



THE SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY
OF
NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS

by Kimon Friar

Nikos Kazantzakis (1883–1957) is the best known of modern Greek writers and his major work, the *Odyssey*, has been described as the single most ambitious literary accomplishment of the twentieth century. Rarely has an epic of this size enjoyed such popularity, commercial success and critical acclaim. It is read by scholars and laymen, all of whom recognize in the person and struggle of the modern Odysseus some of the most important existential concerns of twentieth-century man.

In this volume, Kimon Friar captures the essence of the thought and spiritual struggle of Nikos Kazantzakis by taking the reader on a fascinating pilgrimage through Kazantzakis's *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* and *The Saviors of God: Spiritual Exercises*, works which Friar himself has translated into English. The few letters from Kazantzakis to Friar, included in this volume, tell the story of the collaboration between the two poets for the translation of the *Odyssey*, and the excerpts from critics speak of this epic's reception by the international community.

Kimon Friar is an editor, translator and poet residing in Greece. He has taught and lectured at many universities throughout the United States, South America and Greece on a variety of topics dealing with modern Greek literature and culture. In addition to *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* and *The Saviors of God: Spiritual Exercises* by Nikos Kazantzakis, his translations include *With Face to the Wall*, selected poems by Milto Sahtouris; *The Sovereign Sun*, selected poems by Odysseus Elytis; and *Modern Greek Poetry from Cavafis to Elytis*, to which he has recently completed a companion volume, *Contemporary Greek Poetry*, which includes poets born after 1912. His own poem, *The Nativity*, was translated into Greek by Nikos Kazantzakis.

Theofanis G. Stavrou is professor of history at the University of Minnesota, where he has been instrumental in developing a graduate program in modern Greek studies and Greek-Slavic cultural relations in modern times. He teaches courses on the intellectual and cultural history of modern Greece through the History Department and the Humanities Program. His publications include *Russian Interests in Palestine 1882–1914*; *Russia under the Last Tsar* (ed.); *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime* (co-ed.); and Yannis Ritsos, *Eighteen Short Songs of the Bitter Motherland* (ed.).