good grief," they say to me, "aren't you going to have some meat for a change? We'll end up forgetting about it entirely." "Meat?" I ask them. "Meat? Do you know what diseases it brings? Do you know that a more dangerous food does not exist? Meat? So you want all of us to get sick, do you?"

How is everything getting along out there? Poor Anestasia didn't write anything in Eleni's letter the other day. When the postman comes, I'll definitely send her that piping at long last.

How much I'd like for all of us to be able to come to Athens some year and to stay here all together for about ten days so that you can see what civilization really means.

Perhaps that will happen. I see that some progress is being made, since you're taking dancing lessons now. So you know the polka perfectly! Brava! But don't neglect your French. I, too, will be going to the best dance school in Athens, but not now.

Dear mother, Anestasia, and Eleni, I kiss you ever so sweetly.

N

To Andonis Anemoyannis

—Manuscript in Kazantzakis Museum; printed in Dimakis 1979, pp. 45–49.

[Athens,] 12 January 1904

My dear Andonis,

There are letters that must be answered at once. That's why I'm answering your letter, which I just received. Half of it made me very happy, reminding me of those days when we went together and allowed our youthfulness to sing out its cravings, when we—when you, first and foremost, allowed your heart to chirp its dreams. Days of yore, Andonis!

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The other half of your letter saddened me greatly. Echoing the "friends" out there, you suffused your words with provocative reverberations of irony. You write me—you toss at me—that I am going to Rome. I don't know who told you that. I once had in mind that six months in Rome might do me some good. So, yes, I did dream of it once. I wanted to see other places. Apparently I babble in my sleep, and someone overheard my ravings. Furthermore, my dreams apparently have something terrifying about them; they are superlatively peculiar, calling forth sarcasm and mockery. That's why one tiny one was inflated to the size of a mountain. I assure you that if anyone else had written me what you have written, I would have paid no attention to it.

That's one part of my letter. Please don't mention this business to me again. Enough has been said: a mountain out of a molehill. The long and short of it is that I probably will go to Rome over the holidays if my parents give me permission. You see, it's not worth the trouble of anyone repeating it. And now—please—you too forget the first part of my letter. Let's move beyond all this.

I like hearing the chirping of cravings and the sea-rustle of dreams. I like hearing you, Andonis, talk about your love and your future. You possess what is needed for success in this world: hope. And hope engenders will power. The rosy world of love has been revealed to you in a specific woman and your future in a specific stage. What a beautiful sight you provide! There is nothing more beautiful than the sight of a happy young man—youth combined with joy.

I say this as a poor person would say "How nice to be a millionaire!" Youth, in my case, came without joy, springtime without roses. At first—when you met me, last year still—I was "sentimental"; I had the so-called sentimental melancholy. Now I detest sentimentality, bombastic language, the disgusting exchange of confidences about love. I've come to know the world better; I've come to know that it's not worthwhile for anyone to fall in love. Neither with a woman nor with anything. It's difficult to find a woman who will understand you. As for other women, it's humiliating to stoop so low. Such love is an insult to Love, a desecration. When you find a woman who understands you, then you both need to die, to die at once, before your bodies realize something, before love's dregs defile your lips, before both of your sexualities are defiled by touching the world.

You won't agree with my opinion, Andonis. You'll have a different idea. You'll think that perhaps a person can love and continue to live. Would that my experience might lead me to agree with you one day!

All the above also for E.

Let's turn now to another subject. When you go to Germany and afterwards to England, doesn't returning to Iraklio strike you as somewhat incongruous? Wouldn't you be better off if you took your wife—now E.—and came to Athens or some other center? If you don't do this, won't you be like a large battleship that tries to anchor in Iraklio harbor? Doesn't it seem to you that

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one must choose a domicile that is commensurate with one's development? Perhaps you will answer that you prefer to be the head of a housefly rather than the tail of a lion, that it's better to be first in Iraklio than second here, and the like. Perhaps that will be your answer. Then, my friend, all I can do is agree with you.

13 January 1904. Tomorrow we're having a dinner for Kazazis at the Aktaion. I don't recall whether you are for him or against him. As for me, however, I admire him, adore him. He is the number one Greek—with great feelings, great cravings, the splendor of the Great Idea, still waiting for Saint Romanos's Gate to be opened. You see, he's a visionary, a chimerical utopian with wings and no feet, the butt of those who are practical-minded, their object of ridicule. Nine-tenths of those who hear the name Kazazis smile the smile of scorn. It's only young people who propel his chariot with enthusiasm and scatter blossoms over it. It's only young people who gather round him and love him.

It was exquisite, Andonis. His reception reminded one of the triumphs of Roman generals returning from war.

Frenzy around him, a triumph of youth. I followed him then and afterwards saw him come to the rostrum in the municipal theater and preach before thousands of people that "the Fatherland is in danger." I followed him everywhere as the wingless fledgling follows the flying eagle. Now, dazzled by so much glory, crushed by the weight of so much soul, I exclaim that I admire him, love him—and hate him.

But I am carried away again; my pen always babbles. Your name day is coming soon. I don't want to send you hackneyed regards, so what should I wish for you? A long life? What a ridiculous wish! My friend, I wish that you may achieve all that you desire. That, too, is hackneyed. Everything has already been said. Nothing pure remains in the world any longer.

Write to me often, Andonis. I received your letter yesterday and have answered it at once. In my opinion, delay in answering the letters of friends is a sign of friendship's sleep or death.

Once more I beg of you: write to me.

Nikos

Please give the slip of paper to Pol. I'll appreciate it.

E: Eleni Karouzou, Anemoyannis's future wife. Sazazis: Neoklis Kazazis (1849–1936), law professor at the University of Athens; author of many books on law, philosophy of history, political philosophy. Saint Romanos's Gate to be opened: The famous hymn "On the Ascension" by the hymn writer Romanos the Melodist (sixth century) emphasizes the apostles' distress after the Crucifixion and advises all worshipers to "raise on high our eyes and minds... [to] make our sight together with our sense fly to heaven's gate" since "the heavenly and glorious doors" will be flung wide

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to welcome the resurrected Christ into heaven. Saint Romanos's Gate, in the walls surrounding Constantinople, was one of the first through which the conquering Turks entered the city on 29 May 1453. The Great Idea was the hope of reconquering Constantinople (Istanbul) one day. ** your name day: 17 January. ** Pol.: Perhaps Kazantzakis's friend Heracles Polemarkhakis (see below, note for letter to Harilaos Stefanidis, 1 April 1905).

To Harilaos Stefanidis

—Manuscript in Demosthenes Stefanidis family archive, Iraklio; printed in Aposkitou-Alexiou 1978, pp. 124–26.

[Iraklio,] 19 April [1904]

My very dear,

Behold! Once again our letters are beginning "to bridge the icy north wind with words of love." Thus the years will pass, Harilaos, everything will grow old around us and die, and only our hearts, strengthened by pain and love, will survive in order to love each other forever. The time will come (I sense it deeply) when all our friends, all the hearts that lullabied our youthfulness with words of love—the time will come, my friend, when they will fly far away, will forget the years gone by, will begin to hate. The time will come, if it has not already begun to come.

Tell me, Stefanidis, why I am always filled with melancholy when I write you. It's as if I see everything black. Everything wounds me deeply. I'd like to weep with you, my friend, to weep over our former life and former friends.

I would like so very much to come often to see you. Here my heart is constricted, cannot be opened. Tears are ashamed to appear. But there, beneath the boundless sky, beneath trees, in the clean air, the heart opens and pronounces its love as though it were a flower spreading its aroma.

I would like so much to come. But, you see, alas! there are hindrances, delays. Dreams are beautiful. Do you think they come true?

I'm interrupting the letter. In the evening, in better spirits, I decided to continue.

21 April [1904]

Yesterday, Sunday, early in the morning, at four o'clock, I left Iraklio and went to the Savvathiania Monastery, near Rogdia. I stayed there all day and returned at night. They wanted to keep me there, but I did not desire to remain

You'll ask who was with me. Neither "friends," Stefanidis, nor former classmates. I went with two members of the working class whom you do not know

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but who love me in a way that the hearts of "friends" cannot. I have never experienced a more lovely day.

It is really lovely, my friend, to travel on a beautiful horse, racing amid the mountains' greenery. To scent the mountains' virgin aroma. To hear the birds' early morning songs. To approach the village, its fountain, and to see young girls, innocent of any guilty heartbeats, filling their jars. To dismount, ask them for water, and they lower their eyes while their hands, sunburned but chaste, give you drink. To leave again and soon to confront the cross of a church in the mountains, and then the entire monastery nestled among the trees, surrounded by cypresses. To dismount again, to feel the monks' lips pressed against your forehead and their unkempt beards prickling your face. And to find yourself soon in a small church chiseled into the cliffside and to hear—you, the skeptic—the monks reverently reciting the saint's miracles.

"Do you see here," the abbot asked me, "a tiny dent on the saint's foot? The Turks came here in '66. One of them stopped at the church door and shot the saint, but the bullet—great be the saint's grace!—ricocheted and killed the Turk."

Afterwards to sit at the abundant table, to eat ravenously, to drink like Lianandonis, and to sing the Christ Is Risen together with one's black comrades.

And in the evening, at night, leaving, to feel the monkish lips again on your forehead. To bid farewell to the mountains, the daylight, and to return to where suffering and bitterness await you.

All of that, my friend, I felt and enjoyed yesterday.

There are medicines that anesthetize every pain and days that sweeten entire years.

Ν

I received your last letter this very moment, 9:00 A.M. But why so terse, my friend? Are you going to write me about nothing except your camera? Keep telling me to get whatever you desire, but in a P.S. of five lines at most. All the rest of the page should be filled with other things and not with sodium sulfate, waxed paper, and schoolboys' slates.

I don't promise anything concerning the excursion. I need to ask Fanourakis first. Maybe Vernardos will come, too. Maybe. I'm on my way to buy the items you requested. Your medicines cost 1.50 drachmas.

Εν παγωτοποιείω Ασάν Αγά, βοήθειά σου!

The waxed paper costs 0.60 drachmas.

With kisses.

N

Rogdia: Mountain village, now about thirty minutes by bus from Iraklio. The monastery is approximately 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from the village;

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Kazantzakis traveled there on horseback. Lianandonis: Eating and drinking member of an Iraklio family well known in 1904 and still today. Ev παγωτοποιείω Ασάν αγά, βοήθειά σον!: Asan Agas was a janissary (forced recruit into the Ottoman army) from the Cretan village of Axos, in the Rethymno prefecture. After the revolution of 1821 was suppressed in Crete, he settled in Anogeia, built a mansion there, and forced young Greek girls to dance for him barefoot on hard seeds. One of these girls he hit on the chest with a nettle. Her brother, Stavros Niotis, vowed to kill him for this insult and succeeded in wounding him. But all this is presumably irrelevant because in this case Asan Agas seems to be simply a Muslim seller of ice cream whose aid is requested! Kazantzakis appears to be using bloated, puristic Greek here for comic effect.

To Harilaos Stefanidis

—Manuscript in Demosthenes Stefanidis family archive, Iraklio; photograph of manuscript in Aposkitou-Alexiou 1978, p. 131; printed in Aposkitou-Alexiou 1978, pp. 126–28.

Iraklio, [1] April 1905 [0.s.]

I'm aware of your revolutionary spirit and hasten to satisfy it. I am not going to begin my letter with melancholy emotions, as I have in the past. No more aromas from roses or incense, but from thyme and the fragrance of our mountains and your beloved, invincible gunpowder.

I passed by the city hall and the prefecture headquarters. The Greek flag was waving. So far no one has dared to lower it. You should see how joyfully it plays with the breeze and sweetly kisses the invisible shadows that will descend without fail from the heavenly Cretan Pantheon in order to worship the flag.

When it was raised at prefecture headquarters, Polemarkhakis was weeping like a child. Georgiadis took leave of his senses. He told me yesterday evening that he kept clutching his head and banging it against a wall to keep from losing it! Konstandarakis was in a frenzy as was everyone else around them regarding who was going to mimic Heracles and who Georgiadis, and everyone Konstandarakis.

Everyone here is worried. You don't hear about anything else. All of our friends support the revolution. Michelidakis says he is waiting for the prince to direct him to go to Therisos. O schoolmasters! If only I were in a position to exterminate either all of you or the Bulgars, I would not hesitate, and the Bulgars are the ones who would be saved.

Logiadis says: "We must not support the revolution because his Royal Highness Prince George will be displeased.

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You are well aware, Harilaos, of the ones I hate among the Bulgars (quite a few) and even among the schoolmasters.

A few days ago an Italian gendarme apprehended Kalimerakis and several others and put them in prison in Iraklio. Everyone gathered together under Markopoulos's leadership, surrounded the county offices, and shouted, "Long live Union! Let them out! Release them! Long live Union!"

The Italian captain of the gendarmerie arrives. Everyone surrounds him. "Long live Union, captain!" The poor creature yells "Long live Union" and releases Kalimerakis & Co.

A telegram came last evening, saying that people are allowed to assemble. Maybe that's Sfakianakis's first accomplishment in Athens. I wonder if they'll agree to let him speak tomorrow—Sunday—at the large rally. It will be a triumph!

Various rumors circulate here every hour, every moment. They say that Saklambanis is coming down with two hundred men to take possession of the Messara. They say that eighteen more—Venizelists—were captured in Hania. They say that a large rally supporting Crete took place in France.

It's difficult to learn what's happening. When Gavriilidis came here to see Sfakianakis, somebody was behind Polychronidis's desk when the interview took place; he took down the entire interview in shorthand.

Sfakianakis was extremely peaceful at first. After the opening remarks, he said to him, "Mr. Gavriilidis, your unselfishness is remarkable, for having endangered and troubled yourself to such a degree for Cretan events. And what a misunderstanding you have suffered! Just think, Mr. Gavriilidis, what they are saying, what they dare to say about you—that at first you were against the kingdom; also they add that you were imprisoned for that. Afterwards you go to Crete, see the prince, and become 100 percent for the kingdom because you were bribed, so say the uneducated masses. Next, you go to see Manos and change your mind, because—it's said—you were bribed. Now you come to me in order to change your mind, under the same terms. Just think, Mr. Gavriilidis, how uneducated the common people are here and what unselfishness is required on your part in order to endure all this slander without refuting it."

Do me the favor of calling at Siniora's and sending me the letter that was brought there for me. Tell her that I didn't forget the key. Kiss her on my behalf, if you don't find this disgusting.

Greetings to Aristotelis H.

7 April [o.s./20 April N.s.]

Telegram that parliament approved Union. Church bells are ringing; the populace is racing around, shouting "Long live Union," going down to the customshouse, taking down "Cretan State" and raising up "Kingdom of Greece" plus the Greek flag, running next to gendarmerie headquarters and

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raising the Greek flag there as well. Frangoulis starts to write "Kingdom of Greece" on customs documents. The same at the lawcourts. The clerk of the Justice of the Peace Court writes "Kingdom of Greece" on one of the verdicts and gives it to the Turkish employee to sign. That one hesitates: "Sir, I gave my oath to the prince." "Shut up for your own sake! Sign!" And the poor fellow signs. All of us here are in a tizzy. Manolis doesn't know what's happening to him. We went for a walk last night, ten o'clock. Suddenly he takes off his hat, places it under his arm, and starts to shout "Special edition! The Great Powers' answer and the Union of Crete and Greece." He keeps running like a ragamuffin and shouting. People in pajamas open their doors and yell "Special Edition? Come here!" He slips away in a hurry and keeps shouting further on. We bring Markopoulos downstairs in his nightshirt, barefoot, half asleep. He came down to buy the special edition!

The Greek flag was waving: The cause was the so-called Therisos Revolution of 10 March 1905 (o.s.)/23 March (N.s.), led by Venizelos in opposition to Prince George. The revolutionaries who gathered in Therisos declared the union of Crete with Greece. Georgiadis: Emmanuel (Manolis) Georgiadis, childhood friend, president of the Iraklio Chamber of Commerce, executed by the Germans in June 1942 together with his two brothers. Prince George: Second son (1869–1957) of King George I of Greece; appointed high commissioner of Crete in 1898 (his arrival is described by Kazantzakis in chapter 12 of Report to Greco); resigned in July 1906 owing to Venizelos's success at Therisos. In 1907 he married Princess Marie Bonaparte (1882-1962), who later helped Kazantzakis overcome opposition in Greece to his novel The Last Temptation (see Eleni Kazantzaki 1977, p. 621; Helen Kazantzakis 1968, p. 533). Polemarkhakis: Heracles Polemarkhakis, fellow high school student of Kazantzakis's; lawyer, soldier, supporter of Venizelos; accompanied Kazantzakis to the Caucasus in 1919; advised Kazantzakis and Galatea on their investments. Some Konstantarakis: Ioannis Konstantarakis, Iraklio lawyer; friend of Kazantzakis's who eventually accompanied him to the Caucasus in 1919. Grandson of Mihalis Korakas. Also spelled Kostantarakis. → Kalimarakis: Mihael Kalimarakis (1886–1925), journalist and poet. *Markopoulos*: Georgios Markopoulos, journalist, newspaper publisher. → Sfakianakis: Kostas Sfakianakis (1890–1946), childhood friend who became a composer and a historian of Byzantine music. Saklambanis: Mihalis Saklambanis (1868-1954), friend of Venizelos's; lawyer; eventually a member of the Greek parliament; in 1910 married Kazantzakis's sister Anestasia. • Messara: Valley and plain in south-central Crete, region including Phaistos and Vori. Gavriilidis: Vlasios Gavriilidis (1848–1920), influential progressive journalist and author; editor in chief of the newspaper Akropolis. Polychronidis: Emmanuel Polychronidis, Cretan politician, personal friend of Prince George's. Amos: Konstantinos Manos (1869–1913),

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poet and translator; associated with Venizelos and the Therisos revolution.
Aristotelis H: Aristotelis Hatzidakis, lawyer, friend of Kazantzakis's and Stefanidis's.
Manolis: See Georgiadis, above.

TO HARILAOS STEFANIDIS

—Manuscript in Demosthenes Stefanidis family archive, Iraklio; printed in Aposkitou-Alexiou 1978, pp. 128–30.

[Iraklio,] 9 April [1905]

Everyone here is worried. What will parliament do? Will it continue to function? Is the Great Powers' answer true? Do you know what's happened? Michelidakis, when the session began, rejected Daskalovannis's motion and moved that "parliament vote Union once again." Logiadis supported the teacher. That's right: Logiadis! Oh these disgraceful schoolmasters! Well, Michelidakis's motion was voted 32 to 25. Daskaloyannis, out of his mind, immediately leaves parliament and telegraphs the Greek government, which responds at once, "Declare Union." Union is declared the next day just as Daskaloyannis wished, with several modifications. Teacher became raving mad, so they say, when he saw the Greek government's telegram. As for the prince—His Royal Highness, that still-blossoming rod, the "Messianic Angel of God's Great Will"—he was in a nice fix because, convinced that parliament would vote Michelidakis's motion (or rather the motion he gave to Michelidakis), he had announced officially in advance that he intended "to comply with parliament's decision, whatsoever it may be." That poor devil, that "Messianic Angel of God's Great Will": how could he ever have wished for what was destined to happen to him!

Letters from Venizelos came tonight. Things are going very well, he says. He hopes—is almost certain—that Union will take place.

Polemarkhakis and I are "exploiting" Melekos Georgiadis. He thinks he has dragged us into becoming Venizelists. So he lavishes attention on us every evening, never lets us pay, always treats us, this time for Venizelos's sake, the next for Foumis's, the next for Manos's—indeed, sometimes for all three together! Yesterday evening we told him that we needed to honor the provinces, too, and drink to the health of poor Saklambanis. The proposition was accepted. So, beginning yesterday we began to drink to Saklambanis's health.

Even if Union does not take place, we'll still be pleased that the Therisos Revolution happened. Tonight we intend to suggest to him that we drink as well for poor Daskaloyannis. As soon as the Therisos people finish, we'll begin to drink against those who opposed Therisos: "Manolis, treat us tonight

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for that wretch Michelidakis, so we can drink against his health. Let him see!" Long live the Revolution

13 April [1905]

Nothing new. Two English warships are at Iraklio. Others are expected. English patrols are up and down the streets day and night. The Greek flag at prefecture headquarters is being continually torn apart. Encouragement is coming regularly from Greece; they remind me of that historic "live free or die." Did Kazazis speak at the rally?

If it were a little dangerous, I would feel like going to Therisos. But right now it's not worthwhile; it's just public relations. Perhaps danger will exist at some point and then: Long live the revolution! It seems to me that the odor—the unknown odor—of gunpowder would enliven my womanish nerves just a bit.

I kiss you sweetly. Happy Union!

15 April [1905]

I am a disgraceful, vile person. Two weeks without sending you this letter! I beg you a thousand times to pardon me. I began the letter as soon as I came here, but I'm sending it only today. Things are complicated and turning gloomy, you understand. Our members of parliament intend to go again to Hania after the holidays in order to work—if they're not beaten to a pulp, if someone isn't found to pound them black and blue. For all employees to resign, for us to beseech the peoples of the earth, for all of us together on the mountains of Crete to seek freedom, so that we may live—that is what logic dictates now.

Half measures will devour us. All of us, all of us together, must unite in one final convulsive supreme effort. Let rallies by philhellenes take place.

N

Swhat will parliament do?: This refers, of course, to the Cretan parliament, not to the Greek parliament. Daskaloyannis: Perhaps a reference to one of the "schoolmasters" cited above, together with a pun on the nickname of the famous Cretan insurrectionist who was executed by the Turks in 1771. Messianic Angel of God's Great Will: From the famous Messianic prediction in Isaiah 9:6, which begins "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; . . . and his name will be called μεγάλης βουλής άγγελος [angel of great will]." This is the reading in the Septuagint, which of course is the version of the Old Testament that Kazantzakis would have known. Both the Douay version and the King James, strangely, omit the phrase that Kazantzakis employs so sarcastically against Prince George in order to lampoon those who consid-

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To Andonis Anemoyannis

—Unable to locate the manuscript; printed in Dimakis 1979, pp. 57-61.

Athens, 29 December 1905

My dear Andonis,

Five minutes ago I was sitting in the sunshine of Constitution Square, a perfect Greek, sipping my coffee and thinking.

I was thinking about the lawyers' mess, the ridiculous "future," about everything that you and I have talked about so many times. Above all, I had in mind an acquaintance who is studying law now in Germany and at the same time is working as an employee—secretary—in a store. Returning from Constitution Square, I thought to write you and ask a favor, a favor without excuses and courtesies, with the absolute confidence that someone ought to have in a relationship like ours.

This is what I was thinking about:

When Mr. Gryllos was in Iraklio, he told me that he had influence at the Vatican Library should I wish to be appointed to a position there. Also that he had contacts in Italy.

I thought that it would be concurrently both excellent and exceedingly practical for me to find a position in Italy—no matter whether in Rome, Naples, etc.—and to study criminal law where it far exceeds every other nation in the world: in Italy. I'm asking you now if you could please write to Mr. Gryllos and ask him to try to find this sort of position for me in Italy—for example, to handle the correspondence of some store in two, three, or even four languages (in this regard, if a position is found for me I will, on purpose, engage a tutor in business correspondence), or to do any kind of work involving writing, especially in the Vatican Library. Please write to me immediately, Andonis. Be so good as to do me the favor in this matter. I am all keyed up. Ever since I thought of it today, I have been unable to settle down. I went at once to the library and checked out all the books on criminal law that I found. If you are willing to write immediately to Mr. Gryllos asking him to answer you immediately whether he can or cannot, I will owe you the most gratitude that I can imagine.

What I want is a position in which I could earn enough to cover my expenses and in which I would work six or seven hours a day, leaving me free hours for the university. When I finish university here, what am I going to do? I aim to inform my father that I want to go abroad in order to study

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better—but, to tell you the truth, I'm ashamed to. Since perhaps I can earn something, it's unscrupulous and shameful for me to frazzle my father by hanging around and dawdling.

This is what I wanted to tell you, my dear Andonis. I hope that you'll be able to write to Mr. Gryllos and to stress that I would like a position at the Vatican Library. If you cannot write to Mr. Gryllos, I am sure that, with the influence you have, you will be able to do this favor for me in some other fashion. Send a letter for instance to Mr. Frangopoulos. Since you're the one who asks him, he will want to do it and, since he'll want to do it, I'll be assured because of his numerous contacts in Germany!

I'm considering this, feeling impatient. You're likely to receive my letter this Sunday. You'll have time to answer me so that I'll receive your reply Wednesday or Thursday.

Tell me whether you'll be able to ask Mr. Frangopoulos or Mr. Gryllos.

Now that I've told you my difficulty and have found some relief, let's talk a little about family matters. What's new regarding the subject you know about (21 May)? Marvelous, without a doubt! All I can do is congratulate you, my friend, and be envious. Your future is clear; mine is still being formed—vaguely, hazily, uneasily. I'm working hard, reading a great deal, but unfortunately not only in the law. Of course, there's nothing new in Iraklio. If I'm not mistaken, New Year's is the day after tomorrow. So, happy New Year, my dear Andonis, and may all your wishes be fulfilled.

I kiss you sweetly, Nikos

⇔ *Gryllos*: Worked as a representative of the shipping company Deutsche Levante Linie. ⇔ *Frangopoulos*: Worked with Gryllos as a representative of the shipping company Deutsche Levante Linie; was best man at Anemoyannis's wedding to Eleni Karouzou, and godfather of their first child. ⇔ *21 May*: Name day for Constantine and Eleni. The reference is to E.K. (Eleni Karouzou).

To TSIRIDANIS

—Photograph of manuscript in Aposkitou-Alexiou 1978, p. 133; printed in Aposkitou-Alexiou 1978, p. 134.

[Iraklio, summer 1906]

My dear Tsiridanis,

First of all thank you for remembering me and also writing to me today on the back of Harilaos's, and for that postcard of yours the day before yesterday with your words of praise for lawyers. You don't know that in medieval times

(continued...)

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