

# ETUDES HELLENIQUES

# HELLENIC STUDIES

## **A Tribute to Cypriot Literature Hommage à la littérature chypriote**

*Edited by / Sous la direction de*  
**Lefteris Papaleontiou**

*With associate editor / Avec la collaboration de*  
**Stephanos Constantinides**

*Contributors / Contributions de*

Louiza Christodoulidou	Yiannis Katsouris
Stephanos Constantinides	Yiorgos Lyssiotis
Andri H. Constantinou	Elsi Mathiopoulou
Leonidas Galazis	Yiorgos Moleskis
Evripides Garantoudes	George K. Myaris
Christos Hadjiathanasiou	Costas Nicolaides
Maria Herodotou	Lefteris Papaleontiou
Yiannis E. Ioannou	George Papantonakis
Kyriakos Ioannou	Savvas Pavlou
Maria Kallousia	Elli Philokyprou
George Kanarakis	Theodosios Pylarinos
Tassos A. Kaplanis	Costas Vassileiou
Matthias Kappler	Lefkios Zafeiriou

Alexis Ziras

# **ÉTUDES HELLÉNIQUES / HELLENIC STUDIES**



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**Centre for Hellenic Studies  
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**C.P. 48571**

**1495 Van Horne**

**Outremont, (Québec), Canada**

**H2V 4T3**

**Tel: (514)276-7333**

**Fax: (514)4953072**

**E-mail: K12414@er.uqam.ca**

**University of Crete**

**Department of Primary Education**

**Centre of Intercultural and Migration  
Studies (EDIAMME)**

**Rethymno University Campus**

**Rethymno, 74100, Greece**

**Tel: +28310-77605, Fax: +28310-77636**

**E-mail: ediamme@edc.uoc.gr**

**http://www.ediamme.edc.uoc.gr**

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## Table des matières / Table of Contents

<b>Hommage à la littérature chypriote</b>	
Lefteris Papaleontiou.....	7
<b>A Tribute to Cypriot Literature</b>	
Lefteris Papaleontiou .....	17
<b>Viewpoints on Cypriot Literature .....</b>	27
<b>Theoretical Problems in the Study of the Cypriot Literature</b>	
Stephanos Constantinides .....	31
<b>About the Term "Cypriot Literature"</b>	
Lefkios Zafeiriou .....	43
<b>Prolegomena for a Comparative Approach to Cypriot Literatures</b>	
Matthias Kappler .....	49
<b>Four Levitations Over Four Notes on Cypriot Literature</b>	
Savvas Pavlou.....	55
<b>The Fate of Cypriot Literature</b>	
Yiorgos Lyssiotis.....	59
<b>A Critical Reading of the Cypriot Renaissance Canzoniere of the Venice Marcian Library (Marc. Gr, IX 32). Could this be the Oldest Neo-Hellenic Anthology known?</b>	
Elsie Mathiopoulou - Tornaritou .....	63
<b>Ioakeim Kyprios' Struggle and the Story of the Maltese Sultana: A Literary Account of Historical Events?</b>	
Tassos A. Kaplanis .....	79
<b>Cypriot Literatures as Part of the Eastern Mediterranean Contact Area (1850-1960)</b>	
Matthias Kappler .....	95
<b>Le visage francophone de Chypre</b>	
Yiannis E. Ioannou .....	115
<b>The Achieved Body (An Outlook on the Poetry of Vassilis Michaelides)</b>	
Costas Vassileiou .....	131
<b>Implicit Stage Directions in the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821 in Nicosia", by Vassilis Michaelides</b>	
Leonidas Galazis .....	139
<b>Poetry in the Cypriot Dialect and Pavlos Liasides</b>	
Yiorgos Moleskis .....	161
<b>Cypriot Litterateurs in Egypt</b>	
Lefteris Papaleontiou.....	173

<b>From the Island of Aphrodite to Terra Australis: Greek-Cypriot Literary Writing in Australia</b>	
George Kanarakis .....	191
<b>Cypriot Writers of the Diaspora</b>	
Maria Herodotou .....	211
<b>Theatre in Cyprus (19<sup>th</sup> Century - 1959)</b>	
Yiannis Katsouris .....	229
<b>Post - Independence Cypriot Dramaturgy (1960 Onwards)</b>	
Andri H. Constantinou .....	237
<b>The Short Story in Cyprus from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century until 1920</b>	
Christos Hadjiathanasiou .....	253
<b>Loukis Akritas' Kampos and Ethographic Narrative Realism</b>	
Louiza Christodoulidou .....	263
<b>Costas Montis' Afentis Battistas etc.: Narrative as a Defeat</b>	
Elli Philokyprou .....	273
<b>Strangers at Home: Images of Turkish-Cypriot 'Others' in Contemporary Greek-Cypriot Fiction</b>	
Maria Kallousia .....	287
<b>The Cypriot Generation of the Poets of the Invasion</b>	
Alexis Ziras .....	297
<b>Despite Praise: Techniques of Paradoxology and Paradoxography in the Work of Kyriakos Charalambides</b>	
Theodosios Pylarinos .....	303
<b>The Responsibility of Testimony. Literature and History in Contemporary Cypriot Literature</b>	
Evrripides Garantoudes .....	319
<b>The Image of Nicos Nicolaides in the Correspondence of Thodosis Pierides to Stratis Tsirkas</b>	
Costas Nicolaides .....	327
<b>Six Letters on Andreas Kalvos from Mario Vitti to Antonis Indianos</b>	
Kyriakos Ioannou .....	339
<b>An Introduction to the Cypriot Literature for Children, with an Emphasis on Poetry for Children</b>	
George Papantonakis .....	351
<b>Literary magazines in Cyprus during 2007</b>	
George K. Myaris .....	371
<b>Cypriot Writers Touch on their Poetics</b>	
Th. Nikolaou, I. Meleagrou, P. Ioannides, K. Charalambides, N. Marangou, M. Azina-Chronides, G. Christodoulides .....	377
<b>Cypriot Literature/Littérature chypriote</b> .....	387
<b>Recensions / Book Reviews</b>	
Costas Hadjigeorgiou, Lefteris Papaleontiou, Theodosios Pylarinos .....	414
<b>Chronologies</b> .....	426

## Hommage à la littérature chypriote

**Lefteris Papaleontiou\***

Il ne serait pas exagéré de dire qu'une grande partie de la littérature chypriote contemporaine<sup>1</sup> est marquée par les longues péripéties politiques de Chypre, et a par conséquent un caractère ethno-politique. Depuis l'époque de Vassilis Michaelides, considéré comme le poète national de l'île, jusqu'à nos jours, plusieurs des recueils de poésie et de prose publiés sont liés aux expériences politiques collectives des Chypriotes grecs, soit leur lutte nationale pour la cause de l'Enosis - rattachement de l'île à la mère patrie, la Grèce - et plus tard pour leur indépendance nationale.

Encore de nos jours nous connaissons très peu de choses sur la première période de création littéraire qui commence à l'occupation franque et se termine par l'occupation ottomane (1191-1878). Quelques chansons populaires ou d'autres textes populaires sont plus connus tels les Assises, les chroniques de Leontios Machairas et de Georges Voustronios ainsi que le recueil des poèmes de la renaissance du 16<sup>e</sup> siècle. Une première étude du matériel connu révèle cependant que cette production est beaucoup plus riche<sup>2</sup>. La recherche contemporaine s'intéresse davantage à des auteurs des derniers cent ans, en commençant par Vassilis Michaelides et Dimitrios Lipertis jusqu'à Yiorgos Ph. Pierides et Costas Montis. Malgré cela, la production du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle est rarement sortie à l'extérieur de Chypre et n'a attiré l'intérêt de la critique en Grèce que dans des cas très peu nombreux (par ex. Costas Montis et Kyriakos Charalambides).

D'un côté il est logique et évident, mais aussi très facile, pour nous de dire que la production littéraire des Chypriotes grecs qui s'écrit en langue commune grecque ou dans le dialecte chypriote fait partie de la littérature néohellénique, puisqu'avant tout elle est écrite en grec. D'un autre côté, des points de vue différents ne manquent pas à ce sujet, à Chypre, en Grèce ou ailleurs<sup>3</sup>. Plusieurs questions demeurent encore sans réponse: pourquoi cette production n'est pas traitée de façon égale? Serait-elle considérée comme un corps étranger et un parent pauvre? Serait-elle considérée comme dépourvue de valeur et non digne de mention en comparaison avec ce qui s'écrit en Grèce?

\* Université de Chypre



Serait-ce dû au fait que les philologues n'ont pas préparé le terrain ou à des raisons plus profondes (non seulement des difficultés objectives mais aussi des facteurs politiques)? En principe, la production littéraire des Chypriotes grecs est absente des histoires et anthologies officielles ainsi que des autres études de la littérature néohellénique. Certes, des exceptions ne manquent pas, qui cependant n'invalident pas la règle. Par exemple, la référence faite de façon sommaire à un nombre infime de noms dans la plus récente publication révisée de l'Histoire de la littérature néohellénique (2003) de Mario Vitti ne remédie pas à la situation. Manifestement Nassos Vagenas a raison quand il constate que les oeuvres littéraires contemporaines écrites par des Chypriotes grecs passent presque inaperçues en Grèce (voir Annexe). De même Evripidis Garantoudes, commentant une prévision analogue de Georges P. Savvidis, se demande si la littérature chypriote contemporaine a enrichi pendant les dernières années la littérature néohellénique ou si elle est en train de le faire: si c'est le cas, ceci est latent, «justement parce que la littérature chypriote n'intéresse pas, de façon paradoxale, la communauté grecque des philologues et critiques» (voir sa collaboration au présent numéro).

Je ne suis pas du tout sûr que les choses soient si simples ou si évidentes qu'elles semblent en avoir l'air: ainsi pourquoi le terme «littérature chypriote» continue de déranger ou de ne pas être accepté? Serait-ce parce que son acception signifie que la production littéraire des Chypriotes grecs tend à se détacher du corps de la littérature néohellénique (comme le soutiennent quelques-uns)? Ou est-ce plutôt parce que son usage s'annule, dû au fait qu'il faut loger sous ce même terme également la littérature chypriote turque (comme le soutiennent d'autres)? Pouvons-nous accepter la position de Mehmet Yaşın qui soutient l'existence d'une littérature chypriote «qui ne sera pas basée uniquement sur des codes de la langue et de la littérature grecques, mais qui aurait comme point de départ l'ensemble de toutes les langues et traditions littéraires de Chypre»? Ou sommes-nous prêts à accepter la position de Matthias Kappler pour l'existence «des littératures chypriotes» (principalement d'une littérature chypriote grecque et d'une littérature chypriote turque)? De plus quels sont les termes les plus convaincants et fonctionnels? Les termes «néohellénique» ou «hellénophone», «littérature de Chypre» ou «chypriote grecque» ou «littérature chypriote néohellénique»<sup>5</sup>, qui sont proposés par moments? Ou est-ce Georges Kehagioglou qui a raison quand il considère comme mineur «le problème de scientificité et de l'exactitude ou pas des termes littérature chypriote ou littérature grecque de Chypre, et de son étude avec celle de la Grèce continentale»?<sup>6</sup>

Poursuivons notre questionnement même si les réponses données ici ou ailleurs ne sont pas immédiates ou définitives: Est-il correct ou non scientifique d'écrire une histoire de la littérature chypriote ainsi que de publier des anthologies de la poésie et de la prose chypriotes? Est-ce avec raison que Roderick Beaton a exclu de son introduction à la littérature hellénique contemporaine, tant la littérature chypriote que celle de la diaspora hellénique, en avançant l'argument qu'il s'agit de sujets présentant des particularités et des questions pendantes qui valent la peine d'être examinées à part? (voir Annexes).

À un congrès scientifique ayant pour thème «La littérature hellénique au centre et à Chypre: Convergences et divergences» (Athènes, 17-19 Septembre 1998) d'intéressantes communications ont été entendues, malgré le fait que certains sujets n'aient pas été discutés de façon exhaustive ou satisfaisante. La constatation de Kostas Stergiopoulos est digne de mention: «un groupe de poètes de valeur d'avant-garde réalisa un tournant plus décisif vers l'autonomie de la littérature chypriote pendant le dernier quart du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle, principalement à partir de l'invasion turque et après, mais également plus tôt, qui avec le plus vieux Pantelis Michanikos ont orienté la poésie chypriote - quelques-uns avec des motifs existentiels parallèles - vers son expression présente et à une meilleure prise de conscience du passé et de la tradition culturelle du pays»<sup>7</sup>. Dimitris Daskalopoulos, quant à lui, - suivant les traces de Georges P. Savvides -, a reconnu l'existence fertile et incontestable de la littérature chypriote. De plus, dans sa communication non encore publiée, il a parlé des complexes de supériorité et d'infériorité dans la relation entre la Grèce et Chypre, suggérant entre autres que nous devons nous libérer de ce qui a été dit au sujet de Chypre en tant qu'espace où le miracle fonctionne encore, idéal en soi, mais idéologiquement déformé.

Il est aussi remarquable de constater que des critiques et des néohellénistes reconnus, principalement de la Grèce, Georges P. Savvides, Kostas Stergiopoulos, Georges Kehagioglou, Alexis Ziras et autres, n'hésitent pas à parler des «spécificités» et des «divergences» de la littérature chypriote par rapport à la littérature néohellénique au sens plus large. Ils jugent même que ces spécificités se sont renforcées pendant les dernières décennies, soit depuis l'instauration de la République Chypriote (1960) et principalement après l'invasion turque de 1974 qui ont marqué profondément tous les domaines de la vie à Chypre. De la façon dont vont les choses on s'attend et on souhaite que ces particularités chypriotes (au niveau de la thématique, de la langue ou des techniques rhétoriques d'expression) constitueront la plus séduisante

contribution de cette production littéraire à la littérature néohellénique. Il est manifestement utile (et aucunement dangereux pour notre identité nationale) de prendre soin et de mettre en valeur ces traits caractéristiques.

Des études antérieures menées auprès des auteurs chypriotes, on tire la conclusion que ces derniers croient en principe (et souhaitent également) que leur œuvre appartienne au corps de la littérature néohellénique. Ce qui n'empêche pas ces auteurs de tirer leurs thématiques de la vie chypriote et des péripéties historiques de ce pays, ou d'enrichir ou d'imbiber leur écriture avec la sève du dialecte chypriote - même s'ils savent que cela aura éventuellement des effets négatifs sur la réception de leur œuvre de la part d'un lecteur ou critique non chypriote. Parfois on reproche aux auteurs chypriotes de demeurer collés et ancrés de façon irritante sur des sujets chypriotes (à caractère ethno-politique).

Bien sûr l'orientation vers les sujets locaux ou le fait de traiter des sujets ethno-politiques ne constituent pas des caractéristiques négatives de la littérature d'un pays, bien au contraire. Ce qui importe c'est plutôt la manière de présentation et le traitement littéraire de la matière thématique, de façon à attirer et à émouvoir chaque lecteur, indépendamment de son origine ethnique et de son idéologie. Bien sûr nous n'ignorons pas le fait que la production littéraire des Chypriotes grecs, vu qu'elle s'écrit en grec ou dans le dialecte chypriote constitue une part de la littérature néohellénique. Il n'est pas difficile de constater que cette production s'oriente en grande partie selon les tendances littéraires qui prévalent dans l'espace de l'hellénisme plus large, bien que les contacts directs avec la littérature internationale (principalement anglo-saxonne) ne manquent pas. Il se peut que certains mouvements littéraires (comme le romantisme) soient arrivés à Chypre avec beaucoup plus de retard qu'en Grèce, à cause des conditions historiques; il se peut que les auteurs chypriotes ne soient pas inspirés autant par les événements qui ont secoué la Grèce (comme la catastrophe de l'Asie Mineure, l'occupation allemande, la guerre civile et la dictature des colonels qui a duré sept ans), du fait qu'ils ne les ont pas vécus. De façon analogue, les auteurs grecs eux-mêmes ne paraissent pas s'occuper, sauf rarement, ou pas du tout, des péripéties politiques récentes de Chypre. Cependant, personne ne peut ignorer les nombreuses convergences, et les moins nombreuses divergences entre la littérature des Chypriotes grecs et la littérature néohellénique au sens large.

Par moments durant les années de l'occupation britannique, mais également plus tard, l'usage du dialecte chypriote dans la littérature a été considéré comme servant la propagande britannique ou les idéologies

«chyprocentriques» et a été rejeté (par ex. par Nikos Kranidiotis et Andreas Pastellas)<sup>8</sup>. D'un autre côté, le dialecte chypriote est la grande force de Vassilis Michaelidis qui a écrit la plus importante partie de son œuvre poétique en dialecte chypriote. À l'opposé les poèmes qu'il a écrits en langue néohellénique commune, démotique ou savante, dépassent rarement le niveau de la médiocrité. Cependant, l'usage du dialecte chypriote a fonctionné jusqu'à nos jours de manière négative pour la réception de ce poète important de la part des chercheurs et lecteurs non chypriotes. Quelqu'un pourrait se demander: pourquoi le dialecte crétois n'a pas fonctionné de façon négative pour l'acception plus large et la reconnaissance des réalisations des œuvres de la renaissance crétoise? Combien plus «difficile» et incompréhensible est le dialecte dans lequel a écrit Vassilis Michaelides, pour des néohellénistes et critiques qui sont de surcroît très scolarisés? Ou comment quelques auteurs plus anciens, tels Kostis Palamas, Fotis Kontoglou, Vassilios Tatakis, Zoi Karellis et en partie Ioannis Sikoutris ont pu admirer et reconnaître la valeur de la poésie idiomatique de Vassilis Michaelides?

De toute façon, ce n'est pas le moment ni le lieu approprié pour discuter de façon exhaustive de tels sujets, alors qu'ils pourraient éventuellement être abordés lors d'un congrès spécial, si l'idée mûrissait.

\*

Le but de ce numéro spécial est de présenter une image de la littérature chypriote à l'étranger, à un public plus large, autre que celui de langue grecque. Un effort a été fait afin de combiner des approches d'ensemble, mais aussi particulières, qui couvriraient des périodes plus étendues de cette production, mais également des volets de l'œuvre des écrivains particuliers.

Dans une première partie, nous présentons quelques textes dans lesquels on aborde certains aspects théoriques tels l'usage et le contenu du terme «littérature chypriote», des relations et des contacts entre le centre et la périphérie, etc. Stephanos Constantinides scrute avec audace des questions relatives à l'identité de la littérature chypriote, ses relations avec le centre athénien etc. Lefkios Zafeiriou se réfère à l'imposition du terme «littérature chypriote», et souligne que l'étude de cette littérature ne conduira pas à «sa ghettoïsation étatique». Matthias Kappler, en élargissant une opinion analogue de Mehmet Yaşın, parle de «littératures chypriotes» (pensant principalement à la littérature chypriote grecque et la production chypriote turque) et propose des approches comparatives dans le cadre d'autres littératures de la Méditerranée Orientale. Savvas Pavlou souligne des aspects positifs et négatifs dans les relations du centre hellénique et de la périphérie

chypriote: il propose le polycentrisme face au monocentrisme athénien, l'évaluation objective et juste (et non pas gratifiante et nivelante) des auteurs chypriotes; et il s'attend à ce que le dialecte chypriote puisse donner des résultats heureux en poésie et en théâtre. Georges Lysiotis estime que pendant les dernières années la littérature chypriote est traitée de façon plus sérieuse en Grèce, avec les premiers exemples de Georges P. Savvidis et de Georges Kehagioglou. De toute façon, cette première partie du numéro spécial n'est pas aussi riche que nous l'aurions souhaité. Bien que nous ayons demandé à des néohellénistes et des théoriciens de la littérature leur opinion, ces derniers de façon générale ont décliné poliment notre offre en arguant qu'ils ne connaissent pas la littérature chypriote, ou ils ont montré qu'ils hésitent ou ne veulent pas s'occuper d'un tel sujet. Il se peut qu'il soit prématuré que de tels sujets théoriques puissent être examinés avec sérénité.

Par contre les études philologiques qui composent le corps principal de ce numéro spécial sont d'une richesse certaine. Elles couvrent un large éventail de sujets, avec un nombre infime de textes de la production littéraire chypriote des périodes franque (1191-1570), ottomane(1570-1878), britannique (1878-1960) et celle de l'indépendance (1960 et après).

Seulement deux articles portent sur la première production littéraire pendant les périodes franque et ottomane: Elsi Mathiopoulos revient sur le sujet des poèmes de la renaissance du 16<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui semble-il constituent la première anthologie poétique néohellénique, et essaie de jeter de la lumière sur eux en rapport avec l'horizon européen et plus spécialement italien de l'époque. Tassos Kaplanis fournit des éléments importants de la personnalité et l'œuvre de Ioakeim le Chypriote, en examinant des sujets d'histoire et de littérature contenus dans son long poème narratif qui concerne la guerre entre Venise et l'Empire Ottoman de 1645 à 1669.

Dans deux autres textes comparatifs, on examine ou on évoque des relations et des contacts possibles de la production littéraire chypriote avec d'autres littératures et civilisations de l'Orient et l'Occident: Matthias Kappler tente de voir les «littératures chypriotes» (entendant par ce terme la production des Chypriotes grecs et des Chypriotes Turcs) comme faisant partie des contacts littéraires et culturels avec des pays de la Méditerranée Orientale, qui faisaient autrefois partie de l'Empire Ottoman. Yiannis Ioannou expose la francophonie à Chypre ; il est à la recherche des contacts des Chypriotes avec la culture et la littérature de la francophonie qui vient faire contrepoids au monopole de la littérature anglo-saxonne.

Deux textes se réfèrent au grand poète Vassilis Michaelides qui a écrit ses

meilleurs poèmes dans le dialecte chypriote: le poète Kostas Vassiliou commente de façon poétique les meilleurs moments de la poésie de Vassilis Michaelides. Par ailleurs, Leonidas Galazis examine les instructions scéniques indirectes dans la composition poétique «Le 9 juillet 1821» comme une des composantes de la théâtralité du texte. La partie de poésie en dialecte chypriote est complétée avec Pavlos Liasidis, thématique traitée par Giorgos Moleskis.

Dans trois textes, de Lefteris Papaleontiou, George Kanarakis et Maria Herodotou, est examinée l'œuvre littéraire de Chypriotes qui ont vécu ou qui vivent dans des communautés d'Égypte, d'Australie, de Grande Bretagne, du Canada et des États-Unis. Car c'est un fait, l'œuvre littéraire des Chypriotes et en général des Grecs de la diaspora est plutôt inconnue ou oubliée.

C'est un constat général que l'écriture théâtrale à Chypre présente un retard par rapport à la poésie et la prose. Pendant les dernières années apparaissent quelques signes de changement. Yiannis Katsouris et Andri Konstantinou se réfèrent au théâtre comme spectacle ainsi qu'à l'écriture théâtrale pendant la période de l'occupation britannique et les années de l'indépendance. Ils constatent que pendant les dernières années on assiste à des efforts valables au niveau de l'écriture théâtrale, qui est du reste sous-développée.

Après la référence générale de Christos Hatzianthassiou, qui dresse un tableau des premiers pas de la nouvelle à Chypre de la fin du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à 1920, suivent trois études dans lesquelles sont examinés quelques romans ou d'autres aspects de la prose. Louiza Christodoulidou tente, entre autres de voir le roman *O Kampos* (1936) de Loukis Akritas en relation avec la nouvelle de mœurs réaliste et en particulier avec celle de Constantinos Theotokis *I zoi kai o thanatos de Karavela* (La vie et la mort de Karavelas) (1920). Elli Phylokyprou examine des références autobiographiques de l'auteur lui-même, les digressions et le dénouement de la narration dans le roman *Afentis Batistas kai alla* (Seigneur Batistas et autres) (1980) de Costas Montis. Aussi Maria Kallousia présente une partie non publiée de son mémoire de maîtrise (préparé à l'Université de Birmingham sous la supervision du professeur Dimitris Tziovas), qui parle des représentations des Chypriotes turcs - les «Autres», dans les œuvres en prose des Chypriotes grecs.

Le vécu de la tragédie historique de 1974, telle qu'elle se reflète dans la poésie chypriote, préoccupe Alexis Ziras, qui cherche des particularités langagières et des procédés techniques dans cette production. Theodosios Pylarinos examine des procédés rhétoriques dans la poésie de Kyriakos Charalabides: des parenthèses, des phrases stéréotypées, correctives et

annonciatrices, des questions directes et indirectes, des sous-entendus, des scènes comiques, etc.

D'ailleurs, Evripides Garantoudes, en parlant des livres récents de Kyriakos Charalabides et Yiorgos Haritonidis, estime que la littérature grecque a très peu parlé de la tragédie de 1974.

Dans deux articles, c'est le matériel épistolaire qui est mis en valeur: Nikos Nikolaïdes est présenté par Kostas Nikolaïdes sur la base des extraits tirés de la correspondance de Thodosis Pierides et Stratis Tsirkas. De même, Andreas Kalvos est le sujet dominant dans les six lettres de Mario Vitti à Antonis Indianos présentées par Kyriakos Ioannou.

George Papantonakis se réfère à la littérature pour enfants, en mettant l'accent sur la poésie pour enfants.

Yiorgos Myaris présente de façon sommaire les revues littéraires qui sont publiées aujourd'hui à Chypre.

Dans une troisième unité de la revue on met en valeur la voix de quelques auteurs: on présente de brefs textes avec les opinions caractéristiques des écrivains chypriotes de poésie et de prose, des auteurs déjà reconnus et de plus jeunes (de Theodosios Nikolaou, Ivi Meleagrou, Panos Ioannidis, Kyriakos Charalabides, Niki Maragkou, Myrto Azina et Yiorgos Christodoulidis), qui formulent des problématiques portant sur des sujets de leur art poétique ou des sujets plus généraux. Ces auteurs nous introduisent dans leur laboratoire littéraire et nous révèlent des secrets de leur œuvre. Suivent des textes littéraires caractéristiques d'auteurs qui ne sont plus en vie ; des poèmes de Vassilis Michaelidis, Thodosis Pieridis, Costas Montis, Pantelis Mihanikos et Theodosios Nikolaou; et des nouvelles de Nikos Nikolaïdes, Yiorgos Ph. Pierides et Costas Montis. Les textes choisis de poésie et de prose ont été traduits en anglais et en français par nos collaborateurs May Schehab, Helen Stavrou, Stephanos Constantinides, Thalia Tassou et Stephanos Stavridis). Seulement les poèmes de Thodosis Pierides ont été traduits en français par lui-même pendant qu'il était vivant.

Le volume se termine avec des critiques de publications littéraires et philologiques récentes.

Nous devons remercier chaleureusement tous les collaborateurs du présent numéro, qui ont consacré assez de leur temps précieux pour préparer leurs textes. Nous remercions les traducteurs<sup>9</sup> qui ont travaillé très fort pour traduire en anglais et en français une grande partie des articles. Nous remercions les Services Culturels du Ministère de l'Education et de la Culture

(de Chypre) qui ont subventionné les frais de traduction. Nous remercions également la revue *Etudes helléniques/Hellenic Studies*, et plus particulièrement Stephanos Constantinides qui ont pris l'initiative de présenter ce numéro spécial consacré à la littérature chypriote.

## NOTES

1. Ce numéro de la revue *Etudes helléniques/Hellenic Studies* est dédié à la littérature chypriote qui s'écrit en langue grecque ou en dialecte chypriote. Des efforts ont été faits pour présenter également un aperçu de la littérature des Chypriotes turcs; cependant, à part des références à l'article de Matthias Kappler, ceci n'a pas été possible, les personnes pressenties n'ayant pas répondu à notre appel. Nous espérons que cela sera possible à une autre occasion.
2. Je me réfère à la communication, sous presse, de Georges Kehagioglou «Le polysystème de la première littérature chypriote (12<sup>e</sup> siècle-1571): reconsidération des données et des témoignages», présentée lors du récent *Congrès des Neograeca Medii Aevi* (Ioannina, automne 2005). Pour une bibliographie détaillée sur les auteurs et les thématiques de la littérature chypriote voir Phivos Stavrides, Savvas Pavlou et Lefteris Papaleontiou, *Vivliographia Kypriakis Logotechnias* (de Leontios Machairas à nos jours) (Bibliographie de la littérature chypriote, de Leontios Machairas à nos jours), *Mikrophilologika*, 2001.
3. Voir à titre indicatif Lefteris Papaleontiou, «Réceptions grecques de la littérature chypriote pendant les années d'après-guerre», *Porfyra* 105 (oct. déc. 2002) 422-440, avec la bibliographie correspondante.
4. Mehmet Yaşın, «Sur la littérature chypriote et les identités non définies», *Synchrona Themata* 68-70 (juillet 1998-mars 1999) 321.
5. Ce terme a été utilisé par Tefkros Anthias (journal *Peiramos*, 30 Sept. 1922).
6. *Anev* 10 (Automne 2003) 43.
7. Kostas Stergiopoulos, *Peridiavazontas*, tome 6, Athènes, 2004, p. 126.
8. Voir *Kypriaka Grammata* 15 (1950) 164-164 et *Kypriaka Chronika* 11 (1961) 467-471.
9. Despina Pyrketti a traduit les textes de Costas Vassileiou, Leonidas Galazis, Alexis Ziras, Andri Konstantinou, Yiannis Katsouris, Elsi Mathiopoulou, Georges Moleskis, Lefteris Papaleontiou et Louiza Christodoulidou. Helen Stavrou, en plus des trois nouvelles de Nikos Nikolaïdis, Georges Ph. Pieridis et Costas Montis, a traduit les articles de Evripides Garantoudes, Kyriakos Ioannou et



Kostas Nikolaïdis. Sotiroula Lizidi-Kyriakidi a traduit les textes de Georgos Myaris, Theodosios Pylarinos, Lefteris. Papaleontiou (Book Reviews) et Christos Hatzithanasiou. Eftychia Achilleos a traduit les notes de Yiorgos Lyssiotis et Savvas Pavlou, et Elena Markoulli l'article de Lefkios Zafeiriou. Thalia Tassou a traduit en français l'introduction et a contribué avec Stephanos Constantinides à la traduction des poèmes de Vassilis Michaelides *La Néréide*, et *Le Rêve de Romios*, en anglais et en français.

## A Tribute to Cypriot Literature

**Lefteris Papaleontiou\***

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that a large part of modern Cypriot literature<sup>1</sup> has been marked by Cyprus' age-long political adventures, thus attaining a politico-national character. From Vassilis Michaelides' time to our days numerous poetic and prose pieces have been written and they are interlinked with the collective – political experiences of Greek Cypriots and their struggles for national restitution.

Even today, what we know of earlier literature, from the beginning of the French until the end of the Turkish rule (1191-1878) is very limited. We are more familiar with some folksongs or other demotic pieces such as the *Asizes*, the chronicles of L. Machairas and George Voustronios, as well as the collection of 16<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance poems. Still, from a first mapping out of the known material it appears that this production is much richer.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary research is more interested in writers of the last century, spanning from Vassilis Michaelides and Dimitris Lipertis to Yiorgos Ph. Pierides and Costas Montis. Nonetheless, even the 20<sup>th</sup> century production has only rarely made it beyond Cyprus and in very few instances has it attracted the interest of critics in Greece.

It would be legitimate and self-evident (and very easy too) to suggest that the literary production of Greek Cypriots (written in Greek or the Cypriot idiom) constitutes part of modern Greek literature since – first and foremost – the same linguistic tool is used in Cyprus and Greece alike. On the other hand, different views do exist in Cyprus, Greece and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Yet the most important factor is that specific questions remain unanswered: Why is this production not treated on an equal footing with its Greek counterpart? Is it perhaps considered a foreign body and a poor relative? Is it unworthy of note in relation to what is being written in Greece? Could it be owed to lack of a proper philological groundwork, or do the reasons lie deeper (not only objective difficulties but also political factors)? As a rule, literary production by Greek Cypriots is absent from official Histories, Anthologies and other studies on Modern Greek literature. There are a few exceptions but they do

\* University of Cyprus

not disprove the rule; neither is absence made good by the trivial reference to a few names in the recently revised edition of the *History of Modern Greek literature* (2003) by Mario Vitti. Nassos Vagenas is obviously right to point out that contemporary literary books by Greek Cypriots fare almost inconspicuously in Greece (See Annex). Evripides Garantoudes too, discussing an analogous prediction by Yiorgos P. Savvides asks whether modern Cypriot literature has and continues to enrich modern Greek literature over the past years: if this is the case, it remains latent, “precisely because, and in a paradoxical manner, Cypriot literature doesn’t concern the community of Greek philologists and critics?” (See contribution in current issue).

I seriously doubt that things are as simple or self-evident as they seem: for example, why does the term Cypriot literature continue to bother some or remain unacknowledged? Maybe, as some suggest, because its acceptance would mean that literary production of Greek Cypriots tends to pull away from the body of Modern Greek literature? Or, as others suggest, is the use of the term nullified because it would have to contain Turkish Cypriot literature too? Could we accept Mehmet Yasin’s proposal for the existence of a Cypriot literature “which will not depend solely on codes of the Greek language and literature, but will set off from the current total of Cyprus’ languages and literary productions”?<sup>4</sup> Or are we ready to embrace Matthias Kappler’s suggestion for the existence of “Cypriot literatures” (mainly a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot one)? Further: Are the terms “neo-Hellenic” or “Greek speaking” literature of Cyprus or “Greek Cypriot” or “Cypriot neo-Hellenic literature”,<sup>5</sup> that are occasionally proposed more convincing and functional? Or is Yiorgos Kehayoglou right to consider as minor or unimportant “the issue of scientificity and correctness or not of the terms Cypriot literature or Greek literature of Cyprus and the co-examination or not of Cypriot literature and art with the corresponding Hellenic literature”?<sup>6</sup>

Let us proceed with questions, regardless of whether any answers at all, let alone any which are direct or definitive are provided here or elsewhere. Would it be correct or anti-scientific to write a History of Cypriot literature and compile Anthologies of Cypriot poetry and prose? Would such studies cultivate separatist trends, providing with a State dimension the literature of the amputated Republic of Cyprus (as suggested by some)? Were Yiorgos P. Savvides and Yiorgos Kehayoglou right when, around 1980, they asked for “a scientific History of Cypriot literature” as well as publications anthologizing Cypriot poetry and prose both generally and specifically? Or

was Roderick Beaton justified in excluding from his *Introduction to Modern Greek literature* both Cypriot literature and the literature of Greek Diaspora, arguing that these are topics with particularities and pendencies worthy of separate examination? (See Annex).

A number of interesting suggestions were heard during a scientific symposium entitled “Greek literature at the centre and in Cyprus: Convergences and divergences” (Athens, 17-19 September 1998), even though some topics were not thoroughly or satisfactorily discussed. Kostas Stergiopoulos’ observation is worthy of note: “A group of notable neoteric poets will launch a more uniform and decisive turn toward the autonomy of Cypriot literature within the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mostly from the Turkish invasion onwards, but earlier, too. Alongside the preceding Pantelis Michanicos they will direct Cypriot poetry – some of them with parallel existential patterns – toward expression of the present and better awareness of the past and the place’s intellectual tradition”.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Dimitris Daskalopoulos, treading upon the footsteps of Yiorgos P. Savvides, recognized the fertile and indisputable existence of Cypriot literature. Further, in an unpublished announcement, he talked of superiority and inferiority complexes in the relation between Cyprus and Greece, pointing out, among other things, that we should discard the ideal but ideologically unbending maxim that Cyprus is a place where miracles still occur.

The fact that valid critics and neo-Hellenists (mostly from Greece: Y.P. Savvides, Y. Kehayioglou, Alexis Ziras etc) do not hesitate to speak of “particularities” and “divergences” of Cypriot literature (in relation to the wider Modern Greek literature) is worthy of note. In fact, they deem that these particularities have been enhanced over the last decades, since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (1960) and mainly after the 1974 Turkish invasion that left a deep mark on every aspect of life in Cyprus. Apparently, these Cypriot particularities (across themes, language or rhetoric schemes) are expected and in fact hoped to comprise the most valuable and attractive contribution of this specific literary production to Modern Greek literature. It is obviously useful (and not at all hazardous to our national identity) to observe and mark out the said particularities.

Earlier research conducted among Cypriot writers shows that as a rule they believe (and wish) that their work belongs to the body of Modern Greek literature. However, this does not prevent them from deriving their themes from Cypriot life and the island’s historic adventures or immersing their writing within the juices of Cypriot dialect – even if they know that

this may be inhibitory to the reception of their work from non Cypriot readers or critics. Cypriot writers are sometimes accused of remaining rigidly attached to Cypriot political-national subject matters. Of course, turning to nativism or engaging in political-national matters does not constitute a negative characteristic of a land's literature; on the contrary. What is important is the way that the thematic material is presented and literarily processed so that it attracts and moves every reader, independently of their nationality and ideology.

Of course, we do not overlook the fact that the literary production of Greek Cypriots, since it is written in Greek or the Cypriot dialect, is part of Modern Greek literature. One may easily see that this production is largely guided by literary trends prevailing in the wider area of Hellenism, despite its direct contacts with international (mostly Anglo-Saxon) literature. Certain literary movements (such as Romanticism) may reach Cyprus at a slower pace compared to Greece, because of historic circumstances; Cypriot writers may not be so extensively inspired by events that stirred Greece (such as the Asia Minor catastrophe, the Nazi occupation and the seven-year junta rule) as they have not actually experienced them. On their part, Hellene writers if at all, seem to scarcely delve into Cyprus' recent political adventures. But no one can overlook the numerous convergences and fewer divergences between the literature of Greek Cypriots and the broader Modern Greek literature.

At times, during the years of English rule (and later, too) use of the Cypriot dialect in literature was considered to serve the British propaganda or Cypro-centric ideologies and was deemed dismissible (i.e. by Nikos Kranidiotis and Andreas Pastellas).<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the Cypriot dialect is the greatest power of Vassilis Michaelides, who wrote the most significant part of his poetry in his birthplace's idiom (in contrast, the poems he wrote in the *koine* - standard Modern Greek, both demotic and kathaverousa rarely surpass the level of mediocrity). Still, the use of the Cypriot idiom has to this day restrained the reception of this important poet by non Cypriot scholars and readers. One could justifiably wonder: Why hasn't the Cretan dialect hindered the wider reception and acknowledgement of the achievements of Cretan Renaissance? How much more "difficult" and incomprehensive is Vassilis Michaelides' idiomatic language, especially for lettered scholars and critics of Modern Greek? Likewise, how had earlier writers, such as Kostis Palamas, Fotis Kontoglou, Vassilis Tatakis, Zoi Kareli and partly Ioannis Sykoutris been able to admire or recognize the value of Vassilis Michaelides' idiomatic poetry?

In any event, this is neither the right time nor the right place to thoroughly discuss such issues which could possibly be investigated at a special conference, if and when the time will ever be ripe for such an undertaking.

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The purpose of this tribute is to offer a picture of Cypriot literature abroad, to foreign-language recipients. An effort has been made to combine both wide-ranging as well as specialized approaches covering larger periods of the said production alongside aspects from the work of individual litterateurs.

The first part, following this Introduction, includes texts that touch on theoretical questions such as the use and content of the term Cypriot literature, relations and contacts between centre and periphery etc. Stephanos Constantinides boldly investigates questions pertaining to the identity of Cypriot literature, its relations with the Athenian centre etc. Lefkios Zafeiriou comments on the prevalence of the term “Cypriot literature” pointing out that the study of this literature will not lead to its “State ghettoization”. Matthias Kappler, elaborating an analogous view by Mehmet Yasin, talks of “Cypriot literatures” (largely referring to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot productions) proposing their comparative approach in the context of other Eastern Mediterranean literatures. Savvas Pavlou discerns positive and negative facets in the relations between the Helladic centre and Cypriot periphery: He proposes polycentrism versus Athenian monocentrism, the objective and impartial (and not prejudiced and leveling) evaluation of Cypriot writers; and he anticipates that the Cypriot dialect will bear precious fruit in poetry and theatre alike. Yorgos Lysiotis deems that during recent years Cypriot literature has been dealt with more seriously in Greece, beginning with Yiorgos P. Savvides and Yiorgos Kehayoglou. At any rate, this first part of the tribute is not as enriched as we would have liked it to be. Even though scholars and theoreticians of Modern Greek literature were asked to state their views, most of them politely denied arguing that they have not studied Cypriot literature or appeared reluctant or unwilling to engage in this topic. Perhaps more time is needed before such theoretical matters can be soberly settled.

Ample philological essays make up the main body of the current issue and span across a wide range of topics, with only a few pieces on Cypriot literature during the French (1191-1570) and Turkish rule (1570-1878) and the rest focusing on literature during the years of the English rule (1878-1960) and the Republic of Cyprus (1960 onwards).

Only two articles look into early literature during the French and Turkish rule respectively: Elsi Mathiopoulos revisits the question of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Cypriot Renaissance poems which seem to constitute the first neo-Hellenic poetic Anthology and attempts to shed light on them vis-à-vis the European and especially the Italian horizon of their time. Tassos Kaplanis provides interesting information on the persona and work of Ioakeim the Cypriot, examining questions of history and literature in his lengthy narrative poem on the 1645-1669 Turkish-Venetian war.

In another two comparative texts possible relations and contacts of Cypriot literary production with other literatures and civilizations of the East and the West are examined or touched upon: Matthias Kappler attempts to picture “Cypriot literatures” (meaning the productions of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots) as part of literary and cultural contacts with Eastern Mediterranean countries that used to belong to the Ottoman empire. Yiannis Ioannou explores the question of Francophony in Cyprus; he seeks contacts of Cypriots with the French-speaking literature and culture that counterbalance the monopoly of Anglo-Saxon literature.

Two essays explore major poet Vasilis Michaelides who wrote his best poems in the Cypriot dialect: Poet Costas Vasileiou comments in a poetic manner the best moments in Vassilis Michaelides’ poetry. Further, Leonidas Galazis examines the implicit stage directions in the poetic synthesis “The 9<sup>th</sup> July 1821” as one of the text’s theatricality components. The section on the Cypriot dialect is concluded with the case of Pavlos Liasides, who serves as the subject of Yiorgos’ Moleskis essay.

In three different essays, Lefteris Papaleontiou, George Kanarakis and Maria Herodotou examine the work of Cypriots who lived or are living in communities in Egypt, Australia, the Great Britain, Canada and the U.S.A. Admittedly, the production of Cypriots and generally Greeks of the Diaspora remains largely unknown or forgotten.

It is commonly acknowledged that theatrical writing in Cyprus pales in comparison to poetry and prose. Still, some indications to the contrary have appeared over the last years. Yiannis Katsouris and Andri Constantinou investigate theatrical praxis and writing during the British rule and the post-Independence period respectively, suggesting that in recent years noteworthy efforts are being made in the generally underrated field of theatrical writing.

After Christos Hadjiathanasiou’s general reference on the first steps of the short story in Cyprus from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1920, three more specialized essays follow, in which isolated novels or other facets of

prose are examined. Louiza Christodoulidou attempts, among other things, to read the novel *O kampos* (1936) by Loukis Akritas in conjunction with realistic ethnography and in relation to Constantinos Theotokis' *I zoi kai o thanatos tou Karavela* (1920). Elli Philokyprou examines self-referencing comments of the writer-narrator, digressions and the narration's outcome in Costas Montis' novel *O afentis Batistas kai t'alla* (1980). Also, Maria Kallousia presents part of an unpublished postgraduate thesis (produced at Birmingham University, supervised by Dimitris Tziovas) which looks into images of Turkish Cypriot "Others" in Greek Cypriots' prose pieces.

The experience of the 1974 historic tragedy and its imprint onto Cypriot poetry preoccupies Alexis Zeras who is looking for linguistic and stylistic particularities in this specific production. In a more specialized essay, Theodosia Pylarinos investigates rhetorical manners in the poetry of Kyriakos Charalambides: parentheses, stereotypical, corrective and pre-announcing phrases, direct and indirect questions, innuendos, comic scenes etc. Further, Evripides Garantoudes, setting off from recent books by Kyriakos Charalambides and Yiorgos Charitonides, finds that Helladic literature contains very few references on the 1974 Cypriot tragedy.

Epistolary material is utilized in two articles: Nicos Nicolaides' portrait is sketched out based on excerpts from the correspondence between Thodosia Pierides and Stratis Tsirkas, presented by Costas Nicolaides. Also, Andreas Kalvos is the main topic in Mario Vitti's six epistles to Antonis Indianos, presented by Kyriakos Ioannou. In addition, Yorgos Papantonakis looks into children's literature with an emphasis on poetry for children; and Yorgos Myaris attempts a brief presentation of literary reviews published in Cyprus today.

In a third section of this issue, the voices of individual writers are heard: It includes brief texts with illuminating views of Cypriot poets and prose writers, established and younger alike (Theodosia Nicolaou, Ivi Meleagrou, Panos Ioannides, Kyriakos Charalambides, Niki Marangou, Myrto Azina and Yiorgos Christodoulides), putting forth their speculations over matters relevant to their poetics or other general issues. These writers introduce us to their literary workshop, revealing secrets of their craft. Representative literary pieces by deceased writers follow; poems by Vassilis Michaelides, Thodosia Pierides, Costas Montis, Pantelis Michanicos and Theodosia Nicolaou; and short-stories by Nicos Nicolaides, Yiorgos Ph. Pierides and Costas Montis. All selected poetic and prose pieces were rendered into English or French by our cooperators (May Schehab, Helen Stavrou, Stephanos Stephanides, Stephanos



Constantinides and Stephanos Stavrides). Only Thodosis Pierides' poems had been rendered into French by the poet himself. The issue is concluded with reviews of recent literary and philological publications.

We would like to extend our warm thanks to all those who worked on this issue, dedicating a great part of their valuable time in order to prepare their essays. We would like to thank the translators<sup>9</sup> who worked intensively in order to translate to English a large part of the essays. We also thank the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture (of Cyprus) for subsidizing all translation expenses. Thank you, *Etudes helléniques / Hellenic Studies* review, especially Stephanos Constantinides for having suggested we put together this tribute to Cypriot literature.

#### NOTES

1. This is a tribute to the literary production of Greek Cypriots written in Greek or the Cypriot idiom. Efforts have been made to provide a picture of the literature of Turkish Cypriots; however, with the exception of references within M. Kappler's article, this has not been achieved.
2. I am referring to Yiorgos Kehayioglou's announcement, currently in print, "The polysystem of early Cypriot literature (12<sup>th</sup> cent.-1571): a reevaluation of facts and testimonies" made at the recent conference of *Neograeca Medii Aevi* (Ioannina, autumn 2005). For additional bibliography on figures and issues of Cypriot literature see Phivos Stavrides, Savvas Pavlou, and Lefteris Papaleontiou, *Bibliography of Cypriot Literature (From Leontios Machairas to our days)*, Nicosia, *Mikrofilologika*, 2001.
3. See Lefteris Papaleontiou, "Helladic Receptions of Cypriot Literature in the post-war Years", *Porfyra* 105 (Oct.-Dec. 2002) 422-440, wherein relevant bibliography.
4. Mehmet Yaşın, "On Cypriot Literature and Indeterminable Identities", *Syghrona Themata* [Current Matters] 68-70 (July 1998-March. 1999) 321.
5. This term was used by Tefkros Anthias (*Peirasmós* daily, 30 Sept. 1922).
6. *Aneu* 10 (Autumn 2003) 43.
7. Costas Stergiopoulos, *Peridiavazontas*, Vol. 6, Athens, Kedros, 2004, p. 126.
8. See *Kypriaka Grammata* 15 (1950) 164-164 and *Kypriaka Chronika* 11 (1961) 467-471.

9. Despina Pirketti translated texts by Costas Vasileiou, Leonidas Galazis, Alexis Ziras, Andri Constantinou, Yiannis Katsouris, Elsi Mathiopoulos, Yiorgos Moleskis, Lefteris Papaleontiou and Louiza Christodoulidou. Helen Stavrou, aside from three short stories by Nicos Nicolaides, Y.Ph. Pierides and Costas Montis translated the contributions of Evripides Garantoudes, Kyriakos Ioannou, and Kostas Nicolaides. Soteroula Lizides-Kyriakides translated the essays of Yiorgos Myaris, Theodosios Pylarinos, Lefteris Papaleontiou (Book Reviews) and Christos Hadjiathanasiou. Eftychia Achilleos translated the notes by Y. Lysiotes and Savvas Pavlou; and Elena Marcoulli the article by Lefkios Zafeiriou. Thalia Tassou translated the introduction in french and contributed with Stephanos Constantinides to the translation of the poems *Nereid* and *The Dream of Romios* (The Dream of the Greek) of Vassilis Michaelides.

## Appendix

### Viewpoints on Cypriot Literature

**Y.P. Savvides:** The unquestionable existence of Cypriot literature does not necessarily imply the existence of a “Cypriot School”: With the exception of the conscious return of certain 19<sup>th</sup> century learned poets to the popular idiomatic language and the tradition they crafted through part of their work, I have to admit that I do not as yet discern the pronounced characteristics that would allow us to generally talk of a “Cypriot School”. [...] On the other hand, it is only natural that modern Cypriot literature is directly irrigated by means of the Greek one (I would say Helladic, if it weren't for Cavafy) and either indirectly or directly by means of the European (in its broader sense) literary tradition. However, the politico-cultural conditions within which Cypriot literature is being developed are much different than the Greek ones: therefore, sooner or later, its particularity will become more pronounced and beneficial to the sum total of Greek literature. (*O Philelephtheros*, 13.5.1979)

Therefore, the first thing we note is that the obvious inclination of Cypriot poets to align themselves with the Greeks, has fortunately neither suspended nor marginalized the scholarly cultivation of idiomatic means of expression – i.e. what has been the case with their Cretan counterparts./ In other words, modern Cypriot poetry contains a plethora of expressive possibilities, extending both in width and depth, of an animated vocabulary and lived rhythms, outside the dehydrated conventionalities of the Panhellenic poetic discourse. This multitude preserves, among other things, a rich, cathartic production of versed satire, the like of which is no longer published nowhere within the rest of Greece – perhaps with the exception of Mytilene. / Second: modern Cypriot poetry is incessantly irrigated by means of a historic process which Cavafy called the “wide-ranging action of reflective adjustments” and Nicos Svoronos “*résistante*”. This experience, albeit being in part common with the experience of the Greeks, it actually differs significantly from it, both in character and density as well as in inclination. (*Ta Nea*, 28.9.1992)

**Yiorgos Kehayoglou:** Modern Cypriot literature is generally absent from extensive Histories of Modern Greek literature, even from the most inclusive among them. The absence of our three best contemporary grammatologists

(Demaras, Polites, Vitti) from the respective works is especially painful. [...] We would be grateful to those who could provide us with: a scientific analytical History of Cypriot literature (and/ or its two principal domains: History of Cypriot poetry and History of Cypriot prose; comprehensive annotated anthologies of Cypriot literature (general, of distinct periods, thematic or individual anthologies); philological, annotated editions with the works of mainly earlier but also contemporary litterateurs; inclusive monographies or “introductions” to the work of the main representatives of modern Cypriot literature (updated, in the best way possible, with bibliographical guides and timetables). (*Anti* 151, 9.5.1980, pp. 33, 34)

In this respect Cyprus, as a (compact and eastern) literary domain does constitute a ‘periphery’, not in the sense of the margin, but because it is not incorporated geographically and politically in the Greek state. As for whether this peripheral literature is worthy of note, the answer is not only to be inferred from a retrospective examination of the crucial role which ‘peripheral’ manifestations have often played in the course of Modern Greek literature, but also from a sober and unprejudiced comparison of, for example, the achievements of Hellenic and Cypriot literature (particularly in the field of poetry) in the period since 1955. If this ‘peripherality’ is in many people’s eyes a disadvantage, for Cypriot literature and also for Greek literature in general it can be seen as an advantage: the ‘eastern’ and ‘Mediterranean’ local sensibilities, or special perceptions of Cypriot literature at the thematic, expressive and linguistic levels enrich, rather than impoverish or undermine, the broader Greek literature: the striking juxtaposition of traditional and modern, the special meaning and weight of Cypriot ‘Greekness’ in the circumstances of the last 35 years, the limitless possibilities for discussion of social and historical issues, and the restless *élan* of Cypriot writers for artistic expression – these are certainly evidence of vigor not decline, with a real (not just ‘marginal’ or ‘provincial’) value as contributions to the sum total of modern Greek literature. (*Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 2, 1992, p. 251)

**Marios Byron Raizes:** Coming back to the principles and terms I referred to in my introduction, I am in a position to infer the following concerning the nature and role of contemporary Cypriot literature: 1. In terms of *aesthetics*, Cypriot literature follows closely on Western inclinations and the artistic tendencies embraced by the broader Greek literature, to which of course it belongs. 2. The reflection and impact of recent *aesthetic applications*

from abroad on Cypriot letters stem on the one hand from their close contact with Helladic letters; on the other hand, they can be independent too, stemming from a direct acquaintance with English speaking and other foreign models. In terms of *thematic orientation*, numerous important Cypriot works display a differentia when compared to Helladic works. In particular, the intense and dominating presence in Cypriot literature of a “wartime” ambiance, a psychological disposition “under siege”, with all induced consequences, make Cypriot texts stand out and faithfully express the *Zeitgeist* of the space and time that inspired them (*Proceedings of International Cypriological Conference II*, Nicosia 1987, p. 517).

**Roderick Beaton:** In the 1980s many discussions took place in Cypriot and Greek journals as well as in Greek universities over the content of the terms “Greek literature of Cyprus” or “Cypriot literature”. In fact, this is a very delicate topic and any comparisons with the German speaking literature of Switzerland or French speaking literature of Belgium are not really helpful. A seminal question here is whether the Greek literature of Cyprus is dealt with, in both Cyprus and Greece as a *national* literature (insisting upon the political dimension of the Cypriot state) or as a local tradition within the broader and politically vague borders of Hellenism. Whether the Hellenism of Diaspora should be included within this Hellenism is of course a different issue (*Introduction to modern Greek literature*, 1996, pp. 35-36).

**Demetris Angelatos:** If we are to perceive the history of literature intertextually, then I believe that since V. Michaelides’ times and until today, literature in Cyprus adheres to threads that dynamically connect it (in the best cases) with significant cells, with *sections* in modern Greek literary tradition even though personally I cannot discern any section which is analogous to that of Machairas’ or even of the *Apokopos*, analogous to that of the peak in Crete or to that of D. Solomos. [...] For a contemporary poet may be Cypriot, yet if his work is still perceived as “Cypriot” and not an integral part of modern Greek literary tradition, [...] then the naïve (at best) metaphysical considerations of an unharmed “Cypriot” literary entity that have already taken up residence on the island, aided by the Helladic “magnanimousness”, an insoluble nexus of historic-cultural impasses and guilt, produce a first class ideological complication, opening at the same time a large field of investigation into the ways of formation and validation of State literatures (*Anti*, 681, Febr. 1999, p. 60).

**Costas Stergiopoulos:** Cypriot literature comprises a distinctive case. On the one hand, it converges toward the literature of the Helladic center, following it; on the other hand, it deviates from it, claiming its autonomy – to a large extent, it is from this two-way trend that its distinctiveness is inferred. Aside from any texts written in the Cypriot dialect, where the local spirit is undoubtedly prevalent, most convergences within its main body are provided at the level of form: in the Panhellenic vernacular, despite certain idioms, in the structure and the traditional or neoteric narrative techniques as far as prose is concerned; but also, more conspicuously, convergences are provided at the level of poetic form. [...] Where Cypriot literature deviates more steadily from the literature of the center – not only in the dialectal texts but in other texts too – is at the thematic level and the level of content, what stems from the dissimilar historic circumstances and the dissimilar space, climate and context, even if we are chanced to have a specific standard or influence (*Peridiavazontas*, 2004, pp. 126-127).

**Nasos Vagenas:** We are completely indifferent toward literary books by Greek Cypriots printed in Cyprus, as if they are written in a foreign language (then again, we have witnessed that, too: Greeks repeating the earlier British “discovery” that “Cypriots are a people of Phoenician origin”). The distribution of these books in Greece is virtually non existent. As far as books by Cypriots printed here are concerned, they are very few and catch our eye to a lesser degree than Helladic books. However, Cypriot books are not necessarily inferior; in fact, they are sometimes more noteworthy than numerous Greek books that are considered important (*To Vima*, 13.8.2006).



## Theoretical Problems in the Study of Cypriot Literature

**Stephanos Constantinides\***

### RÉSUMÉ

Cet article se concentre sur les concepts qui s'appliquent dans l'étude de la littérature chypriote. L'auteur explore l'identité de la littérature chypriote qui est reliée à la discussion de l'identité chypriote. Il suggère une identité républicaine civile commune pour tous les Chypriotes qui pourrait aussi abriter la littérature grecque et turque de l'île. Il est également en faveur de l'utilisation du terme littérature chypriote pour ce qui est écrit en grec, la considérant comme faisant partie de la littérature néohellénique.

### ABSTRACT

This article focuses on concepts that apply to the study of Cypriot literature. The author explores the identity of Cyprus's literary output in relation to the Cypriot identity. He suggests a common republican civil identity for all Cypriots which could embrace the island's Greek and Turkish literatures. He also argues that Cypriot literature could only be in Greek, and considers it as part of the neohellenic literature.

### The Concepts

Discussions of Cypriot literature, its place, name, autonomy and specificity in the broader Greek literature remain fragmentary. There is almost a fear to tackle these problems as well as a series of others related to it, because they are not only philological, but ideological and political, because Cypriot literature has always evolved in a social context that exercised a very decisive influence on it.

There is no doubt that the study of every national literature is confronted with problems of ideological and political nature. However in the case of Cypriot literature these problems are more complex and difficult because they don't concern a literature that could be qualified as national, whilst even the use of the term Cypriot literature is contested. Even if the problem of the name

\* Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research Canada-KEEK



already existed and was discussed in a certain way from the time of the British colonial era<sup>1</sup> it took an even more explosive dimension after independence.

At that time step by step began to be formulated the question whether the Cypriot state would dispose its own national symbols. And if among these symbols one could speak of the existence of a national Cypriot literature. It was during the same period that some people began speaking about the creation of a national Cypriot identity. For the Greeks of Cyprus such discussions were questioning the long struggles for national restitution i.e. union with the Greek motherland. That's why these efforts had been identified with the old propaganda used by the British rulers either contesting the Cypriots' Greek identity or promoting the idea of their dissimilarities from the rest of the Greeks.

Yet beyond all these questions was the problem of the strong Turkish community, which of course identified itself with Turkey. If one was to consider a national Cypriot literature, what this term would include? The Greek or the Turkish literary production, or both? Given that language is the main substratum of a national literature, it would be impossible to combine Greek and Turkish Cypriot literature to form a single national literature. This doesn't mean that their coexistence would be impossible in the context of a Cypriot state, in the context of a secular democratic society. Otherwise, a national Cypriot identity or conscience wouldn't exist. But it would be possible that a common civil identity could exist, without bring into question the composing ethnic identities of its parts. It is understood that one cannot exclude shared cultural practices and traditions. More problematic, if not utopian, is also the idea of the existence of two "Cypriot literatures" or of one Cypriot literature having as starting point Cyprus' two "languages and literary productions"<sup>2</sup>.

In any case the term Cypriot literature was regarded as one of the Greek peripheral literatures, like those of Crete, Ionian Isles, Alexandria, which have gradually eclipsed because the heavy Athenian dominance did not leave enough space for them. Nowadays Cypriot is the main peripheral literature together with that of the Greek Diaspora<sup>3</sup>, although some particular literary voices are still heard from Salonika. Of course the phenomenon of the Athenian centralist model which barely admits the traditional cultural polycentrism of the late Ottoman Empire and the first period of the national Greek state, doesn't concern only literature but all aspects of Greek contemporary life, ranging from economics to politics and from nurture to culture. Nevertheless the concentration of everything in the national capital

is not only a Greek phenomenon. We meet it also in most European countries. Only in the English speaking world, i.e. America, Australia and Canada, we meet, for reasons which are not going to be examined in this article, an important decentralization in all fields of human activity. In these countries there is a relatively strong multicentrism and their capitals are rather administrative centres than anything else.

In the case of Cypriot literature, one extreme opinion is that it does not exist independently but only as part of contemporary Greek literary production, in the same sense as those of the other Greek regions. The difference, though, lies in the fact that today we can hardly speak about a peripheral literary production in Greek territory, if we accept the general rule that a Greek writer must live, work and produce in Athens or be related with it. On the contrary, Cypriot writers, with some exceptions, live, produce and publish their work in the precise geographical space of their island. In other words Kazantzakis may be Cretan, Ritsos or Vretakos Peloponnesians, but they had not been recognised in their region of origin, but at the Athenian centre.

Thus linguistically speaking, there is a Cypriot literature as this term has been used for the Greek literature of Cyprus. It is the last peripheral literature of the Greek space with its own specificities, thematic and at a certain point its relative autonomy and particularity, as part of it has been written in the Cypriot dialect. It is natural that this literature has links with the Turkish Cypriot literature of the island. I suppose that the Turkish Cypriot literature is included in the larger context frame of Turkish literature, even if some want it to be included together with the Greek Cypriot one.

One realises that the terms used to define Cypriot literature are fluid. And they are so because the same applies to the terms related to Cypriot identity, especially those used by intellectuals, rather than in reality. For many years, from the end of the Ottoman Empire to the end of English rule, the term Greeks of Cyprus was standard. After independence the term Greek Cypriots was gradually imposed. But at the same time, the term Hellenism of Cyprus was emphasized.

Same discussions seem to exist also among the Turkish Cypriot community. Rauf Denktash's position about the non existence of Cypriots but of Greeks and Turks of Cyprus is well known. Of course to be Greek or Turk doesn't exclude to be also Cypriot. Other people, though, in the Turkish Cypriot community promote the idea of "Cypriotism" or "Cypriotness". The idea was to create a common national Cypriot identity. It has to be noted that in the Greek side an effort has been made to promote the same idea of "Cypriotness",

but it was the object of many strong reactions and remained marginal. Greeks of Cyprus, without ignoring their local specificities like in various other Greek peripheries, consider that their Greekness and national conscience deriving from it are unquestionable. Besides, it is worth mentioning, that from the beginning of independence, voices from various circles either within the island or abroad, have promoted the construction of a unified national Cypriot identity. Something that the Greeks of Cyprus have seen as a continuation of the English propaganda effort to present them as “phinikizontes,” behaving like Phoenicians rather than Greeks.

Identity issues preoccupy societies that are not confronted with the same political problems as Cyprus. Societies thinking having solved it and in spite of that it appears strong in front of them<sup>4</sup>. This is because identity is never static. It is a strong process leading to its continuous redefinition, construction and deconstruction, especially today in the context of the globalization. That is why the study of Cypriot literature, its definitions and theoretical problems, are linked to the concept of identity. And as every identity the Cypriot one is also multileveled. Any “Cypriotness” is not different from the “Kritikotita”(local identity of Cretans) or the “Ipirotikotita” (local identity of the Epirotes). If this Cypriotness can link Greek with Turkish Cypriots without abolishing, as some want it, their Greekness or the Turkishness, so much the better. And of course all these local identities, as far as Greeks are concerned, are included in the frame of Greekness. Thus Cypriot literature is included in the broader Greek literature following the same principle applied for the literature of Alexandria, Crete, or the Ionian Islands. A question remains though, if we can speak of a Cypriot school of literature in the same sense that we speak of a school of the Ionian Islands. Some characteristics of Cypriot literature such as its thematic specificities and dialect could give it this character. It would be difficult though to consider it as a school in the sense of some different philological, even ideological current or in the sense of some break that has been brought to the Neohellenic literature. Cypriot literature is more a geographic reality than anything else.

On the other hand the abandonment of ethnic identity would drive to a cultural alienation, given that it cannot be replaced by a hermaphrodite artificial identity with a taste of Cypriotness: an identity drawn from an ideological nursery without social background and support. Any identity is the result of a long social process, sometimes of centuries and it is not produced by recipes, as some in Cyprus believe after independence,

especially when most of the time these recipes were coming from outside. From London as had been experienced during the colonial era, from Washington where the term of nation is more political and didn't have the European sociological comprehension of this definition, but also from the Athenian centre, from some people who mainly after '74, may feel guilty, because of the coup d'état and the Turkish invasion. Such people would like to get rid of this Cyprus problem. So the foreigners like it more to impose an artificial identity because this facilitates to impose also their solution to the Cyprus problem. Willing to safeguard its national identity is not a question of nationalism as some neoliberal apostles of a unidimensional globalisation advocate. It's a question of human dignity and people have the right to oppose a unidimensional conception of culture. The sense of togetherness between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, but also between other smaller communities of the island, doesn't require either the abandonment of everybody's national identity or the homogenisation of cultural diversity. This sense of togetherness requires only a common civil identity. This common civil and political identity means no exclusion of the "Other". Its construction is and will be based on the ground of the common Cypriot citizenship<sup>5</sup>. Common European identity will be also an important ingredient for this Cypriot civil identity.

### **A Comparison: The Canadian Case**

Those who dream about the Cypriotness should study the case of other countries in order to understand how difficult is the production of identities or national symbols through an ideological nursery process against people's will. The case of Canada may give them an answer to many questions and would lead them to the realities of the social process which doesn't follow recipes. The Canadian federation exists since 1867. The various Canadian governments spent millions if not billions of dollars, in order to impose the Canadian identity. In vain. During the first years of federation, Canadians of English origin were identified as British. Only Canadians of French origin were considering themselves as Canadians. Later the terms were inverted: British adopted the Canadian identity and the Francophones became French Canadians. When the numbers of French Canadians began to diminish and their main residence was limited to the province of Quebec, then French Canadians became "Quebequers". Certainly there is a common Canadian civil identity, as there is the common Canadian citizenship. But at the same time

on ethnic grounds people have a multileveled identity. Because apart from those of English and French origin we have a multitude of other ethnic groups resulting from immigration and as far as literature is concerned of course there is no Canadian national literature. Sometimes the English literature of Canada is claiming this definition of national literature. As far as French literature is concerned, given that during the last decades it is developing in Quebec, it has been proclaimed as its national literature. The Anglophone Canadian literature is threatened in its very existence as a distinctive autonomous specific literature from the American cultural influence. On the contrary Quebec's French literature, in spite its relations with France, became completely autonomous and is defined as a national literature. I don't know if it is possible to draw some conclusions from the Canadian experience. Of course the failure to build a Canadian national identity may foretell also the failure to create a national Cypriot identity. Nevertheless one may be inspired from the Canadian example of a common civil identity and see as very possible a common Cypriot civil identity. On the other hand the failure to create a Canadian national literature with the participation of English and French speaking Canadians, shows how unrealistic is the expectation to create a national Cypriot literature based on the Greek and Turkish language. On the contrary the autonomy of Quebec's literature from this point of view could give arguments to those who see a similar orientation in the Cypriot literature as this term is understood to cover the literature written in Greek. But even in this case the comparisons are difficult. Quebec has a population of seven million and an economy which if it was an independent country would be ranked fortieth in the hierarchy of the world's economy. One realises that it is a different case from that of Cyprus. Nevertheless in spite of the autonomy of its literature and its definition as a national literature, all the writers active in Quebec tend to consider as their ultimate consecration the recognition of their work by Paris and the French salons. In short, the Parisian literary salons continue to play the same role in Quebec's literature as that of the Athenian salons do on the Cypriot one. Something that was happening in older days also with the interrelations between the English-Canadian literature and the British one is less visible today. Having said this, even if in Canada they refer to two "solitudes" English and French, the interrelation between French and English culture is vivid<sup>6</sup>.

The difficulties of definition of Cypriot literature derive also from the lack of comprehensive studies which would relate the Cypriot literary production with the historical, political, ideological and cultural developments on the local Cypriot level but also the Greek and international levels as well. In reality there

is a lack of critical evaluation of Cypriot literary production apart from some hagiographies or public relation presentations. Some exceptions don't invalidate the rule. Because neither the rhetorical outbursts nor the superfluous talks in the presentation of some Cypriot writers either in Cyprus or in Greece, constitute an interpretation, a critique, or a philological study.

### **Relations with the Athenian Centre.**

It is natural that Cypriot writers try to be recognized by the Athenian centre. Nevertheless Greek critics rarely showed a continuous interest for Cypriot literary production. The same is valid for neohellenists, philologists and other specialists. There is a lack of systematic study and presentation of the work of Cypriot creators to the Greek public. We could say that the interest of Greek writers, critics and neohellenists for the Cypriot literary production is occasional. This was happening even in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it happens and in its second half and continues up to now<sup>7</sup>. During the post war period it appears that the Cypriot experience of Seferis who gave the collection "Kypron ou m'ethespisen" (Cyprus, where it was ordained for me... 1955) created in Athens some interest for Cypriot literature. Lefteris Papaleontiou attributes the interest of George Savvides for Cypriot literature to its relation with Seferis. George Savvides is perhaps the first Greek critic and neohellenist who after the war, basically in the '70s, made an effort to face somewhat globally Cypriot literary production. Nevertheless these studies were in their major part selective. Even the increased number of tributes of Greek revues to Cypriot literature "take, according to Papaleontiou, a festive character and are written in the heat of the moment, on the occasion of an important political event or anniversary, but also on the basis of personal contacts. Thus often the texts published are not the most representative or the most important of Cypriot literary production. Or there is a lack of a real critical evaluation".<sup>8</sup> We could say that the participation in these special editions is depending on interpersonal relations and even to use a term from politics on clientelistic relations. The same is valid, beyond the special tributes and for the presence in Greek publications of some Cypriot writers, not after a critical evaluation but more on the basis of public relations that they maintain with some circles in Athens.

What is characteristic of the limited, if non-existent interest of Greek critics – if there are nowadays such critics, – or specialists, neohellenists and historians, is the fact that there is a complete absence of reference to Cypriot

writers in the histories of the neohellenic contemporary Greek literature. The limited presence of some names in the last edition of the history of Mario Vitti doesn't change this reality.

Apart from the older Cypriot writers who lived in Athens or Alexandria (Loukis Akritas, Tefkros Anthias, Emiliós Hourmouzios, Nikos Nikolaidis, etc.) and who somewhat have been noticed by the Athenian centre, if one would look to see who of the Cypriot writers have won some recognition in Greece, he would hardly find others than Costas Montis and Kyriakos Charalambides. The first was noted somewhat mainly at the end of his life, because of George Savvides. The second built himself from very early a network of interpersonal relations which permitted his promotion, in contrast with others who stayed unknown because they didn't have this opportunity or they didn't want to work in the same systematic way for their promotion.

This finally proves the limited Greek interest in the study and critical evaluation of Cypriot literary production, apart some conventional and occasional presentation related most of the time to political events. Also the occasional presentation of certain Cypriot writers is done mostly on the grounds of public relations than on any other evaluation of their work. These presentations are generally anodyne, conventional, colourless and odourless. They avoid the obstacle of serious critical evaluation in order to satisfy everybody. The Cypriot writers contribute also to this phenomenon by accepting a superfluous promotion and even they go after it. They are satisfied and even search through public relations a little "recognition" instead of claiming the real study and critical evaluation of their work. Often it is a behaviour of "poor relatives". One could argue that Cyprus doesn't have writers who have provoked a rupture within the Greek contemporary literature analogous to those of Cavafis, Kazantzakis, Seferis, Ritsos, or Elytis. Nevertheless Vassilis Michaelides or Costas Montis, closer to us, and perhaps some other poets, could stand next to big names of the neohellenic Greek contemporary poetry. Also contemporary poets such as Pantelis Michanikos or Costas Vassiliou, but also others, could stand next to some of the best Greek poets of the so called generation of the '70s. The question is why they are absent from anthologies, studies, histories of literature, and from school manuals. The same could be advanced and for some prose writers such as Georges Ph.Pierides, or Ivi Meleagrou and others. It is characteristic that Georges Savvides has admitted himself that till 1973 he had never heard the name of Costas Montis<sup>9</sup>.

Of course if Cypriot literature remains in the margins the responsibility doesn't only lay on the Athenian centre. Equally responsible are the Cypriot writers themselves who look spasmodically for its favour, some of them even using the clientelistic way instead of trying to be presented by serious publications, or perhaps to create publishing houses which will promote Cypriot books in the Greek market<sup>10</sup>. Cypriot philologists are also responsible because they didn't show interest to study, interpret and evaluate the work of Cypriot writers. In other words, there could be created a pole of a systematic study and promotion of Cypriot literature in Cyprus. The aim would be to present this work in a critically evaluated way at the larger Greek public. A Cypriot pole in the space of neohellenic literature could help to put into evidence a polycentrism and favour Greek voices of the regions neglected by the Athenian centre. Naturally the question is if they could put aside the clientelistic relation and conventionality which kill creativity and help to promote mediocrity. There even exists the "inferiority" complex from which suffer many Greek Cypriot creators as well as the complexes of "superiority" afflicting their Greek-Helladites (the ones residing in Greece) counterparts.

## Conclusion

It is certain that in discussing all these subjects we move into a fluid and slippery landscape. Aphorisms are always dangerous, as well as definitive conclusions. It is well known that what we believe today is based on scientific documentation that tomorrow may be challenged and inverted. Also, we should not ignore the dynamics of the political situation in the island and the ideological currents deriving from it. From another point of view "scientificity" is never neutral.

With these reservations, we would advance some early conclusions:

1. As far as the term Cypriot literature is concerned, it is scientifically correct. It adds nothing and substracts nothing from its Greekness, nor cuts it from neohellenic literature. Furthermore it doesn't add more Cypriotness to it from what it carries with its specific characteristics. This literature as a peripheral one disposes of a relative autonomy.
2. The relations with the Athenian centre remain superficial. As it happens with the literature of the Diaspora there is a limited if not inexistent interest for it and for everything done beyond the Athenian ramparts. But it's a fact that the Cypriot writers try in general to obtain artificial applause and



provisional recognition rather than the real appreciation of their work. The same thing is going also on in the narrow Cypriot space where usually are held equilibriums in the distribution “of applauses” and “prizes”.

3. Finally the subject of identities which troubles all the contemporary societies in the context of a neoliberal globalising economy is even more painful in a country partly under occupation. Something which is necessarily reflected on the theoretical discussions concerning Cypriot literature. Without a strongly built national identity, cultural alienation waits in the corner. The coexistence, though with the Turkish Cypriots imposes also the parallel common republican political identity. This republican identity could shelter and interrelate the Greek and Turkish literatures of the island without cutting them from their corresponding ethnic trunk.

## NOTES

1. For this subject see Lefteris Papaleontiou “Greek reception of Cypriot literature during the after war years”, *Porphyras*, Octobre, December 2002. See also Stephanos Constantinides, «Some Rather Heretical Thoughts on Cypriot Literature» *Etudes helléniques /Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 13, no 1, Spring 2005, as well as the article of Lefkios Zafeiriou in the present volume.
2. Matthias Kappler in his article in the present volume and Mehmet Yaşın, “On Cypriot literature and indeterminable identities”, *Syghrona Themata* [Current Matters] 68-70 (July 1998-March. 1999) 321.
3. In the special volume of the academic revue: *Etudes helléniques/Hellenic Studies*, a tribute to the literature of the diaspora (under the direction of Stephanos Constantinides, Kathryn Radford and Thalia Tassou) the term used is “Literatures of the periphery”, Vol. 13, no.1, Spring 2000.
4. Stephanos Constantinides, *Preface* to Michalis Damanakis, *Identities and Education in the Diaspora*, (in Greek), Athens, Gutenberg, 2007.
5. Another way to destroy the identity of Cypriots – Greeks, Turks, or whatever other origin – is to accept the colonisation of the island by the settlers from Turkey. Something that apparently doesn’t trouble some neoliberal intellectuals on grounds of “non-exclusion”. These people on grounds of their “antinationalist” obsessions are ready to accept colonisation and expropriation of Cypriots and to legitimate Turkish neocolonial expansionism.

6. Craig Brown (sous la direction), *Histoire générale du Canada*, Montréal, Éditions Boréal, 1990.
7. Lefteris Papaleontiou, "Greek receptions of the Cypriot literature during the after world war years", *op. cit.*
8. Papaleontiou, *op. cit.* p. 423.
9. Papaleontiou, *op. cit.* p. 434.
10. An effort to create a publishing house in Athens has been done by the intellectual Tassos Psaropoulos of Cypriot origin, during the 60s, whose aim was to publish important works of neohellenic literature as well as of Cypriot. It was the publishers Alvin Redman Hellas in cooperation with the English publishing house of the same name. At that time there have been published in Athens some books of Cypriot writers, among them the well known anthology of Cypriot poetry (under the direction) of the Cypriot poets Costas Montis and Andreas Christofidis. In a note in this anthology signed by Tassos Psaropoulos reference is made that this anthology of Cypriot poetry and an analogous anthology of Cypriot prose will be republished from time to time updated. Reference is made also to the formation of a committee for this purpose with the participation of Costas Varnalis, Andreas Karantonis, Michalis Peranthis, Lili Iakovidis, and from Cyprus of Costas Montis and Andreas Christofidis as supervisors. It was also mentioned that Athina Tarsoulis would be responsible for the section of the folk songs. The publishers activities were atrophied after the imposition of the dictatorship in Greece. Psaropoulos is also known for his literary work, mainly for his novel *O Dimios* (The public executioner), published by his own publishing house at that time.



## About the Term “Cypriot Literature”

Lefkios Zafeiriou \*

### RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur de cet article se concentre sur le terme «littérature chypriote» et met en évidence sa prédominance, sur les autres termes utilisés de temps à autre. Il prend position en faveur de l'utilisation du terme «littérature chypriote» parce que les termes «littérature grecque de Chypre», «littérature grecque moderne de Chypre», etc., constituent des terminologies inutiles qui présentent le danger d'exclusion ou de suppression de la définition «chypriote» de différentes expressions de la vie à Chypre.

### ABSTRACT

The author of this article focuses on the term “Cypriot literature” and points out its prevalence on other terms used from time to time. He argues in favour of the term Cypriot literature because such terms as Greek literature of Cyprus and modern Greek literature of Cyprus make up a redundant and dangerous grammatical terminology that could exclude or eliminate the “Cypriot” dimension from various expressions of Cypriot life.

In June 1925, the literary journal *Avgi* (*Dawn*) suspends its publication. In an unsigned comment of the editors – most probably written by Aimilios Hourmouzios – the reasons that led to this decision are explained:

“‘Avgi’, upon completing one year of presence, also completed the first period of its publication in Cyprus. Very soon, it will be ‘transplanted’ to Athens, where it hopes to accomplish its destiny more thoroughly and successfully. Its distance from the centre of Greek literary world has always been a great obstacle and insurmountable hindrance to the thorough observation of both the Greek literary movement, as well as the foreign one [...].

In Athens too ‘Avgi’ will maintain its Cyprian character and as the sole instrument of Cyprian literature it will seize the opportunity to be appreciated by a wider intellectual environment...”.

\* Philologist, poet.

In any case, the publication of the journal was discontinued. However, this excerpt is of interest to us for two reasons. On the one hand, it indicates the isolation of regional literature, and on the other, the use of the term “Cypriot literature” affirms its content leaving no room for misinterpretations.

Starting from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the term “Cypriot literature” becomes standardized. During the following years and over the later English occupation period, the term will prevail without any national, historic, social, political and ideological parameters constituting reasons for contesting or replacing the term.

From as early as 1897, Demosthenis Stavrinos uses the term “Cypriot Poetry”, the content of which is explicitly defined: “What I want to signify is that the war [namely the 1897 Greco-Turkish war] has not nurtured the Greek muse. And by saying Greek muse, I do not exclude the Cypriot one”.

Within the next year, George S. Frangoudes publishes his own text on demotic Cypriot poetry while the use of the term over the following years is an undeniable fact. In 1924, Ioannis Sikoutris will talk “About Cypriot Poetry”, whereas during the 1930s, references and discussions regarding Cypriot literature increase.

The circulation of the journal *Kypriaka Grammata* (*Cypriot Letters*) (1934-1937 and 1939-1956), the most important literary journal of the last years of the interwar period and the first post-war years, will contribute to the promotion and prevalence of the term, aiming to underline the importance and function of literature in national life. The objective, a Cypriot Grammar, is pinpointed since the first issues of the journal and in 1935 Yiannis Lefkis’ research “How Modern Cypriot Literature should be studied” is published. Within the same year, the texts of Lefteris Yiannides on Cypriot literature and the interventions of Nikos Kranidiotis, Yiannis Stavrinos Economides and Savvas Christis are also published.

As Lefteris Papaleontiou notes, since 1888 and until the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the term “Cypriot Literature” (Cypriot philology, Cypriot poetry) is traced in the texts of most scholars of those times. However, the intervention of Antonis Indianos, Kostas Prousis and Nikos Kranidiotis (the latter, in his capacity as director of *Kypriaka Grammata* [*Cypriot Letters*] and reacting against British propaganda, proposed during the 1940s to avoid use of the term “Cypriot literature”) was decisive as far as the predominance of the term is concerned. These people, through their critical work set the preconditions for the study of modern literature.

As it appears from this brief retrospective examination of the history of the term under investigation, its use becomes established and acknowledged; even more so during a period when the national movement is rekindled.

Nevertheless, the historic roots of the use of the term and any objections raised during critical periods of the Cyprus Issue have not been examined systematically. Exactly what Sikoutris stressed in 1929 about the dialectal literature, it belonging to the national literature, and later, that Cypriot men of letters “are, as Cypriots, as remotely different from others as their counterparts in Lesbos” has remained, for many researchers, open for negotiation over the last three decades.

Therefore, during a period of political turmoil, transitions and unrest following the 1974 military invasion of Cyprus by Turkey, the term “Cypriot literature” is transformed from a grammatological issue to a seminal problem of ideological and political dispute.

From the “Anti-manifesto for Cypriot Literature” unto the 1982 *Symptoma* (*Symptom*) journal and the recent fabrications of short-lived journals, not one disambiguated point of view has prevailed and even more so, no persuasive argumentation has been expressed.

When in 1958, Nikos Kranidiotis’ book *The national character of Cypriot Literature* was released in Athens, the demand for Self-determination – Union was almost entirely prevalent. One may object to the fact that emphasis is placed on a study which was imposed by political and ethnic wilfulness. Nevertheless, bearing in mind that during the same time the Basic Library volume, *Cypriot Literature* came out, the use of the term since the interwar years suggests its resistance to various historic and political pressures; its enhanced standardization is combined with a clear definition of its content.

The intervention of Modern Greek scholars (e.g. Georges P. Savvides etc.) after 1974 will determine more precise grammatological issues regarding Cypriot Literature. However, for reasons emanating from the tragic historic context of Cyprus, the term is being challenged, without any other concise, explicit and functional term put forward in its place. The excerpts that follow refer to the objections raised to the use of the term while (in the second excerpt) the term “Modern Greek literature of Cyprus” is proposed:

- a) “The official separation of Cypriot literature from the rest of the Greek literature, applying as sole criterion the origin of the writer lacks any scientific credibility [...]. It is evident that the literature of Cyprus,

including the dialectal texts, belongs to Modern Greek literature just as the literature of Crete, the Eptanisa or Epirus does”.

- b) “...in terms of form, there is nothing that could discern modern and contemporary “Cypriot literature” from contemporary Greek literature in the Helladic area. This significant grammatological conclusion leads us to the search of other terms that could characterise Cyprus’ literary production of modern years [...]. That is why the term “Modern Greek literature of Cyprus” is proposed”.

These objections ignore the views of most researchers who claim that Cypriot literature constitutes an integral part of Modern Greek literature and deny its specific particularities. From as early as May 1979, Georges P. Savvides formulated his views about Cypriot literature shedding light on some fundamental aspects of the matter:

“I shall clarify first what I perceive as “Cypriot Literature”, works of Cypriots who live in Cyprus, written in Greek, whether it be Modern Greek or the Cypriot dialect [...].

The unquestionable existence of Cypriot literature does not necessarily mean that there exists a “Cypriot School” [...]. However, the political and cultural circumstances through which Cypriot literature is developed are very different from the Helladic ones. So, sooner or later, its particularity will become more apparent and beneficial to the sum total of Greek literature”.

These distinctions by Georges P. Savvides put forward in an interview (“Cypriot literature from a Helladic point of view”) provided answers to philological questions of a coherent literature outside the borders of the Greek state. In the same interview, he answered directly or indirectly to other issues as well, such as centre and periphery, dialectal– national literature and moved on to the concluding statement that “if Cypriot literature, just as the Cretan before, constitutes an integral part of the Greek, then Cypriot writers rightfully hold a place among Greeks who speak the same language and serve the same art as them. Important people join important people and the rabble joins the rabble”. He also points out the need for a scientific history of Cypriot literature and refers to regional “provincialism” as a motive power. Shortly afterwards, Yiorgos Kehayioglou too underlines the need for an analytical history of the Cypriot literature in his study “Modern Cypriot Literature in the framework of Modern Greek Literature Histories”.

During the last decades, the term “Cypriot Literature” becomes generally acceptable, despite the objections we have already examined, which most times approached the issue with non-philological criteria. It contains a literature characterised by geographical polymerisation (Cyprus, Alexandria, Cairo, Athens etc.). This polycentrism will later become limited mainly to Cyprus and Athens.

The terms “Literature of Cyprus”, “Greek literature of Cyprus”, “Modern Greek literature of Cyprus” make up a needless grammatological terminology that bears the danger of excluding or suppressing the definition “Cypriot” from various expressions of life in Cyprus. This regulatory behaviour in the form of a philological policeman would eventually undermine everything, from the Cypriot wedding to the Cypriot wines, or should we say... the Modern Greek wines of Cyprus! For, by considering that the term “Cypriot Literature” is misleading and any attachment to it inevitably leads to a separatist approach of literature and by extension, to national division, then we are merely fighting with shadows. And no problem can thus be resolved.

The term “Cypriot literature” is far more explicit and at the same time its long-term use adequately covers local and regional literature and justifies its grammatological use. The historic and political events of 1974, with their tragic consequences, did not alter the character of this literary making, just as in previous years, the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 did not lead to its national ghettoization.





## **Prolegomena for a Comparative Approach to Cypriot Literatures**

**Matthias Kappler\***

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Cet article se concentre sur les concepts de littérature et d'identité. L'auteur soutient que les «littératures chypriotes» sont incluses dans une région de contacts plus large du Moyen Orient. De plus il suggère que le modèle périphérie/centre s'applique parfaitement aux littératures chypriotes, selon lui, quand il s'agit d'une approche comparative.

### **ABSTRACT**

This article focuses on the concepts of literature and identity. The author advocates that “Cypriot literatures” are included into a broader contact area of the Middle East. Furthermore, he suggests the periphery/centre pattern which, according to him, perfectly applies to Cypriot literatures in a comparative approach.

### **1. Literature and Identity**

When using the plural form “Cypriot literatures” (also “Literatures in Cyprus” might be employed) I am referring to both Greek and Turkish Cypriot literature. This can be considered a compromise between two extreme points of views: the recognition of the two Cypriot literatures as one common multilingual “uncanonized” literature (see the introduction to Yashin 2000), which seeks to set a distance to both Hellenism and Turkishness, and the complete exclusion or ignorance of the “Other”, widespread in both Greek and Turkish Cypriot comprehension. The latter attitude is an already stereotyped rhetoric device in both communities. On one side, most Greek Cypriot literary historians when using the term “Cypriot” very simply mean “Greek Cypriot”. As has already been stated elsewhere (Yashin 1997: 223-224 or Yashin 2001: 34-35), you will hardly find an “Ιστορία της ελληνοκυπριακής λογοτεχνίας” (History of the Greek Cypriot Literature) or

\* University of Cyprus

“Ιστορία ελληνοκυπριακής γραμματείας”(History of the Greek Cypriot Letters), but a lot of works, books, essays, anthologies about “Κυπριακή λογοτεχνία” as a self-sufficient term, excluding from “Cypriot” any literature written in other languages than Greek. The inverse procedure with the same result is represented by the official Turkish Cypriot attitude, which, on the contrary, overstates the autonomy of Turkish Cypriot literature with terms such as “Kıbrıs Türk Edebiyatı”, while “Kıbrıs Edebiyatı” is not used by this ideological stream, as if there never existed any contact between the various forms of expression of Cypriot literatures. The same is true when speaking about language: the ideological and political concerns dictate the terminology of “κυπριακή διάλεκτος” or “κυπριακά”, for “our”, i.e. the Greek Cypriot’s way to speak, the Others speak “τουρκοκυπριακά” or just “τουρκικά” (since the mere existence of a Turkish Cypriot dialect is, interestingly enough and in contrast to all the scientific linguistic findings, been denied by some Greek nationalistic circles and amateurish ‘pseudo’-scientists), just as for Turkish Cypriots the Other’s language is “Rumca”, and not “Kıbrıs Ağzı”, reserved for “our”, i.e. Turkish Cypriot speech only<sup>1</sup>.

Operating in terms of “we” and “the Other”, borrowed from stereotypology, the first approach of analysis that comes into mind is the issue of identity as a research option from the imagological point of view, analyzing the image of the “Other” in the two respective literatures. An extensive monography (comparable to Millas 2002 for the Greek image in Turkish novels) on this topic does not yet exist for Cyprus, although attempts have been made<sup>2</sup>. Such an approach for a comparative analysis of Cypriot literatures is not without problems, since the issue of identity apparently seems to be of different or even divergent nature in the mutual stereotypical image of the Greek/Turkish “Other”, but in the same time presents stunning structural similarities and convergences in the two communities when it comes to the self-definition towards the respective mainland literature. The traditional and nationalistic device of both Hellenocentric and “Anatolian-centered” literary rhetorics consists in seeking its root in the origin from (and dependence of) an idealized and rather abstract “motherland” (see for instance Panagiotounis 1981: 5, 60 and Serdar 1993: 1-6 respectively). When it comes to contemporary literature with the rise of critical approaches and currents, the image is, of course, more complicated. The seek of identity in Greek Cypriot literature lies still in Hellenism, somewhat “overdetermined” in postcolonial Cyprus (according to Stephanides 2000: 160)<sup>3</sup>. A very recent example, interesting

also because of its subtly discriminating attitude towards the “Other”, is the wording used in the advertisement for a translation program launched by the Ministry of Education, where Greek Cypriot literature is termed “Ελληνική γραμματεία της Κύπρου” (“Greek literature of Cyprus”) whereas Turkish Cypriot literature is “only” “τουρκοκυπριακή γραμματεία”<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, the identity quest of contemporary Turkish Cypriot literature in its relation with Turkish literature seems to be more conflictual (see Mehmet Yashin 1990 and 1997). However that may be, we roughly have the consciousness of Greek Cypriot literature as a part of Greek literature and of Turkish Cypriot literature as referring to models, themes and forms in the literature of Turkey. This cannot be questioned or denied, but such a conception disregards important historical and cultural factors which unite the two communities in terms of colonialism, post-colonialism, migration and periphery/centre-structures and which, on the other hand, imbed the two communities and their literatures into an intercultural sphere outside the Greek and Turkish contexts, call it Levante or Eastern Mediterranean or Middle East, with considerable socio-economic and cultural implications. It is therefore inevitable to include Cypriot literatures into a broader contact area and to compare the role of identity and of periphery/centre-structures in both literatures with the literatures not only of the respective mainlands, but also with those of the adjacent Near East, especially with literatures (in different languages) of Lebanon/Syria/Palestine and of Egypt.

## 2. Periphery and Centre(s)

The above mentioned periphery/centre-pattern, well-known from postcolonial studies (Ashcroft et al. 1989, in particular pp. 3-4, 7-8; Gandhi 1998: 161-163 and *passim*), perfectly applies to Cypriot literatures when it comes to a comparative approach. According to this theoretical framework, a marginal periphery “converses” in an often conflictual literary dialogue with the metropolitan (in former times imperial) centre. Again, the use of the plural form (“centres”) should be preferred here, since the concept of “centre” of Cypriot literatures cannot be confined to one or two metropolises only, because it has been multiplied according to the diachronic development and historical displacement of the two societies: Istanbul/Constantinople and London for both, plus Athens, Alexandria and Cairo (and even Venice) for the Greek Cypriot society/literature, thus a “polycentric” structure being valid especially for the Greek Cypriot literary

production. This approach seems to be particularly suitable for the analysis of Cypriot literatures during the Ottoman period, when there was a well-established imperial centre (Istanbul) sending impulses to both communities of the island (see for an attempt in this direction Kappler 2004). By using a comparative research orientation, the Greek and Turkish literatures of Cyprus can be fruitfully analyzed as two corresponding and antagonizing voices from the periphery to the centre. It is necessary, however, to draw a line between “folk” and “learned” literature which, in the case of Cypriot literatures, only partially overlap with oral and written literature respectively. In each of the two literary categories, symmetrical and asymmetrical correspondences in the narrative discourse may be discovered: the Turkish *Gazevât-nâmes* and the Greek genre of “Lament” (Θρήνος) immediately after the Ottoman conquest; the various “epic” texts (*destan*) of the “Dragoman-tradition” produced in both Greek and Turkish during the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries; centre-oriented vs. centre-opposing literary production during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, e.g. Hilmi Efendi (1782-1847) or Âşık Kenzî (1795-1839) and Vassilis Michaelides (1851/53-1917)<sup>5</sup>. The periphery/centre-pattern might be a useful framework to work on texts of the following (late Ottoman and British) period, too; under this light of analysis apparently divergent literary topics and settings might suddenly converge as a parallel manner of speaking and expression<sup>6</sup>. Concerning contemporary Cypriot literatures, especially after 1974, when identity becomes a decisive issue in defining literature (and society) in a new context of “Cypriotness”, a combinational methodology constituted by the analysis of the understanding of herself/himself against the “Other” (or the “other side”) and by the definition of links and (self)-references to the centres (now undoubtedly Athens and Istanbul respectively) could be a promising approach for a modern comparative analysis. The research in this direction for contemporary Cypriot literatures has not yet begun, perhaps simply because of the researchers’ general lack of competence in both literatures and languages, or because of a certain resistance against a holistic interpretation of texts which might not be in line with the still dominating ethnically defined patterns of literary history in Cyprus.

## NOTES

1. To confuse even more this somewhat absurd image in mutual stereotypology, we might add that apart from the self-denomination “Kıbrısca” for Turkish Cypriot, some parts of the Turkish Cypriot society use also the expression “kibriyaka” (in Greek!) for their own (Turkish) speech variety!
2. For the images of Turks/Turkish Cypriots in Greek Cypriot poetry see Pieris 2006, in Greek Cypriot prose writing see Papaleontiou 2005. Cf. also the M.A. thesis by Maria Kallousia (supervisor Dimitris Tziouvas) “Strangers at Home: Images of Turkish-Cypriot ‘Others’ in Contemporary Greek-Cypriot Fiction” (University of Birmingham, 2006). As far as I know (and also according to information provided by Neşe Yaşın) there are no published studies on the opposite phenomenon, i.e. the image of Greeks/Greek Cypriots in Turkish Cypriot literature; an unpublished conference paper “From Turkishness to Hybridity: the Evolution of ‘the Other’ in Turkish Cypriot Poetry” was presented by N. Yaşın at the symposium ‘Mare Nostrum III’, Nicosia 2004. Cf. also Azgın 2000 for a general overview, but with only some hints at the concept of the ‘Other’.
3. For an extensive discussion of contemporary Greek Cypriot literature in the context of periphery/centre in relation to Greek literature see Kechagioglou 1992.
4. The advertisement is dated 17.5.2007 and has the file number 14.13.30.5, see [www.moec.gov.cy/announcements.pdf/17\\_5\\_2007metafrasaeis\\_tourkikon\\_ergon.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/announcements.pdf/17_5_2007metafrasaeis_tourkikon_ergon.pdf) (“metafrasaeis”: sic!). The committee members mentioned at the end of the document have apparently not been consulted for the wording of the advertisement.
5. For all these examples see Kappler 2004: passim.
6. See for such an attempt in the framework of postcolonial theory the article “Cypriot literatures as part of the Eastern Mediterranean contact area (1850-1960)” in the present volume.

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## Four Levitations over Four Notes on Cypriot Literature

Savvas Pavlou\*

### RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur relève les aspects positifs et négatifs dans les relations entre le centre hellénique et la périphérie chypriote. Il est en faveur du polycentrisme et contre le concentrationisme athénien.

### ABSTRACT

The author outlines the positive and negative aspects of the relationship between a Helladic centre and the Cypriot periphery. He argues in favour of polycentrism versus Athenian concentrationism.

A. The contrast between centre and periphery has oftentimes been depicted throughout the history of Modern Greek literature. Since the establishment of the Greek state and the proclamation of Athens as its capital, the Phanariotes, supporters of the ere now mighty Ionian School (Eptanisiaki Scholi), scholars from Alexandria and the province during the interwar years or even from northern Thessaloniki have resisted to Athenians, arguing that the interplays and favouritism among Athenian literary circles diminish and understate the stature and work of other literary circles in the periphery and province.

This is a prolific contrast indeed, as it prompts further criticism and reassessments and does not permit the domination or quiescence of the Athenian perspective. Furthermore, among these contrasts, one may trace significant elements of renewal and quality. Particularly, nowadays, we attest to the emergence of locality with peripheral anthologies and surveys, the emergence of efficient and competent figures and works ignored by Athenian connections and axiological mechanisms; what is more, these

\* Philologist



contrasts are invested with more ideological resultants designating a different ethos (by rejecting bribery and marketability formulas, addiction to the Media, Public Relations and literary glamour, phenomena which have began to dominate in the Athenian publishing and axiological practice). Littérateurs from the province are not invited by major Athenian TV stations to cook pasta for TV lovers, as is the case with certain modernist and innovative Athenian littérateurs, who are being humiliated in order to gain a spot in the limelight, thus increasing the number of copies they sell. Afar from all these, the littérateurs from the province fly under the radar and keep making their statements with modesty.

Indeed, polycentrism has never harmed anyone and, sometimes, Athenian monocentrism crushes values and oppresses qualitative statements. Cyprus could contribute to the elevation of Modern Greek polycentrism which is in fact a prerequisite for the renewal and enrichment of contemporary Modern Greek culture. However, in Cyprus, the contrast with the Athenian Canon may receive different dimensions just as hurtful, or even worse. The Cypriot state could be vested with power; the contrast with Athens' literary and publishing practices and its axiological standpoints could take cover behind Cypriot Statism and end up devoid of any suggestions for renewal, criticism, contemplative reassessment, thus failing to elevate the new ethos and attitude of literary life.

B. Notable Cypriot poets are oppressed by two trends, both the Cypriot and the Greek one. What prevail in Cyprus are relationships, acquaintances and connections of a restricted literary circle. Only conventional affirmative reviews are deposited for each work, without any classification into good, average and bad. Therefore, notable Cypriot poets take the rap.

Although Helladic circles hardly ever study works by Cypriot litterateurs seriously and thoroughly, they always have at hand convenient and conventional affirmative reviews for almost everyone. Therefore, in the context of emotional stress resulting from the 1974 Cyprus tragedy and the ongoing injustice imposed upon Cypriot Hellenism, a dominant impression has been established which Helladic circles keep reproducing: that everybody has affirmative reviews about Cypriot works even though they are on the whole average. Therefore, notable Cypriot poets take the rap.

C. So much persistence for publications of general content detailing the island's literary production, proclaiming that notable poetry is produced in Cyprus, ranking the general traits of each period and other encyclopaedic

trivial! By experiencing boredom, I read so many things, and they are all the same. Even here, one can detect Cypriot Statism. In the same way that efforts are being made to elevate the state identity of Cyprus with the promotion of national teams of polo, volleyball, basketball, football, ice-hockey and field hockey, it is also proclaimed that the Cypriot state possesses literature too.

Therefore, it is imperative to turn away from the general picture and look into the particular *littérateur* and/or the particular work. It is imperative to detect whatever it is that this specific Cypriot poetry collection and this specific Cypriot poet have contributed to art, whatever it is that they have contributed to the Greek poetic art. This is where the essence lies, and not in vague notes.

D. Undoubtedly, the Cypriot dialect has a lot to offer to poetry, theatre and other arts. It constitutes a contemporary live linguistic expression and it may yield modern live poetry and theatre. However, the poetic expression of the Cypriot dialect was led to obsolescence by many that dote on and overprotect it, ending up enclosing it into the one-dimensional expression of an obsolete world; an idyllic world that expresses the ethos of a long gone bucolic Cyprus. In Cyprus, where people lead modern stressed lives, dialectal poetry works in replacement of a world that no longer exists. Very few writers have ventured to employ the Cypriot dialect in order to express their metaphysical anguishes, the ethos and habits of a modern inhabitant of the island. Once, I attended a poetry event. The actor was reciting a beautiful poem by Michalis Pashiardis on the tragic feeling of frustration and lack of response from Heaven. The actor recited the poem as if it was a pastoral bucolic romance, as if he was recounting a wickedly erotic rural story – a recitation nail on the coffin of dialectal Cypriot poetry.



## The Fate of Cypriot Literature

Yiorgos Lyssiotis\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Dans son article, cet auteur considère que pendant les dernières années la littérature chypriote a été abordée de façon plus sérieuse en Grèce par des milieux académiques, en particulier par les professeurs Georges P. Savvidis et Georges Kehagioglou.

### ABSTRACT

In his article, the author claims that Cypriot literature was tackled more seriously in Greece in recent years, especially by academics like George P. Savvides and George Kehagioglou.

In earlier times, Cypriot literature was unappreciated by or unknown to the cultural cradle of Hellenism. History books of Modern Greek literature have never ventured an evaluation of literary production in Cyprus. In fact, it used to be the metropolitan centre's unfamiliar and poor relation.

However, things have changed over the last few years, and this is owed to two Professors at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the dear departed George P. Savvides and his student George Kehagioglou. Moreover, some infrastructure works have recently been completed in Cyprus including the *Bibliography of Cypriot Literature* (2001) by Phivos Stavrides, Lefteris Papaleontiou and Savvas Pavlou.

In Cyprus, we may fall short in the novel genre but short story writing appears to have found fertile ground here. The basic representatives of prose in Cyprus are: Nicos Nicolaides, Nikos Vrachimis, Yiorgos Ph. Pierides, Costas Montis, Ivi Meleagrou, Christos Yeorgiou, Panos Ioannides, Yiannis Katsouris and others. Short stories by Nicos Nicolaides bear the vivid imprints of Cyprus and Greece, marrying ethnographic and psychographic elements with social speculation. Nikos Vrachimis was the first novelist to have managed to break the cluster of locality and broaden the cultural horizons of Cypriot prose by investing his texts with a European and universal character, marked by the persistent emergence of existential questions. Tassos

\* Literary critic

Stephanides seems to follow on Nikos Vrachimis' traces. Heaving the inner conflicts out of the unconscious, he tries to depict the tragic inconsistency between inner and outer worlds. Yiorgos Ph. Pierides is the most pragmatic, the most humane short story author. He introduces us to daily routine so that we can live through it and identify ourselves with it. His work is devoid of elaborate fiction, effusions or ideological ruffles; there's nothing but realism, social realism. In fact, he is the short story author of the popular folk. Both in his short stories and his novels, Costas Montis outlines the ordinary man, the minor and humble moments in life, with poetic and emotive disposition.

Christos Georgiou concentrates on crime scenes and alienated human characters while, in point of fact, he ponders over the refutation of dreams for a prosperous life in the newly established Republic of Cyprus. Both in their short stories and their novels, Panos Ioannides and Yiannis Katsouris utilize the elements of irony, satire and humor in order to inflict individuals and attitudes in the modern society of Cyprus, or to reproduce more authentic forms of past life. Ivi Meleagrou's novels are more complex and elusive: through them she describes the political and social issues of the country employing innovative narration.

With regards to Cypriot poetry, means of expression are characterized by diversity. Some poets combine the traditional style with the modernistic one and others clearly introduce an innovative pattern. For instance, Manos Kralis, the first one to regenerate poetic discourse in Cyprus, sets out from neo-symbolism and ends up in modern style. Influenced by the poetry of T.S. Eliot and Arthur Rimbaud, he utilizes images and symbols in order to sketch out the universal tragic man. The vagrant poetry of Tefkros Anthias, who has made "a home out of the whole world and Universe", runs at a different level. Likewise, the poetry of Thodosis Pierides moves along the lines of social realism. The gnomic poetry of Costas Montis, reminiscent of the Socratic dialectic, also divagates. Pantelis Michanikos ponders over the issue of ethnic autognosis and the abortion of individual and collective expectations and visions. The poetry of Theodosis Nicolaou is par excellence anthropocentric, with fructuous elements deriving from the Greek and European poetical tradition. The stochastic "historism" of Kyriakos Charalambides stems from Cavafy and Seferis and ends up in Byzantine solemnity. Theoklis Kouyialis probes into the fog of a ruthless world in order to find the incorruptible man. Furthermore, Yiorgos Moleskis attributes a poetic dimension to nothingness, searching for missing gods who are being replaced by poets.

Over the last few years, many works of Cypriot literature have been translated into various languages and made it out of the narrow geographical boundaries of Cyprus. Still, a lot of work lies ahead. First and foremost, the best specimens of Cypriot literature should be selected and translated in the best possible way in order to touch the foreign reader.

During a visit to Cyprus, Odysseas Elytis stated that among numerous poetry collections he had the chance to read in the 1970s, he picked out merely ten, seven of which were works by Cypriot poets. Elytis' appraisal may be read as an indication of the high quality of Cypriot literature which is interlinked with the relentless historical destiny of the island stemming from its geographic location.



## **A Critical Reading of the Cypriot Renaissance Canzoniere of the Venice Marcian Library (Marc. Gr, IX 32). Could this be the Oldest Neo-Hellenic Anthology known?**

**Elsie Mathiopoulou - Tornaritou\***

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Beaucoup de questions concernant les poèmes qui sont inclus dans le manuscrit chypriote de la bibliothèque Marcienne (datation, identité des poètes, rapport entre les poèmes et les textes originaux en italien, etc.) demeurent ouvertes. Cependant, il paraît que nous sommes en présence d'une première anthologie de poésie en dialecte chypriote où sont transférés dans l'espace littéraire hellénique des modes et des schémas métriques de la poésie de la renaissance de Pétrarque.

### **ABSTRACT**

Many questions concerning the poems included in the Cypriot manuscript of the Venice Marcian Library (dating, poets' identity, relation between the poems and the original texts in italian, etc.) remain open. However, it seems that we are in the presence of the first anthology of poems in the Cypriot dialect, which, in the world of Greek literature, convey thematic and stylistic modes and metrical schemes of the Petrarchism's renaissance poetry.

The poems of this Cypriot manuscript – a sum total of 156-164, if we follow Antonis Indianos or Themis Pitsillides – comprise a poetic Anthology which is well organized for its time, possibly from a philological perspective too, that runs in the spirit of 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian Petrarchanism. Obviously, they do not belong to the folksong genre or the oral tradition. Very few among them may be characterized as semi-folk (see Table II). However, in their entirety they present the most noteworthy early endeavor of Neo-Hellenic lyric verse to find its own path – if only a dialectal one – amidst the disordered scene of the then first appearing artistic lyric poetry beyond Italian ground. It is the time when the so called “Petrarchism”, though not

\* University of Bonn



everywhere and always successful in its strict sense, appears in many poetry collections from the Iberian Peninsula to faraway Cyprus as rhymes and verses of erotic content mostly, in which the new meters and new poetic form experiments that will soon prevail in the literary endeavors of the main European countries are also here tried out. After all, it is not by chance that the explosion of personal sentiments of Petrarchan orientation in specific national literatures in Europe coincides along general lines with the quests and ideological conquests of the dawn of modern years, which do not eventuate everywhere at the same time. Affluent literatures such as the French, the English, the Spanish and the Portuguese are telling examples. They may vary from both a chronological and a grammatological perspective of genres and form, but one thing is certain: effusion of lyricism, seen either as a pan-European movement or not. Similarities across new themes, the ideology and radical renewal of expressive means that prevail in these foreign language lyric pieces are easily discerned, regardless of whether they are delivered as translations or paraphrases of Italian originals or if they are only partly and indirectly influenced by them. Their language very often emits self-sufficiency and inventiveness of expressive possibilities. That is why over recent years, interest in these early pieces from the origins of national literary production has increased together with the phenomena that govern them. Hence new editions on the literary production of “the Venetian rule” from all over the Greek area along with evaluations of neoteric methodology have multiplied. During the sixth meeting of *Neograeca Medii Aevi* in Yiannina (29 September - 2 October 2005), Yiorgos Kehayioglou was right to ask for a “Reevaluation of facts and testimonies on the poly-system of early Cypriot Literature (from the times of the Komninoi to 1570)”, where he also referred to the Marciana Code texts by their old title as “*Kypriotica Erotica*” [Cyprian Erotic Texts], adding that for the works of most categories he considers “the contextual horizon as a thematology of cardinal significance”. In the following pages, greater special emphasis should be placed on this component of European and mainly Italian “contextual horizon” where for one reason or another verses and poems facilitating the course of reading are only presented as samples.

Neither in the texts themselves nor in an apex or any dated annotations are there any clear indications that would allow for an accurate dating of the Marcian manuscript and the verification of the identity of its scribe. However, if we carefully examine certain data of the Code then we conclude with certainty that the manuscript dates back from somewhere within the

third quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Of course, terminus post quem for the original and inevitably for the Marcian copy is the introductory poem *Pedante* (Nr 27 Pedagogue) from the collection *Cantici di Fidenzio Glottochrysio Ludimagistro* (approx. 1550) by Camillo Scroffa (1526-1565), according to a clever comparison and match of the two poems by Vincenzo Pecoraro at the Convegno Nazionale di Studi Neogreci (Palermo, 1975). The ultimate date with terminus ante quem is 1582, the year of death of the first possessor of the Code, Natale Conti. However, whether the manuscript had been scribed in Cyprus or Venice, a more likely date is the year 1570, when Nicosia fell to the hands of the Turks. Yet new questions arise instantly: Could the scribe of the Venetian Code be a Greek-speaking foreigner, regardless of the place where the scribing took place? This cannot be ruled out with absolute paleographic criteria which are extensively discussed elsewhere (see “Origins of Neo-Hellenic Literature”, 1993, pp. 364-369). However there is no other example in the Greek or even the Latin alphabet of a foreign and not a bilingual scribe scribing a clearly neo-hellenic text like ours with difficult and intricate vocabulary as well as folk and dialectal particularities. It appears that the name of the Code’s scribe remains an issue as well as the identity and the name or names of its versifiers. Basically, if we exclude from the start the possibility that the hasty scribe is the same as the compiler of the collection’s poems – which in my opinion is the most likely, since the Code’s whole style presents an offhandedness lacking any decorating element – the identity of the anthologist remains even more vague. However, attempting to identify him through the texts themselves, we reach certain conclusions which at the same time help us investigate the problematic of one or more rhymers within the collection.

In order to tread with certainty we set off from a few poems (Nrs 132-135, 137, 141, 150, 153) largely found toward the end of the Code. These poems can hardly be considered lyrical and whilst presenting numerous Renaissance elements, they do not lie within the spirit of Petrarchanism. One may easily deduce that these are not translations. They are linguistically distinguished by a mixture of scholarly or even archaic elements with idiomatic and dialectal expressions so that they become reminiscent of the graceless style of the Cypriot “poiitarides” [folk poets reciting their poems in public] from the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But the most important fact is that either directly or indirectly these versifiers refer to persons and events of their milieu and times, which ascribes to them an air of seasonality, another element that supports their originality. As for the aforementioned

indications, indisputably important in the form of historic testaments and the dating of the Code's original, they coincide with the first twenty years after 1550 which we have established as *terminus post quem*. Therefore, since we are obliged to accept that this Cypriot anthology, composed as we've come to know it, received its final form between 1550-1570 – a time when it is known that the trend of poetry collections was at its peak in Italy and especially Venice – it would not be arbitrary to suggest that anthologizing coincided chronologically with the last production phase of the above seasonal poems' originals.

Pierre de Ronsard, one of the most important European Petrarchists, had in his library the first two volumes of the earliest Venetian anthology (published by Camillo Giollito de Ferrari) in 1545 and 1547, *Rime diverse di molti eccellentissimi autori*. Also in Venice the renowned anthology of Girolamo Ruscelli, *I fiori delle rime de' poeti illustri novamente raccolti* was published in 1558 (at the Giovanbattista and Melchior Sessa press office). The anthologizing and systemic presentation by genre and according to the metric scheme of the poems of a *Canzoniere* [collection of poems] is a necessary component of the movement known all over Europe as Petrarchism in compliance with the latest research on the ideological, sociological and philological procedures that led to it.

This parameter, closely interlinked on the one hand with the beginnings of historiography of Italian literary production and on the other with the increase of the reading public's interest in poetry collections alongside strides in typography, contributed decisively to the gradual transformation of an easy to use linguistic and lyrical instrument that had an effect on the whole of Italian society. Carlo Dionisotti (p. 188) refers to this phenomenology of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as follows: *Il linguaggio lirico era diventato lingua e disciplina comune di tutta la società italiana, tesa nello sforzo di far argine e riparo a tanta rovina: una lingua e disciplina non meno esatta del latino umanistico, ma aperta a un uso di gran lunga più spedito, più frequente e più vario*. Of course, the uniqueness of the Cypriot Petrarchan collection as well as the as yet precocious research stage in the Greek area particularly on the non folk poetry of the time do not allow but an initial general comparison and parallelism with analogous Italian phenomena.

It is true that this brief project does not leave much room for setting forth several critical observations on the construction of a historic-social context to outline the ambience of production of both the evidently Petrarchan poems of the Code and of the semi-folk and clearly seasonal verses in the

form of epistles, included therein. If someone could thicken, albeit only theoretically, the network of information and the presentation of elements in order to fill in the mainly cultural voids that correspond to approximately four centuries of French-Italian rule (Frangokratia) in Cyprus, and more specifically sometime between the relics of Saint Neophytos the Enclosed and the two historically significant editions of the *Description de toute l'île de Chypre* by Etienne de Lusignan, they would have a cultural synopsis, probably less complete but somehow parallel to N.M.Panayiotakis' and David Holton's similar attempts with regards to Crete. The pursuit of Theodoros Papadopoulos, the coordinator of the new supplemented Greek edition of the history of George Hill, and his cooperators, in which a large part of the third volume is dedicated to the history of Cypriot literature and art during the French rule, appears to be analogous.

However we are limited to an isolated cluster of informative material concerning the two main places under Frankish rule in the Greek area: Crete and Cyprus, where next to the plethora of parallel and often even similar historic-social phenomena and intellectual workings there lies a number of dissimilar conditions and coincidences mainly across ecclesiastical and administrative issues but also in the economic, population and educational infrastructure of the two islands.

In the well known *Descriptio Insule Crete* of 1415 (published by Marie-Ann Van Spitael, 1981; Greek translation by Martha Aposkite, *Enas gyros tis Kritis sta 1415* [A tour of Crete in 1415], 1983) Christophoro Buondelmonti admits to have been impressed by the Cretan songs (*cantilenas creticas*) sung by sailors and oarsmen which of course were then very popular in the Greek world. Both for Crete and other islands there is information from other travelers too about fairs, entertainments and festivities involving eating and drinking, dancing and mainly singing; but also on mourning events and funeral songs. The enumeration and utilization of similar information by Chrysa Maltezou (in the collective volume *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete* edited by D. Holton, 1991) in conjunction with the official prohibitions of the Venetian administration – as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century – comprise valuable indications which contribute to the discussion predominantly on folksongs and the cultural conditions in Crete and proportionately other islands. Another discovery should be added here, indirectly mentioned in *Turcograecia* (1584) by the German Humanist Martin Crusius which apparently refers along general lines to the Aegean islands or most likely to the two big islands only, Crete and Cyprus after

having discussed their dialect on the same page (209) and earlier. After comparing the “islands” to a Paradise (*quasi Paradisus esse propter fertilitatem et amoenitatem*) he returns further below to add that a kind of poetic games takes place there. It is not clear from Crusius’ brief description whether the recited verses were improvised by the poets or if they were simply recited in a musical manner (*recitativo*). The former seems more likely, based on the phrase with which Crusius closes his paragraph, which he cites in the margin as *Poesis insulanorum*. His telling last phrase is this: *Fieri haec animi causa: accedere convivia, choreas, cantus*.

Analogous informative material, pertaining especially to the mores, songs and character of the people of Cyprus from someone who lived precisely during the time of the compilation of the Marcian collection poems, is found in the descriptive work of the already mentioned clergyman, chronicler and scholar Etienne Lusignan (1537-1590), *Description de toute l’île de Chypre*. In chapter 29 (p. 219 and so forth), also referring to the contents under the general title “*Du naturel des hommes et femmes de Chypre*”, we read a number of interesting facts on the whole of Cypriot society of his time, mainly with regards to music and poetry. Consciously or unwillingly the French nobleman of Cypriot origin, a chronicler (or historiographer as he calls himself in page 119), touches with an almost systematic clarity on specific sociological and cultural resultants that demarcate a temporary network of substructure for the anthology of the Venetian code, even if the processing of the informative volume of all of Lusignan’s works is yet to be completed.

Limiting our observations to the minimum and only with respect to the above excerpt from page 220 verso – 221 recto of the *Description*, we arrive at certain useful conclusions:

a) The social stratum that the writer calls noblemen (*la noblesse*) creates a clement and humane climate around itself which is open to foreigners; in fact, noblemen are more interested in foreigners than in their compatriots. Taking into consideration other economic and historic preconditions, we may determine Cypriot society in the urban centers during the primary and late French rule as almost pluralistic in terms of its population and culture. This world of mainly French and Italian noblemen entertained themselves, according to Lusignan’s information, practicing in weaponry and fencing. At the time, all lords were adept in the art of singing and playing the *laouto* [stringed musical instrument], whereas the ladies played the *spinetto*. They all loved music very much (*aimaient fort la Musique*).

b) But if the foreigners and Hellenized lords engaged more systematically in

artistic singing and music, other social groups (which the chronicler carefully distinguishes: *Le peuple & bourgeois & autres de mediocre condition*) did not fall short in their entertainment, even though theirs leaned more on the amateur side (*amateurs des jeux et dances*). In this world, which in its large majority was comprised by the local Cypriot population, Lusignan dedicates more lines to describe with relevant precision and knowledge when and in what circumstances they composed their verses without ever having been taught the art (*sans en avoir toutefois aucun art ou précepte*), as they had a natural inclination to poetry (*ont un naturel si enclin à la poésie, qu'ils composent gentilmente*). They sang in a generally pleasant and sweet voice (*ils chantent aussi fort doucement & avec une voix plaisante*) that was adjusted according to the occasion and the theme of the song (*accommodant la voix semblable au sujet*).

c) Next to his reference on funeral songs for the death of a lord or an important person, the chronicler goes on to address his reader with personal engagement and emotion (*amy Lecteur que tu eusses entendu celle, qui fut faite sur l'entreprise du Turc contre la bie defendue Isle de Malte, je m'assure que tu fondrois en larmes*), in order to touch on the lamentations about the war of Malta and the destruction of Nicosia (*ou si tu pouuois ouyr celle de la ruine de Nicossie*).

The aforementioned specific information designates the two principal systems of entertainment and overall communication that coexisted in Cyprus in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, precisely when Lusignan wrote his *Description* (concluded in 1568). Whether it be folk poetry with space for amateur improvisation on the one hand or foreign artistic lyrical poetry distinct from the local traditional culture, accompanied by lords playing the *laouto* on the other, one may discover within the rich and heteromorphous collection of poems of the Cypriot Code whole sets of relations and interdependencies between these two systems of communication.

The product of translation or paraphrase – not always of the same quality – that comes to us through the verses of the Marcian manuscript depends on the phrasing forms, the linguistic levels and the semiotic conventions prevailing in the two contrasting but communicating social groups. And precisely because the transfer of poetic discourse, as already noted, does not follow homogenous processes and rules, independent of any Italian models, linguistic and stylistic closeness across the Code's texts, advocated by earlier research, was rightly questioned.

We have attempted here, based on specific figures of lyrical eloquence, to point out certain poetic units which are schematically presented in Table 2 at

the end of this project. It would be useful to repeat that the Cypriot poems of the Venetian Code are not the product of selection from the work of one and only rhymers (in other words, one *canzoniere*) but the anthologizing of verses of more than one writer which in accordance to the Italian practice, must have taken place within the 1560s. Therefore, the brief enumeration of easily recognizable but divergent elements has allowed us to point out the two main poetic units included in the manuscript, each of an utterly contrasting style.

A) Let us first point out a rich cluster of mainly octaves (*strambotti*) of courtly inspiration and origin – without necessarily implying that these verses are the oldest layers in the original of the Cypriot Code. The anthology opens with these octaves (numbers 2-4), whilst around the middle of the collection there is a large bulk of poems again in the form of the Italian *strambotto* (numbers 28-68). Together they compile the most compact cluster in the Code in terms of metrical technique, effortless language and expressiveness of meanings, so that they may be described as a whole in relation to their Italian originals (some of which are known to us) but also autonomously, as noteworthy lyrical verses of their time. Most of the above poems, at least those of which the originals have been discovered mainly through the works of Th. Pitsillides and V. Pecoraro, are deeply immersed in the early Petrarchan ambience of the end of the Quattrocento and the beginnings of the Cinquecento (Table 1) for the most part in the wider Venice area; without however excluding other influences stemming from Northern Italy i.e. the rhymes of Serafino dell' Aquila. From the latter we have four octaves in this specific cluster, translated quite faithfully, as well as a sonnet elsewhere – simplified and in many points misunderstood. Dell' Aquila's rhymes (he died in 1500 at the age of 34) gained considerable fame all over Italy with 20 subsequent editions in Venice only, between 1502-1513. In any case, it is worth noting that both in this section of the Cypriot collection and in others one does not meet only the most well known Petrarchan poets of Venice usually included in anthologies, such as the scholar and poet Pietro Bembo and others from his circle i.e. Bernardo Cappello and Baltassar Castiglione, but also less known poets that are completely absent from the statistical tables of Petrarchan collections, such as Niccolò Delfino or Niccolò da Correggio. As we shall see further below, this is not the only particularity of the Cypriot anthology in relation to the selection of the texts destined for translation (see Table 1).

But coming back to the translations and the more or less liberal paraphrases of the aforementioned *strambotti*, it appears that despite the trend to generally

follow the Italian versification and the mannered style of courtly eroticism, only rarely does one note servile rigidity in the rhythm of these poems' verses. Strambotto number 40 of the Cypriot Code is an example of a worthy effort on behalf of the Cypriot rhymers to faithfully render the technique of Serafino dell' Aquila's lyrical style. Also, in the four introductory hendecasyllable octaves of poem number 2 the scheme of the book and colors from the known sonnet of Niccolò da Correggio are used masterfully for its time in a liberal paraphrasing attempt of the same Cypriot poet.

That is precisely why it would be impossible to ascribe to this specific translator-rhymers other poems from the Code which, whilst according to the *gusto*, content and style of their Italian originals belong to the early Petrarchan period or even the first decades of the Cinquecento (when Pietro Bembo's *De Imitatione* and *Asolani* were published – see Table 1) do not present analogous versification abilities even from the hand of an amateur. In particular, poems such as number 102, modeled after Ariosto's *Capitolo* 22, numbers 79 and 84, modeled after Baldassare Castiglione's and Bernardo Capello's poems – the latter indirectly or directly belonging to the Petrarchan movement of Venice – numbers 7, 23 and 110, modeled after two sonnets and a *terzina* based on respective verses by Niccolò Delfino (all of the aforementioned poets joining the close circle of Pietro Bembo), show no flexibility in verses and possess limited translational abilities. Two early sonnets of the great Venetian Humanist Pietro Bembo (numbers 8 and 14) are also included in the Cypriot anthology. Even if no other indisputable translations of his works will ever be discovered, Bembo's implicit influence within the Venetian Code as an authority of Petrarchism and as a forerunner of the *nuovo gusto poetico* well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century is undeniable, independent of the Italian poet's significant relation with the court of Katerina Kornaro in Asolo: Asolo was where the Queen of Cyprus lived almost in confinement during the last years of her life (1489-1510) in a milieu which promoted letters and arts and was frequented by Bembo and most of the poets of whom verses are found in translation within the Venetian manuscript.

From as early as the first careful but strictly critical reading of the aforementioned early Petrarchan verses it is obvious that they have not always achieved to transmit much of the technique or eloquence of their Italian originals (with a few exceptions: numbers 110, 1-4, 10-17, 31-37). Number 102 by Ariosto and sonnets numbers 7 and 23 by Delfino are especially awkward and boring compared to their originals. In fact they pale in comparison even to the worst translations of the octaves mentioned in the



beginning (such as the strambotti numbers 29, 39, 41, 49-50), which have not been marked as more faithful renditions or liberal paraphrases of Italian originals, yet they remain interesting as linguistic and expressive exercises. That is precisely why through these first attempts to transfer to the Greek language texts by early Italian Petrarchans (despite their dialectal and Cypriot nuances) there should probably be a differentiation between the most noteworthy in the mass and almost autonomous group of octaves (numbers 2-4 and 28-68) and the other awkward Petrarchan translations, even though it is not impossible for one group to be chronologically distant from the other (Table 1). Then again, if this period could be demarcated globally as a whole, it should not lie far from the first phase of the main Venetian rule in Cyprus that coincides, not accidentally in my opinion, with the twenty years of Katerina Kornaro's stay in Asolo (1489-1519).

B) In terms of chronology, there is another certain indication of a terminus ante quem for the writing of the Venetian Anthology's original which, as already noted, is designated by the poem "Pedagogue", number 27 (see Table 2). This poem may also be considered as the beginning of another partial collection comprising of lengthier poems – amongst them *Canzone* number 94, translated after the renowned funeral epitaph *Canzone Nr 268*, "In morte di Madonna Laura" by Petrarch. With this last canzone, the Cypriot rhymers – to our knowledge the only foreign Petrarchan that translated the whole of this work in the 16<sup>th</sup> century – renders wonderfully within his powers the mournful ambience of the Italian model. This gifted translator with the ornery and affected style, which clearly distinguishes him from the octaves' rhymers, is also traced in another group of poems. If the observations I have pointed earlier are correct, we may deduce that his writing style is met beyond the translations of Petrarch's poems – an issue worthy of special consideration – in the seven syllable canzoni numbers 92-93, the terzinas numbers 97-100 and 104, the eight syllable barzellettas numbers 116-118 and the eight syllable octaves numbers 125-129. If the introductory poem "Pedagogue" (the only title in the Code, fol. 286 r), is added to these poems – dissimilar to the originals we know, but quite similar in terms of their somehow boring yet utmost expressive linguistic elaboration in Greek – then we have a small but quite complete collection of poems with the most mournful verses in the Cypriot Code. The verses of this strange *rimadore*-translator that at times reach a unique eloquence of mourning despite his frugal means (i.e. the recurrent verse – epode from barzelletta number 118: *alive with two deaths*) are dedicated to the girl of his thoughts, named

Chrystalleni. His artistic idiosyncrasy and “poigitiki” [poetics] (see also *Epistola number 149* where this expression is used), that touches on certain manneristic trends of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – despite its casual clumsiness and naivety of expressions – is easily discerned in the studied and almost programmed selection of the pieces rendered as translations or more liberal paraphrases (See tables 1-2). His preference, as we have already seen, pivots for the most part around sonnets and two canzoni by Petrarch whilst in a way keeping pace with the fashion of directly approaching and acquainting the Canzoniere of the great master through the Italian Petrarchans of the first decades of the Cinquecento, he is inspired by the spirit of the early printed anthologies of the mid 1500s. The representative selection of the well known first “epistle” by Antonio Tibaldeo, a text which alongside the other two “epistles” and “ekloges” of the poet is famous for its positively transitional role within the Italian poet’s work, could also be added to the above. For, by escaping the thoroughly courtly early Petrarchan style of his previous verses, these epistles, with their mannerism and complex phrases (often with their idiomatic color too, as the Cypriot translation itself) set the ground for the style of the latter 16<sup>th</sup> century. From the *terzine* to the *epistola* of this Italian model, the Cypriot rhymers composes quatrains whilst daring to carry out quite a few other smaller changes. Also, in his effort to render the meaning not only more analytically but also through his own interpretation he does not always remain faithful to the Italian text. Sometimes he does not merely paraphrase; he makes his own interesting additions that proclaim (as in number 104. 33) his classical education and his abilities in the handling of rhetoric figures such as alliteration.

But based on today’s facts, we cannot know for sure whether this rhymers to whom he have ascribed the mournful verses of Chrystalleni’s canzoniere which in accordance to the dating of the “Pedagogue” (number 27) must have been written between 1560-1570, had also been the compiler and also to an extent a writer within the original of our anthology – even though it seems very likely that he had been. Upon a more careful reading of other original (?) poems of the Code the possibility that this bold experimentist of the verse was one of the two rhymers and opponents by whom poems of confrontation and personal dispute are characteristic of their epoch, appears in fact equally great. Therefore, by overlooking certain features that are perhaps not irrelevant to the particular conditions surrounding these poems’ composition – for which reason they are included in this group according to their themes and versification– and bearing in mind that for these peculiarly

personal verses there cannot be any Italian model neither directly nor indirectly – then based on expressive and linguistic affinities, we add to Chrystalleni's canzoniere the following probably original poems: the double sonnet number 137, the fifteen syllable poems 132-135 and the thirteen syllable 153 that belong to the "*Manogeles*", according to the strictly fifteen syllable poems number 141,1 (Table 2). We do not know who Emmanouel was, for whom a thorough lesson of literary theory is provided through poem number 141. The writer of the above advisory verses also remains unknown. Further, let us not forget the telling annotation "*kripsis*" (from fol. 272r), in other words the first saved folio of the Venetian manuscript. Only a few indicative verses from the hendecasyllable acatalectic sestets numbers 105-111 could be associated with X, the poet of Chrystalleni and the versifier of the two "epistles" numbers 141 and 150 with the streamlined minor tone and more lyrical expressions. Then again, if this group of seven sextines – in their largest part free paraphrases of Petrarchan models or verses by early Petrarchans – is compared to the musical quatrains of number 112 or the folkway fifteen syllable verses of number 115 and the hendecasyllable tercine of number 101, the most pronounced and dynamic efforts to conquer a personal lyrical style are easily and clearly distinguished. Further, and compared to the above examples – even with certain verses from poems numbers 2 and 28-68 which rank among the best in the collection – "epistles" numbers 141 and 150 are obviously inferior in terms of expressive modes and especially linguistic findings. But the clever critical disposition and graceful arrows of irony (numbers 150, 25-26) alongside the breadth of knowledge of classical antiquity convince us that both the "epistles" and the other original poems (numbers 132-135, 137 and 153) of "*Manogeles*" refer to important personalities of the time. Therefore, it is not impossible that the gleaning and noteworthy arrangement of the model of our anthology was effectuated upon the initiative of one of the two.

Reaching the end of our reading we have probably noted some of the main parameters for a new phase of research on the Venetian manuscript. By discussing only a few points on the content and quality of the lyrical style of its poems, the presence and bearing of the Greek speaking anthology amidst its equivalent Italian and foreign anthologies of the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century should be underlined once more. Of course, it is not yet possible to determine the requirements for an in depth acquaintance with and systematic analysis of the achievements of the Cypriot rhymers, by means of a verse by verse comparison to their Italian models, nor could the influences of the whole

spectrum of Petrarchanism on the two or more canzonieri included in the Code be recorded. One thing is certain: within the framework of approximately a century or perhaps less, the transfer of the phenomenon of Petrarchanism unto the Greek cultural area brings about a first lyrical attempt to render mainly in the Cypriot idiom and of course the commonly used *Demotic* language of the time new Renaissance ideologies, poetic images and complex metrical schemes. It is an interesting and laborious effort which will be resumed about three centuries later within Solomos' work in dissimilar conditions and with different results.

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## Appendix

### TABLE I

#### Proposed Chronological Layering of the Anthology Based Mainly on the Italian Models

End of Quattrocento,  
beginnings and latter Cinquecento

- a) More faithful or more liberal translations or isolated verses and schemes from texts of Petrarch himself: Numbers 5, 9, 13, 15, 24, 26, 90, 94, 106, 108, 122, 131, 136, 143, 145-146, 154-155.
- b) the same phenomenon from early Petrarchan poems, mainly verses by Sannazzaro (perhaps even before the organized 1521 edition): numbers 12, 88, 107, 111, 112, 114, 127.
- c) liberal translations and paraphrases mainly from early Petrarchan and courtly poems (mainly strambotti) of the wider Venice region: numbers 2-4, 28-68.
- d) other poems in more faithful translations and texts by poets from the circle of Pietro Bembo: numbers 7-8, 10, 14, 17-23, 79, 84, 102, 104, 110.

Middle and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter  
of 16<sup>th</sup> century

- a) quite faithful translation from the introductory sonnet *Pedante* of the collection *Cantici di Fidenzio Glottochrysio Ludimagistro* by Camillo Scroffa, reflecting manneristic trends and exaggerations of linguistic archaism: number 27 Pedagogue. Use of ideologies and schemes from the *Rime* (ed. 1544) by Gaspara Stampa in barzelletta number 118.
- b) probably original verses of local and seasonal character, based on which they are most likely dated: numbers 132-141 and 150-153.

TABLE II

Proposed Schematic Sampled Classification of Poetic Units Based on  
Thematic, Linguistic and Stylistic Observations in the Greek Text.

More faithful but awkward  
translations of courtly early  
Petrarchan poems mainly  
from the circle of P. Bembo.

Canzoniere with the free  
paraphrases mainly in a  
strambotti scheme and effortless  
lyrical style. Perhaps by the  
rhymers with the blazon of the  
climbing lion.

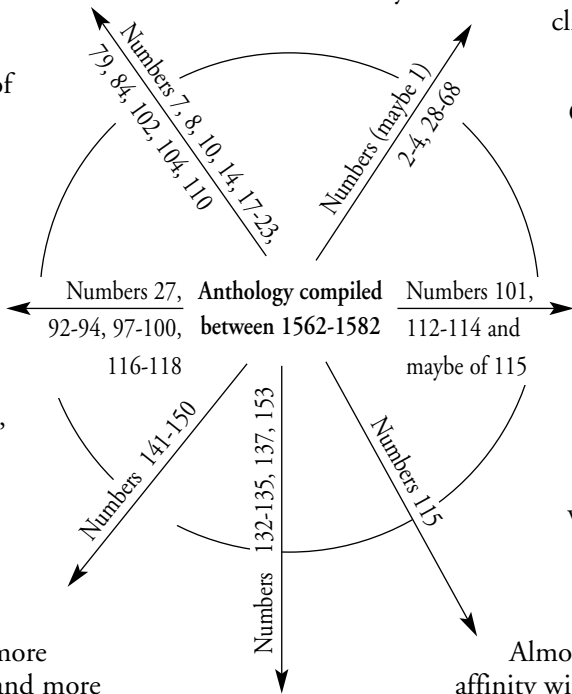
Canzoniere of  
Chrystalleni:  
faithful or  
more liberal  
translations  
of Petrarch,  
ambience of  
melancholy  
and  
mourning,  
affected style,  
scholarly  
expressions.

Good liberal  
translations  
and  
paraphrases  
(Sannazaro),  
effortless  
*Koine*  
*Demotic*  
[standard  
Modern  
Greek],  
wholesome  
versification.

Similar but more  
streamlined and more  
lyrical style than that  
of the rhymers of  
epistle number 153.

Probably  
original verses  
in the style of  
the *poiitarides*  
with scholarly  
idioms.

Almost semi-folk:  
affinity with the verses  
of an Iberian  
manuscript (cod.  
1203) and manuscripts  
from the Meteora.  
However, it could  
belong to the rhymers  
of numbers 101 and  
112-114.





## Ioakeim Kyprios' Struggle and the Story of the Maltese Sultana: A Literary Account of Historical Events?

Tassos A. Kaplanis\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Le personnage et l'œuvre de Ioakeim le Chypriote ne sont pas encore très connus des chercheurs contemporains: dans cet article on parle d'un long poème narratif qui se réfère à la guerre entre Venise et l'Empire Ottoman des années 1645-1669. Plus particulièrement, on y examine si dans ce poème est présentée de façon littéraire (et même avec des éléments théâtraux) l'histoire de Sultana la Maltaise.

### ABSTRACT

The personality and work of Ioakeim Kyprios are not yet well known by contemporary scholars. The author of this article discusses a long narrative poem written by Ioakeim about the Turco-Venetian conflict of 1645-1669. More precisely, he ponders whether this poem presents the story of the Maltese Sultana.

Ioakeim Kyprios' *Book called Struggle, i.e. Battle of the Turks against the most venerable and most illustrious Grand Ruler and Prince of the most illustrious City of Venice* [henceforth *Struggle*] is an unedited vernacular Greek text of the 17th century – best known in the bibliography as a verse history of the 'Cretan War' (1645-1669) – which has been preserved in an autograph manuscript in the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest (BAR ms. gr. 37).<sup>1</sup> The text was first brought to the attention of scholars by Prof. Nikolaos Tomadakis, who published a very brief note about it in the first volume of *Κρητικά Χρονικά* (1947).<sup>2</sup> Some years later, Prof. Emmanuel Kriaras, in a paper presented at the 1st Conference of Cretan Studies,<sup>3</sup> provided for the first time a description of the contents of the work - based on its 'Prologue'<sup>4</sup> -, presented

\* University of Cyprus



the part of the story of the Maltese Sultana that was then known to him (737 verses)<sup>5</sup> and underlined the linguistic importance of the text. In the same article, the author made some useful remarks on the vocabulary and the dialectal characteristics of the poem's language, which still retain their validity,<sup>6</sup> edited a short passage of 33 verses and announced his intention to present a critical edition of the whole text in the future, i.e. as soon as he would get hold of it on microfilm. Kriaras did acquire such a microfilm some time in the late 1960s,<sup>7</sup> but his unfortunate personal experiences did not allow him to realize the intended edition.<sup>8</sup> In 1998, Prof. Kriaras – to whom I would like to express my deepest gratitude – encouraged me to undertake the task of editing *Struggle* and generously offered to me copies of the text made from the microfilms Γ16 and Γ17 of his personal archive. Ioakeim's *Struggle* has been the subject of my Cambridge PhD dissertation,<sup>9</sup> which was brilliantly supervised by Prof. D. Holton – to whom I am also extremely grateful. The critical edition of the text, which is currently in its final stage of preparation, is expected to appear in 2009 in the publication series of the Cyprus Research Centre (Nicosia). The edition will be accompanied by a lengthy introduction where all major issues concerning the author, the manuscript, the text and its context will be thoroughly examined.

Since my research on Ioakeim and his *Struggle* is still ongoing and due to the restrictions that this research is subject to on part of its publisher I cannot provide here many details on issues that will be discussed in the forthcoming edition. Thus, the presentation of Ioakeim's biography in this paper will exclusively rely upon published material. What this paper aims to do is to present the content of the introductory part of *Struggle* (verses 1-1690), which includes one of the most important and interesting parts of Ioakeim's text, i.e. the story of the Maltese Sultana. The story of this Sultana, who was allegedly one of the Turks' reasons/excuses for invading Crete, will be presented here for the first time in its complete version, and the question of both its historicity and its literariness will be briefly discussed. But before getting to this let me first provide some information on Ioakeim himself.

In 1962, Kriaras stated that, despite his efforts, he could not find any information on the author of *Struggle*.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, even today – with the exception of the catalogue of Litzica (1909) –, Ioakeim's name, i.e. 'Ιωακείμ αρχιμανδρίτης Κύπριος ο παντοελλιάρης',<sup>11</sup> is not mentioned in any published catalogue of Greek manuscripts<sup>12</sup> – and it has even been excluded from the standard catalogue of Greek scribes of the 17th-18th centuries.<sup>13</sup> In this, otherwise extremely useful, catalogue, there are 33 entries of scribes

named Ioakeim:<sup>14</sup> 23 of them, for chronological and other reasons, cannot possibly be identified with our Ioakeim; however, the identity of – ideally all – the remaining 10 needs to be cross-checked. My research so far, even though inevitably limited,<sup>15</sup> shows that at least 2, perhaps even 3, of these scribes can be identified with the author of *Struggle* (details will be given in the forthcoming edition of the text). All we know about Ioakeim with certainty is based on the information he provides in his text. The secure information that we can gather from *Struggle* about its author summarises as follows:<sup>16</sup>

[Ioakeim] was a Cypriot monk from the Monastery of Kykkos who had at some time visited the Holy Land and who was established in Belgrade [Serbia] when he wrote his book. No chronological data are provided; we do not know when and where exactly he was born nor do we know when and why he left Cyprus and what he was doing in Serbia. We do not know anything about his education and of course we do not know the date of his death. But from the contents of his book we can presume that he must have died not long after 1667 and, probably, even before the end of the [Cretan] war in 1669 [...]. We can also assume that he had a basic, at least, ecclesiastical training and education, since the language he uses in the text is in general an awkward vernacular bearing the traces of his ecclesiastical readings. Finally, the extensive use of Italian and Turkish words, phrases and even passages [that occurs in *Struggle*] makes it reasonable to assume that he spoke both Turkish and Italian/Venetian.

As regards the text itself, *Struggle*, as preserved today, consists of 10,240 couplet-rhyming 15-syllable political verses, a book-title, a 6-verse epigram in 12-syllable iambic metre, a 75-line prose prologue (with a title), a 12-line prose *Synopsis*, 122 prose headings (section-titles) of varying length (average: c. 42 words per heading) and two prose 'endnotes' of 5 and 24 lines respectively. According to my calculations, some 400 verses are today lost as a result of the manuscript's missing folios.<sup>17</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, internal reasons allow us to assume that<sup>18</sup>:

Ioakeim decided to write his book some time between 1648 and 1650, most probably after reading a book or pamphlet(s) about the Venetian victories of these years and also after reading a book about the story of the Maltese Sultana: he makes extensive use of this last source in the first part of his poem (ff. 10<sup>v</sup>-34 [of the manuscript]), while the account of the events of the years 1648-1650 takes up the biggest part of the text

(ff. 70-146<sup>v</sup>), with that of the year 1648 covering almost one fourth of the total (ff. 70-119<sup>v</sup>).

The basic structure of the text is simple in concept and falls into the general scheme ‘introduction – main narrative – conclusion’, which was certainly very common in early modern Greek narratives.<sup>19</sup> However, unlike the conclusion which is clearly introduced in the text by a separate chapter-heading,<sup>20</sup> the introductory part is not clearly defined and it is difficult to decide where it ends. For the sake of this paper’s economy, I will accept that the introduction includes all verses before 1691, where the narrative reaches the siege of Chania,<sup>21</sup> and I will, thus, provide a summary of the first 1690 verses.

The first section of the introduction (*Struggle* 1-46) emphasizes the good diplomatic relations that the Venetians and the Turks enjoyed in a vaguely defined past and is immediately followed by a sneering description of the Turks and their religion (*Struggle* 47-216), which anticipates the pro-Venetian standpoint that the text will henceforth adopt;<sup>22</sup> after this derisive description, the reader is transferred in time to the reign of Sultan Murad IV (1623-1640): it was during his reign that a Maltese lady – together with her mother and all the passengers of a ship that was taking them to Spain – was captured by Barbary corsairs, who gave her to the Sultan as a present; the Sultan fell in love with her, made her a Sultana and agreed to set her mother free to return to Malta (*Struggle* 217-294); later, Murad sets off to Babylon – read: Baghdad –,<sup>23</sup> but an incident that takes place in the port of Avlona and involves the destruction of a Barbary fleet by the Venetians makes him take a ‘horrid oath’: when he returns from Baghdad, he will attack Venice to avenge the destruction of his Barbary allies – but he dies soon after his return (*Struggle* 295-314); Murad is succeeded by Ibrahim in 1640 (*Struggle* 315-344) and it is during the latter’s reign that the ‘scandal’ between the Venetians and the Turks begins, not only as a result of Murad’s oath (*Struggle* 345-364), but also because a monk or priest (a ‘bandit and imposter’ in the text) of aristocratic Peloponnesian origin presents himself to Ibrahim with falsified documents and offers him his supposed ‘property’, Chania and Rethymno, as a present (*Struggle* 365-398); Ibrahim discusses the issue with his counsellors and negotiations begin with the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople so that the Turks get what now, supposedly, belongs to them (*Struggle* 399-460); the *bailo* under the Turkish pressures writes to Venice (*Struggle* 461-470) and the *Serenissima*, as expected, answers the Turkish claims in the negative (*Struggle* 471-506). In the meantime, the Maltese Sultana, who was previously Sultan Murad’s *haseki*, i.e. favourite wife

(*Struggle* 507-530), never abandoned her Christian faith and always prayed to God for return to Malta (*Struggle* 531-574); when Murad died, she was transferred to the *Eski Sarayi*, on Ibrahim's orders, and in compensation for this transfer she was given property as well as hundreds of slaves and servants; among them there were two confidants who spoke her mother tongue (*Struggle* 574-614); when she found out about their existence, she asked them to send a letter to her mother, who in turn was asked to prepare a few ships to come and liberate the Sultana from the Turks in due course; the Sultana's plan was to set off on a supposed pilgrimage to Mecca, meet her mother's ships on the way and get freed by her people (*Struggle* 615-646); the Maltese Sultana asks the permission of the Sultan to go on the pilgrimage and with the intervention of his mother, the *valide* Sultana, permission is granted (*Struggle* 647-700); the Maltese Sultana prays to God to help her succeed in her plan and makes all necessary arrangements and preparations for her trip (*Struggle* 701-768); when everything is ready, the other members of the Harem come to wave her goodbye and, after an emotional farewell, during which both the Maltese Sultana and the *valide* fall in a faint (*Struggle* 769-862), the Maltese Sultana finally sets off, with the accompaniment of a ceremonial *donanma*; she informs the Maltese fleet about her departure and asks them to put in at Sigri, a port in Lesbos, and await her orders (*Struggle* 863-950); a storm obliges her fleet to berth in Sigri for the night and after a prophetic dream which foretells the success of her plans (*Struggle* 951-1068), the battle follows: the Maltese win, the Sultana rewards them with lavish presents and they all set off on their return journey to Malta, where preparations begin for her reception (*Struggle* 1069-1220); a festive ceremony is organized, the Maltese Sultana thanks God for her unhopd-for return and the whole of Malta comes out to meet her; the Sultana and her retinue are marshalled to St. John's Church where they are all baptized with all proper solemnities and the celebrations go on for 30 weeks (*Struggle* 1221-1402); when the Sultan finds out what happened, he reacts furiously (we are reminded that he was nicknamed *Deli*, the mad one): he wants to attack Malta immediately, but with the intervention of his mother he is persuaded to call a meeting of the *divan* first; the council regards his plan as unfeasible and the decision is made to attack Crete instead, on the basis of the documents that were given to the Sultan, documents which secured his ownership of Chania and Rethymno; negotiations with the Venetian *bailo* begin once again, but this time the Turks deceitfully ask the Venetians for help in order to attack Malta, although they had already decided to do

otherwise; the Venetians refuse and the *bailo* is then asked to secure a permit for the Turkish fleet to anchor at Souda on its way to attack Malta (*Struggle* 1403-1594); the *bailo*, being under enormous pressures, promises to do everything in his power to secure the permit and the Turks, satisfied, wait for Venice's reply (*Struggle* 1595-1688); but when a negative reply comes (*Struggle* 1688a), the war begins.

Ioakeim's description of the aftermath of the Sultana's capture includes many realistic elements: the diplomatic fever which followed the capture, with the successive meetings of Ottoman officials with the *bailo* Soranzo, the decision of the *divan* to attack Malta (including the conflicting views of the second Vizier and Cinci Hoca who supported an attack on Crete, on the one hand, and of the Grand Vizier who opposed it, on the other), the setting-sail of the Ottoman fleet to Malta and its sudden change of course and attack on Crete, have all been reported in contemporary historiographical and official/diplomatic Venetian sources.<sup>24</sup> Realistic elements are also to be found in many other parts of the introduction.<sup>25</sup> But, of course, the story of the Maltese Sultana as a whole is fictional: although contemporary sources are far from unanimous in their accounts of the Sultana, the 'official' version that is widely accepted by modern scholarship is significantly different.<sup>26</sup> Most importantly, this widely accepted version does not refer to a person, but to a ship.<sup>27</sup> Based on this fact alone, previous scholarship was at times particularly dismissive as regards the historical value of Ioakeim's text: Tomadakis e.g. – who had no further knowledge of *Struggle* but that provided by Kriaras (1962) – explicitly stated that Ioakeim's text is a 'novel'<sup>28</sup> and, more generally, a mythological work which cannot be taken seriously as a historical source,<sup>29</sup> for the additional reason that Ioakeim could not have been contemporary to the events of the 'Cretan War'.<sup>30</sup> Obviously, this is not the case.

As one may easily observe, the introductory part of *Struggle* offers a mixture of realistic events and fictional stories, in an attempt to create a narrative universe with claims to reality: the accurate details provide the narrative with verisimilitude and the reader is then forced to believe that the text depicts events as they actually happened. This is a characteristic retained throughout the text, but, unlike the introduction, which is both well planned and well executed/structured – and that is the main reason why it also summarizes well –, the main narrative presents weaknesses in both planning and execution. One may argue that it too is subject to a general plan where historical events unfold in chronological order; however, this must be regarded as a general observation only. There are many parts of the

main narrative, in particular from verse 3739 onwards, where flashbacks occur and as many others where digressions of various sorts (religious, eschatological, lyrical, etc.) are employed: the former usually reflect not only the flow of information that the author obtained, but also the time when he obtained it, whereas the latter often represent fillers, simply aiming to make up for the author's lack of information on specific events of the conflict. Of course, both flashbacks and digressions relate to the nature of Ioakeim's project: *Struggle* is a contemporary account of the events of the Turco-Venetian conflict over dominance in the Aegean of the years 1645-1663/4, and, as Ioakeim was not an eyewitness of the events he aimed to describe, his narrative depended exclusively on second-hand information; had his work been completed after the end of the war, the author would have had the possibility of organizing and presenting this information in a strict chronological order; unfortunately, this did not happen. For many years, Ioakeim incorporated information in his text as it became available to him and, when it was lacking, he filled the gaps of his narrative with digressions. Finally, in 1665, he gave up the whole project; the fact that he did not have the time – or the will – to reorganize his information and, in effect, to rewrite his work resulted in a main narrative that includes repetitions and recapitulations and, perhaps worst of all, a narrative that often moves back and forth in time, thus causing a great deal of confusion for the reader.

However, *Struggle* provides an historical account that is more often accurate than not; the subject of this account is not restricted exclusively to the 'Cretan War': the text, correctly, considers this war in the frame of a broader Ottoman-Venetian conflict and this is already depicted in the work's title, but also in other parts of the narrative – most significantly, in the parts where the theatre of war is transferred from Crete to Dalmatia. This inevitably brings to mind other contemporary Italian/Venetian historiographical works that deal with the *successi* of the *guerra di Candia e di Dalmatia*;<sup>31</sup> from this point of view, Ioakeim's account is in line with the Italian/Venetian historiography of its time both in its general scope – it impressively resembles the account of Setton (1991), which is a reconstruction of accounts of this sort – and in some details that escape the attention of other 17th-century Greek histories of the 'Cretan War'. In addition, Ioakeim adopts a more general point of view: *Struggle* refers not only to the Turco-Venetian conflict that is described in its title, but also, more broadly, to the struggle of Christendom against Islam. This allows the author to include in his narrative accounts of Eastern Christians (Cossacks,

Russians) as potential adversaries of the ‘Turkish beast’, which are absent from Venetian sources, as well as accounts of the ‘Turkish beast’ itself. In this respect, the images of both the self and the other (the latter as an anti-type of the former) are revealed to be central to the text’s argument: in its own simplistic/dualistic terms, the whole story is about the battle of the evil Turks/Muslims against the good Christians, as the iconological analysis that I have provided elsewhere has attempted to demonstrate.<sup>32</sup> This rhetoric is also adopted by many other 17th-century Greek texts, mostly non-historical ones, and Ioakeim’s text seems to belong to a specific ideological current of its time, in the context of which it is better understood.<sup>33</sup>

This does not mean that Ioakeim’s narrative is not personalized; on the contrary, it is, and highly so; the ‘I’ of the author is omnipresent and the narrative itself often teeters between an accurate historical account and a fictitious demonology; in this sense, it raises many questions about the interrelation of history and literature. But this is by no means a shortcoming of the text, as scholars of the 20th century would think – or, indeed, some of them (e.g. N. Tomadakis) have thought; in all the early modern period and in the Greek 17th century in particular, authors who provided historical accounts readily produced literary/personalized narratives, where the ‘I’ of the author did not (have to) disappear behind impersonal expressions; Ioakeim’s text is no exception. *Struggle* does not have pretensions to objectivity either; its account is a subjective one, with clear political targets, and this is both programmatically stated<sup>34</sup> and consistently put forward throughout the text. But this does not make it less valuable to us: let us not forget that Ioakeim does not attempt to reconstruct an historical past (in which case the author’s complete abandonment of any effort to distance himself from the subject of his description would be a serious shortcoming); Ioakeim records historical events of his present and by doing so in the way he does makes things easier for modern scholarship: we always know where he stands.

As for the literary value of Ioakeim’s narrative, not much can be said here. The iconological analysis that I have provided in Kaplanis 2004 – and that will be expanded in my forthcoming edition – shows that the image of the self and the other in Ioakeim’s text, though predictably inaccurate at a factual level, is consistently constructed and, in parts, both amusing and inventive, in literary terms. This implies that Ioakeim’s narrative has literary values as well. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate so far the model on which the long story of the Maltese Sultana may have been based. However, its dramatic elements in Ioakeim’s account (dialogues, organization of the

narrative material in episodes/scenes, limited number of ‘acting’ characters) point to a theatrical model, most probably an Italian *turquery* of the *Seicento*,<sup>35</sup> but the lack of a monograph on the subject has inevitably limited my research. Of course, the issue requires further investigation. In order to illustrate my point on the text’s dramatic elements and instead of a closing statement on the text’s literariness, I provide here a substantial excerpt from the text itself and I let the readers decide for themselves; in any case, some questions need to remain open.

### ΙΟΑΚΕΙΜ ΚΥΠΡΙΟΣ’ *STRUGGLE* 730a-836

**Περὶ πὼς ἔκαμεν πάσα διόρθωσιν ἡ σουλτάνα εἰς ὅλα τῆς τὰ πράγματα, δούλους καὶ τὰς δούλας τῆς. Ἐπῆγαν καὶ οἱ καπεταναῖοι τῶν γαλουνίων καὶ ἔδωκαν λόγον πὼς ὁ καιρὸς εἶναι καλὸς, νᾶ ἰ (f. 20v) οῤίσει ἡ σουλτάνα, χάριτι Θεοῦ, νᾶ κάμει το ταξίδι. Καὶ πὼς ἔκαμεν ἡ σουλτάνα δέησιν καὶ προσευχὴν εἰς τὸν Κύριον καὶ εἰς τὴν Παναγία Θεοτόκον.**

Ἐπῆγαν οἱ ἀγάδες τῆς στὸν πρῶτον τῆς εὐνοῦχον  
 ἐκεῖ οπου ἐκάθετον σαν σκοτισμένον πούφον,  
 σ’ ἐκείνον τὸν κισλάραγαν καὶ τὸν καρασουράτη,  
 εἶπαν τὸν: «Σύρε γλήγορα ἀπάνω στὸ παλάτι,  
 νᾶ οῤίσει ἡ σουλτάνα μᾶς κατὰ τὸν ὀρισμὸν τῆς, 735  
 διότις ἦλθεν ὁ καιρὸς νᾶ κάμει τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς».  
 Πάγει· κατὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς αὐτὸς προσκύνῃσέ τὴν  
 ἕως ἐδάφου καὶ αὐτὸς παρακάλησέ τὴν.  
 Εἶπεν τῆς: «Ὅρισε, κυρά, νᾶ πάμεν στὰ καράβια  
 καὶ στόλισε τοὺς σκλάβους σου με τὰ χρυσὰ καβάδια». 740  
 Τότες εἰσέβηκεν αὐτὴ ἐκεῖ μες στὸ ταμεῖο,  
 γονατισθὴ ἐδέετον μετὰ πολλῶν δακρῦων.  
 Τὸ «πατερνόςτρε» ἄρχισεν, ὅλο τελείωσέν το,  
 «Ἄβε Μαρία, πρόφθασε σε τούτο τὸ κομέντο.  
 Χαίρε, Μαρία Δέσποινα, καὶ τάχυνον σιμά μου, 745  
 βοήθει μοι, πανάχραντε, εἰς τὰ καμώματά μου.  
 Στάσου μπροστά μου σαν τὸ φῶς καὶ πρόφθασε, ἐπαρέ με  
 ἕως εἰς τὴν πατρίδα μου καὶ κατενὸδώσέ με».  
 Γονατισθὴ ἐδέετον με δάκρυα περίσσια,  
 αὐτῆς τριγύρου ἐστεκον κυράδες καὶ κορίτσια. 750  
 Ὅλες αὐτές ἐχύθησαν στὰ δάκρυα παραύθις  
 ἀπὸ τὸν φόβον τῆς κυράς κι ἀπὸ ἀγάπην αὐτῆς.  
 Καὶ ἐλυποῦνταν καὶ αὐτές διὰ τὴν ξενιτείαν,



εκεί που ήθελαν να παν εις αὐτήν την δουλείαν.  
 Τότες αὐτή σηκώθηκεν ἀπὸ την ἡ (f. 21) προσευχή της 755  
 καὶ πρόσταξεν νὰ κάμουνσιν, ὡς διὰ την ψυχὴ της,  
 βόας καὶ πρόβατα πολλὰ νὰ κάμουν κουρουπάνια  
 καὶ μέσα στα γαλούνια νὰ στείλουνσιν κουμπάνια.  
 Τότες αποφασίστηκεν πὼς θέλει νὰ κινήσει  
 την ἄλλην ἡμέρα το ταχύ την στράτα της νὰ ποίσει. 760  
 Εὐθύς τοὺς σκλάβους ὅρισεν, τὲς σκλάβες, τὰ κορίτσια  
 καὶ ὅλους τοὺς εὐνούχους της, μ' ἐσπάρια περὶσσα,  
 μες στα γαλούνια νὰ βρεθοῦν, ὅλοι, νὰ μὴν ἀργήσουν,  
 κει μέσα νὰ γερωτιστοῦν διὰ νὰ κατοικήσουν.  
 Πάραυτις τοῦτοι κάμασιν τον ὀρισμὸν σουλτάνας, 765  
 αὐτῆς της ἐκλαμπρότατης κυρίας Μαλτεζάνας.  
 Καὶ ὅλα ἐξορθώθησαν τὰ πράγματα καὶ βίος  
 μέσα εις τὰ γαλούνια συν Θεῷ τῷ αγίῳ.

**Περὶ πὼς ἦλθαν αἱ σουλτάνες νὰ την ἀποχαιρετίσουν καὶ πὼς αὐτὴ ἐπήγεν εις την  
 βαλετέ σουλτάναν, την πεθερὰ της, νὰ την ἀποχαιρετίσει καὶ πὼς ἐγένεν μεγάλος  
 θρήνος μέσα εις το παλάτι. Καὶ μυκητηρισμός περὶ του αὐτῶν προσκυνήματος, ἦγουν  
 του Μεκκέ τους, καὶ του προφήτη τῷ Μωάμεθ.**

Τότες ἐφθάσασιν σ' αὐτὴν ἀπειρες κει κυράδες,  
 που ἔταν σουλτάνες καὶ αὐτές, συμβίες τοὺς πασάδες, 770  
 ὡς ν' ἀποχαιρετίσουν αὐτὴν την Μαλτεζάνα,  
 σουλτάν Μοράτη σύμβιον, αὐτείνην την σουλτάναν.  
 Θρήνον πολὺν ἐκάμασιν ἐκείνην την ἡμέρα  
 ἔπο το ταχύ ἕως βραδὺ που ἐγένεν ἐσπέρα.  
 Ὑστερα πάγει καὶ αὐτὴ στην βαλετέ αὐτῆς της, 775  
 ὡς πενθερὰ της που ἔτανε, νὰ πάρει την ευχή της. ἡ (f. 21v)  
 Εἶπεν της: «Μάνα, ευχήσου μου, πάγω νὰ προσκυνήσω,  
 τον τάφον του προφήτη μας νὰ δῶ καὶ νὰ φιλήσω.  
 Τον ἄνδρα μου νὰ κλαύσω ἔγω ἐκεῖ, σουλτάνον τον Μοράτη,  
 που ἐβλεπαν τ' αἰμάτια σου ἐδῶ μες στο παλάτι, 780  
 καὶ την ψυχὴ μου καὶ ἐγὼ ν' ἀγιάσω ἀπὸ τώρα  
 ἐκεῖ μέσα εις το Μεκκέ, που βιγαίνει εις την ὥραν  
 ἐκείνον το ἀγιοτικὸν τεβetoυβὶ σκυλάκι,  
 ἴσως καὶ ἔλθει καὶ εις ἐμέ νὰ κατοικῇ λιγάκι.  
 Νὰ πάρω καὶ ἀγιασμόν ἔπου το Μεκκέ μας κείνο, 785  
 οπού ν' αἶ ο προφήτης μας μέσα στον λάκκον κείνον,  
 καὶ νὰ σε φέρω καὶ ἐσὲν ἀγιασμόν νὰ το ἔχεις,

ν' αγιάζεσαι αείποτας εις τας ημέρας πόχεις.  
 Διότις βλέπω, μάνα μου, καρδιάν καμένην έχεις  
 πως δεν επήγες και εσύ εις το Μεκκέ να πέσεις, 790  
 να προσκυνήσεις και εσύ κάτω στον τάφον κείνον,  
 οπού τον πάσα χρόνον απεκεί φοιτεί κείνος ο κύνος.  
 Αμή αν θέλει ο Θεός να πα να προσκυνήσω,  
 αγιασμόν σου φέρνω εγώ 'πεκεί οντάν γυρίσω.  
 Και ενθυμού μου, σε παρακαλώ, διά αγάπην του ανδρός μου, 795  
 οπού τον είχα εγώ ζωήν στ' αμμάτια κι εις το φως μου.  
 Μην λησμονήσεις, μάνα μου, εμέν διά εκείνον,  
 οπού διά του λόγου του παγαίννω εις εκείνον  
 τον άγιον τόπον να ιδώ, καθώς σου είπα, μάνα,  
 καθολική μητέρα μου και βαλετέ σουλτάνα. 800  
 Και δώσ' μου την ευχίτσα σου να πα να προσκυνήσω,  
 χατζίνα να αγιασθώ και πάλιν να γυρίσω.  
 Να 'λθω να σ' εύρω, μάνα μου, και άλλον να μην ποίσω,  
 τότες να δώσει ο Θεός εγώ να ξεψυχήσω. II (f. 22)  
 Σιμά εις τον σουλτάνον μου Μοράτη να με βάλεις, 805  
 να μας θωρούν τ' αμμάτια σου, όνταν έρχεσαι να ψάλλεις  
 εκεί μέσα στους τάφους μας, υποκάτω στον τουρπέ μας,  
 οπού βρισκόμασθεν οι δυο, και ό,τι ορίζεις πε μας».  
 Τότες, αν ήτον και αυτή λίθινη η καρδιά της,  
 εσπάραξαν τα μέλη της και όλα τα σωτικά της. 810  
 Φωνές μεγάλες έβγαζεν ώσπερ ξετρομασμένη  
 και μόλις αποκρίθηκεν: «Ω κόρη τιμημένη,  
 ω κιόζουμ, ω σουλτάν· μετέτ! Σίντι ολούρουμ!  
 Τζανούμ σίντι κιτέρ, σίντι ταμάμ ολούρουμ!...  
 Κι εγώ σε 'χα, σουλτάνα μου, παρηγοριά μεγάλη, 815  
 διότις ήσουν άξια και φρόνιμον κεφάλι.  
 Εγώ διά την αγάπην σας, εσέν και του υιού μου,  
 πολύν καιρόν επέρασα χωρίς από τον νουν μου.  
 Σύρε, παιδί μου, στο καλόν εις το προσκύνημά μας  
 κι έπαρε βίον άπειρον από τον χαζανά μας. 820  
 Εγώ και ο Πραχίμ σουλτάν έχομεν έγνοιάν σου  
 τα κάστη σου, τες χώρες σου κι εις τα προάσθιά σου.  
 Γραφές πυκνά να βλέπομεν από την αυθεντιά σου,  
 ν' ακούομεν πάντα διά σου και διά την υγειάν σου».

**Περί πώς αγκαλιάσθησαν αι δύο σουλτάνες διά να φιληθούν και να δώσουν τον  
 ύστερον χαιρετισμόν και παρευθύς επάρθησαν εις δισταγμόν και έκστασιν, και εις**

**αυτό έγινε θόρυβος και θρήνος μέγας μέσα εις το παλάτι και ήλθεν ατός του ο βασιλεύς και ελυπήθη μεγάλως.**

Τότες αγκαλιαστήκασιν διά να φιληθούσιν, 825  
 ως έπρεπεν, με δάκρυα ν' απο- II (f. 22v) χαιρετισθούσιν.  
 Πράγμα 'γινεν εξαίσιον τότες, κείνην την ώραν,  
 που δεν ακούστηκεν αυτό εις άλλην μίαν χώραν.  
 Εκεί που επιλιόντησαν πάραυθις και αι δύο  
 εξεστηκές στα φρένα τως επόμειναν και αι δύο. 830  
 Εκ την λακτάραν έπεσαν κάτω στην γην εδάφου  
 και σαν επίληψις σ' αυτές ήταν έως κροτάφου.  
 Σαν είδασιν αι σκλάβες των τες δύο αυτού σουλτάνες  
 εκεί κάτω στο έδαφος εσκουζασιν: «Ω μάνες».  
 Έλεγαν, «Πρε, μετέτ!», ροδόσταμμα να φέρουν, 835  
 ως να τες περιχύσοσιν στο πρόσωπον, συμφέρουν.

## NOTES

1. See Litzica 1909, 111-112. The original title is 'Βιβλίον ονομαζόμενον Πάλη, ήγουν μάχη των Τουρκών μετά του ευσεβεστάτου και εκλαμπροτάτου μεγάλου αυθεντός και πριντσίπου της λαμπροτάτης Βενετίας'. For the manuscript and its scribe/author see Kaplanis 2005.
2. See Tomadakis 1947b, 619 – in fact, this note is an addition to an article of his, printed in a previous fascicle of the same volume (see Tomadakis 1947a).
3. Kriaras 1962.
4. At the time, only the 'Prologue' and the first 737 verses of *Struggle* were available to Kriaras on a microfilm sent to him before World War II by N. Cartoian; see Kriaras 1962, 399.
5. See previous note.
6. See his remarks on Turkish loanwords, double consonants and the replacement of the genitive by an accusative to denote possession in Kriaras 1962, 403.
7. According to his personal testimony to me.
8. It is well known that in January 1968, for political reasons, Kriaras was dismissed from his professorial duties at the University of Thessaloniki by the colonels' dictatorship then established in Greece. This was a critical turning-point in his academic career and from then on Kriaras devoted himself mostly to the preparation of his *Dictionary of Medieval Greek Vernacular Literature, 1100-1669* (on the issue see, conveniently, Kaplanis 2000, 15-16).
9. Kaplanis 2003.

10. See Kriaras 1962, 400.
11. This is his full name as it occurs in *Struggle*'s prose prologue (see Kaplanis 2005, 36).
12. Of course, for many libraries one has to rely upon insufficient descriptions, while there are still many collections lacking catalogues of any kind (for an overview of this problem see, conveniently, Mioni 1994, 133-140).
13. Politis and Politi 1994; the reason for this exclusion is that Litzica 1909 was not taken into account in this publication, but one may hope that it will be included in a future and, as promised by M. Politi, more complete version of the catalogue (see Politis and Politi 1994, 322).
14. See Politis and Politi 1994, 466-469.
15. Given the fact that the manuscripts of the 10 scribes that need to be cross-checked are today scattered in various places (Sinai, Jerusalem, St. Petersburg, Mount Athos, Thessaloniki, Ellassona, Athens), in both public and private collections, it was not possible for me to investigate all of them.
16. See Kaplanis 2005, 38. This paper, as stated in its 'Afterword' (Kaplanis 2005, 46) 'was prepared for publication in winter 2000 and inevitably reflects the state of my research at that time'. Nonetheless it still remains – together with Kriaras 1962 and Kaplanis 2004 – the main published source on Ioakeim and his work and it has already served, in typescript form and with my permission, as the main source for Kitromilides' entry on Ioakeim Kyprios (see Kitromilides 2002, 257-8).
17. For these see Kaplanis 2005, 40 and note 17.
18. See Kaplanis 2005, 44.
19. For other examples see Vlassopoulou 2000, 22-25, where the scheme is described as 'prologue – main narrative – epilogue'.
20. *Struggle* 9194a: Συμπέρασμα ωραιότατον της παρούσης πραγματείας, του παρόντος βιβλίου, της Πάλης, περιέχον συνόψεις στις υποθέσεις. Και λόγοι δεητικοί προς τον Κύριον ημών Ιησούν Χριστόν και εις την Αυτού υπέραγνον μητέρα, την Κυρίαν ημών και Δέσποινα Θεοτόκον. Και περί της αγίας και θεοβαδίστου πόλεως Ιερουσαλήμ και του αγίου και θεοβαδίστου όρους Σινά, ομού και του Άθωνος και Κύπρου, της πατρίδος του αναγραφέως.
21. The prose heading at the end of folio 38v (*Struggle* 1688a) still refers to the negotiations between the *Serenissima* and the *Sublime Porte* for the temporary use of the port of Souda by the Ottoman fleet; as we move to the next folio (39), however, we immediately realize that there is a gap, since we find ourselves inside the beleaguered city of Chania, and this certainly has to do with the missing folios of the manuscript (cf. note 17 above).
22. For an analysis see Kaplanis 2004.
23. *Struggle* 216a, where the confusion of Baghdad with Babylon occurs for the first time, comes immediately after the derisive description of the Turks and their religion, where Ioakeim attempts to create a stereotypical image of them – quite successfully, as I have argued in Kaplanis 2004; given the apocalyptic connotations that this image bears, not only in *Struggle* but also in other texts of the period (for references see Argyriou 1982,

- 720), the confusion of Baghdad with Babylon comes almost naturally in the text: the biblical and, more notably, apocalyptic (Rev. 17-18) 'great whore' of Babylon serves much more adequately the purposes of the text than the figuratively indifferent (for the 17th century) Baghdad and is, therefore, employed throughout this section.
24. For an insightful and detailed account see Setton 1991, 112-126.
  25. For example, the incident in the port of Avlona which is described in *Struggle* 295-314 took place in August 1638 and Murad was indeed furious about it (for an account of the event and its effect on Turco-Venetian relations see Setton 1991, 108-110). Other events and details reported accurately would include Murad's expedition to Baghdad (for an explanation of the less accurate reference to Babylon see note 24 above), his death shortly after his return (cf. Shaw 1976, 200: 'Murat IV died [...] on February 8, 1640, just after his return from Baghdad'), his succession by Ibrahim in 1640, the portray of *Deli Ibrahim* and the frequent interventions of his mother, the *valide* Sultana, in the *Porte's* decision-making, etc. (more details will be given in the forthcoming edition of *Struggle*).
  26. This version (but again not without variations) is presented briefly in Vincent 1970, 239 and Greene 2000, 14; for more details see Setton 1991, 104-126.
  27. This has already been the subject of a debate between G. Spadaro and N. Tomadakis in the 1960s-1970s (see Spadaro 1967 and Tomadakis 1976).
  28. See Tomadakis 1976, 41: 'οὔτε ἄλλος τις ἠδυνήθη να μας δώσει την συνέχειαν του μυθιστορήματος τούτου του Ιωακείμ Καντζελλιέρη' (my emphasis).
  29. See Tomadakis 1976, 46: '<οὐδέ> τα υπό [...] Ιωακείμ Κυπρίου μυθολογούμενα είναι δυνατόν να ληφθούν ως σοβαρά ιστορική πηγή' (my emphasis).
  30. Tomadakis 1976, 41 note 47: 'Δε νομίζω ότι ο Ιωακείμ ήτο σύγχρονος του Κρητικού Πολέμου, στερούμεθα ἄλλως τε πληροφορίες περί του ατόμου του.'
  31. Most notably the *Continuazione de' successi della guerra di Candia e di Dalmatia, dall' anno 1647, fino al 1662, tratta dall' Istoria del sig. Girolamo Brusoni* (i.e. G. Brusoni, *Historia dell' ultima guerra tra' Venetiani e Turchi*, first edition in Venice: Curti, 1673, second edition in Bologna: Recaldini, 1676), for which see Cicogna 1847, 135. The authorship and other issues relating to this text are quite complicated and this has to do with Brusoni's revising historiographical habits (for Brusoni see De Caro 1972, esp. 719-720 for his historiographical work and a bibliography). This and other related matters regarding the history of the 'Cretan War' are discussed in my paper 'Recording the History of the "Cretan War" (1645-1669): An Overview' in *Κάμπος. Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek*, 16, 2007 (forthcoming).
  32. See Kaplanis 2004.
  33. A detailed analysis will be included in the introduction of the forthcoming edition of the text.
  34. Ioakeim makes it clear already in his prose Prologue (lines 42-46) that emphasis will be put on the presentation of heroic events and (exclusively Christian) victories; cf. the passage presented in Kaplanis 2005, 43.
  35. For a general account see Preto 1985, where also basic bibliography.

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## **Cypriot Literatures as Part of the Eastern Mediterranean Contact Area (1850-1960)\***

**Matthias Kappler\*\***

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Cette contribution constitue une tentative de considérer les «littératures chypriotes», c'est-à-dire surtout les littératures grecque et turque chypriotes, comme partie d'un espace de contact couvrant les vieilles provinces ottomanes dans la Méditerranée orientale (Grèce, Anatolie, Liban, Syrie, Palestine, Égypte), afin de pouvoir analyser les sujets, les lieux et le discours narratif dans le cadre d'une approche comparative. Par le moyen de concepts comme «dislocation / migration» et les modèles de «centre-périphérie», empruntés aux études post-coloniales, cette approche a pour but de déchiffrer des structures convergentes dans l'expression littéraire des littératures chypriotes en comparaison avec les littératures du Proche-Orient (surtout en langue arabe) en essayant de créer des correspondances entre expression littéraire périphérique en migration (par exemple grecque chypriote en Égypte) et les tendances et courants dominants pendant les dernières années de l'occupation ottomane et britannique de l'île.

### **ABSTRACT**

The present contribution constitutes an attempt to consider "Cypriot literatures", i.e. especially Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot literature, as part of a contact area which covers the former Ottoman provinces in the Eastern Mediterranean (Greece, Anatolia, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Egypt) in order to analyze topics, settings and narrative discourse in a comparative approach. With the aid of concepts like "dislocation/migration" and "centre-periphery" patterns borrowed from post-colonial studies, this approach aims at providing convergent structures in literary expression in Cypriot literatures in comparison to Near Eastern (especially Arabic) literatures, and it tries to create links between peripheral literary expression in migration (for instance Greek Cypriots in Egypt) and central trends and currents during the last year of Ottoman rule and during the British rule on the island.

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\*\* University of Cyprus



## Contact Areas and Contact Studies

To consider literature under the light of comparative implications and contexts is a given method in the framework of colonial and postcolonial studies, very much in vogue and therefore to be handled with caution<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, the theory of colonial and postcolonial studies is questionable when applied with the same parameters to Turkish or Cypriot, as, let's say, to Black African or Caribbean literatures, because the historical contexts are totally different. Furthermore, it might be argued that Cypriot, as well as Syrian, Palestinian or Egyptian literatures are not to be considered as colonial/postcolonial or so-called Commonwealth literatures, because the mean of expression is not the English language, though with exceptions, such as Taner Baybars, who writes mostly in English, or Khalil Gibran, whose works show clear features of colonialist and post-colonialist writing (see below for other cases). The classical postcolonial approach (especially in Ashcroft & alii 1989: 3-4) is considering literature as a dialogue/response of the periphery towards the colonial/imperial centre, the "writing back of the Empire", which might not be applied to Cyprus in every instance and for every period of time, although there are also typical examples for that<sup>2</sup>. However that may be, we will see below that a postcolonial studies' approach to Cypriot literatures can be highly productive if we are aware that the point is not the self-definition in contraposition to the colonizer, but the sharing of common configuration through colonialism in an area of cultural transfer and dislocation.

Actually, efforts to launch a comparative investigation of Middle Eastern literatures, namely Greek, Turkish, Arabic and Hebrew, have been made also outside the postcolonial frame theory, taking for granted a few common features in cultural history, such as the role of the central government in the creation of a modern literature in Turkish and Arabic, the emerging of a bourgeoisie in the major cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, and the influence of European Enlightenment and of European, particularly French literature (Kilpatrick 2000: 92). Narrowly related to these features are common developments in language, for instance the diglossia situation in Arabic and Greek (καθαρεύουσα/fusha, δημοτική/âmmiyya), or the language policy and reforms in Turkey and Israel (Kilpatrick 2000: 93).

Another point of approach is given by the "polycentric" (rather than the commonly used term "diaspora", not appropriate, to my opinion, for Greek literature) character of Greek and Hebrew literature (and here also Armenian literature should be considered), radicated in the Eastern Mediterranean culture and highly relevant for Greek Cypriot literature, too,

as it is a fact that the centre of Greek Cypriot literary and printing activity during and between the two World Wars was in Egypt (Zafeiriou 1991: 35 and *passim*) being so in narrow contact to both contemporary Arab and Greek literature of Egypt<sup>3</sup>. Even for post-modern literature there have been efforts to trace a common history by the comparative analysis of two novels written by the Turkish bestseller author Orhan Pamuk and the Egyptian avant-garde writer ‘Abduh Gubayr (Guth 1994), as well as by the investigation of the affinities between another of Pamuk’s novels (*Beyaz Kale*, 1991) and Rhea Galanaki’s *Βίος του Ισμαήλ Φερίκ Πασά*, 1989 (Calotychos 1997 and Calotychos 2000: 57-65).

An extremely important aspect of all the literatures we are dealing with in the given period of time is the fact of *periphery* on the one hand and of *displacement* on the other. With the exclusion of Turkish and Arab Egyptian literatures, all the literatures are operating away from the metropolitan centre. In the case of Cypriot literatures there is a plurivalence of periphericity, or of “centres”, namely Athens, Alexandria and Cairo for the Greek Cypriots, Istanbul for the Turkish Cypriots (but also the same city, let’s call it Constantinople, for the Greek Cypriots in a given period of time!), London for both.

As to *displacement* or *dislocation*, a term of postcolonial studies (Ashcroft & alii 1989: 8-11), there are to be distinguished three different levels, all of them being relevant for the literatures and histories of the peoples concerned here. The first is the actual migration, loss of home and subsequently dislocation with related themes in literatures, especially in Greek and Turkish literatures after the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations in 1924, as well as in Palestinian literature with the exodus in 1945 and in Hebrew literature with the migration towards Israel, the latter reflected also in Jewish literature in Turkish, for instance in one of Mario Levi’s novels (*Bir şehre gidememek*, 1990; see Evin 1993: 92-93). As for Cyprus, a great part of the Cypriot, especially Greek Cypriot literature after 1974, is obviously concerned with migration, which exceeds however our chronological context, though displacement is valid also for the previous period of time in the texts of Cypriot migrants to Britain or Egypt.

The second kind of displacement is the thematic dislocation, where themes of the dominating or colonizing elements are transposed to the local surroundings creating alienation in literary expression. In our area this might be the case with neo-classicist poets, like Ahmad Sawqî in Egypt or the early poetry of Osman Türkay in Cyprus.

The third model of displacement concerns language and consists in the adoption of the colonizer's language or the linguistic switching between the local and socially inferior ("low", according to the diglossia theory, see Ferguson 1959) varieties and the dominating standard ("high") variety. Although the first (adoption of the colonizer's language) is less true for the Eastern Mediterranean area, as in almost all the cases the local languages are used, and local varieties of the colonial language do not exist at all (e.g. in the sense of standard British English and the local "englishes" of the colonized, see Ashcroft & alii 1989: 8), we do find some cases of linguistic dislocation in this sense, as the aforementioned Cypriot writer Taner Baybars and some other contemporary migrant Cypriot authors writing in English such as Alev Adil or Lysandros Pitharas, or a part of post-war Lebanese literature with a wide use of French and English (see Neuwirth & Pflitsch 2000). Linguistic displacement can however be applied to the specific case of Cyprus, when it comes to the second point, i.e. the conflict between a socially dominating "high" standard variety and "low" varieties of the same language which are marginalized as impurities. This kind of displacement does exist in the relation between the linguistic forms of the metropolitan centre and of periphery, i.e. between standard mainland Greek/Turkish vs. Cypriot Greek/Turkish, with exactly the same implications until today in terms of inferiority and dominance as in the "classical" case of a colonizing language.

The following remarks are intended as an attempt to apply the previous approaches for a comparative Middle Eastern or Eastern Mediterranean literary history to the history of Cypriot literatures in the late Ottoman period and during the British rule. Taking for granted that Cyprus forms a historically, linguistically and culturally integrated part of what we call the Eastern Mediterranean contact area, we should be able to point out concrete cases of cross-cultural exchanges in the different fields of interest. The significant contribution by Kechagioglou (1992) for Greek Cypriot literature can thus be extended to a wider 'frame' of Middle Eastern or Eastern Mediterranean literatures considering also the development of Ottoman literatures (in the sense of literary productions in different languages within the geographical area of the former Ottoman Empire) in general. The unique opportunity of this kind of research is given by the nature of Cyprus herself, which has always been a multilingual and multicultural area of contact *par excellence*, not only between Greek and Turkish (and British), but also between Armenian, Arabic, French /Italian /Latin, Maronite, Syriac, Coptic cultures. On these premises and given the

limited time and space of the present contribution, a deep insight into the various instances that will be mentioned is neither possible nor intended. The aim is rather to trace the mere possibility (and need) of an integrated view over a related group of literatures in contact instead of the traditional distinction in “national literatures”.

Several aspects are emerging: the migration of authors and of their works in the given contact area, printing places of Cypriot literatures outside Cyprus, common literary trends and streams, common themes and forms, linguistic copying or switching in literary texts. On the other hand, and in a widened sense of the colonial and postcolonial studies’ approach, the relation to the various metropolitan centres (Athens, Istanbul, London) must also be considered.

## 1. Geographic and Textual Migration – The Cultural Context of Eastern Mediterranean Literatures

Already under a most superficial investigation, it becomes evident that the area was a cross-cultural market place of printing material and publishing in the last years of the Ottoman rule. The main printing-places, Istanbul and Izmir, were both equally important for Greek and Turkish publications; especially Izmir occupied a prominent place also for Greek Cypriot writers. I only remind that the first texts written by Vassílis Michaelides appeared in the Smyrniote periodical *Πυθαγόρας* in 1873 (Zafeiriou 1991: 17) and that one of the first feminist literary periodicals of Istanbul, *Ευφροσύνη*, was edited by the Cypriot Aimilia Ktena in the 1870s (Zafeiriou 1991: 20). In this context, also the activity of Epameinondas Frangoudis, director of the Greek school of Nicosia, who resided four years in Istanbul (1854-1858), and published a translation/adaptation of Théophile Gautier’s travel diary *Constantinople* in the Istanbulite periodical *Θελξινόη* (22/24, 1857), is an interesting case of Cypriot writing “towards the centre” (see Papaleontiou 2004). Due to the continuous migration of middle and high class Greek Cypriots to Egypt, typical for the years between the 1860s and the 1910s (Zafeiriou 1991: 14) as well as the subsequent importance of Cairo and Alexandria as “centres” of Greek culture, many Greek Cypriots who lived elsewhere and were thus not considered “Αιγυπτιώτες”, i.e. Egyptian Greeks, used the Egyptian metropoleis as printing and distribution places of their works (cf. Pieridis 1971: 19). Actually, it is in Alexandria and Cairo where most of the literary works written by Cypriots in Greek during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were printed.

In a broader sense, this migration flow coincides with the textual migration in the Middle East, i.e. with the so-called “age of translation and adaptation” in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic literature, but also in the literatures of other communities of the Ottoman society, such as Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian, Persian and others. The political conditions (reforms in Muhammad Ali’s Egypt and the Tanzimat in the Ottoman Empire) promote a wide activity of translations of European, especially French works. The *Tercüme-i Manzume*, a translation-anthology of poetry from La Fontaine, Lamartine, Gilbert, Racine by İbrahim Şinasi in 1859, or Münif Paşa’s translations from Voltaire, Fénelon, Fontenelle with the title *Muhaverat-ı Hikemiye* (“Philosophical dialogues”), mark the beginning of this era in Turkish literature (Paker 1991: 21-22, Tanpınar 2001: 150), whereas in the Arab world the first steps are made by al-Tahtâwî’s translation of Fénelon’s *Les aventures de Télémaque* in the late 1860s. Typically enough, one of the first productions of modern Cypriot literature is also to be ascribed to this tradition of translation and adaptation, being the *Néa Kypria`Epi* by Markos Andreadis (1804-1878), printed 1836 in Paris and including also translations from La Fontaine (Zafeiriou 1991: 15). In the period between the 1870s and 1914 in Egypt approximately 70 French novels are translated into Arabic (Cachia 1991: 36; Allen 1992: 183-184). In both areas, Ottoman Turkish and Arabic, the publication of the first novels in form of *feuilletons* in magazines and newspapers is basic and typical for the dynamics of this kind of textual migration (see Strauss 1994: 131-32). The translation and adaptation activity in the Ottoman Greek area can be settled in the same period<sup>4</sup>. The centres of this production, Istanbul, Izmir and other Ottoman towns, are shifting towards outside the Ottoman borders and Greece due to the migration of Greek intellectuals to Italy, Paris, Vienna and Russia. Obviously, not only Greeks but other Ottoman minorities as well are active in this field, first of all Armenians for translations into Turkish, but also Bulgarians and other ethnic groups, favouring considerably the intercommunal culture exchange and contributing an important stimulus for literary creation in the Muslim *millet* (see Tietze 1991b; Strauss 1994: 132, 139-40 and *passim*). Probably one of the most significant innovations is the translation or adaptation of theatre plays. Apart from Molière’s comedies which were the most popular models in the Middle East at that time, we also find adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays, although the first one, *Othello*, was translated in Turkish by Manastırlı Rıfat and Hasan Bedreddin from a French adaptation (by Jean François Ducis, 1792) and

considered by the Ottoman translators as a 'great Italian opera' with the remark that their reason for translating the play lays in 'its representation of the bravery of the Arabs' (Paker 1991: 27). It is interesting to see how literature was translated, or rather transferred, into Turkish and Arabic, not only linguistically but by a process of transposition of themes, characters and social connotations. Ahmed Vefik Paşa's famous Turkish translations of Molière's comedies include a transposition of characters, e.g. Georges Dandin is transformed into the Levantine Greek character Yorgaki Dandini, and in Egypt the concept of *ta'rib* (Arabization) and *tamsîr* (Egyptianization) meant not only the translation into Standard or Colloquial Arabic, but a whole transposition of themes, settings and forms, such as the rendering of La Fontaine's verses in *zagal*-form (Allen 1992: 184; see also Cachia 1991: 40). Thus, through the dislocation of contents, as mentioned before for any kind of colonial literature, the text is adapted to the social and cultural needs and contexts of the target audience, which is exactly the intention of the first Ottoman translators of *Othello*.

Apart from translations and adaptation of mainly European literature, the outstanding feature of the late Ottoman period is the rise of own literary productions in new genres developing parallelly to European orientation in other fields of the society. These new genres are drama, novel and short story. In the Ottoman world theatre has been played by Armenian and Greek actors for their own communities in Istanbul from the 1810s, whereas in the 1850s Armenians began to produce plays in Turkish, thus laying the foundations of the Ottoman theatre culminating in the opening of the first Ottoman theatre *Tiyatro-yı 'Osmanî* by Güllü Agop Efendi in 1868-69 (Tanpınar 2001: 281-282, Paker 1991: 26)<sup>5</sup>, while the first European play in the Arab world, based on *L'Avare*, was performed in Beirut in 1847 (Cachia 1991: 37). The first original play written in Turkish was İbrahim Şinasi's *Şair evlenmesi* in 1860, a satirical comedy of manners inspired by the comedies of Molière (Paker 1991: 25, Tanpınar 2001: 150). In the whole Eastern Mediterranean area the short story makes its appearance in periodicals, whereas in the field of the novel, especially in Turkish, once again the importance of the non-Muslim millets is highly significant: before the famous Ottoman novels of the Tanzimat era by Ahmed Midhat or Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem, the first novel in Turkish is Vartan Paşa's *Aqabi*, printed 1851 in Istanbul in Armenian letters (published by A. Tietze in 1991; see Tietze 1991a and Georgeon 1992), followed by Evangelinos Misailidis's work *Temaşa-i dünya*, printed 1871 in Greek letters, which is however a translation, or adaptation, of Grigorios Palaiologos's novel

*Πολυπαθής* (Athens 1839). In order to see the first original novel to appear in Arabic, we must wait until 1913, when *Zaynab* by Muhammad Husayn Haykal is printed in Egypt (see below).

The extensive description of the translation period in the wider Middle East seen in relation to the parallel development of displacement and evolution of literary texts is a necessary approach in our attempt to locate Cypriot literatures in a common “Near Eastern literary history”. Thus, the historical conditions of the cosmopolitan intellectual and literary ambience found by Cypriot writers on their way to migration, Greek Cypriots in Egypt and Turkish Cypriots in Istanbul, can be better understood.

## 2. Greek Cypriot Literature in Egypt

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new landed economically significant group comprising Greek, Italian and other European settlers, contributes to the literary development of Egypt. This does not mean that there was immediately a reflection of the new surroundings in the often academic or “alexandrine” texts written by Egyptian Greeks. One of the most important Greek Cypriot Egyptian writers, Yiorgos Philippou Pieridis, states in an article written in Nicosia years after his return to Cyprus that “in the past years our literates took, as a rule, the part of the stranger in front of the reality of the place they lived in, very few of them tried to deal with Egypt and its people.” (Pieridis 1971: 17). It is perhaps a myth that Egyptian Greeks lived completely isolated from their Arab and Muslim environment (even Cavafy was not completely unaffected from “Orientalisms”<sup>6</sup>), but certainly a great part of the “Αιγυπτιώτες” did not include the local environment into their texts. Nevertheless, we have a few examples of cross-cultural exchange in Egyptian Greek literary production and related topics dealing with Arabic and Islamic culture. It is not the aim of this contribution to provide a complete account of Greek Cypriot writers in Egypt and their relation with the Arabo-Islamic environment, for this we may refer to the precious studies done by Papaleontiou (2005-2006) and Kechagioglou (1993), where the approach is the examination of “Orientalism” (in Edward Said’s sense), or possibly the absence of it, in the works of the Cypriots of Egypt. In our framework we will only mention examples, such as Yiorgos Philippou Pieridis, Maria Roussia or Nikos Nikolaidis (about them see below), as well as Evgenia Palaiologou-Petronda (born 1911) with poetic

collections such as *Ιχνητά* (Arabic term for “gift, offer”, 1956) or *Μέση Ανατολή* (1946), or Kostas Tsangaradas, though not of Cypriot origin, with his novel *Ναμπία* (1924) and his volume of short stories *Χικαγιάτ* (1925) (see Pieridis 1971: 17-18; Papaleontiou 2005-2006: 19).

One of the main writers representing this current is the aforementioned Yiorgos Philippou Pieridis. He was born in Dali in 1904, lived in Egypt until 1947 when he returned to Cyprus in order to organize the Municipal Library of Famagusta. His first novel *Οι Βαμβακάδες* (“The Cotton Manufacturers”) printed in 1947 in Alexandria and translated 22 years later into Arabic (by ‘Abd al-Mohsin Al-Hashab [?], Cairo 1969, see Pieridis 1994: 15) as well as his *Διηγήματα από τη Μέση Ανατολή* (“Stories from the Middle East”, Famagusta 1949) give an image of the author’s social engagement for the local population<sup>7</sup>. In a series of chapters without novelistic dramaturgy, almost in the form of short stories, Pieridis traces in *Οι Βαμβακάδες* the life of a small Greek community of cotton manufacturers and of their Arab fellow-countrymen in Upper Egypt in a critical-realistic description of exploitation and arrogance, love and disappointment, power and labour. According to Malanos’s words, it is the first time that a local prose text deals with the relation between Greeks and Egyptians without false idealization (Pieridis 1994: 13). Pieridis’s social criticism was certainly an outstanding exception at that time. He criticizes satirically the prejudices of Greeks towards Arabs, as in the case when a young Egyptian from Alexandria is placed in a ruling position of the manufacture provoking the following reaction of most of the Greeks: “Look here! ... an Arab! ... that’s why Hellenism is declining in Egypt!...” (Pieridis 1994: 32). Many pages are filled with the description of labour and life conditions of the workers, in a manner resembling both romantic moralism and socialist realism.

The setting in the Egyptian countryside and the description of life, also of sentimental acting and feeling combined with social criticism put into a rural environment, is a tradition which from Rousseau on continued to influence Eastern Mediterranean literatures and can be found in the first Arabic novel mentioned above, *Zaynab* (1913), by the Egyptian Muhammad Husayn Haykal (Ostle 1991: 105). We do not know if Pieridis knew about Haykal’s novel, but he probably knew about another countryside novel, *Ο κάμπος*, published by the Greek Cypriot Loukis Akritas in 1936, describing in a similar combination of idyllicity and reality the rural life in the Cypriot Mesaoria. And it is no coincidence that in the same years we have the first examples of “rural



realism” also in Turkish literature with Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, who was born 1898 in Cairo where he spent his early childhood and died in 1974, and whose novel *Yaban*, “The Stranger”, appeared in 1932. Later, in the 1950ies, with Mahmut Makal (born 1930) and the so-called “Köy Edebiyatı” (“Village literature”) another rural literary genre was established, followed by the Cypriot reflection of the “Köy Edebiyatı”, exactly at the same time, with Hikmet Afif Mapolar (born 1919 in Kyrenia)<sup>8</sup>.

Another kind of Greek Egyptian voice is represented by Maria Roussia, who was born in Cairo and died in Alexandria in 1957<sup>9</sup>. Specialized in short stories centred also in urban environments in Egypt and dealing with the theme of the “stranger”, the “alien”, she expresses the quest of identity in a period of wars and displacements; she published also a volume with stories and diaries about her trips to her “homeland” Cyprus, where she actually never lived for longer periods, putting thus a Cypriot counterbalance to her Egyptian production. To a certain extent, her work can be truly evaluated under the aspect of postcolonial writing, and should be compared to other contemporary writers of the area under this light.

One of the most significant Greek Cypriot Egyptian writers, perhaps the outstanding Greek Cypriot prose writer in general, is Nikos Nikolaidis, who died in Cairo in 1956 and left an important production of novels and short stories, as well as collections of poems and “prose-poetry”, with a great variety of themes and settings. Like Pieridis, also Nikolaidis has achieved fame with his social criticism, though the setting of his production is predominantly “Greek”. But there are some exceptions, especially in his only famous poetry collection *Φελλάχοι* (“Fellaheen”, 1937), containing the noteworthy poem “The Fella’s Funeral Procession”, where he depicts the miserable life of Egyptian peasantry<sup>10</sup>. In our context, Nikolaidis represents a part of wider Greek literature which, in the 1930s, distances itself from the political developments in Greece: his collection of “prose songs” *Ο Χρυσός Μύθος* (Cairo 1938) was distributed only in Egypt and Cyprus in protest against the censorship under Metaxas’s dictatorship (Zafeiriou 1991: 46).

Political orientated writers dealing with specifically Cypriot experiences in colonialism is another aspect of textual displacement. A typical example for this group is Christakis Georgiou (born 1929) describing late colonialism out of the prisons of Nicosia in his novel *Ωρες 1950* (1981), though particularly interesting in our context is his short story *Χωρίς αποσκευές* (“Without luggage”, from the volume *Παράλληλοι*, 1964): in a

dark New Year's night in London a Greek Cypriot girl, former cabaret dancer, meets a cosmopolitan Lebanese. Re-discovering her Mediterraneity, she comes into conflict with her English husband, a linguist and collector of Greek dialect material, and leaves with the Lebanese guy to Egypt. Through a painful triangular dialogue, the problematic of loneliness in migration and cosmopolitanism, as well as the consequences of colonialism are subtly traced.

Another important point of textual migration and displacement (cf. the description of the "translation period" above § 1) can be found in literary translations. In fact, it is not very known that in those years Egyptian Greeks living in Alexandria and Cairo translated classical and modern Islamic literature. Many Arabic authors, from the pre-Islamic 'Imru-l-Qays until contemporary poets like Ahmad Sawqî, were translated into Greek<sup>11</sup>; in 1878 the Qur'an was translated, reportedly from Arabic, into Greek by Gerasimos Pentakis (Pieridis 1971: 15). Reflections of this translation activity can be seen in Cyprus, where Panos Fasoulitis (1894-1965) from Limassol who had graduated from the American University of Beirut (see Koudounaris 2005: 444) published translations (from English) of the works of the Persian poet Nizami in the Limassolian newspaper *Αλήθεια* in 1917 (Papaleontiou 1998: 152).

Topics and subjects related with the Middle East are thus to be found in extremely different contexts. These topics are not confined to the mere presence of setting and place, but make part of the literary structure of Greek Cypriot literature, even in authors not pertaining to the Egyptian community (like Georgiou). From the comparative point of view, the role of migration in the cross-cultural exchange of Eastern Mediterranean literatures, of which Cypriot literatures form a part, must be underlined. It thus reconfirms on the one hand the extreme importance of the wider Eastern Mediterranean area for the creation, production, transport and diffusion of Cypriot literatures and on the other hand the thematic and stylistic interrelations between literatures in Greek, Arabic and Turkish.

### 3. The Language Question

One further possible approach suitable for a comparative analysis of our area is given by the linguistic situation in the Eastern Mediterranean. As already mentioned, the common diglossia in Greek and Arabic between "pure" and "popular" language is widened into trichotomy in Cyprus by the

dimension of the dialect. The use of dialect in popular anonymous texts and today still alive in the folk literature of the Ποιητάκηδες is going back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century with the acritic songs, and is living an intensive period in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, whereas the British rule and the orientation towards Greece in the 19<sup>th</sup> century put the dialect literature in the background<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, it entered learned poetry with the result that dialect began to play a fundamental role in nationalist writing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not only in Cyprus but also in the Arab countries. The best-known Greek Cypriot example is Vassilis Michaelides (1851/53-1917), the first non-popular (in the sense of ‘learned’) Cypriot poet to use dialect in poetry, although he wrote in καθαρεύουσα and δημοτική, as well<sup>13</sup>. In the same period when he writes his (lesser known) satirical texts with social cynics (Zafeiriou 1991: 22), and little before Dimitris Lipertis (1866-1937) addresses himself negatively to Britain as “step-mother” in one of his poems, Egyptian Arab poets are re-discovering the vernacular *zagal*-tradition, publishing satirical gazals in colloquial Egyptian against the British rule. One outstanding example is Ya‘qûb Sanûn (1839-1912) who, describing the dialogue “between an English soldier’s wife and an Egyptian ‘man on the street’ sketches the people’s determination to eject England.” (Booth 1992: 467). The colonialist’s image is rendered by English words in the Arabic text. The same can be said about Yemenite literature under Ottoman rule, where the satirical poet Ahmad Saraf al-Dîn al Qârah (d. 1863) used Turkish loanwords to “express local sentiment towards the Ottomans” (Booth 1992: 466). Language mixing is indeed a typical procedure for any satirical composition: the wide-spread use of French in Eastern Mediterranean bourgeois societies in order to boast of the pretended high social rank, is often derided by the insertion of French words. Examples are the *zagal*-poet Muhammad Tawfiq in Egypt at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (*Zagal halafâwî ‘arabî ‘alâ faransâwî*, 1899; see Booth 1992: 468), Anastasios Pnevmatikas in Istanbul with his satirical versified compositions about the Greek high-class society in Pera/Beyoğlu in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Stathi 1997 and Kappler 2002: 41) or the novels of Mehmed Mizancı Murat (d. 1917) and Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar (1864-1944) mocking about Europeanized Ottomans in Istanbul. The same is true for deliberate language mixing in Greek Cypriot literature using Turkish words in contexts where Ottoman rule or Ottoman past becomes an object of ridicule or accusation, but also of sympathy for Turkish Cypriot compatriots, for example in Michailides’ epic texts. It is interesting, or obvious, that in both Arabic and Greek literature poetical

multilingualism goes together with the socially lower variety of language, δημοτική or colloquial ‘âmmiyya, and never with the high or “pure” variety. Especially in Cyprus, where in a microcosmos of language contacts all the languages of the Eastern Mediterranean area are represented, multilingualism is frequent in dialect texts, especially in non-learned literature. This is the case with the so-called ποιητάρηδες (folk poets), shifting continuously between Greek and Turkish, especially in the τσιαπτίσματα (from Turkish *çatizma*, as a loan word [“αντιδάνειο”] migrating back to Turkish Cypriot as *çatizma*), improvised poetical dialogue contests<sup>14</sup>. Here the phenomenon is to be considered free of any “national” implications, since ποιητάρηδες writing in Greek Cypriot dialect are not necessarily Greek Cypriots, as attests the following τσιάπτισμα/*çatizma* performed in 1988 by a Turkish Cypriot ποιητάρης (Yusuf Akandere, a so-called “Linobambaki” from Lurucina, see the text in Yaşın 1999: 229-231):

Εσύ μπο τζίεϊ ελούννεσουν, ben deligden bakardım,  
Mahallene θέλω να’ρω, μα bubandan gorkardım.

It is a fact that the more bilingual the community is (or was), the more frequent is code shifting. Bilingualism being more diffused among Turkish Cypriots than among Greek Cypriots, it is obvious that Turkish Cypriot ποιητάρηδες used more extensive language mixing (and not because “they are, in reality, [Crypto-] Christians or even ‘Greeks’”, as still considered by a good number of Greek Cypriot researchers<sup>15</sup>). In the Paphos region there have been registered folk poetry texts performed in the 1930s by Turkish Cypriots containing very few Turkish words (reported in Giangoullis 1986: 8), although these are not original creations of the performer but only transmitted folk texts. The specific linguistic situation of the Paphos region, where some Muslims even did not master very well the Turkish language, as referred for instance in the autobiography of the Turkish Cypriot poet Taner Baybars (Baybars 2005: 152) and witnessed by one of the most famous ποιητάρηδες, Charalambos Azinas, who, in 1938, published a long poem about Atatürk’s death in Greek Cypriot written in Latin alphabet with the new Turkish orthography, apparently for the use of Hellenophone Paphos Turks (Fevzioglu 2001), is obviously an exception, since there is also a rich material of *çatizma/çatizma* in Turkish Cypriot only<sup>16</sup>. Unfortunately, research done until today into the ποιητάρηδες production does not include any comparative aspect with the Turkish production. The same is true for the yet uninvestigated oral literature of the Arabic-Greek Cypriot bilingual

Maronites in the village of Kormakiti, if there is any (see Roth 2000: 129, Giangoullis 1986: 13). The result in both cases is that precious sources of the Eastern Mediterranean culture in Cyprus remain in darkness.

#### 4. Perspectives: Identity Issues in a Comparative Approach

Issues of “identity in literature” are important criteria for a comparative analysis (see the “Prolegomena” in this volume) and can be productive when applied to contemporary Eastern Mediterranean literatures. Talking about Cypriot literary production in Turkish, it is a fact that Turkish Cypriot literature during British rule is marked by distinct features of Ottomanism in its first period, summed up in the programmatic and almost laconic verse by Kaytazzade Nazım (1857-1924) “Osmanlıyız, Osmanlıyız / Alemde biz pek şanslıyız” – “We are Ottomans, we are Ottomans, all over the world we are very lucky” (Fedai & Azgın 1993: 15-18), whereas Turkish Cypriot literature in the later British period is mainly concerned with Turkish nationalism. The “Cypriotness” of a more recent literary activity is characteristic for the contemporary generations (see Neşe Yaşın 1990: 82), but can be compared to the quest for a specific Lebanese national identity in the 1950s, where during the outburst of the Civil War the country faced the issue of joining the UAR and the neo-symbolist Sa’îl ‘Aql (born 1912) published a poetry volume in Latin characters in order to underline his opposition to Panarabism and annexation (*Yârah*, 1961; see Booth 1992: 472).

Furthermore, the proclaimed “Mediterraninity” in Turkish Cypriot culture and literature finds its expression in the common saying of the contemporary Turkish Cypriot poetry as “a Mediterranean poetry which uses the Turkish language” (“Türk dilini kullanan, Akdenizli bir şiir”)<sup>17</sup>. This should then be compared to the Egyptian modernism where authors as Taha usayn or Lewis Awad were calling for a “frankly ‘Mediterranean’ Western-oriented culture for Egypt” (al-Kharrat 1991: 180) and confronted to Costas Montis’ exclusive Mediterraninity in his untranslatable short poem *Μεσόγειος και Κύπρος* (“Mediterranean and Cyprus”)<sup>18</sup> where he exclaims: “Τι αποκλειστικά δική της αγκαλιά τής άνοιξε, / τι αγκαλιά μοναχοκόρης!”. Though moving outside the chronological framework of the present contribution, it should be however born in mind that identity questions can be easily linked to the periphery/centre structures adopted in this attempt of analysis and therefore be used for a further, and deeper, exploration of the complex literary production and reception in nowadays Cyprus.

## NOTES

1. As examples of introductions into the application of postcolonial theory in literature see Ashcroft & alii 1989 and Gandhi 1998.
2. One of those is the case of Rodis Roufos (1924-1972) and his novel *Χάλικινη εποχή*, which was originally published in English (London 1960) and, being a “response” (*antilogos*, according to L. Papaleontiou, see below) to Lawrence Durrell’s *Bitter Lemons*, constitutes a fine example of dialogue or “writing back” to the colonial centre; see the chapter “Από τα Πικρολέμονα του Λόρενς Ντάρελ στη Χάλικινη εποχή του Ρόδη Ρούφου: Αποικιοκρατικός λόγος και αντίλογος” in Papaleontiou 2000: 146-163.
3. It should be mentioned that in this particular geographical and historical context of British occupied Egypt, the theory of colonial and postcolonial studies has been applied interpreting one of Cavafy’s poems (“Waiting for the Barbarians”) with a postcolonial key by McKinsey 2000.
4. This is obviously not valid for philosophical-political texts, where the phenomenon is certainly to be set earlier, i.e. at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the most important texts of the French Enlightenment are translated into Greek; cf. Kitromilidis 2000: 144-153.
5. Cf. also Th. Gautier’s description of a performance of an Armenian comedy in Kadıköy translated by the Cypriot writer Epameinondas Frangoudis (Papaleontiou 2004: 456).
6. For Cavafy’s dealing of the Arabo-Islamic world in his work see Kappler 2000. It is very interesting, as Papaleontiou (2005-2006: 20-22) and Kegayiolglou (1993: 37) point out, that there are also Cavafian reflections in Greek Cypriot poetry, where explicit reference is made to the Arabic context of the Alexandrian poet, namely the poem *Προς Κωνσταντίνο Καβάφη* (“To Constantin Cavafy”) by Costas Montis and *Αποθανών εν Αλεξανδρεία* (“Deceased in Alexandria”) by the contemporary poet Kyriakos Charalambidis.
7. For a detailed account of Pieridis’ work related to the Egyptian environment see Papaleontiou 2005-2006: 13-17.
8. Mahmut Makal’s novel *Bizim Köy* (“Our Village”) appeared in Istanbul in 1950; H. Afif Mapolar, influenced from the mainland’s “Village Literature”, published his *Üçümüz* (“Us Three”) in 1954.
9. For an account on M. Roussia’s Egyptian production see Papaleontiou 2005-2006: 17-18. About her general work see also Palaiologou-Petronda 1981.
10. See Papaleontiou 2005-2006: 11-12. The mentioned poem in English translation can be seen in the presentation of his work Nicolaides 1998: 115.
11. One of the *Mu‘allaqât* by cImru-l-Qays was translated 1896 in Istanbul by I. Stavridis (Papaleontiou 1998: 47), a Greek translation by “Archim. Ilias Dip.” of Sawqî’s odes appeared 1905 in Alexandria (Papaleontiou 1998: 68). The same person translated several other Arab poets in the same period of time. These are only examples, the

- whole translation activity from Arabic, Ottoman and Persian to Greek can be seen in Papaleontiou 1998: *passim*.
12. Cf. Yiangoullis 1986: 35 and *passim*.
  13. For a comparative approach to Michaelidis and his Turkish fellow countryman, the Ottoman poet Hilmi Efendi, see Kappler 2004.
  14. The Greek Cypriot *τουατίσματα* genre has been adopted from the Turkish Cypriots looking back on a long tradition of Turkic folk (especially *mani*) literature in Anatolia and elsewhere; for a general overview see Dilçin 2000: 287-289; for the Cypriot context cf. Gökçeoglu 2002: 8, 66.
  15. Cf., for instance, Kyrris 1976: 246.
  16. See some examples in Yaşın 2005: 269-282.
  17. According to Tamer Öncül, in: Karadag, Metin, Çağdaş Kıbrıs Türk Edebiyatı İçinde Osman Türkay Şiirinin Evrensel Boyutları, [http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/GENEL/karadag\\_evrensel\\_pdf](http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/GENEL/karadag_evrensel_pdf), 17.08.2007.
  18. In: *Ylantron* 1 (2001): 3.

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## Le visage francophone de Chypre

Yiannis E. Ioannou\*

### ABSTRACT

In spite of appearances, Francophony in Cyprus has played a role that is not only cultural but also indirectly political. The few articles published on the subject, examine the particular aspects of this presence. Based on this observation, this article attempts to assess the contribution of Francophony in Cyprus in relation to Cypriot cultural life. We recall very briefly passages from Rimbaud and their impact on the intellectual life, before presenting in detail certain French-speaking literary figures of the island. The francophone literature, sustained since Independence (1960) by a highly active French Cultural Centre, has opened for Cypriots a window on to a world other than the one forced upon them by their Anglo-Saxon oppressor for nearly a century (1878-1960). In addition, in the context of the post-colonial period from Independence to the present, French culture offers an alternative that cultivates and spreads the idea of a European identity and, more recently, of a united Europe as opposed to the British ascendancy. Moreover, it promotes a sensibility that counterbalances the model of mass consumption "imported especially during the last two decades.

### RÉSUMÉ

En dépit des apparences, la francophonie à Chypre a joué un rôle, non seulement culturel, mais indirectement politique aussi. Les quelques articles publiés sur le sujet examinent des aspects particuliers de cette présence. Sur ce constat, le présent article tente de dresser un bilan de la contribution de la francophonie à Chypre par rapport à la vie intellectuelle et scientifique de l'île. Nous rappelons très brièvement les passages de Rimbaud et leur impact sur la vie intellectuelle, avant de présenter d'une façon assez détaillée, certaines figures francophones majeures de la littérature de l'île, dont l'activité et l'œuvre ont contribué à l'enrichissement de la vie intellectuelle et littéraire chypriote. Cette francophonie, soutenue d'abord par des noyaux francophones chypriotes, et dès l'indépendance (1960) par un Centre Culturel Français très actif, a permis aux Chypriotes de garder une fenêtre ouverte sur un monde autre que le seul monde anglo-saxon perçu comme l'oppresseur pendant près d'un siècle (1878-1960). Aussi, la culture francophone, dans le contexte post-colonial de la période de l'indépendance à nos jours, renforcée par la vague estudiantine vers les universités françaises des années '70-'80, se veut une alternative qui cultive et diffuse l'idée de l'identité européenne, puis de l'Europe unie par opposition à l'emprise britannique. De plus, cette présence francophone cultive dans l'île une sensibilité qui tend à contrebalancer le modèle hyper-consommateur «importé» des États-Unis, notamment aux cours des deux dernières décennies.

\* Université de Chypre

La présence francophone à Chypre se concrétise, le plus souvent, dans la période des Lusignans (1192-1486) et dans les deux passages de Rimbaud (1878, 1880), et les quelques lettres qu'il avait écrites pendant son séjour à l'île. Nous n'avons pas eu jusqu'à présent, d'études qui présentent globalement la contribution de la francophonie à la vie littéraire, scientifique et sociale de Chypre depuis la fin du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Les travaux les plus crédibles à ce sujet, sont les articles de Roger Milliex sur Rimbaud et Laffon, de Jacqueline Karageorgis et la thèse de Sylvain Béraud intitulée *La culture française dans l'espace chypriote*. Par ailleurs l'excellent film *Arthur Rimbaud, Poste Restante, Limassol Chypre*, réalisé en 2005 par Patrick Cazals donne une image très complète de la relation de Rimbaud avec l'espace chypriote. Enfin notre article intitulé, *La réinvention de Rimbaud par la littérature chypriote*, paru dans la revue *Transtextes-Transcultures*<sup>1</sup>, analyse la présence et la légende du poète dans l'espace culturel de l'île. En outre, un bref résumé de la présente étude, vient de paraître dans le numéro spécial de la Revue *Echinox* sur la francophonie dans le Levant.<sup>2</sup> Toutefois, on ne pourrait pas négliger la présence des institutions et des personnages qui, d'une manière ou d'une autre, ont renforcé la place de la langue et de la culture françaises à Chypre depuis la fin du 19<sup>e</sup> jusqu'à la fin du 20<sup>e</sup> siècles. Au sujet des traductions de textes français par des lettrés chypriotes, la bibliographie établie par Leftéris Papaleondiou constitue déjà une source précieuse.<sup>3</sup> Dans cette optique, nous allons tâcher d'approcher la question de la francophonie dans un souci d'évaluer sa contribution à sa juste valeur

Si la présence de Rimbaud fut l'objet d'études et d'un film, en revanche, celle d'un autre poète, franco-chypriote lui, qui entre 1868 et 1874 travaillait au Consulat français à Larnaca<sup>4</sup>, n'a attiré l'attention que de Roger Milliex. Fils du docteur Adolphe Laffon, médecin et Consul, de France d'abord, puis de Grèce aussi, à Larnaca, comme nous en informe le premier directeur de la mission culturelle française à Chypre Roger Milliex<sup>5</sup>, Gustave Laffon naît dans cette ville en 1835. Au cours de sa carrière diplomatique, il se voit confier le Consulat de France au Pirée (1880), puis à Adrinople (1886 ou 87) et enfin à Valparaiso<sup>6</sup>. Cet intellectuel polyglotte (outre le français, il lit l'anglais, le grec ancien et moderne, le turc et probablement l'espagnol<sup>7</sup>), écrit et traduit de la poésie en grec et en français en marge de son activité consulaire. Il traduit entre autres des poèmes de Béranger, de Musset, de Moréas, de Prudhomme ainsi que l'Hymne à la Liberté de Dionyssios Solomos en français. Ces traductions des poètes français en grec revêtent une

importance particulière compte tenu de la situation politique –Chypre fait partie de l'Empire ottoman jusqu'en 1878- et s'inscrivent dans la grande vague d'influence de la pensée et des lettres françaises sur le monde hellénique. Le poème que Gustave Laffon écrit en grec à l'occasion de la mort de Victor Hugo est extrêmement émouvant et caractérisé, du point de vue du style, par un ton quasi apocalyptique<sup>8</sup>. Le décès de Hugo ne semble pas l'y avoir profondément touché seulement au plan littéraire et humain, mais aussi identitaire: il aurait ainsi réveillé sa conscience française puisque, outre que Laffon se définit dans le poème comme Français, ce doit être la seule fois où il qualifie le grec de «lyre étrangère»:

*Comment oserai-je moi Français  
Dans le débordement généralisé  
Du deuil qui a inondé nos cœurs de Français,  
Te louer avec une lyre humble, étrangère  
Toi, qui allumas des brasiers qui persévèrent !<sup>9</sup>*

Poète à ses heures, grand amant et amoureux en permanence, Laffon publiait ses vers dans des journaux de Grèce et de Chypre: c'est ainsi que ce lectorat apprenait ses poèmes par cœur<sup>10</sup>. Bien que ses poèmes aient été publiés avant 1900, la seule publication disponible aujourd'hui est celle réalisée en 1915 à Nicosie<sup>11</sup>. La mort de Laffon à Constantinople en 1906 déclenche la publication, dans la presse chypriote, de «fervents articles nécrologiques»<sup>12</sup> évoquant ses doubles origines, ainsi que Laffon lui-même l'avait fait dans l'épithaphe (en grec) qu'il s'était souhaitée:

*Sur mon tombeau  
Je ne veux point de lettres d'or -ni ciselées  
Deux mots seulement me suffisent- deux mots bienaimés  
Ici repose Laffon -Français par la naissance-  
Mais de la Grèce amant et admirateur fervent.<sup>13</sup>*

La littérature chypriote connaît au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle un essor considérable et offre des prosateurs et des poètes dont la renommée dépasse progressivement l'espace chypriote. La culture française est de plus en plus présente, directement ou indirectement, chez bon nombre d'auteurs connus, voire célèbres. Les œuvres de Pavlos Valdasseri, des frères Théodossis et Yiorgos Philippou Piéridis, de Yiannis Stavrinos Économidis, d'Achille Émilianidis, d'Émilios Chourmouzios, de Théodoros Marcellos, de Nikos Vrachimis, d'Hector Patriotis, pour ne citer que les auteurs les plus connus, véhiculent des influences françaises.

Ménélaos Frangoudis (1871-1931) compte parmi les personnalités qui ont marqué la vie intellectuelle et politique de l'île de par son activité de journaliste et de critique littéraire mais aussi d'homme politique puisqu'il fut membre du Conseil national à une époque bien agitée de l'histoire de Chypre. Né à Limassol, il avait fait des études de droit à Paris, où il s'était lié d'amitié avec Yiannis Psycharis, grand universitaire marxiste et partisan de la langue démotique. Influencé par la culture française et la tradition républicaine, Frangoudis était devenu un fervent supporteur de la démotique aux idées très progressistes à une époque difficile tant pour la Grèce que pour Chypre. Le journal *Alitheia* qu'il dirigea pendant plus de trente ans (1897-1931)<sup>14</sup> était la tribune qui diffusait ses idées libérales autant au niveau politique qu'artistique. De plus, il avait traduit *Acté* d'Alexandre Dumas père.

Comme Frangoudis, le poète satirique Yiannis Perdios (1882-1930), avait fait des études de droit à Genève et de retour à Chypre, il avait publié, entre autres, le journal satirique *To Mastiyion* (Le fouet) (1911-1930) et avait écrit des poèmes directement en français, dédiés et envoyés à Clémenceau, qui n'avait pas manqué de répondre en le remerciant.<sup>15</sup>

Iéronimos Varlaam (1849-1915), éditeur de la revue *Cosmos* (1909-1911) à Larnaca, réalise une des premières traductions de la tragédie de Racine *Mithridate* dont il publie des extraits dans la revue qu'il dirige en 1909.<sup>16</sup> Cette traduction demeure inconnue puisqu'elle n'a jamais été publiée dans son intégralité et il semblerait que ce lettré chypriote originaire de Corfou, l'aurait traduite en vue d'une production théâtrale qui viserait à «ranimer les sentiments patriotiques de l'hellénisme chypriote asservi»<sup>17</sup>. Cette production n'avait jamais été réalisée.

Valdasseridis (1892-1972), né à Larnaca, de même qu'Achille Emilianidis Theodossis Piéridis et d'autres, fait des études à Paris, ce qui lui permet de bien connaître la langue et la culture françaises. Influencé par Baudelaire, il publie en grec et en français, à Chypre, à Athènes et à Paris: polyvalence linguistique et éditoriale qui est en elle-même significative. A Paris, aux Éditions de la Revue Mondiale, il publie en 1929<sup>18</sup> le recueil *Reçois mon cœur, ô vie*, et en 1934 le recueil *La Colonne Corinthienne* aux Éditions Eugène Fiquière. En 1939, il publie à Athènes le recueil *Offrande à Pomone* (en français), aux Éditions Flamma et en 1948, il publie à Larnaca le recueil *Quelques Poèmes*, aux Éditions Scala. Comme le signale S. Béraud:

Paul Baldassare (pseudonyme français) s'est fixé un idéal esthétique et essaye d'atteindre un paradis sentimental et mystique. Il songe, en effet, à fuir son siècle et pense que l'Art éternel peut apporter une consolation

aux âmes raffinées. Dans toutes ses œuvres, il exprime son angoisse métaphysique et son horreur de la condition humaine<sup>19</sup>.

Yiannis Stavrinos Économidis (1894-1987) est une voix littéraire particulière. Avocat à Famagouste, il a écrit des nouvelles, des romans, des poèmes et des essais. Dès 1918, il publie à Nicosie un recueil des nouvelles de Maupassant traduites du français sous le titre *Nouvelles choisies de Guy de Maupassant*. Fondateur de l'éphémère revue *Néa Épochi* (1921-22) à Famagouste, il contribue grandement, malgré la brièveté de cette parution, à la diffusion dans les cercles littéraires, des idées novatrices venant de France et d'autres pays européens<sup>20</sup>. L'invasion turque de 1974 fait de lui un enclavé dans son village natal de Rizokarpaso, situé dans la région occupée de la péninsule de Carpasie: Économidis avait en effet refusé de se réfugier dans la partie libre de Chypre et y est resté confiné jusqu'à sa mort en 1987.

La personnalité du journaliste et critique littéraire Émilios Chourmouzos (1904-1973)<sup>21</sup> a marqué les lettres chypriotes et grecques de la première moitié du vingtième siècle. La revue littéraire *Avghi* (1924-25) qu'il fonde à Limassol avait réuni autour d'elle de jeunes écrivains et critiques progressistes qui par leur action avaient contribué au renforcement du mouvement en faveur de l'usage du *Démotique* (la langue populaire) dans la presse et la littérature de l'époque. Chourmouzos s'était très vite tourné vers la Grèce où il était devenu l'un des journalistes les plus respectés de l'époque. Ses traductions de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, de Barbusse, Gide, Taine, Malraux et Sartre comptent parmi les premières et les plus appréciées, et ont permis la diffusion d'œuvres majeures de la littérature et de la pensée française contemporaine en Grèce et à Chypre à une époque où ces deux pays traversaient encore une longue période d'instabilité politique et sociale et connaissaient l'isolement des pays sous-développés. Pour évaluer à leur juste mesure l'importance de ces traductions, il faut d'une part rappeler que la Grèce moderne n'entre dans une période de stabilité et de développement qu'après la chute de la (dernière) dictature en 1974 ; savoir d'autre part que cette démocratisation s'est produite au détriment de Chypre: si en effet sa vie de colonie britannique s'est terminée en 1960, le coup d'État des colonels Grecs à Chypre, perpétré en 1974, avait entraîné une autre occupation, celle de l'armée turque, qui se prolonge jusqu'à nos jours. Dans ce contexte, les traductions de Chourmouzos n'étaient pas seulement investies d'une dimension de résistance à la colonisation et à l'obscurantisme, mais étaient de plus porteuses d'un espoir existentiel en inspirant la pensée et l'action de tous ceux qui combattaient les occupants et les dictateurs.



Théodossis Piéridis (1908-1968), quoique né à Chypre, fait partie du groupe des intellectuels Chypriotes d'Égypte. Eduqué au lycée français du Caire, il poursuit ses études de lettres à la Sorbonne. Il a publié une vingtaine de recueils<sup>22</sup> en grec, mais a écrit et traduit en français. Les archives du poète que nous avait confiées son frère, le prosateur Yiorgos Philippou Piéridis, contiennent en effet un nombre important de poèmes directement écrits en français ou traduits en français par le poète lui-même, qui laissent poindre des influences des poètes engagés de la lignée socialiste. À titre d'exemple de cette poésie chaleureuse et profondément humaniste, reproduisons ici un rare témoignage d'un épisode sanglant et occulté de l'histoire récente française<sup>23</sup>, dans la traduction française effectuée par son auteur, le poème «Maurice Lurot», qui d'après une note a été «composé en hommage aux martyrs de la liberté tombés à Paris, sur la place de la Nation, le 14 juillet dernier (1953)» et «a été diffusé par 'Ce soir en France', le jour des obsèques des sept patriotes assassinés. La traduction a été assurée par l'auteur»<sup>24</sup>:

*Maurice Lurot!*  
*Je viens à peine d'apprendre ton nom.*  
*Il vient à peine de sortir tout chaud*  
*du gosier palpitant de la radio.*  
*Le sang sur le pavé de la Nation*  
*Vient à peine de prendre à mes yeux*  
*Sa forme finale.*

*Mais toi depuis des jours,*  
*Tu voguais déjà vers l'immortalité*  
*En compagnie des six aigles d'Afrique.*

*Maurice Lurot,*  
*Les étendards grecs*  
*Se penchent jusqu' à terre*  
*Sur ton passage.*

*Et moi*  
*le plus humble de tes frères d'armes,*  
*moi qui ne suis*  
*qu'un simple poète grec,*  
*je m'agenouille sur ton passage,*  
*grand aigle de ma douce France.*

*Adieu camarade aigle de France*  
*Adieu camarades aux ailes brisées.*

*Mais l'aigle n'est pas l'oiseau de la*  
*défaite*

*L'aigle est le signal de la victoire.*

Th. PIÉRIDIS  
20 juillet 1953

Une précision est nécessaire à propos de cette émission, dont il n'y avait aucune trace jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Dans les années 1950, sur les ordres du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque, la radio du pays avait conçu l'idée d'un

programme appelé «B broadcasts» qui allait émettre en français et en italien. Le Parti avait en effet reçu une demande des PC français et italien, de créer ces émissions d'une nature contestatrice et qui seraient dirigées par des équipes de communistes italiens et français stationnés à Prague. L'émission italienne était appelée *Oggi in Italia*, et la française *Ce soir en France*. Fait pour le moins curieux, toute trace de ces émissions a disparu depuis les années 1960, ce qui confère au document ici publié une importance accrue<sup>25</sup>.

Le frère du poète, Yiorgos Philippou Piéridis (1904-1999) est l'un des prosateurs et essayistes les plus éminents de la littérature chypriote moderne, et l'un de ceux qui contribuèrent à ce que cette littérature soit étudiée par des critiques et des chercheurs hors les frontières de l'île. Comme l'ont constaté le professeur Yiorgos Savidis et d'autres chercheurs<sup>26</sup>, il appartient à l'école du réalisme critique et son œuvre se nourrit des problèmes sociopolitiques de Chypre et de l'Égypte. C'est dans ce dernier pays que, comme son frère, il avait passé une quarantaine d'années, y avait appris le français et s'y était laissé influencer par Guy de Maupassant<sup>27</sup> qu'il lisait dans l'original. Outre Maupassant, il connaissait bien l'œuvre de Romain Rolland, Jules Verne, Henri Barbusse et Rabelais, ayant publié à Athènes et à Chypre des essais à leur sujet<sup>28</sup>. En outre, Yiorgos Philippou Piéridis a publié un roman, six recueils de nouvelles (dont trois sont traduits en français aux éditions Praxandre<sup>29</sup>) et une série de recueils d'essais. Selon L. Papaleontiou, «<I>'excellente maîtrise du français et la connaissance satisfaisante de l'anglais lui permettent d'avoir aisément accès à la bibliographie internationale. Déjà depuis les années 1970 (très tôt pour les données grecques) il connaît et applique les points de vue de Bachktine sur le 'roman polyphonique'»<sup>30</sup>. Les auteurs français séduisent Piéridis à plus d'un titre: manifestement, c'est la technique du récit réaliste qui le séduit chez Maupassant, l'antimilitarisme chez Romain Rolland et enfin, chez Rabelais et Barbusse, la critique sociale. Quant à Jules Verne (1828-1905), Piéridis reste d'actualité en cette année 2005 qui marque le centenaire de sa mort, lorsqu'il affirmait de lui qu'«il avait trouvé le secret du succès dans le mariage entre l'imagination du conte et le réalisme»<sup>31</sup>. Il est par ailleurs intéressant de lire son témoignage sur le statut de la langue française en Égypte, à l'occasion d'une mobilisation pacifiste devant les prémices de la montée du fascisme en Europe:

*Devant cette menace, apparut en Europe un mouvement pour la paix qui rassembla beaucoup d'ouvriers de l'esprit, des personnalités de la science, de la pensée et de l'art, avec pour résultat que se formèrent partout diverses*

*organisations dont le but était la mobilisation des peuples pour la préservation de la paix et l'éloignement du péril de guerre. En écho à ce mouvement, des groupes de progressistes fondèrent en Égypte l'Union Pacifiste avec des branches au Caire, à Alexandrie et à Port-Saïd.*

*L'Union était internationale connue sous le nom français de «Ligue Pacifiste». La langue française continuait à être celle généralement parlée par les étrangers, et la langue étrangère la plus connue des Égyptiens. C'était aussi la langue officielle des Tribunaux Mixtes. On peut dire qu'elle était en quelque sorte la langue internationale d'Égypte<sup>32</sup>.*

Écrivain engagé, Piéridis participa aux manifestations antifascistes de l'entre-deux guerres avec la flamme idéologique qui animait les jeunes de l'époque. Il nous fournit un important témoignage d'une visite de Marinetti au Caire peu avant le début de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, que nous reproduisons dans son intégralité:

*Ces jours-là, vint au Caire, d'Abyssinie où il avait pris part – et il s'en vantait – aux assauts de l'aviation italienne qui bombardait des villages sans défense et mitraillait les populations civiles, le fameux Marinetti, fondateur du futurisme, devenu désormais le chantre de Mussolini et du fascisme. Il fit une conférence dans la salle de théâtre de l'Université Américaine du Caire. Nous allâmes l'écouter. C'était un éloge lyrique de la guerre en général et de l'élan conquérant de l'Italie fasciste en particulier, un délire de présomption fasciste. En réponse, l'Union Pacifiste organisa une conférence à son siège, avec comme orateur un Égyptien, copte, Georges Héneyn. C'était un jeune homme pâle et délicat, à la poitrine étroite et à la vue faible, mais il opposait à son apparence physique maladive, une grande force de caractère et une grande combativité. Il était fils de famille aisée, il avait étudié à Paris.*

*Les organisateurs de la conférence s'avisèrent d'envoyer une invitation à Marinetti. Et connaissant la façon dont se comportaient les fascistes italiens, ils s'employèrent à recruter une dizaine de jeunes Égyptiens costauds, triés sur le volet pour leur stature, capables de jouer des poings si nécessaire. (Les Italiens d'Égypte, pas tous, seulement ceux qui s'étaient laissés piéger par les mots d'ordre et les promesses de la propagande de Mussolini, étaient devenus très provocants).*

*Quelques minutes avant le début de la conférence de Héneyn, Marinetti entra dans la salle, suivi d'une troupe de «bravi» italiens. Ils s'avancèrent d'un pas martial et Marinetti alla s'asseoir au premier rang tandis que ses hommes de main s'éparpillaient en divers points de la salle pour s'installer après un coup d'œil circulaire, de l'air de ceux qui sont venus pour en découdre, si ça vous chante. Leur but était évidemment de disperser le rassemblement. Dans la petite salle le*

*nombre des auditeurs ne dépassait guère les deux cents. Aussitôt nos gaillards-pacifistes Égyptiens se levèrent de leurs places, choisirent chacun un Italien et allèrent s'asseoir à ses côtés du même air de défi. Les Italiens ne semblaient plus aussi mariolles.*

*Héneyn monta à la tribune. Il parla en français. Tranquillement, comme un humaniste et un ami de la paix, il se mit à réfuter une à une les fanfaronnades belliqueuses que nous avions entendues dans la salle de l'Université américaine. De temps à autre il raillait même un peu. À un moment donné, Marinetti bondit sur son séant et interrompit l'orateur par une remarque sur le ton agressif. C'était visiblement un signal pour ses « bravi ». Pourtant aucun n'osa bouger. Marinetti s'assit. Héneyn continua son propos. Mais peu après Marinetti se leva de nouveau et l'interrompit de la même façon qu'auparavant, mais une fois encore sans le résultat escompté. Marinetti comprit. Il se leva, se tourna vers ses compagnons et cria, en italien cette fois. Ce n'est pas un endroit pour des Italiens patriotes. Italiani, nous partons<sup>33</sup>.*

Gardons-nous cependant d'oublier de mentionner que le groupe d'intellectuels chypriotes francophones d'Égypte qui, une fois rapatriés, ont renforcé la francophonie dans les cercles intellectuels et artistiques de l'île, ne s'épuise pas avec les auteurs que nous avons nommés. À ceux-là, il faudrait ajouter les noms d'Eugénie Paléologue Petrondas, Maria Rousia, Mimis Iacovidis et bien d'autres.

Plus récemment aussi, parmi les auteurs chypriotes francophones qui continuent d'exercer une influence considérable sur les lettres chypriotes, citons les noms d'Iréna Ioannidou Adamidou, de Klitos Ioannidis et de Niki Katsaouni.

Mais aux noms choisis parmi les gens de lettres, il faut adjoindre ceux de plusieurs intellectuels, professionnels et scientifiques qui, sans avoir forcément pratiqué la littérature, sont francophones et ont contribué directement ou indirectement au renforcement de la francophonie, par leurs activités critique, professionnelle ou scientifique remarquables. Le compositeur Achilléas Lymbouridis (1917-) n'a pas seulement mis en musique les vers des grands poètes dialectaux mais également celui qui a publié des études et donné des conférences sur Rimbaud et Hugo. Costas P. Kyrris (1927), grand historien, est aussi un polyglotte raffiné dont les conférences au Centre Culturel Français de Nicosie ont toujours constitué un événement à part. De surcroît, les projets scientifiques qu'il avait lancés en collaboration avec le Collège de France et le C.N.R.S. ont permis à la science française non seulement d'être présente dans l'île mais encore de

préparer le terrain à une petite équipe de chercheurs francophones, ce qui allait leur permettre de poursuivre leur carrière au C.N.R.S. de Chypre et de lancer des projets extrêmement intéressants au regard des échanges franco-chypriotes. L'archéologue Vassos Karageorgis (premier directeur du Département des Antiquités de la République de Chypre) et son épouse Jacqueline, archéologue aussi, ont pu ainsi institutionnaliser les échanges scientifiques avec l'Institut Courby et la Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen de Lyon. Les fouilles menées, soit en commun soit par chaque mission séparément à Salamine, à Kiton, à Khirokitia et ailleurs dans l'île, ont donné lieu à grand nombre de publications en France et à Chypre, tout en consolidant l'image intellectuelle et scientifique de la France dans l'île.

Enfin, outre qu'il a été l'envoyé spécial du journal *Le Monde* à Chypre, le journaliste et critique littéraire Alécos Constantinidis (1930- ...), a souvent mobilisé certains termes français dans ses articles contestataires et sarcastiques. Mais surtout il a réalisé la première traduction en grec de la *Cantatrice Chauve* d'Ionesco, dès 1961. L'œuvre traduite avait été montée pour la première fois dans la cour de la résidence-atelier du peintre Christoforos Savva par un groupe de jeunes acteurs cette même année, d'après les informations fournies à l'auteur de cet article par Alécos Constantinidès. Ceci a son importance: dorénavant, certaines œuvres d'avant-garde française allaient toucher Chypre non plus avec vingt ou trente années de retard, mais quelques années à peine après leur première parution en France, mettant ainsi l'île, comme dans le cas des traductions de Chourmouzios, en relation directe avec les réalisations littéraires et philosophiques de la France des avant-gardes.

On ne saurait manquer de rappeler l'importance de la présence de l'helléniste, hellénisant et philhellène Roger Milliex comme premier Conseiller Culturel de l'Ambassade de France à Nicosie. Fondateur et animateur dynamique du Centre Culturel Français, Milliex est aussi le fondateur de la première et seule bibliothèque française dans l'île jusqu'à la création de l'Université en 1992. Cette bibliothèque, qui desservait et dessert toujours la communauté francophone de Chypre, contient entre autres des ouvrages rares et précieux, témoins des nombreux échanges franco-chypriotes. La contribution de Roger Milliex, décédé le 7 juillet 2006, au maintien de la francophonie existante et à son développement a été décisive et durable.

Le coup d'état des extrémistes de droite et l'invasion turque de 1974 avait provoqué une fuite massive de certaines couches de la population, y compris plusieurs catégories d'ouvriers et de jeunes désireux de s'investir dorénavant,

dans des valeurs plus stables et strictement personnelles telles que la formation scientifique. Devant la perte totale ou presque, des biens matériels provoquée par l'invasion, la seule propriété qui semblait sûre était la formation scientifique que personne ne pouvait enlever ou voler. La grande majorité des jeunes désireux de faire des études qui venaient des milieux défavorisés choisirent la France notamment parce que les études y étaient gratuites mais également parce que l'inscription à l'université était possible sans concours, avec le seul titre équivalent au baccalauréat. Le phénomène qui se développe alors est que les jeunes des milieux aisés continuent d'aller en Grande Bretagne, ceux qui réussissent au concours d'entrée aux universités grecques vont en Grèce et un grand nombre de ceux qui n'ont pas les moyens financiers et n'obtiennent pas une place dans les universités grecques s'orientent vers la France. À partir de l'automne de 1974 le nombre d'étudiants chypriotes inscrits ou bien en cours de langue française ou bien directement dans des cursus universitaires augmente de manière spectaculaire. Cette nouvelle réalité francophone durera une dizaine d'années et commencera à s'affaiblir à nouveau avec la reprise économique à Chypre observée à partir de la seconde moitié de la décennie 1980. Cette reprise due notamment au tourisme, permet à nouveau aux Chypriotes d'envisager leurs études dans des universités payantes de Grande Bretagne et<sup>34</sup> des U.S.A. Cette reorientation s'explique par deux facteurs principaux. D'abord, par le constat des étudiants chypriotes que le système éducatif français, étant régi par la notion du concours, reste sélectif et assez difficile pour les étudiants venant des pays non francophones. On peut s'y inscrire facilement et presque gratuitement mais on en sort diplômé beaucoup plus difficilement. Tandis que les systèmes éducatifs britannique et américain, à partir du moment où l'on est prêt à payer, on peut facilement trouver l'université qui délivrera le titre. Deuxièmement, par le fait que, de retour à Chypre, la langue anglaise constitue la langue de travail à plusieurs niveaux de l'activité économique.

À partir de 1992, date à laquelle la jeune université de Chypre avait reçu ses premiers étudiants, la francophonie se consolide davantage, notamment grâce à la création d'une dynamique section de Français au sein du Département des langues et Littératures Étrangères qui commence avec un professeur et une trentaine d'étudiants inscrits aux deux cours de FLE<sup>35</sup>. L'augmentation du nombre des inscrits et le développement spectaculaire de la section de Français Langue Étrangère renforce la position de la francophonie parmi les étudiants et crée les conditions pour l'introduction d'un cursus de Maîtrise (bac + 4) en Langue et Littérature Françaises qui, à

partir de 1999, reçoit sur concours, une vingtaine d'étudiants par an, fait qui alimente et dynamise, non seulement le marché autour de la francophonie mais aussi la sensibilité, les idées, la réflexion et la culture francophones en tant que telles.

Si, outre la place occupée par la présence française dans les lettres chypriotes, nous souhaitons en mesurer la contribution *identitaire*, depuis les passages de Rimbaud aux Chypriotes francophones actuels, alors force est de constater que, à partir du tournant du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, la relation et le contact du monde intellectuel chypriote avec une culture autre que celle ottomane ou britannique permettaient d'une part d'éviter la soumission totale au monde de l'occupant, et d'autre part, de se forger librement une pluralité, fût-elle limitée, dans le choix et les représentations du monde. Une orientation qui, entre autres, contribuera à transformer les Chypriotes en fervents partisans de l'adhésion de l'île à l'Union Européenne, en tant qu'elle signifie non seulement une harmonisation au niveau identitaire mais aussi un désenclavement de la culture et de l'influence angloaméricaines. La cypriotisation de la dynastie des Lusignans avait contribué à ce que la France soit dorénavant perçue par les Chypriotes, non plus comme le pays de l'occupant mais plutôt, comme un pays ami dont la culture revêtait, au fur et à mesure que les siècles passaient, le caractère d'une culture proche de celle du monde hellénique. Cette image a été davantage renforcée après le siècle des Lumières et la révolution française et l'influence que ces événements avaient exercée sur le monde grec. Les liens étroits entre le monde intellectuel grec et la culture française qui se consolident incessamment au cours des 19<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> siècles, ne font que confirmer et clarifier l'image amicale de la France et la familiarité de sa culture avec la civilisation grecque, faits qui, directement ou indirectement, se repercutent sur le monde intellectuel et artistique de Chypre.

## NOTES

1. Yiannis E. Ioannou, «La réinvention de Rimbaud par la poésie chypriote», *Revue Transtextes-Transcultures*, No. 2, Université Jean Moulin-Lyon 3, Lyon 2007, pp. 178-184.
2. Yiannis E. Ioannou, «La francophonie à Chypre et sa contribution à la littérature», *Revue Echinox*, Numéro Spécial, Vol. 11, Cluj, Roumanie, 2006, pp. 249-254.
3. Lefteris Papaleontiou, *Traductions littéraires de l'hellénisme majeur, Étude Bibliographique, Asie Mineure-Chypre-Égypte 1880-1930*, Éd. du Centre de la Langue Grecque, Salonique 1998.
4. S. Béraud, *op. cit.*, p.103.
5. Roger Milliex, «Esquisse d'une biographie de Gustave Laffon (1835-1906)», *Actes du premier colloque cyprologique*, Nicosie 1973, pp. 221-236.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-230.
7. À la page 128 de ses *Œuvres Complètes*, Laffon déclare avoir traduit un poème de l'espagnol.
8. *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 50.
9. Sur la mort de Victor Hugo, *ibid.*, p. 50
10. *Ibid.*, p. 234
11. Γουσταύου Λαφφόν, *Τα Άπαντα*, Εκδότης Ριζάρδος Βαζζίλης, Εν Λευκωσία Κύπρου 1915. [Gustave Laffon, *Œuvres Complètes*, Éditeur Richard Barzilis, À Nicosie, Chypre, 1915].
12. R. Milliex, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 235. Nous reproduisons la traduction de l'épithaphe effectuée par Roger Milliex.
14. Klitos Ioannidis, *Histoire de la Littérature Chypriote*, Éd. Du Centre des Recherches Scientifiques, Nicosie 1986, p. 55.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
16. V. Maria Papapetrou Miller, «La tragédie de Racine *Mithridate* en une traduction inconnue», par I. Varlaam, *Revue Microfilologica*, No. 4, Nicosie, Chypre, Automne 1998, pp. 23-25. Aussi, du même auteur, «Racine et la Méditerranée, Soleil et mer, Neptune et Apollon», *Actes du Colloque International de Nice des 19-20 mai*, Université de Nice- Sophia Antipolis 1999, pp. 106-108.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 108. Nous rappelons que Chypre se trouvait alors sous occupation britannique. Voir aussi, Klitos Ioannidis, *Histoire de la Littérature Chypriote*, Éd. du Centre des Recherches Scientifiques, Nicosie 1986, 42-44.
18. *Anthologie de la Littérature Chypriote*, 2, Poésie B, pp. 370-376.
19. *Op.cit.*, pp.151, 154.
20. Klitos Ioannidis, *Histoire de la Littérature Chypriote*, Éd. Du Centre des Recherches Scientifiques, Nicosie 1986, pp.185-186.
21. *Ibid.* pp.196-199.



22. *Anthologie de la Littérature Chypriote*, *op. cit.* pp. 475-486.
23. Voir à ce sujet l'ouvrage récent de Maurice Rajsfus, 1953, *Un 14 juillet sanglant*, Agnès Viénot éditions, Collection Moisson Rouge, 2003, p. 237  
 «Le 14 juillet 1953, comme chaque année depuis 1936, le Parti communiste et la CGT organisent une grande manifestation de rue pour célébrer les valeurs de la République et les idéaux de la Résistance. Mais ce mardi-là, un important cortège de travailleurs algériens s'est formé, qui scande "Non au colonialisme" et - pour la première fois - "Nous voulons l'indépendance !" Place de la Nation, les forces de l'ordre chargent violemment. Les Algériens résistent, des policiers tirent alors dans le tas, tuant six jeunes ouvriers algériens et un métallurgiste français, syndicaliste CGT. Et de cet épisode, pas de trace dans la mémoire officielle de la Préfecture de Police» (Source: Bibliomonde [http://www.bibliomonde.net/pages/fiche-livre.php3?id\\_ouvrage=2644](http://www.bibliomonde.net/pages/fiche-livre.php3?id_ouvrage=2644), site visité le 28 janvier 2005).
24. Ces précisions figurent sur le manuscrit, juste après le titre avec, en bas de la page, une autre précision rédigée au stylo disant que le poème 'avait été envoyé de Bucarest par Yiannis Kritikos en 1972'. Cette note appartiendrait au frère du poète, Yiorgos Ph. Piéridis.
25. Voir le site de Radio-Prague [http://www.radio.cz/en/html/65\\_prisoner.html](http://www.radio.cz/en/html/65_prisoner.html) (consulté le 25.1.05).
26. Démosthénis Theodorescos, «Les principaux axes de l'œuvre de Yiorgos Philippou Piéridis», *Néa Epochi*, N°1, 1994, p. 11.
27. À l'occasion du centenaire de la mort de Guy de Maupassant, Piéridis consacre un article à l'auteur français, «Yiorgos Philippou Piéridis, Guy de Maupassant», *Néa Epochi*, N°3, 1993, pp. 17-18. À noter qu'il avait déjà publié des essais sur Maupassant (1980) et sur Romain Rolland (1973). Pour plus de détails, consulter l'étude en grec de Leftéris Papaléontiou, «Στοχαστικά δοκίμια ενός πεζογράφου», («Essais savants d'un prosateur»), *Néa Epochi*, N° 283, hiver 2004-2005, pp. 13-20.
28. Consulter à ce propos le récent article de Leftéris Papaleontiou, *op. cit.*, note 26.
29. Yiorgos Philippou Piéridis, *Souvenirs et histoires d'Égypte*, Éditions Praxandre, Besançon 2003; *Nouvelles et récits* (Extraits de différents recueils), Éditions Praxandre, Besançon 1999 ; *Les marchands de coton*, Éditions Praxandre, janvier 2001.
30. Papaleontiou, *op. cit.*, p.14.
31. Papaleontiou, *op. cit.*, p.15.
32. *Souvenirs et histoires d'Égypte*, *op. cit.*, p. 95-96.
33. *Ibid.* pp. 99-100.
34. Les chiffres des étudiants chypriotes en France évoluent à partir de 1975 comme suit: 1975-76: 504, 1979-80: 1122, 1985: 358, et à partir de 1987-88 on observe une chute progressive jusqu'en 1996-97 où il n'y a plus que 82 étudiants en France. Une augmentation peut être à nouveau observée à partir de 2002-3 (107), 2003-4 (117), 2004-5 (124). Source: Département des Statistiques et des Enquêtes, Ministère du

Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale de la République de Chypre.

35. En 2006 le nombre des étudiants inscrits en cours de FLE à l'université de Chypre avait dépassé les 750, lorsqu'en anglais ce chiffre ne dépassait pas les 800.

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## **The Achieved Body (An Outlook on the Poetry of Vassilis Michaelides)**

**Costas Vassileiou \***

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Le poète Kostas Vassiliou, qui au cours des dernières années écrit de façon plus systématique de la poésie en dialecte chypriote, essaie de mettre en valeur les meilleurs moments de la poésie de Vassilis Michaelidis. Avec des images poétiques il essaie de mettre en évidence les neuf meilleurs poèmes du poète, écrits presque entièrement en dialecte chypriote, et n'hésite pas de placer à côté des poèmes les plus reconnus le poème intitulé «Amoloïtos» (L'indiscret) ou le satirique «Romios» (Le Grec).

### **ABSTRACT**

The poet Kostas Vasileiou, who has more systematically written poetry in the Cypriot dialect in recent years, tries to highlight the best moments of Vassilis Michaelidis's poetry, namely his nine best poems, written entirely in the Cypriot dialect, and doesn't hesitate to place next to the best known ones the poem entitled «Amoloïtos» (The Unspoken) and the satirical «Romios» (The Greek).

If someone asked me to choose the nine best poems by Vassilis Michaelides, I would tell them that this would not be right as we should accept a poet, as well as any man or woman, in their entirety with their virtues and faults. After all, the best elements cannot be conceived without the worst and vice versa.

However, if one insisted on the nine best (and later we will see about the rest), I would have no trouble suggesting the following in chronological order:

1. «Mia epistoli is kypriakin dialekton» [A letter in the Cypriot dialect] (1881, March)
2. «I Kypros pros tous legontas oti den einai elliniki» [Cyprus to those who say it is not Greek] (1881, June)

\* Philologist, poet

3. «Amoloitos» [The Unspoken] (1880-1884)
4. «Anerada» [The Nereid] (1893)
5. «I Ennati Iouliou 1821» [The 9<sup>th</sup> July 1821] (1893-1895)
6. «Chiotissa» [Woman of Chios] (1893-1895)
7. «Romios kai Tzion Poullis, Tzionis kai Kakoullis» [The Greek and Tzion Poullis, Tzionis and Kakoullis] (1903)
8. «Constantinos» (1914)
9. «To oroman tou Romiou» [The Greek's dream] (1917)

I would merely ask them, why choose nine and not ten to round it up; and they would reply, first that no number is more “rounded-up” than nine, either multiplied by three or added up (3x3 or 3+3+3) and secondly that we only need nine in order to assemble the collected body of his poetry. Let us now begin from the limbs.

For the feet we need two robust poems, equal and identical, to make up a pair that can safely carry the weight of a human body. I can think of nothing more appropriate than “Constantinos” and “The Greek’s dream”, two of his latest poems which in their maturity and robustness leaning on the perfection of popular songs, reveal a man who knows where he set off from, the course he is about to cover and where he will end up; a man who walks the ground well grounded – on the language, the sensitivities, the yearning and the dreams of his people.

*Constantinos woke up late at night,  
and saw the destitute land, his mother in tears.  
“Where am I, mother?” he said, “Where is our church?”  
“Where are our houses, our ancestral possessions?”  
“They took them, my son, the graceless Tatars  
And who braver than you can claim it back?  
The whole world is waiting, looking at you  
Your fast horse is already saddled.  
With God’s help put on your uniform,  
Cross yourself thrice and tighten your sword”. (“Constantinos”)*

For the hands we need to choose another pair, and the only remaining pair is the “Letter” and “Cyprus”, two of his youth poems written in the same year and the same frame of mind (even though one is satirical and the other patriotic). They are equally lengthy, loose in their structure and therefore

flexible and versatile, suggesting two immense, tireless hands, agile and dexterous, able to create both an icon and an ecclesiastical wood-craft with the same ease, embrace either a log or a body, lift a boulder, prune either a tree or the sky; a “devilish” poet, aptly characterized by his friend St. Hourmouzios “who while walking the earth, lets his mind stroll high up in the skies” (*Salpingx*, 14.3.1884).

*As I was saying, this earth compared to everything else  
is like, how can I put it, a grain of sand.  
Amidst the sky it resembles a spark,  
going round and round to bring us the year and the month.  
On her back she holds us with her magnetism  
and so we travel with her to the skies  
In her whole journey she spins faster and faster  
just like the yarn in the spinning wheel.  
Round and round she goes and if ever she halts  
who knows where the hell she'll throw us.  
All of us, tall and short, poor and wealthy,  
beggars and lords, rich and glorious  
kings and ministers, if that day ever comes,  
we'll all be reduced to kites in the wind. ("A letter in the Cypriot dialect")*

For the chest, the central torso in general, no poem is more appropriate than the “Ninth July”, the most virile and manliest amongst his poems that provides a wide bosom, solid and warm. Here, not only Cyprus but the tortured Greek race or *Romiosiny* may safely lay its head and receive a tender caress on the hair in the comforting sound of these words: “let no harm come to you”.

*“The race of the Greeks was born when the world was born;  
No one has ever been able to root it up?  
God shelters it from the heights: it cannot die.  
Not till the whole world ends will the Greek race vanish!”<sup>1</sup>*

The “Woman of Chios”, the most malleable poem by Vassilis Michaelides boasts an ethereal, almost fleshless language, transparent style and a well-rounded metric system that allow the poem to take off and fly in the sphere of music and pure poetic energy. For all these reasons we cannot but place it in the position of the face. Just as in the human body the face requires its Creator's greatest pliable dexterity in order to assemble all the elements (eyes,

lips, cheeks etc) that reflect the personality of a human being, thus “The Woman of Chios” is the mirror of Vassilis Michaelides’ poetic personality.

*The old beggar-woman left the house  
And the Bey came in with a Turkish woman,  
A black-eyed girl with a pale, gaunt face  
And a body like a cypress tree.  
When he saw his own beloved mistress  
Down on her knees and with tear-filled eyes,  
He said: “What is it, my Gioulsapa?”  
You’re crying again my Morning-rose.  
In all the time that you have been with me,  
You’ve never shown a drop of gaiety.*

For the end, we kept the three poems that correspond to the three more pertinent body parts that define, contain and regulate a psychosomatic personality: the sex or “nature” (instinct), the heart (emotions) and the head (reason) – the platonic chariot with the two horses and the charioteer who directs them (the pathos, the thymos, the logos).

In the place of the sex I would definitely plant “The Unspoken”, not least with the ostentatious intention to show the size of his poetry but in a simple, natural and effortless manner pertinent to an ancient statue –covertly, too. I would adopt the same manly coyness with which, while describing the most spicy issue, the sexual act, the poet avoids all “harsh” words and artistically replaces them with other poetically articulated ones (i.e. unspoken, saddlebag, cave).

*If it weren’t for me, how would you ever see this life?  
Only I know what I’ve been through for you to live.  
I would wake and get up like an angry lion  
walking about bareheaded, carrying my saddlebag  
caring none for verdict neither kingdom  
but only shoved my face and spat inside the cave;  
a cave with its mouth covered up in hair  
and I would leave my saddlebag hanging on the outside.*

The place of the heart – the throne hall and the throne itself rightfully belongs to the “Nereid”. Not only the woman that sealed and broke the poet’s heart but the “Nereid” as a poem of incomparable beauty and crimson, tightly-knit vigor (like a rose or a pomegranate) that releases the

poet from his passions, rejuvenates him and activates the erotic root that feeds his human and poetic attitude:

*Later we came to a mountain  
That reached, like Paradise,  
Straight up to heaven.  
On its heights we wept  
Together, and laughed  
In the pungent musk.*

*"If you are brave", she said,  
"And this life is to your liking,  
Stay here alone with me" –  
And she burst into laughter.  
All at once I felt that my heart  
Was about to break.*

*She spoke and she vanished,  
Lost from my sight  
Like a passing wind.  
Then my heart cracked  
And my mind stood still; since then  
I have turned to stone".*

Last, in the place of the head, *reductio ad absurdum* there is no other option but "Romios". Let us not rush into talking about hydrocephaly in a Praxitelian body even though this poem is the lengthiest (641 verses) and the most "fluid" one – the most voluble, the most inartistic, the one most attacked by the critics. In contrast, written during his peak period (1893-1903) when he also wrote his greatest dialectal poems, "Romios" is so revolutionary in terms of its meaning and composition that even today, a hundred years later, we are having trouble grasping it. First because it shows a muscular mind that does not rest on its laurels but keeps on speculating and renewing, seeking new ways of expression in line with the new realities, his own or his country's – a filtering mind. Secondly because, as the title suggests ("Romios"), it is a Greek mind that rises from the things to the idea: the result may be an immense fresco of the English rule – a "world of Cyprus" (just as the "Ninth July" and the "Woman of Chios" are frescos of the Turkish rule) but it eventually becomes condensed in a Gospel, an Arc of the Greek race:



*God will provide! Countless villains conquered our land.  
None of them stayed then, and none of them will stay now-  
These too will come and go.*

And finally because as an artistic composition of antithetical elements (i.e. the Panhellenic vernacular and the Cypriot dialect, satirical versus dramatic tone, theatrical versus poetic genre), through an inspired and innovative architectural structure, this is the most daring experiment ever to appear in the modern Cypriot Poetry. Its national and poetic value can only be measured against classical pieces i.e. a Homeric rhapsody, a Platonic Dialogue, a Roman *kontakion* (short prayer).

*Suddenly they see  
two ladies of high standing approaching.  
well-dressed, young  
as beautiful as angels...  
Then they asked Kakoullis: "Please, tell us,  
are we talking to an Italian or a Greek?"  
And while their flaming look sets the poor man afire,  
"To a Greek!" he responds.  
"We're sorry! From a distance we thought,  
I that you're a Greek and she that you're Italian,  
so there goes our secret.  
I won the bet and I am very happy indeed.  
Please tell us, which is your birthplace?  
"I come from Cyprus, born in Limassol.  
Myself too, ladies, when first I saw you  
I thought that you were nymphs who escaped from Parnassus".  
"You are so flattering!"  
"I speak the honest truth, you have to believe me!"*

Not bad, I would say, we've managed the nine best. But let us not forget my early promise: "...and later we will see about the rest". I was referring to poems written in the local idiom such as *Tokoglyphia* [Usury], *Tyrinades* [Fasting Period], *O geros tis Parekklesias* [The Old Man of Parekklesia] and some epigrammatic ones: *En'angaliaso ton Theon* [I will embrace God], *Thee mou tziai na pethana...* [God, I wish I died] that may not reach the elevated standing of the nine chosen but remain nonetheless smaller fragments of the same diamond rock. These, they would say, we would put in his pockets, like

nuts, for him to treat children. How about the multitude of his poems written in the Panhellenic language? Poems like *To cigaron* [The cigarette], *To thavma tou Agiou Georgiou* [The miracle of Saint George], *Spoudaia Anakalypsis* [Great Discovery], *Ta proxenia tis Aphroditis* [Aphrodite's Matchmaking] and *O Diavolos* [The Devil] (as a whole and in many of its parts) cannot be easily erased. These, he would say, we shall put in his goatskin bag, for him to offer people in fairs.

### NOTES

1. Translator's Note: The excerpts from the poems "Ninth July", "Woman of Chios" and "Nereid" are taken from a translation by Athan Anagnostopoulos, adapted by Kinereth Gensler and Ruth Whitman. *Poems of Cyprus* to the form in which they appear within this essay (Nicosia: The Printing Office of the Republic of Cyprus, 1970). The rest of the excerpts are translated by Despina Pirketti for the purposes of this essay.



## **Implicit Stage Directions in the “9<sup>th</sup> July 1821 in Nicosia”, by Vassilis Michaelides**

**Leonidas Galazis\***

### **RÉSUMÉ**

La synthèse poétique «Le 9 juillet 1821» de Vassilis Michaelidis, très populaire à Chypre, a été mise en scène à plusieurs reprises. Bien que ce texte n'ait pas l'aspect extérieur d'un drame, il présente des caractéristiques théâtrales. L'auteur lui-même incorpore dans son texte toutes ces indications pour l'espace, le temps, les personnages, qu'un auteur dramatique présente d'habitude sous la forme d'instructions de mise en scène.

### **ABSTRACT**

“The 9<sup>th</sup> July 1821 in Nicosia” has been repeatedly staged as a theatrical play. Even if this very popular text of Cypriot poetic synthesis doesn't have the outer form of a drama, it has many theatrical characteristics, and the author himself included indications on space, time and persons very similar to a playwright's stage directions.

### **Introduction**

The remarkable and perceptive economy in the use of means of expression, the well-timed and drastic poetic discourse, the careful alteration between the narrator's discourse and the discourse of the players with an emphasis on the latter, all combine to make the “9<sup>th</sup> July 1821...” one of the most important 19<sup>th</sup> century Cypriot literary texts. Even though he did not assign the outer form of a drama to his piece, Vassilis Michaelides wrote in fact a poetic synthesis which as noted by several scholars and critics (whose views will be commented on further below), was distinguished by theatricality, at a time when this element was absent from most 19<sup>th</sup> century Cypriot dramatic pieces. In other words, the poet himself incorporates in his text all inserts on space, time and dramatis personae that a playwright usually presents in the form of stage directions (teachings). Naturally, as already

\* Ph.D. candidate

known, the effectiveness of Michaelides' aforementioned method has been repeatedly verified on stage. The aim of this paper is to examine the implicit stage directions observed in "9<sup>th</sup> July..." as merely one of the ingredients of theatricality in the poetic synthesis at hand.

## 1. The Genre Identity of Poetic Synthesis and the Predominant Theatricality Therein

Theatre theorists, scholars and critics do not agree on the content of the term *theatricality*, while they very oft underline that it is a fluctuating and controversial concept, perceptions of which shift from time to time.<sup>1</sup> "On the one hand, theatricality is considered a "general connotative index", allowing the reader or spectator "to perceive the performance as a network of significations, namely a text",<sup>2</sup> and on the other hand it is astutely stated that theatricality is defined in terms of "the distinct nature of theatre as a transformational process meaning a text-to-stage transition" and depends on "its unique tension between its two poles, the text and the performance, to the degree that the transformation from the first to the second can be achieved".<sup>3</sup> Anne Ubersfeld points out that the term *theatricality* is often used with confused meaning. She herself (agreeing with earlier relevant views of Roland Barthes) purports that theatricality in a text lies in its innate potential to become enacted on stage. Giorgos Pefanis adopts the same view, noting that "we may refer to the implementability or performability of the dramatic dialogue, in order to show its persistent tendency toward its own enacted realization [...]".<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the examination of implicit stage directions in this paper requires the elevated degree of performability in "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" as a working hypothesis, owing to Vassilis Michaelides' ability to disperse the stage notes required for a theatrical performance throughout his poetic text.

Naturally, despite the intense theatricality of Vassilis Michaelides' poetic synthesis under examination, one should not understate the fact that the play is not written in theatrical form. All scholars converge to the view that the "9<sup>th</sup> July..." is a narrative poem of a predominantly epic character that does not lack lyrical elements and the element of the dramatic. "An epos", according to Vasilios Tatakis, who underlines: "It is indeed epic; the purest, as far as I know, modern Greek epic poem. Highly wise and contained. Diegesis flows effortlessly and naturally [...]. This poem is run by Greek epic health". Pavlos Krinaios writes on "9<sup>th</sup> July...": "(A poem), grandiose in conception and masterful in execution. The drama and clarity of its descriptive elements, the

innovation of its images, the philosophical thinking embellishing the manifold work, the rich and effortless rhyme and finally its architecture combine to make it a paragon and great tableau of epic and lyric synthesis". The poem is a "small epos" for Costas Proussis, who believes that through the poem the poet presents "the whole heroic drama of the year 1821 in Greece [...]". He goes on to add that the "epic element, abundant in the "9<sup>th</sup> July" is wonderfully interwoven with lyric exaltation and becomes more intense with the brilliant descriptions and the wholesome depiction of the various characters presented in the poem either as protagonists or as personae in passing [...].<sup>5</sup> More recently, scholars of the "9<sup>th</sup> July" concentrate on the dramatic element that prevails in the poem. In particular, Yannis Katsouris points out Michaelides' ability to "set up dramatic human scenes with frugal means" and Michalis Pieris investigates the poem's directorial arrangement and especially the "dramatic function of the light". The latter concludes that the "play's proceedings are limited chronically to only one day, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1821 and a specific space, Nicosia" and claims that Michaelides consciously intended to write a piece "which upholds the elementary dramaturgic and stage conventions of ancient tragedy". The poet's "directorial and dramaturgic diligence" is underlined by Lefteris Papaleontiou, who pertains that the aforementioned thoroughness works as a means to tame the "ethnic exaltation caught in a subject such as this".<sup>6</sup> Also notable is K.G. Kasinis' co-examination of the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" with Theodoulos Constantinides' "Küçük Mehmet", which Katsouris shows to be one of the sources used by Michaelides for the poem. Among other things, Kasinis examines genre questions concerning the two pieces: He claims that, even though some parts of Constantinides' piece possess theatricality, in others we merely see a "dialogic arrangement of the material" which in itself does not constitute theater. He concludes with the opinion that we are dealing with an "intermingling of fictional and dramatic elements". In addition to this, he underlines that even though the "9<sup>th</sup> July" has been called "an epic", it is distinguished for its dialogic parts. More specifically, measurements made by Kasinis showed that 62.5% of the poem consists of dialogic parts and 37.5% of narrative ones. He notes that "the poem's plot is held together, culminates and is resolved using dialogue as a dramatic means". Having indicated the above, the scholar concludes that "the epic poem has greater theatricality than Constantinides' drama. After all, the fact that the "9<sup>th</sup> July" was staged many times as a theatrical piece without any essential changes is not an accident". In one of his notes, Kasinis points out that in writing about theatricality he converges toward a view similar to the one put forth by M. Pieris (1995).<sup>7</sup>

Undoubtedly, the theatricality of a text is eventually judged by its representation on stage or the stage test. Vassilis Michaelides' "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" was pronounced a piece that contains all space-time and characterization indexes required by a director and thus it may be represented theatrically without any violation or drastic modification of the poet's intentions. The theatrical destiny of the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" was investigated by Yannis Katsouris, who undertook a thorough study of the Cypriot Press in order to put forth information on the piece's performances (mostly staged by students), the frequency of which heightens in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, for obvious reasons. Among the older performances of the piece the one staged by the Greek High School of Famagusta (1948) stands out. It was based on a theatrical adaptation of the poetic synthesis by the then headmaster Kyriakos Hadjioannou,<sup>8</sup> for which the poet Theodosios Nicolaou offers quite a remarkable personal testament. A student at the time, Nicolaou took part in the performance in the role of the narrator.<sup>9</sup> From the subsequent performances of the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821", the piece's presentation by the University of Cyprus' Drama Workshop, directed by Michalis Pieris is distinguished for its quality. This approach, as the director points out, differs from the previous theatrical adaptations given that "it is the first time that the two great epic and lyric pieces, the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" and the "Woman of Hios" are worked on as a poetic diptych and presented as a single dramatic synthesis".<sup>10</sup> Of course, the comparison of the poetic synthesis to its theatrical adaptations may provide interesting indications as to the reading reception of the text's implicit stage directions, especially if the scholar's attention is placed on the process by which implicit stage directions are transformed to explicit ones by the adapters.

## 2. Implicit Stage Directions: Between the Narrator's Discourse and the Discourse of the Dramatis Personae

According to Anne Ubersfeld, by the term stage directions or teachings we mean evidence on space and time that are necessary for a theatrical piece's stage representation. Ubersfeld stresses that this is in effect an ambiguous term, given that it means both the spatial and chronological conditions in which speech is uttered, through which the fictional fact is represented, as well as the conditions in which its representation on stage will be attempted. The scholar distinguishes between *external* and *internal* stage directions. The first are separated from the theatrical text, as they are noted in the margins

of the character's discourse (either at the beginning of each act or scene or interjected in the monologue or dialogue), whenever deemed necessary, whereas the second are channeled in the speech of the *dramatis personae* without being separated from it. Ubersfeld's distinction is adopted by G. Pefanis, who points out that the term intra-textual or inner-textual stage directions<sup>11</sup> is also used to describe stage directions detected in the character's discourse. Walter Puchner also comments on the distinction (presented in the Aston and Savona study *Theatre as Sign-System*) between stage directions in terms of those which are explicit (extra-dialogic) -identified with the external directions in Ubersfeld's distinction and implicit (intra-dialogic) -identified with the internal ones.<sup>12</sup> This distinction is based on Manfred Pfister's noteworthy study, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (1977), which suggests that the use of implicit stage directions is found mostly in classic drama and in Shakespeare's plays. The German scholar focuses on the function of stage directions (of both categories), concerning either the actor (*dramatis persona*) or the visual and acoustic connotations of the theatrical representation. Those directions referring to the *dramatis personae* may concern the manner and time during which their entrance to and exit from the stage takes place, their build and physiognomy, masks and costumes, gestures and expressions, the paralingual elements of speech and the characters' interaction. Or again, those directions referring to visual and acoustic connotations may concern the stage, lighting, sounds, special effects and the change of a scene or act.<sup>13</sup> For the purpose of approaching stage directions in the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821", Pfister's distinction is considered more appropriate. Implicit<sup>14</sup> in their totality, this poetic synthesis' stage directions either traced in the narrator's discourse or found in the characters' speech, will be examined in terms of their function in the framework of the piece's principal semiotic systems,<sup>15</sup> in other words, space, time and characters.

### 3. Evidence on Time in Stage Directions

#### 3.1. *Evidence in the Narrator's Discourse*

##### 3.1.1. *Discourse Time*

Theatre theorists propose the distinction between action time, meaning action as it unfolds on stage (discourse time) and time traced in *stichomythia* or in the characters' monologue that is not represented theatrically. This is called diegetic or off stage time.<sup>16</sup> In the discourse of the narrator in the "9<sup>th</sup>



July 1821” the night of 8<sup>th</sup> July 1821 is given as the starting point of action emphasizing the contrast between dead calm and clear skies and the impending disaster of slaughter and havoc (lines 1-10: page 137).<sup>17</sup> Kioroglou’s arrival at the Archdiocese is placed by the narrator at a time point suitable for precarious endeavors like the venture the aforementioned Turkish Cypriot was planning: to help the Archbishop escape after midnight: “Midnight had passed and dawn was just beginning” (21: 137). Upon failing in his efforts, Kioroglou realized that he had run out of time and could not stay there (obviously because dawn was nearing); therefore he took his leave (69-70: 140). The arrival of the next day is noted in the narrator’s discourse with a stage indication about lighting:<sup>18</sup> “the east was turning to a rosy hue” (71: 140). Until the narrator’s next clear reference on time (Saturday noon) these events take place: the Archbishop’s passage to the Archdiocese’s church and his dramatic prayer there, the arrival at the forecourt of Turkish soldiers from the saray and the arrest of Kyprianos, who was led before Kucuk Mehmet at the time the latter was questioning the three Metropolitans. Upon completion of the interrogation of the three and the Archbishop, they are all imprisoned in the same cell. The coercion of the shepherd Dimitris to commit perjury and the deliberation of pasha-aghas regarding the issue of executions (who would be executed and how) follow. When the meeting ends, it is already noon and Turkish officials withdraw in order to pray: “The sun was overhead and at high noon” (297: 147). The passage of time from noon till dusk is not indicated through implicit stage directions in the narrator’s discourse but is traced in the characters’ speech (in particular that of Kucuk Mehmet), a technique which will be commented on further below. Intermediary plot elements, meaning on the one hand the unsuccessful efforts of Kioroglou’s son to change the Archbishop’s mind and help him escape and on the other hand the foul venture of a Turk, the pasha’s delegate, to coerce the archpriests into compromise and humiliation, the dramatic prayer of archpriests inside the prison, the hanging of the archdeacon and the secretary, the transfer of archpriests outside the saray onto the area of execution, the aghas’ final deliberation and their transition from the saray’s interior space onto the yard, the hanging of the archbishop and the slaughtering of Metropolitans and of the shepherd Dimitris, all those events are not accompanied by the narrator’s explicit references to the passing of time. The final implicit stage direction on time, found in the narrator’s discourse is once more supplied with a description of “stage lighting”: <sup>19</sup> “A little after the sun had set/ And it had started growing darker” notables and

priests came before the pasha requesting to receive the dead bodies in order to bury them. Their request is bluntly denied by the supreme Turkish official, who decides that the bodies should remain unburied for three days (561-570: 160).

### *3.1.2. Diegetic or off Stage Time*

In the “9<sup>th</sup> July 1821” the narrator focuses on discourse time avoiding as a rule references to the past or to events unfolding elsewhere, away from the location of the drama. The description of the Greek Revolution in the 10 first lines of the poetic synthesis (137) is an exception wherein the general spatial-chronological context of the tragic events is supplied through the use of metaphorical images (secret preparation of the revolution, participation of the Cypriots, breaking out of the revolution in the Peloponnesus and retaliation in Cyprus). Of course, diegetic time is also found in several other instances of the poetic synthesis, not in the narrator’s discourse but in the speech of the characters who (as will be shown further below) in revisiting the recent past are usually attempting to interpret or justify their position.

## *3.2. Evidence in the Characters’ Speech*

### *3.2.1. Discourse Time*

The characters’ references to the present time of the action through the use of time indexes are less in number than the narrator’s said references. A first chronological indication is traced in the speech of Kioroglou, who shortly after midnight secretly arrives at the Archdiocese and attempts to convince Kyprianos to flee. More specifically, he warns the Archbishop that if he is still there when morning comes, it is certain that he will be executed either by hanging or by impalement. “You’ll be dead on the spit or the gallows” (38-39: 138). Though grateful to Kioroglou for his stance, Kyprianos is determined to stand by his people. The next day, immediately following mess and the Archbishop’s dramatic moments in church, Küçük Mehmet’s straw men arrive at the court; the Archbishop asks the Turkish soldiers who had sent them so early to meet him: “He said: Who sent you here so early in the morning?” (97: 141). After being told that the pasha issued an order for his arrest, the Archbishop asks for a five minute interval during which he rushes upstairs into his chamber where he destroys all secret documents lest they fall to Turkish hands (101-110).

Especially important are references to discourse time, traced in Kucuk Mehmet's speech. We have already seen that the beginning of the day up until noon is described through the narrator's discourse. However, references to the afternoon are made by the pasha. Using this technique, the poet emphatically demonstrates the haste with which the Turkish viceroy wanted to carry out the executions and at the same time his irritation and concern throughout the time his plan is still underway. Therefore, in one last effort to humiliate the Archbishop and the rest of the archpriests, he pressures the Cypriot hierarch, by stating that if he wants to save his life, he must speak quickly because it is already late: "It is getting late", Mousselim Agha said/ "*Dusk is approaching, night is nearly here*" (430-431: 155) / "Speak now, if you have anything to say / Get on with it, *or night will overtake us*" (437-438: 155). This is followed by the Archbishop's refusal to compromise, the archpriests' transfer outside the saray, into the execution area and one last council between the pasha and the aghas, during which Kioroglou and Mettes Agha express their reservations, disagreeing with the haste of the executions. Undeterred by the aghas' views, the pasha points out to them that it is afternoon and they're already late. Therefore, they need to stand up and bring their plans to fruition. "*We have delayed. It is dusk and time to go*" (511: 158).

### 3.2.2. *Diegetic or off Stage Time*

Even though it lies outside the strict limits of discourse time (that in "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" is almost 24 hours) diegetic time, as traced in the characters' speech, sheds light on their motives and intentions. Therefore, it serves as an annotation on theatrically represented time. Thus, the charged ambiance of the 9<sup>th</sup> July morning does not come as a surprise to the reader/ audience, as that have already been prepared through the dialogue scene between Kyprianos and Kioroglou in which the latter describes the developments that will inevitably lead to the carnage a few hours later. Addressing Kyprianos, Kioroglou mentions an edict sent by the Porte and refers to a sudden council of Turkish officials, launched at the saray the previous night. The pasha now holds in his hands the fate of the Archbishop and the archpriests [31-40: 138] and it is suggested that for his own good the Cypriot hierarch should follow the example of another raya who had fled in disguise for Larnaka seeking protection in the city's consulates just one hour ago [54-60: 138].

Meanwhile, Kucuk Mehmet's persistence to proceed with the execution of the Archbishop who did not give in to Kioroglou's tempting plan to save himself and the other archpriests, is justified by the pasha in two ways. On

the one hand, he mentions the clergy's efforts to unite with the revolted Greeks in order to spread to Cyprus the revolution against the Turks [115-120: 141, 147-150: 142] and on the other he points out that the decision is not his, as he was merely executing the orders of an edict from the High Divan [131-140: 142]. Kyprianos' assurances that the Cypriots were truly disarmed, upon his orders, and that they were not involved in revolutionary activities are rejected as misleading and fallacious with an emphasis on revolutionary leaflets supplied in the villages, some of which he still has in his possession [161-166: 143]. At this point, it would be legitimate to interpret the mention to revolutionary leaflets as an implicit stage direction, namely as an indication that the pasha could be holding a handful of leaflets, presenting them to the Archbishop as undeniable evidence of the guilt weighing upon him, as well as the rest of the archpriests and notables. "No matter what is said, I don't trust hearsay;/ I've seen those leaflets – what more is there to say?" [165-166: 143]

Kucuk Mehmet's intransigent stance does not change despite the Archbishop's assurance that the Cypriots were not involved in the Metropolitan Hellenism's revolutionary upheaval and despite him pointing out that any isolated revolutionary moves on the island took place secretly from the clergy [151-160, 161-170: 143]. In the same way, neither the reminder of the Patriarch Gregorios 5<sup>th</sup> hanging in Constantinople, three months prior to the poetic synthesis' discourse time nor the suggestion of the Cypriot hierarch that this tactic will harm the Turks themselves leads to a modification of Mehmet's decision to unleash the massacre [421-430: 155]. Equally firm is the Archbishop's decision to sacrifice himself for his people, as he urges the pasha to be quick about his business, referring to two important stage props, the sword and the noose: "bring your sword and the noose of your gallows" [443: 155].

In the discourse of the shepherd Dimitris (as well as in the discourse of the rest of the characters) no references to or recounting of long past events can be traced. His son's departure for the now revolted Greece a month ago, his inability to cope alone with the heavy load of keeping a flock and his arrest a few days prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> July throw the simpleminded villager into sorrow and despair, making him idealize his previous pastoral life: "I played my flute and the mountains echoed/ My eyes knew nothing of weeping or tears" [249-250: 146]. This extrusion to the idealized pastoral space-time runs in contrast to the prison space. What follows comes naturally – a perjury from a frightened anti-hero as he has been characterized by Lefteris Papaleontiou,<sup>20</sup> who might

have thought that this move could safeguard his return to his village and his quiet pastoral life [271-290: 147].

#### 4. Evidence on Space in Stage Directions

##### 4.1. *Evidence on Space in the Narrator's Discourse*

###### 4.1.1. *Action Space (Represented<sup>21</sup> Space) of the Discourse Time*

The action unfolds in both open and closed spaces and is structured based on the antithesis between Archdiocese Vs saray (with the secondary closed spaces of these two edifices and their multiple connotations) and Ayios Ioannis church forecourt Vs open space in front of the saray (wherein multiple props suggesting sacrifice and martyrdom are found).

The *Archdiocese space* is where narration focuses, following the epic introduction and summarized presentation of non represented wider geographical areas. The Archbishop's *chamber* is a space linked with meditation and formulation of the Archbishop's final steadfast stance: it is the space where Kyprianos rejects Kioroglou's suggestion to flee [21-70: 137-140] and burns the documents before putting himself at the disposal of the soldiers charged with bringing him to Kucuk Mehmet [106-108: 141]. In contrast to the chamber's space, wherein no stage directions can be traced, the *church's space* is presented in more detail: the Archbishop's dramatic prayer, absolution by the people in the main temple, as well as the tragic obeisance to the Virgin, which preambles the hierarch's sacrifice ("As if to bid farewell to both church and world") [86: 140], entrance to the *Altar* where he receives communion [87-88: 140], exit and a pause at the Beautiful Gate with an expression revealing that he had already taken the painful decision to be sacrificed. Immediately after the aforementioned tragic moments that take place inside the church, *outside*, as soon as the Archbishop exits with his entourage onto the *forecourt*, he is arrested by the Turkish soldiers in order to be brought to the saray. [91-100, 113-114: 141].

This particular space, the center of the Turkish ruling force, is further analyzed. The first (secondary) *internal space* of the *saray* is the *central hall*, as the reader can easily deduce. It is there that both the critical meeting of the pasha with the aghas takes place on the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> July [19-20: 137] as well as the following morning's interrogation of the Archbishop and the Metropolitans from the pasha and the rest of the Turkish officials [115-200:

141-144], after which the archpriests are led to prison. The interrogation of the shepherd Dimitris unfolds in the same space [211-290: 145-147]. Following his perjury, the shepherd was led back to his cell. Therefore, even though the exact location of the prison is not determined in the narrator's discourse, on stage the prison could be designated by one or two side exits from the saray's central hall, whereas another gate would signify the entrance into the building from the court and other open-air areas in general. Once the interrogations are over, when the pasha and the aghas are left alone inside the saray hall, they open the ledger of those who were listed for beheading and confer on who will be executed and how [291-300: 147]. After a break for prayer at noon, the pasha and the aghas enter the central hall, where two close associates of the Archbishop are called (the secretary and the archdeacon), inculpated with summary proceedings and taken away to be executed then and there [441-410: 153]. In this same space, the last hearing of the archpriests takes place, during which the pasha attempts in vain to talk them into compromising with the ruling authority [411-410: 153] and shortly afterwards, following their transfer to the open area outside the saray, Kucuk Mehmet announces his decision to behead the four high ranking bishops. Kioroglou's attempt to avert the slaughter is proven fruitless and Mettes Agha's intervention to postpone it is ineffective [451-460, 487-500: 156-7]. It is in the same hall that the concluding scene of the poetic synthesis unfolds, during which the pasha rejects the request to give the archpriests' bodies for burial [551-560: 160]. It is worth noting here that in the theatrical adaptation of the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" by Kyriakos Hadjioannou, the stage direction that introduces Scene B refers to the saray setting: "This scene presents Mousselim Agha's Saray, furbished with Turkish luxury. Kucuk Mehmet, Mettes Aghas and 2-3 other Turkish notables<sup>22</sup> are seated on a divan, smoking nargileh. [...]". Similarly, in Theodoulos Constantinides' play *Kucuk Mehemet*, the saray hall is thus described in the introductory stage direction of the third Act: "The scene represents the Saray's great hall, with three gates, one in the back and the other two on its western sides".<sup>23</sup>

*The prison*, which is another internal area of the saray, has two doors: one external, leading to a garden, and one internal. The reader could deduce that the prison is not a separate building behind the saray, but makes up part of it, if one judges by the haste with which Kioroglou's son escaped through the back gate (in other words, the same door through which he entered) once he became aware that someone was trying to open the other gate and come in [355-360: 150]. All four bishops are imprisoned in the same "narrow and

confining” cell [207: 144], which had on its garden side an iron gate through which “the soft tones of their speech was heard” [301-305: 148]. There, a Turkish delegate of Kucuk Mehmet makes one last effort to humiliate the bishops and when he fails, he stays awhile in a corner before leaving disappointed [387-390: 153]. In the same area, the bishops fall upon their knees and pray [391-400: 153], before being led for the last time into the saray hall, where they are given a last chance to save themselves by compromising [401-410: 153]. In Hadjioannou’s theatrical adaptation, stage directions concerning the prison area do not contain but one reference to a bench where the bishops are seated.<sup>24</sup>

*External spaces* (in contrast to closed spaces, where one may express their opposition to the ruling authority or criticize its planning) connote the absolute enforcement and hasty implementation of subjugation and slaughter (with the exception of the garden behind the prison, from where Kioroglou’s son escapes and avoids arrest). *Outside the Archdiocese’s church*, Turkish soldiers arrive, surrounding and seizing the Archbishop [91-100, 113-4: 141]. After the Archbishop’s and the Metropolitans’ proud refusal to compromise, during their interrogation in the saray and their stay in prison, the hierarchs are transferred to the space of torture, namely the *open space in front of the saray*:

“They tied the bishops’ hands behind their backs/ And led them to a place outside the Serail”. [449-450: 155]. The space is emphatically described: shortly afterwards, following a short meeting, the high ranking Turkish officials exited the saray and went to the area of execution. To their right, the Archbishop’s archdeacon and secretary hung from the plane tree. To their left, the gallows stood ready at the “mulberry”. The Archbishop and Metropolitans stood with tied hands, surrounded by a crowd of Turks waiting for the execution: “The Muslims surrounded them as if at a fair” [520: 158]. The Archbishop’s torture reached its climax when he was led by two or three armed men under the mulberry, where the noose kept swinging against his forehead. At the same time, the bishops were facing westwards on their knees, whereas the executioners provokingly and cynically paraded in front of them [526-530: 158]. Space-time following the execution is macabre: It is afternoon and a pool of blood forms on the earth, heads and bodies still pulsating before death, the gradual withdrawal of the Muslim crowd among whom the Turkish Cypriots who were devastated [545-546: 160], and the three-day abandonment of the unburied bodies in the execution area [551-560: 160]. It is worth noting

that this particular locale is acted out in the novel *Thersandros* by Epaminondas Frangoudis (1847) and the play *Ta Kat'Evanthian kai Aghisilaon* by Theodoulos Constantinides (1873). The latter does not hesitate to copy an extensive excerpt from Frangoudis' novel, in which the saray area is described as a space of torture for Cypriot Hellenism. In *Thersandros*, the writer uses a long footnote in order to comment on the homonymous protagonist's letter to his friend Dimitrios, describing on the one hand the Aghia Sophia in Nicosia and on the other the "venerable and deep-shaded plane tree" whose roots "were dyed in the blood of our bishops". The writer goes on to paint in dark colors the Metropolitans' beheading and Kyprianos' hanging.<sup>25</sup> In the play *Ta Kat'Evanthian kai Aghisilaon* the young poet and romantic traveler Aghisilaos visits among other areas the "beauteous Nicosia [...]". Transcribing from *Thersandros*, Constantinides gives these words to his hero: "In the shadow of its plane tree, I see Aghia Sophia before me, sitting on coarse rocks, weeping for our tortured country". Plagiarism is also quite obvious within the excerpt in which the plane tree is presented as an important monument of the ordeal suffered by Hellenism in Cyprus. Details on the execution of the bishops, found in the aforementioned novel, do not appear in the play.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, in the historic drama *Kucuk Mehemet* by Th. Constantinides (1888) the description of the saray forecourt is not provided in stage directions neither of course are the events unfolding in it represented on stage. Once the slaughter is completed, the eupatrid Zenon (in the beginning of the play's Act 5) recounts what he saw to his friend, Evagoras. "My tongue is lost. Ever since I saw the Archbishop hung from the mulberry in front of the saray, the bishops beheaded and three other men hanging off a plane tree, my whole body has been trembling!..." In Evagora's reply, the horrible image of the unburied dead and how spitefully the execution's mastermind looks upon them recurs: "No! [Kucuk Mehmet] is not asleep; he is looking through a window, gazing at the hanging bodies of the Archbishop and the notables and those of the bishops, wallowing in blood. Delighted, the Satan orders his men to raise more gallows and bring more executioners in order to complete what he had begun by killing all arrested notables".<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it is worth noting that while in V. Michaelides' poetic synthesis the saray forecourt is presented as a major action space, in Constantinides' aforementioned play it is traced in off stage space, given that the playwright alternates the story of the execution of the Cypriot bishops with Kucuk Mehmet's love story, placing emphasis on the latter.



#### 4.1.2. *Off Stage Space*<sup>28</sup>

Very few references to other spaces that are not represented on stage can be found in the narrator's discourse. In the introduction of the poetic synthesis, the image of the impending revolution is painted, together with the presentation of the wider geographical area: The Ottoman Empire, the Peloponnesus, Cyprus [1-10: 137]. A second reference to a non represented space can be found in the last verses: when the news of the archpriests' execution spread in Nicosia, lament fell over the city, when it had started growing darker [551-554: 160].

The emphasis placed by the narrator on action space and his limited interest in other spaces is an element of theatricality. References to off stage space are skillfully incorporated by the poet in the characters' speech, as will be shown next.

#### 4.2. *Evidence on Space in the Characters' Discourse*

##### 4.2.1. *Evidence on Discourse Time's Action Space*

In contrast to the narrator's discourse, very few implicit stage directions referring to the space of action are found in the characters' discourse and these can be traced in the speech of the Turkish viceroy. More specifically, Kucuk Mehmet orders against any gathering *outside the Saray* and that those who are *inside it* should be fully armed. Also, he orders that the executioner and the gallows be ready [127-130: 142]. Invoking information supposedly provided by the shepherd Dimitris who was pressured into committing perjury, Mehmet stresses that the information was not only heard by him but also by all present *in the saray hall*: "We heard your own mouth speak those words in public" [268: 146]. Finally, Kucuk refuses to give the three dead bodies for burial and orders that they remain on the ground in front of the saray, unburied for three days [559-560: 160].

##### 4.2.2. *Evidence on other Spaces Acted out Only in the Locutionary Acts of the Characters (Recounted<sup>29</sup> or Diegetic Space<sup>30</sup>)*

Not many references on diegetic space can be traced in the narrator's discourse, as these are found more in the characters' speech; non represented space also serves for the justification of their stand and action as well as for the representation of the drama's wider space.

Of the external spaces, it is worth noting the space of the Walls and the three gates of Nicosia, denoting confinement and oppression of the enslaved

[54-56: 138 and 125-7: 142]. The space in front of the saray also appears in off stage space, there where the execution of the archpriests and other notables took place. Aiming at pressuring the archpriests to compromise, Kucuk Mehmet points out that the executioner is waiting, the gallows are ready and he can no longer wait for them [417-420: 153]. He also warns the archbishop that he will see the archdeacon and his secretary hung outside the saray [435-6: 155]. A richly attired Turkish notable also refers to the torture site. The notable entered the prison and told the archpriests that passing outside the saray he saw three gallows, two at the plane tree and one at the mulberry, which made him feel "very sad". [367-370: 152].

In contrast, the Larnaka area with the European consulates suggests (regardless of how temporary and uncertain) freedom and rescue. The Karpass is the location of escape toward the insurgent Greece. It is precisely from the coast of Karpass that the shepherd Dimitris recounts how his son departed, obviously to fight in the Greek revolution [231-236: 145]. In the meantime, the Bishop Lavrentios talks of the whole of the island when admiringly referring to Theofylaktos, who distributed revolutionary leaflets throughout the length and breadth of the whole island [307-309: 148]. Finally, of the Cypriot spaces, the idyllic picture of the village, the way Dimitris recalls it, is worth mentioning. It was there that he took care of his flock and played his flute oblivious to the meaning of sorrow [241-244: 146]. At this point, it should be said that the element of village and pastoral life idealization can also be traced in Theodoulos Constantinides' *Ta Kat'Evanthian kai Aghisilaon* (1873). Young Aghisilaos dreams of living there with his beloved Evanthia. "Only wilderness, plains, groves and fields are inhabited by virtue and innocence. – Look at the goatherd, the shepherd, how happily he plays his flute, leading his flock to a crystal clear spring; his sheep's bleating echoes round the nearby forests; the sheep, on their part, full of joy and innocence jump from one rock to the other..."<sup>31</sup>.

External spaces are not only Cypriot ones: Determined to sacrifice himself, Archbishop Kyprianos reminds Kucuk Mehmet that the patriarch and other archpriests were executed in Constantinople and that he believes that the bloodshed will harm the Turks themselves [426-430: 155]. Later, in an effort to appease the aghas that there's no risk of retaliation from the rayas over the impending execution of the archpriests, Kucuk points out that on the one hand the oppressed are aware that the Turks outnumber them and on the other hand they take very seriously the island's being in close vicinity to Turkey [506-510: 157]. He also mentions Cyprus' nearness to another Turkish-dominated

country, namely Egypt, their isolation from the rest of Hellenism and their encirclement by Turkey like lambs kept in a fold [505-510: 157].

As far as internal spaces are concerned, Kioroglou's house, outside which a car ready to transfer the Archbishop to Larnaka's consulates was parked, can only be traced in off stage space whereas the other two closed spaces, namely the saray and the prison are also theatrically represented in other parts of the piece. In particular, Kioroglou refers to a meeting held the night before at the saray, in an effort to convince Kyprianos to flee [25-30: 137]. Moreover, questioned inside the saray, Dimitris says that he can no longer stand the prison and that he feels exhausted [241-244: 146].

## 5. Evidence on Characters in Implicit Stage Directions

### 5.1. *Evidence on Characters in the Narrator's Discourse*

#### 5.1.1. *The Archbishop and the other Archpriests*

The following implicit stage directions are linked with the painful course of the Archbishop toward sacrifice: rejection of Kioroglou's proposal to flee, after bowing his head in silence and thinking for a while [41-2: 138], dramatic prayer in the church, sorrow, devastation, crying, farewell to the people and the church, paleness [78-90: 140], a fierce glance and anger when laying eyes upon Kucuk Mehmet's straw men there to arrest him [92-100: 141], destruction of secret documents in his chamber prior to his apprehension [106-7: 141], imprisonment together with the three bishops [300-304: 148], immediate and decisive reaction and refusal to compromise despite the Turkish delegate's sweet-talking [380-384: 152], his violent presentation into the plight area with the other three bishops, where they stood tied [445-450], last prayer, lifting his eyes to heaven shortly before the execution [531-534: 158], sweat rolling down his face from excessive heat, hanging [537-540: 158]. The archpriests are presented twice, upon their knees: the first time they kneel (with the Archbishop) inside the prison and pray crying softly in broken voice [391-400: 153]; the second time they are forced by the executioners to kneel one after the other shortly before their execution, facing westward [526-530: 158].

#### 5.1.2. *The Shepherd Dimitris*

In stark contrast to the Archbishop's heroic stance, the frightened Dimitris committed perjury in order to save his life (or so he thought) and immediately

afterwards “he was bathed in tears” [270-280, 281: 146-7]. The perjury scene concludes when he’s forced to place his fingerprint (since he was illiterate) upon his “confession” document, prepared by Kucuk Mehmet’s minions. Therefore, unbeknown to him, Dimitris (an example of the thematic role of the traitor) makes himself one of the helpers of the aforementioned Turkish dignitary and an opponent of the Archbishop and his nation too.

#### *5.1.3. Kioroglou, his Son and other Turkish Cypriots*

It has been already noted<sup>32</sup> that in the “9<sup>th</sup> July” Vassilis Michaelides clearly distinguishes between Turkish Cypriots and Turks, by bringing forth the Turkish Cypriots’ humanitarian stance in contrast to the latter’s intolerance. Therefore Kioroglou, who belongs to the first category, is shown to make magnanimous efforts at his own risk to help the Archbishop escape. He secretly goes to the Archdiocese to speak to him [22: 137]. His efforts are proven as being in vain [67-8: 140] which makes him take his leave “in sorrow and distress” [70: 140]. Not giving up, Kioroglou sends his son, a handsome lad, tall, well-dressed and smiling – in all an image revealing his noble background and wealth. The young man’s efforts are interrupted as, when trying to change Kyprianos’ mind, a noise is heard at the prison’s interior door that makes him flee [321-324, 359-360: 148-150]. Finally, at the area of the execution, Turkish Cypriots (contrary to the cheering Muslims) [520: 158] seem sorrowful and are silent and pensive at the sight of the gallows and the tied archpriests bound to be executed shortly [521-523: 158]. The Turkish Cypriots’ sorrow culminates with the completion of the execution [547-8: 160].

#### *5.1.4. Kucuk Mehmet and his Straw Men*

The Turkish viceroy of Cyprus, as a basic subject in the action is surrounded by his aids, in other words his spineless (as a rule) empty suits. When the Archbishop is brought before him, with a glance he beckons a soldier to approach and orders him to have all the gates of Nicosia locked [121-130: 142]. Later, upon Kyprianos’ proud response underlying the immortality of the Greek race, Mousselim has no trouble putting on a mellow mask, trying with a honeyed glance to cajole the Cypriot hierarch [191-2: 144]. However, when Kyprianos firmly rejects Kucuk’s proposition for compromise and treason, he enrages the pasha and the attending aghas who, in awe, are trying to conceal their shame [201-210: 144]. The Turkish notable’s ability to pretend and sweet-talk in order to serve his purposes bears fruit in the scene

where Dimitris is being questioned and finally commits perjury [287-290: 147]. But when addressing his Turkish subordinates his speech is imperative and commanding, leaving no room for a reply (for example in the case of a few aghas who believed that not all those listed should be executed [296: 147]. One glance from him is enough for the soldiers to tie up the archpriests and transfer them to the execution area [445-447: 155] while cruelly rejecting the priests and notables' request to bury the dead bodies [551-560: 160].

On the other hand, while the Turkish aghas seem to have their own personal opinion of what is going on, in the end they do not move against Kucuk Mehmet's will. They whisper to one another and write Dimitris' "testimony" on a piece of paper, forcing him to sign it [281-286: 147]. Shortly before noon they momentarily disagree with Kucuk as to the number of those to be executed [297-300: 147], while upon hearing the muezzin at noon, they put down the ledger and go out to pray [297-300: 147].

Spineless straw men (symbols of the occupying force) are (usually) not required to talk much. Therefore, the Turkish soldiers who arrive at the Archdiocese church in order to arrest Kyprianos are initially hesitant to explain why they are there and then succinctly mention the order they received from Kucuk Mehmet. The encirclement and apprehension of the Archbishop follows [95-114: 141]. The "richly attired notable" that comes to prison supposedly to help the archpriests is more talkative. He pretends to care for them, offers them food and asks from them one word (capitulation, compromise, treason) in order to save them, until the moment Kyprianos calls on him to be quiet and leave. Sullen, saddened and ashamed, küçük Mehmet's Turkish representative leaves the prison empty-handed [361-390: 152]. The twelve fully armed Turkish soldiers who transfer the archpriests from the prison to the saray hall are silent characters [410-414: 153]. Rushing about in anger, they tie the archpriests and lead them to the execution area [445-450: 155]. The three executioners who looked like wild men, brandishing their swords above the bishops' heads are also silent characters [529-530: 158]. They are presented as the ones to slaughter their victims with the dynast's presumptuous pride standing with their victims' blood on their faces and clothes [541-550: 160].

## 5.2. *Evidence on Characters in the Characters' Discourse*

There are very few implicit stage directions traced in the characters' speech concerning other characters and these can be found in the Archbishop's speech, when he admires Kioroglou's good upbringing [62: 140] and when

he rejects his son's second effort to change his mind, asking the young man to convey to his father his gratitude and his request to help the rest of the Greeks on the island [341-350: 150].

A few implicit stage directions referring to the characters themselves can be found in their own speech. At the moment of his arrest, the Archbishop calls on the Turkish soldiers not to hesitate to tell him why they are there, because his "heart's like stone" [97-100: 141]. At the same time Dimitris tells Kucuk Mehmet that he's been worn out in the saray prison and that his heart is burned from sorrow [241-244: 146].

## 6. Conclusion

The theatricality of the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" is unquestionable. It has been shown how in this poetic synthesis implicit stage directions can indeed be traced (both in the narrator's discourse and in the characters' discourse). Their quantity and quality make the piece representable contrary to many 19<sup>th</sup> century Cypriot *pièces-de-théâtre* that do not easily lend themselves to on-stage presentation. The narrator's persistent focus on the discourse time's space and time of action as well as the astute interchange between narration and dialogue attribute to this poetic synthesis the distinctive mark of clear and drastic speech, which is at the same time poetic and theatrical.

## NOTES

1. See Walther Puchner, *O Palamas kai to Theatro* (Palamas and the Theatre) (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1995) 447. Puchner, *Apo ti theoria tou theatrou stis theories tou theatricou*. Exelixeis stin episteme tou theatrou sto telos tou 20ou aiona (From the Theory of Theatre to the Theories of the Theatrical. Evolutions in the episteme of theatre in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) (Athens: Patakis, 2003) 390 and Patrice Pavis, *Lexico tou theatrou* (Lexicon of the Theatre) (translated by Agne Stroumbouli) (Athens: Gutenberg, 2006) 203-205.
2. See Keir Elam, *H Simiotiki Theatrou kai Dramatos* (The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama) Translation – introduction by Kaite Diamantakou (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2001 (1980)) 34.
3. Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) 149.

4. See Annn Ubersfeld, *Les Terms Clés de l'Analyse du Théâtre* (Paris: Seuil 1996) 83· Giorgos Pefanis, *To Theatro kai ta Symvola. Diadikasies symbolisis tou dramaticou logou* (The Theatre and the Symbols. Procedures of symbolization of dramatic discourse) (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 1999) 185.
5. See Vasilios Tatakis, "V. Michaelides". *Kypriaka Grammata* 62 August 1940: 80· Pavlos Krinaios, "V. Michaelides", *Kypriaka Grammata*: 86· Costas Proussis, "To tefhos tou Vassili Michaelide" ("The issue of Vassilis Michaelides"), *Kypriaka Grammata*: 111.
6. See Yannis Katsouris. *Vassilis Michaelides. I zoi, I prosopikotita kai to ergo tou* (Vassilis Michaelides. His life, personality and work) (Nicosia: Chr. Andreou, 2002 (1987)): 354· Michalis Pieris. "Stathmoi tis kipriakis logotehnias" ("Milestones of Cypriot literature") *Palimpseston* 5 (Herakleion 1987):140-144 [= Michalis Pieris [editor] *Vassilis Michaelides: The race of the Greeks was born when the world was born* (Nicosia, UCY Drama Workshop, 2001) 146-9· Lefteris Papaleontiou "Kypriaki idiomatiki piisi: Apo ton agnosto piiti tou 16ou aiona eos ton V. Michaelide kai ton K. Monti" ("Cypriot idiomatic poetry: From the 16<sup>th</sup> century unknown poet to V. Michaelides and K. Montis"). *Epetirida tou Kentrou Epistimonikon Erevnon* (Scientific Studies Center Yearbook), XXVIII (Nicosia: 2002): 291. See also L. Papaleontiou "H 9<sup>th</sup> Ioulίου 1821 se kypriaka logoteknika keimena tou 19ou aiona" ("The 9<sup>th</sup> July 1821 in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cypriot literary texts"). *Simerini* 3 (August 1995), where the scholar correlates the poetic synthesis under examination with other thematically similar Cypriot literary texts concluding that " "Djyprianos' song" as the poet himself referred to it, is the most remarkable text written on the issue under examination".
7. See K.G. Kasinis, "1821 in Cyprus. A drama and an epos" *Diastavroseis*. Studies on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (Athens: Hadjinicolis, 1998) 301-335· for the issue under discussion, 321-323. For Michalis Pieris' views see also, Michalis Pieris, "Aristotelis Valaoritis-Vassilis Michaelides. I elxi tou montelou tou ethniku piiti" ("The attraction of the "national" poet's model") *Parousia* 3 (Winter 1995): 13-16 and [=Michalis Pieris] [edit.] (2001): 160.
8. See Yiannis Katsouris, *Theatre in Cyprus* Vol. B 1940-1959 (Nicosia: 2005) 125, 131, 140, 152, 154, 159, 284. The issue of the theatrical adaptations of the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" and of the piece's onstage representations is worth a more thorough investigation in a separate study.
9. See Theodosios Nicolaou, "The 9<sup>th</sup> July 1821". Michalis Pieris (edit.): 189-190. See also the text of Hadjioannou's theatrical adaptation: Kyriakos Hadjioannou, *The 9th July 1821 in Cyprus*, a drama in the Cypriot dialect, poem by Vassilis Michaelides. (Famagusta: Library of Famagusta's Greek High School, 1960).
10. See Michalis Pieris (edit.): 216. The directorial line followed by M. Pieris may be further studied through the comparison of his own theatrical adaptation

- (219-240) with i.e. K. Hadjioannou's adaptation (See endnote 9) or A. Kouros' adaptation: Andreas Kouros, *The 9th July 1821*, adaptation for the stage (Nicosia: Ministry of Education) or even with other theatrical adaptations of the poem that may be discovered in the future.
11. See Anne Ubersfeld, endnote 4: 29-31 – Giorgos Pefanis, endnote 4: 213. For the function of stage directions, see also Jean Alter, endnote 3: 165-168.
  12. See Walter Puchner, *Apo ti theoria tou theatrou stis theories tou theatricou*. Exelixeis stin episteme tou theatrou sto telos tou 20ou aiona (From the Theory of Theatre to the Theories of the Theatrical. Evolutions in the episteme of theatre in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) (Athens: Patakis, 2003) 74.
  13. See Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (transl. John Halliday) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) (1997): 15-16. On the same subject, see also Patrice Pavis, endnote 1: 348-350.
  14. The term "stage directions" will hence denote implicit stage directions.
  15. See Marika Thomadaki, *Simiotiki tou olikou theatrikou logou* (Semiotics of the Total Theatrical Discourse) (Athens: Domos, 1993) 87-149.
  16. See Anne Ubersfeld, *Lire Le Theatre I* (Paris: Belin, 1996) (1997): 151-157· Keir Elam, endnote 2: 143-145· Marika Thomadaki, 120-128· Patrice Pavis, endnote 1: 534.
  17. The first numbers show the poem's verses and the last number the page of the following edition from which all quotations from the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" are taken: Vassilis Michaelides, *Apanta* (Complete Works) (Nicosia: Chr. Andreou, 2002) (1987). Highlighting is mine, marked with italics.
  18. For the issue of lighting in the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" see Michalis Pieris' interesting study "Stathmoi tis kypriakis logotehnias; I dramatiki leitourgia tou photos stin Enati Iouliou" ("Milestones of Cypriot literature – the dramatic function of light in the Ninth July) [= Michalis Pieris (ed), endnote 6: 145-149.
  19. See above, 147.
  20. See Lefteris Papaleontiou (2002): endnote 6: 290.
  21. For represented space see more in Giorgos Pefanis, endnote 4: 370.
  22. See Kyriakos Hadjioannou, endnote 9: 19. Contrary to Hadjioannou, who makes a creative use of the "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" implicit stage directions and transforms them into analytical explicit ones, in his own adaptation A. Kouros writes laconic stage directions that would probably perplex whomever tried to stage the piece. See Andreas Kouros, endnote 10: *passim*.
  23. See Theodoulos Constantinides, *Kucuk Mehemet I to 1821 en Kypro. Drama istorikon eis pente praxeis* (Kucuk Mehemet or 1821 in Cyprus. Historic drama in five acts) (Alexandria: "I Omonia" Vitalis and Manousakis, 1888): 44.



24. Endnote 9, 24.
25. See Epaminondas I. Frangoudis, *Thersandros kai alla afgimata* (Thersandros and other narratives) (Ed. Lefteris Papaleontiou) (Athens: Nefeli, 2002): 42-45.
26. See Theodoulos Constantinides, *Dio eiseti tou erotos thymata I ta Kat'Evanthian kai Aghisilaon. Drama eis praxeis tris* (Two more victims of Eros or Evanthias' and Aghisilaos'. Drama in three acts. (Smyrne: Nicolaos A. Damianou, 1873) 58-59. The relation between *Thersandros* and *Dio eiseti tou erotos thymata* cannot be studied systematically here. What would merit an in-depth investigation is not just the issue of plagiarism by Constantinides that probably does not even require any documentation, but the possibility that the very dramatic structure of the said theatrical piece is built on the basis of *Thersandros'* narrative structure. I extend my thanks to Lefteris Papaleontiou for his suggestions on the aforementioned issue.
27. See Theodoulos Constantinides, endnote 23: 101.
28. The term denotes the space which is not represented theatrically. It is in fact an off stage space, as described by the dramatis personae in their monologues and dialogues. See Manfred Pfister, endnote 13: 257.
29. For this term see Marika Thomadaki, endnote 15: 132.
30. For diegetic space see Giorgos Pefanis, endnote 4: 368-371.
31. See Theodoulos Constantinides, endnote 26: 52. The possibility that the play *Dio eiseti tou erotos thymata I ta Kat'Evanthian kai Aghisilaon* was one of the sources of Vassilis Michaelides' "9<sup>th</sup> July 1821" merits further investigation. The same applies to Ep. Frangoudis' *Thersandros*. For Theod. Constantinides' aforementioned play, see Leonidas Galazis, "Dio dysevreta kypriaka theatrica erga" ("Two rare Cypriot plays") *Mikrofilolofika* 21 (Spring 2007): 21.
32. See Yiannis Katsouris, endnote 6: 241-2' Michalis Pieris *Apo to Mertikon tis Kyprou* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1991) 278-9' Lefteris Papaleontiou, endnote 6 (2002): 290.

Translator's Note: The excerpts from the poem "The Ninth of July 1821 in Nicosia, Cyprus" are taken from a translation by Athan Anagnostopoulos, adapted by Kinereth Gensler and Ruth Whitman to the form in which they appear within this essay. *Poems of Cyprus* (Nicosia: The Printing Office of the Republic of Cyprus, 1970).

## Poetry in the Cypriot Dialect and Pavlos Liasides

Yiorgos Moleskis\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Après Vassilis Michaelidis et Dimitris Lipertis, un autre poète, Pavlos Liasidis, a écrit de la poésie en dialecte chypriote. Son éducation scolaire limitée ne lui a pas permis d'utiliser la langue néohellénique commune. Ayant grandi dans un environnement rural et ayant été élevé avec la poésie populaire laïque, il chante les joies et les douleurs des gens de la campagne et en même temps il se préoccupe des problèmes sociaux et politiques de son pays.

### ABSTRACT

After Vassilis Michaelides and Dimitris Lipertis, another poet, Pavlos Liasidis, used the Cypriot dialect, his poor education having prevented him from mastering the common Greek language. Raised in a rural milieu and nurtured by folk songs, he sings the joys and pains of rural life, and is deeply concerned about the social and political issues of his country

These days in Cyprus the dialect changes on a fast pace, more and more approaching the Panhellenic demotic language. This is produced by development, education as well as the Mass Media that keep diminishing distances, allowing a more direct communication between people living in different areas. In addition, diverse TV programs suggest common linguistic standards on a daily basis to all Greeks, wherever it is that they live. This is a historical evolution, which will continue even more rapidly in the future and we cannot but accept it. Therefore, the Cypriot dialect is diversified, yet it vividly maintains several particularities; to a different extent and in different ways it is expressed through the works of Cypriot litterateurs. Not only those who write in the dialect but almost all Cypriot litterateurs who employ the Panhellenic *demotiki*, receive the influence of Cypriot dialect both in their language and their style.

\* Poet

In every era, throughout the sum total of their historical adventures and struggles, our people expressed their thoughts, feelings and emotions through poetry. In times when poetic tradition was predominantly verbal, a poem created by a talented poet could easily be transferred from one to the other and across different regions, undergoing additions, abstractions and differentiations, gradually acquiring dense form and meaning, expressing collective emotions and the feelings of many.

This is the path followed by our folksongs that through a diachronic process of recreation and reformation arrived on the verge of perfection in terms of their form, the wealth of their images and emotions. Throughout the centuries, these songs would be transferred from one region of Hellenism to the other, vaccinated with local elements, historic events, stories and myths and above all, carrying the linguistic types and distinct features of each region.

Therefore, a wealth of dialects rises from the Greek people's folksongs, all different variations of the great and diachronic Greek language. Within this framework, the Cypriot dialect and Cypriot versions of folksongs occupy a special place, like for example, the cluster of songs on Dhigenis Akritas. However, other songs too, i.e. "Tou Nekrou Adelfou" [Of the Dead Brother], "To Yefyri tis Artas" [The bridge of Arta], "O Gyrismos tou Xenitemenou" [The Immigrant's Return], transferred here from other Hellenic regions have been delivered in especially rich variations in their Cypriot version. The Cypriot dialect endowed them with its own poetic grace and singularity, its own means of expression. For instance, in "The Immigrant's Return" the particularities of the Cypriot variation are indeed obvious. Verses are rebuilt, condensed, the first person of the Greek variation is turned to a second person. Most importantly, this masterpiece of Greek folk poetry has come to us in a different but equally masterful form, in a dialect of the Greek language, namely the Cypriot dialect.

A plethora of anonymous poets crafted their work in the context of this tradition which they kept alive, expressing the emotions and feelings of the people. For instance, the beautiful "Tragoudi tis Arodafnousas" [Arodafnosa's song] details the tragic historic events that took place in the palace of the French king of Cyprus, Peter I in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, described by Leontios Machairas in his *Chronicle*. The recounting of these events stirred the people that set out to express their feelings through the song:

*Three sisters live in the upper neighborhood,  
ChrySTALLOU, Lenousa  
whilst the third and best of them, is called Arodafnousa.*

*It is with her that the king is enamored, it is her that the rex loves,  
the rex of the East and king of the West.  
The Regina found out and was greatly discontented,  
four messages she sent for Rodafnou to go to her.*

This is how the song begins, moving on to recount in a vivid and dramatic manner the passions of Arodafnousa, who suffered in the hands of the cruel Regina.

The Cypriot dialect has evolved through the centuries, receiving and assimilating influences by foreign peoples who passed through the island, i.e. the French, the Venetians, the Turks, always however maintaining a solid basis that dates back to the ancient Greek language. Even today, many philologists are surprised to discover ancient Greek elements within the Cypriot dialect - not only words but also phrases and syntactic structures, obsolete elsewhere but still alive here.

The transition from the verbal to the written poetic tradition in the Cypriot dialect took place in the end of the preceding century with Vassilis Michaelides. Following the example of the Hellene poets who abandoned the *katharevousa* [the “purified” Greek] in order to write in the demotic, a more animated and direct language, V. Michaelides tried his hand at several endeavors to use both the *katharevousa* and the *demotiki*. Eventually, though, he turned to the Cypriot dialect and the folk poetic tradition. This is how he wrote his poetic masterpieces that made him Cyprus’ greatest and indeed national poet: the synthetic works “I Ennati Iouliou tou 1821” [The 9<sup>th</sup> July 1821], “I Chiotissa” [Woman of Chios] and the lyrical “I Anerada” [The Nereid].

Michaelides’ verses and language possess power and evocativeness; they are overflowing with ideas, feelings and emotions. The work Vassilis Michaelides bequeathed to us is of immense importance for both his time and ours, on account of its innovativeness and poetic vigor. It is aesthetically complete and historically vindicated albeit rather small in terms of volume (at least his published work). V. Michaelides is Cyprus’ Solomos. At the linguistic level, his work utilizes the potential of the Cypriot dialect contributing to this day to its growth into the language our popular poets employ in order to craft their poetry and sign it with their own name.

Demetris Lipertis followed the example of V. Michaelides, employing the Cypriot dialect in order to write his beautiful idyllic songs, as he too abandoned the *katharevousa*. However, Michaelides and not Lipertis is the

starting point for subsequent poets that use the Cypriot dialect, the so called “popular poets”: Pavlos Liasides, Kyriakos Karneras, Elias Yeorgiou, Demetris Ttakkas, the Katsantonides etc. V. Michaelides is the predecessor of our country’s contemporary popular poets. His frugal but natural language, his knowledge of history, satire etc. lay the foundations for the poetics of our later popular poetry. The most significant element, highlighted from the perspective of this study, is the way language is used. The Cypriot dialect is applied as a self-sufficient and self-dependent language, freed from all taboos, suitable for all topics and spheres of life. The poet makes use of this language in order to express his philosophical reflections, his lyrical poetic dispositions, to mold his own lyrical hero and express his poetic ego.

The poets that follow V. Michaelides use the Cypriot dialect as a living, evolving instrument of expression and communication; they do not feel that it restricts their expression in any way. For them, the Cypriot dialect does not mean they can only write about specific topics excluding others. Popular poets are not producing folklore. When employing the Cypriot dialect, they do not treat it as a folkloric material that needs to be documented. It is their own living language. That is why they have no difficulty using words that come into the language later on, or delving into contemporary topics.

Throughout our century, poetry in the Cypriot dialect stands next to poetry in the Panhellenic vernacular. It is the language of popular poets and minstrels (*“poiitarides”* - folk poets reciting their poems in public), to which poets like Costas Montis and Michalis Pashardis, known for their work in the *demotiki* often turn when wanting to describe something lyrical. Still, the language these poets use is different, perhaps a little feigned, “clearer” than the genuine dialect of popular poets.

From 1974 onwards, Cyprus has been the scene of a true poetic climax. The devastating events and the tragedy that ensued gave rise to and inspired a multitude of works that expressed feelings of pain, bitterness, disappointment, struggle and hope. Dialectal poetry has a big share in this poetic effusion. Within this framework, earlier poets like Pavlos Liasides, Kyriakos Karneras, Demetris Ttakas, Elias Yeorgiou and many others pondered over contemporary topics related to the tragedy; shattered by the hordes of refugees, they had wanted to express their feelings in verse. Many of these poems may not possess a significant poetic value, but they are indeed valuable in the form of testimonies about the tragedy. In addition, they contribute to the preservation of the dialect, providing scholars with ample material to work with. They are

indeed a source of information on social, historic and linguistic topics.

Pavlos Liasides owns a special place within the sum total of Cypriot dialect. His work is from many aspects interesting and unique in terms of the wealth of his ideas and his passionate character. More than twenty years have gone by since his death; still, Pavlos Liasides continues to live in our minds as the poet whose work was putting into words our country's historic and social adventures for a period over sixty years. In his case, we realize that a rare poetic talent has been offered to us, a talent we recognize in his verses but also in his entire attitude toward life. We discern it in what P. Liasides stood for as a personality and to everything he has given us through his poetic yield.

This gift that was accorded to him, he had to carry through difficult and unfavorable living conditions. We are not in a position to say whether the development of his talent would have been favored or not, had he had other education opportunities or bigger financial ease. What we can say is that in the end, the life he led did not restrain his talent neither did it stop him from bequeathing to us a valuable sum of work.

Throughout his life, P. Liasides was first and foremost a poet. Not only because he wrote poems but also because he lived, thought and felt like a poet. Above anything else, he was a poet and no other aspect of his personality was as strongly illuminated. His dedication to poetry was almost phenomenal, setting him apart from the rest of the world.

Born in a village, barely educated, forced to win his bread sometimes as a shepherd, other times as a seasonal worker, a farmer etc, Liasides lived his life attached to the people, and from the people he derived many elements for his poetry. His language, the myths and scenes he describes, his images and symbols, the heroes of his poems, everything is drawn from the popular milieu within which he spent his life. Furthermore, Liasides applied himself to the popular and folk poetic tradition, from which he learned a lot. And what he took from it, he gave back, recreated through his poetry. After all, in his work the element of personal creation, personal experiences, his own feelings, thoughts and dreams are indeed prevalent.

Drawing from his popular surroundings and tradition, Liasides never yields to various poetic stereotypes that are being cultivated and often used as "molds" by a large group among those who write dialectal verses, those we are referring to as popular poets. These stereotypes are often applied at the level of verses but they also expand to means of expression and content, thus depriving their verses of any poetic value. Even the best samples of works by popular poets rarely escape these stereotypes.

In P. Liasides' case, as in the cases of all original craftsmen, regardless of whether they are popular poets or not and regardless of the language they employ, poetry is deeply personal and original. Within his verses we may trace his personal experiences, his thoughts and visions. We may discern the particular manner in which the poet grasped and accepted the world; we may even approach his own truth and specific poetic logic.

P. Liasides was born a poet. Poetry lived within him as a natural gift which he would discover everyday. Since his adolescence, when he was still a shepherd in the Agios Eufemianos region in Lysi, Liasides experienced some intense poetic moments, emerging through personal experiences, impressions and feelings suggested by the landscape, as well as through his personal thoughts and dreams. The poet lived the reality of nature and society as they expanded into the sphere of dream.

In his unique autobiography, which he wrote in 1954 upon a request by Savvas K. Xystouris, a collector of folklore material from Lysi, Liasides remembers and notes down a few verses from a larger, previously unrecorded adolescent synthesis.

*Whilst I was walking today I stumbled on running water  
I thought the earth was torn in two and I slightly sank  
There I met an old man, short and plump  
I asked him who had brought the water down there.  
He said, 'it's from the skies I brought it here  
It is the water of immortality, do you want it? Here, take it.*

These verses contain true and original poetic images and above all they are charged with genuine emotion, born from the discovery of "running water" – an allegory for the encounter of the adolescent poet with poetry itself that like running water starts coming out in spurts from within him.

This discovery he is going through and the special emotion that overwhelms him, he gradually identifies with the form and idea of poetry. His thematic categories are distinctive of a popular poet; they emerge from the symbols of fairy tales, such as the "water of immortality", "the loving princess" etc; or they derive from rural life and rural images. However, owing to their original concept, they often take off and lead to more abstract domains. In the collection "*I parallae tou tzaiou*" [The change of time] (1937), Liasides publishes the poem "*I niki mou*" [My victory]. There, elaborating a myth that resembles a folktale in terms of its images and symbols, Liasides extends the idea of the pursuit of poetry. After providing

us with a description of his personal quests and numerous realistic biographical elements that are displaced onto the edges of the poem's mythology, he concludes:

*Both despair and fear have persecuted me  
but I've won the one I love. – Poetry and speech!*

The perception of poetry as a gift offered to the poet, revealed to him as a secret source of running water, filling him with unprecedented joys and emotions, enriching him, is recurrent in numerous poems within *I parallae tou tzairou*. In the poem "Gelo tous" [I fool them], poetry appears as a cistern of truth and wealth that the supporters and keepers of falsehood hide from the world. However, the poet fools them: wandering into the night in his imagination and mind he reaches the hidden source whence he derives the "jewelry" of truth and beauty. As Liasides' poetry evolves, this abstract form of poetry becomes identified with poetic imagination. In fact, imagination becomes poetry itself and the poet is deeply moved for having been blessed to approach it. Imagination as poetic form, poetic idea, is expanded so as to take the form of the ideal poet. It becomes the truth, justice, happiness; it acquires the meaning of his social ideal, transferring him to worlds where he may encounter freedom and joy. For Liasides, this is the world of poetic imagination and at the same time the real world of the future. In this world, injustice, poverty, lies, sickness, oppression, the war, animosities between peoples etc. will be conquered and the sphere of reality will become identical with the sphere of dreams.

In the domain of erotic poetry, no other popular poet appears able to avoid the stereotypes of form and content, to which I have referred to at the beginning; therefore, almost invariably, a formalistic poetry ensues, devoid of the poets' living personal experiences and everything they have been through. However, this is not the case with Liasides. Deep inside almost his entire erotic poetry, his personal experiences lie hidden, albeit displaced onto the poetic sphere. There are very few instances where Liasides writes erotic poems following the genre's standardized poetics. But even in these cases, it is obvious that his own passion dominates the form.

Nevertheless, in a cluster of other poems, the biographical element lies hidden within his verses. I am not referring simply to specific events, but to things that may depart from a detail which goes on to feed the poet's imagination and emotions, thus building an alternative reality. For instance, when the poet sees the girl he loves washing clothes in the basin with her



sleeves rolled up, revealing “her forearms... white like rice”, this is a given reality. But when he goes on to imagine that the girl will later sit inside the basin in order to take her bath, employing an allegoric language to express the passion stirring up inside him, then the limits of reality are extended to a different, poetic reality.

*She's white like the almond tree that when in bloom  
and sitting inside the flowerpot,  
fortunate is the man who'll taste her first scent,  
who'll eat the first fruit as soon as it sprouts.*

It is in another cluster of erotic poems that Liasides attains high levels of original erotic poetry. Aside from erotic passion, these poems contain the pronounced subversive passion that distinguishes the poet. In them, Liasides sets out to demonstrate that love works like a catalyst, powerful enough to overturn the world's equilibrium. Especially the irresistible female beauty is capable of reversing the tranquility of the world and lead to catastrophes, like an act of God. This theme is often recurrent in folk poetry; still he describes it in an exceptionally original and personal manner. In the collection *Ta tragoudia tou nisiou mou* [The songs of my island] he publishes the poem “Epartin na leipsei” [Take her, make her disappear], in which he addresses the Creator asking him to obliterate the woman he created; for with the power of the beauty he endowed her with she will destroy the whole world.

Various scholars characterized P. Liasides as a popular, ethnographic, gnomic poet etc. Others highlighted the social and class facets of his poetry. Together with all these that undoubtedly express certain aspects of Liasides' poetry, the element that mostly defines it is in my opinion its realism. It is a rich, deep, true realism that expresses the reality of his time from within, often with a pronounced critical disposition, with irony and humor but without being confined to the above. The poet tends to observe reality in progress, as something that keeps changing and reshaping. Summoning his dream and imagination, he endows it with a different dimension. This realism sets the tone in Liasides' poetry which transcends from the start both the ethnographic approach, traced in other popular poets as well as the folk poets' naturalistic imagery.

The world of Liasides' poetry is the world of the village, with its own pursuits, interests and problems. At the same time though, it is also the broader world of Cyprus and the overseas that emit the signals which influence the life of the village. When he describes the world wherein he

lives, Liasides is not just an observer taking notes but also a critical visionary.

In his first two poetry books, *Tragoudia tou nisiou mou* [The songs of my island] and *Ta skiora tis kardias mou* [The flowers of my heart], the prevalent topics, aside from the erotic ones, are rural themes and scenes from life in the village. His heroes are the people of the village, with their faults and virtues, but mainly with their tribulations. They are tormented by poverty, the oppression of the rich and the State, usury but also prejudice, superstition, fatalism and illiteracy. In this domain of his poetry, Liasides is often satirical, sometimes sarcastic, all the more when he delves into questions of social critique. By describing the life of the poor and the oppressed, he exposes from the inside the mechanism of exploitation, obviously aiming to provoke reaction to the prevailing conditions. In the poem “Ston ftohon panta i-ppetei” [The poor man is always the one] the poet really penetrates the system itself that forces all to serve it.

At times, in these poetry books his social critique reaches extreme limits. His passion against injustice makes him the herald of a frustrated subversive attitude. In these two collections, Liasides is a fervent opponent of social injustice but he is yet to put forward his own vision for a different, just and luminous world that becomes for him a source of hope for the future. This vision first appears in his third poetry book, *I parallae tou tziairou* whilst it grows in his subsequent collections. Here too, by projecting his vision, Liasides is indeed putting up a world of his own, his own poetic system that takes us aback. Images and symbols are drawn from the rural milieu wherein he lives, but he elevates them to the first ranks of expressiveness. His verses are filled with emotion and they express original poetic feelings.

This path, traced in the collection *I parallae tou tziairou* is pursued in his subsequent collections, where each title contains a symbolic connotation and sends the message of one more step in the direction of man's liberation: *Haraman fou* [Daybreak], *Yenniman eliou* [Sunrise], *Broeman* [Dawn], *Entekamisi I ora* [Eleven thirty], *Dodeka para deka* [Ten to twelve]. Liasides' vision is clearly social; it is the vision of freedom from the chains of slavery but also poverty and oppression.

*Wake up, poor folk, enough, for the light has risen  
Listen to the ship, it whistles, waiting for us.  
The immovable darkness has started to dissolve  
making room for our permanent, unending joy to come.*

Liasides' faith in the future is fostered on the one hand by the social

changes eventuating in the world and the development of socialist ideas, to which he passionately adheres; on the other hand it is fostered by the support of science and technology. His faith in science exceeds all conventional limits, mainly after the first manned flight into space. Science is identical with progress, freedom, justice, God, the idea and vision of the future. Indeed, rarely has a poet ever lived with so much passion the idea of the future, the idea of a new and happy life, devoid of any kind of lie, injustice and oppression, even death.

*“Heaven will eventuate only when Charon dies”,* he notes in an aphorism in *I parallae tou tziairou*. And in the collection *Na pethanei o Haros* [May Charon dies] he crafts these verses of exquisite conception:

*I want to enter back into the uterus of woman  
be born in the world of truth  
where life will smell of nutmeg  
and thoughts will be rid of the dead and the thieves...*

Liasides expanded these ideas owing to the fact that he had been able to develop his own original poetic system, his own poetic logic, within which the whole world, life and death, the earth and the universe comprised a unity. In the collection “*I parallae tou tziairou*” there is one original quatrain that reveals Liasides’ way of thinking:

*Earth, you who bears bodies and then eats them away  
delivering and collecting souls, as if you were a postman  
Your own turn will come, no matter how late  
the sun that breathes life in you, will finally suck you in.*

In the first two lines he simply formulates an observation within the framework of empirical logic, on which are based both the standardized and the religious standpoints on the ephemeral nature of human life. It is in fact an axiom on the existence of the perishable and restrained human nature, shared by all humans. The style and meaning of the verses are in fact evocative of the Genesis’ “for dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return”.

It is within this stereotypical framework that our entire popular poetry operates, from Kyriakos Karneras to Elias Georgiou. Liasides moves much further treading a different path. In the quatrain’s last two lines, the poet employs subtle irony that ends up in self-sarcasm to remind the earth of its own perishable nature:

*Your own turn will come, no matter how late  
the sun that breathes life in you, will finally suck you in.*

This subverts common, empirical logic whence stems a specific and empirically proven truth, introducing a particular poetic logic to which all elements submit and transubstantiate, receiving a different meaning. The turn that takes place within the poem itself, incites the imagination, provoking both thoughts and feelings. Perhaps without knowing anything on this matter or at least without having purposely aspired to it, Liasides shows a path where poetic imagination and insight merge with scientific theory and observations. However, what is most significant in the poem is not the approach of its content through scientific theory but this magnificent poetic attitude: the challenge of empirical logic, of the limitations and perishability of human nature, the extension of the poetic "I" through feelings and irony (irony also extends to his own nature) to a universal and eternal world relieved of the above, compared even to the mighty sun. From a bird's eye view of the universe, freed from the human predicament, the poet contemplates himself and the world.

At the same time, poems like this one express his existential anguish and quests. As such, they do not allow of merely one interpretation; in fact it is difficult to grasp them throughout applying logic, but they do convince you through the emotion and feelings with which poetic perceptions are formulated. In all these poems, the idea of the world's unity comes forward. Nature and people, dead and alive comprise one single whole. This idea is recurrent in many of Liasides' poems, which are put together based on the same poetic logic, suggesting the vision of immortality and the future. In the poem "San vretho sto nekrotafeio" [Once I find myself in the graveyard] too, we observe a very interesting view of this matter:

*Unforgettable dead friends, resting in the soil  
Fruit of youth, stolen from the enemy of mother life.*

Throughout his poetic journey and mainly in the years that followed the first launchings of manned space vehicles, Liasides' launching into science became stronger and evolved to a source of hope, not only for a better world but also for the attainment of immortality itself. Even in the *Broeman* collection (1947), the poet identifies science with God and predicts that it will liberate man from lies, injustice, oppression, decay and death:

*May God be like a scientific mind*

*May the age be golden, a time for Epiphany  
May from west to east, from north to south,  
a single sky runs across, just like silver.*

The *Broeman* collection was written during the years of World War II, when Liasides' ideological affiliation to the Left became much clearer and loomed through his poems. Division and destruction inferred by the war enhance the poet's wish for peace and unity among humans, but it also heightens the pressure that weighs upon the future.

The phrase "Na pethanei o Charos" [May Charon dies] has always been one of Liasides' favorite patterns-banners; initially it meant death of injustice, lies and oppression. Later on, its symbolic significance gradually became all the more identified with its literal meaning, signifying the annihilation of death itself. The celebratory collection published in 1966 in honor of his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, is entitled *May Charon dies* and opens with a quatrain:

*My brothers, you who burn in hell day and night  
Dreaming, wretched ones, of prosperity,  
Be a little patient, brace yourselves with faith and courage  
The time is near when Charon dies.*

As much as we know that Charon does not die, these verses by Liasides never fail to move us with their freshness, their originality and emotion.

Naturally, Liasides cannot be reduced to this brief overview. He has been a river of poetry – this is what I've attempted to suggest here alongside other things. Even today, more than twenty years after his death it is indeed a great joy to discover in his work things that are so alive as to offer you genuine emotion.

Reading Liasides, you cannot but be fascinated by the power of poetic talent.

## Cypriot Litterateurs in Egypt<sup>1</sup>

Lefteris Papaleontiou\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Pendant les dernières décennies du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'aux années 1960 la communauté grecque d'Égypte connaît un essor certain et met en évidence un très grand poète grec Constantin Cavafis. Dans les grandes villes d'Égypte, surtout à Alexandrie et au Caire, ont vécu et créé leur œuvre un grand nombre de Chypriotes, qui sont moins bien connus ou demeurent inconnus. Ils ont écrit de la poésie, de la prose, du théâtre, mais également de la critique.

### ABSTRACT

The Greek community prospered and flowered in Egypt during the last decades of the 19th century up to the 1960s and produced one of the Greek language's great poets, Constantine P. Cavafy. In Egypt's major cities, especially Alexandria and Cairo, a large number of Cypriots, who are less known or still unknown, lived and wrote poems and prose theater, as well as articles and reviews.

“Cypriot litterateurs of Egypt” was the subject of a conference organized by the Cultural Services of the Cyprus Ministry of Education in April 1991.<sup>2</sup> The ever memorable novelist and essayist Yiorgos Ph. Pierides had previously published two noteworthy articles on the same topic, whereas more recent scholars (such as Dimitris Daskalopoulos, Yiorgos Kehayioglou, N. Charalambidou, Kostas Nicolaides et al.) looked into the stance of Cypriot *Aigyptiotes* [=Cypriots of Egypt] on the poetry of Constantin P. Cavafy, the question of “orientalism” or the image of the “other” in the work of Nikos Nicolaides and Y.Ph. Pierides as well as the intellectual and personal contacts between the older and by then acclaimed N. Nicolaides and the younger Glafkos Alithersis, Thodosis Pierides and Stratis Tsirkas.<sup>3</sup> In this brief lecture I will refer synoptically to the Aigyptiotes writers of Cypriot origin, who lived and created their work in the Greek communities of Egypt – before they were forced to abandon the country of the Nile, mostly on account of

\* University of Cyprus

the post World War II new order and mainly around 1960. I would like to concentrate more on the novelist Nicos Nicolaides, who has been for me an ongoing project since my graduate studies, also because this year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.

Let us now begin in due order with a few general points and information.

It is well known that the presence of a Greek community in Egypt (mostly in Alexandria and Cairo) is enhanced during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reaching its heyday over the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is then that the noteworthy literary journals *Nea Zoi* (1904-1927), *Serapion* (1909-1910), *Grammata* (1911-1921), *Argo* (1923-1927), *Alexandrini Tehni* (1926-1930), *Alexandrini Logotehnia* (1947-1953) etc. come out.<sup>4</sup> It is also at around the same time that clusters of litterateurs live and produce their work, pivoting around the aforementioned journals. Quite a few things have been written with respect to these facts; still, much more must be done, not only about the most prominent writers (poet C.P. Cavafy and novelists Nikos Nicolaides and Stratis Tsirkas) but also about forgotten craftsmen of logos and art albeit of a lesser value.

Among other things, we should bear in mind that the Greek (and Greek Cypriot) Aigyptiotes lived in different historic and cultural conditions, in an Arab-speaking environment, taking great care to preserve their language and education, their religion and customs. In addition to this, it would be interesting to investigate whether and to what extent but also in what way the Aigyptiotes writers and artists incorporate the world of Egypt into their work, or if they look into the Arab culture at all. The general and perhaps temporary picture we get from sporadic studies conducted thus far is that, generally speaking, the Greek Aigyptiotes litterateurs do not draw their inspiration from the Egyptian environment or that when they do explore Egyptian topics they appear led by ethnic stereotypes and orientalist representations. There exist some bright exceptions but these topics require a more systematic investigation.<sup>5</sup>

Y.Ph. Pierides, who spent half his life in Egypt,<sup>6</sup> remarked that the Greek Aigyptiotes men of letters adopted from the beginning “as a rule the stance of someone who is a foreigner to the reality of the place where they lived. Only a few among them attempted to ponder over Egypt and its people. And even these few, like Magnis, Vrisimitzakis and Tsangaradas [...] never reached the essence, but rather stayed on the surface of things, like foreign observers”.

Being very sensitive to this matter, the writer attempts to exemplify that this “wrongful” attitude of litterateurs was deterministically shaped as a

product of the historic and social reality. However, he goes on to point out that younger writers such as Str. Tsirkas (*Nuredin Bomba, Ariagne*) and even Y.Ph. Pierides (*Bambakades* – Cotton factory workers) change their attitude and look closer and probably without prejudice into the world of Egypt.<sup>7</sup>

Let us now focus on our topic, which is the litterateurs of Cypriot origin who lived in Egypt, attempting a grammatological overview of their work by genre.

POETRY. Glafkos Alithersis is our first stop in the field of poetry. Making his literary debut in 1919, Alithersis tried his hand at all forms of literary discourse. In his first collections, the large influence of Kostis Palamas and to a lesser extent of Angelos Sikelianos is quite obvious. Later he learns from the social poetry of Kostas Varnalis. Initially it appeared as though he was charmed by the poetry of C.P. Cavafy (in fact he initiated the first acquaintance of young Cypriots with Cavafy's poetry), still he subsequently moved onto the opposite anti-Cavafy side, which peaked with his exaggerated Cavafian monograph (1933). In all, Alithersis published nine poetry collections with quite a few undulations and lesser good moments, drawing his topics from personal, panhuman and collective subjects of his place and time. He gradually left behind metrical, traditional verses and wrote his latest books in free, relatively prosaic verses. It should be noted that Alithersis also took up literary translation. In two separate volumes, he published Rupert Brooke's collected poems and an English Poetry Anthology with samples from the work of the four most prominent representatives of English romanticism, namely Byron, P.B. Shelley, J. Keats and W. Wordsworth. In a cluster of poems included in his mature collection *Armogi aionon kai stigmon* [Linkage of centuries and moments] (1964) images and memories from the world of Egypt can be traced. The poet repeatedly expressed his sympathy for Egyptian mothers striving to provide for their family; his sympathy for degraded beings and unprotected children:

*Let me attest to what I see:  
Half-naked children shivering  
on pavements, in train stations and anyplace where  
a cornice may somehow become a shield  
against the rainfall...* (p. 36)

Thodosis Pierides is a more notable poet. He began publishing poetry since 1937, but his most mature work will come much later, in his books



inspired from the people and struggles of Cyprus. The poems he published in his Egyptian period are often bound to the principles of Left ideology; in these poems he seeks to explicitly respond to the current questions of his times, drawing lessons from the social poetry of Kostis Palamas, Kostas Varnalis and Yiannis Ritsos. Egypt is absent from Pierides' poetry. However, the Egyptian world takes center stage in his short prosaic texts that lean toward the category of prose poetry and are published in the *Panaigyptia* journal (1937). In these texts he consciously avoids submitting to the stereotypes of Orientalism and attempts to display images from everyday life in Cairo in unprejudiced manner and realistic style. Of course, Th. Pierides appears at his best in his mature poetic synthesis (*Kypriaki Symphonia* [Cypriot Symphony], 1956 and *Oneiropolisi pano sta teihi tis Ammohostou* [Reverie upon Famagusta's walls], 1965) and the melodic *Treis serenates sto feggari* [Three serenades to the moon] (*Fthinoporo* [Autumn] 1967). In his poetic syntheses that look into Cyprus' historic mishaps, the poet sings the passions of his native land, the simple primordial man who becomes identified with the waterless Cypriot land and resists colonists and all sorts of conquerors that raided the island:

*No, this land does not want you, it does not know you!  
Everything here is ours! For, from every stone,  
the ground, the tree, the water and the wind  
our body took a trickle and became whole.  
Our soul took a breath from each one of them.  
Everything here is ours –but for you, always foreign!*

Evgenia Palaiologou-Petronda, who took permanent residency in Cyprus in 1960, is also worthy of note. From her life in Egypt, the collection with the Arabic title *Ihdaa* [Offering, 1956] stands out. Awarded by Nasser, the book includes fifteen poems, all with Arabic titles and one translated into Arab. The writer seeks to pay tribute to the "gentle" Egyptian people with humanitarian disposition as well as to utilize elements from the country's popular tradition, turning her attention to the distressed rural folk.

Other writers of Cypriot descent publish their poetry and prose poems during the interwar years or even later: Yangos Pierides (*Tis siopis kai tou salou* [Of silence and turmoil], 1919), Ayis Voreadis (*Anemones*, 1927), Polys Modinos (*Rythmikes Zoes* [Rhythmic Lives], 1927), Deimos Flegyas (*Ihoi* [Sounds], 1939 and four more subsequent books), Yiorgos Alkaïos (*Sklira Tragoudia* [Hard Songs], 1939), Loukas Christofides (*Tefras Thymeli* [Ashes'

Altar], 1957) and perhaps others. In addition, Filippos Papaharalambous prints out populist poetry broadsheets around 1930.

Naturally, N. Nicolaides stands out in the prose poem genre. Anna Katsiyianni has placed three of his books (*Anthropines kai anthines zoes* [Human and floral lives], 1920, 1938; *O hrysos mythos* [The golden myth], 1938; *To biblio tou monahou* [The monk's book], 1951, 1955) in the category of prose poetry. However, it would be worth looking into the pertinence of his latest and more mature book with the category of (modern) novel, too. In *Anthropines kai anthines zoes*, N. Nicolaides' probing into estheticism and the esthetics of Oscar Wilde becomes more conspicuous: love for beauty, the decay of prettiness and the feeling of spleen, exoticism, paganism and the Orient's lure, worship of the form and the utilization of prose poem characteristics in terms of form (rhythmical verses and rhymes, repetition, circular development and symmetry, language plays and vivid iconopeia) rank among the collection's basic features. These luscious and rather mannerist miniatures could have come out a few decades before. But N. Nicolaides revisits this collection, enriching it with new texts, finally printing it out in a second, supplemented edition in 1938, wherein selected estheticism patterns (i.e. exotic and luscious imagery of the Orient, erotic encounters in an orgiastic vegetative environment, the ideal of self-cultivation, the wear and tear of things, pantheism of a pagan undertone etc.) are fused with elements of Nietzscheism (genital drunkenness, the Dionysian principle and the omnipotence of instinct, as well as woman's supplantation by man in order for him to be able to materialize higher ideals).

His second book of prose poetry, *O hrysos mythos*, could also be read as a creative parody of myths from the ancient Greek, demotic and mainly Christian tradition. The writer approaches standardized myths in subversive mood, aiming at shedding light on, elevating and praising man in his diachronic passions and mishaps. Therefore as early as in the first text of the collection, he purges the Original Sin and glorifies Adam and Eve for having abandoned heaven's given blessedness in order to throw themselves into the "Life of Free Action"; or he attributes an entirely human dimension to the myths of Narcissus and Ariadne, or in moments from Christ's life and popular tales. The writer does not hesitate to recast Christ's figure. The use of the Biblical myth of Salome could be read in comparison to Oscar Wilde's same-topic play. Along general lines, in *Hrysos Mythos*, divine and sacred figures become humanized and demythologized while at the same time the joy of life, power of love and eros are exalted alongside free man's will to

resist to standardized and “golden” (or gold-filled and eventually fake) myths and institutes weighing down upon his life.

With his last book, *Tō vivlio tou monahou* (1951), N. Nicolaides seems to arrive at a precipice: This heretic book is surprising both on account of its typographical appearance (the writer’s Byzantinish writing style is reproduced throughout the volume) and of its genre identity and content: it is comprised of prose-like poems that combine elements of (neoteric) novel. The book’s 173 small numbered parts pivot around a common thematic axis, the monks’ life. Placed in one single space, the Agelasti Moni [Unsmiling Abbey], it features recurrent and elusive figures of monks with passions and human weaknesses. Applying a strategy of irony, satire and parody, the writer approaches with understanding the world of the monks while at the same time exposing pretense and hypocrisy, the flesh’s humble and hidden passions and their effort to touch on divine perfection. It appears that the writer studied the monks’ behavior closely and very carefully during his stay in Christian monasteries in both Cyprus (Stavrovouni) and Arabia Petraea (mount Sinai). Still, Nicolaides is not an atheist; and he’s only in part anti-ecclesiastical and anticlerical. He does not put on the persona of a moralist satirist in order to reprimand and laugh openly at the monks’ world. He points the arrows of irony and satire not so much towards his suffering heroes but rather towards the regime of monastic life. The *Vivlio tou monahou* is the apex of Nicolaides’ ironic poetics; in it, his ironic style appears quite sophisticated and often covert, even though it is not devoid of clear and intense satirical moments.

Some of the aforementioned poets, such as Gl. Alithersis, P. Modinos, N. Nicolaides, Y. Pierides and L. Christofides got to personally meet C.P. Cavafy and his poetry; sometimes they are appreciative of it and other times they look at it with embarrassment or even reject it. In all, they are not in a position to utilize his poetic example. With the exception of N. Nicolaides’ more complex case, the rest of them mainly tend toward Kostis Palamas’ poetic model or reproduce the thematic motifs, rhetorical ways and psychic dispositions of neo-romantic and neo-symbolic poetry.

PROSE. Compared to poetry, the production of *Aigyptiotes* of Cypriot origin in the field of prose appears more important in terms of both quality and quantity (obviously, with the exception of N. Nicolaides’ prose poems). As early as 1889, Theodoulos Ph. Constantinides printed in Alexandria the first part of a long narrative entitled *Apomnimonevmata didaskalou* [A

teacher's memoirs], wherein he used delicate humor to narrate the mishaps of a teacher in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Turkish-occupied Cyprus, dispersing fictional episodes throughout his narration. Constantinides also translated Hugh Conway's novel *Dark Days* (1884: Alexandria, 1885) whereas the same year marked the publication of Camille Paganel's philhellenic narrative *Le tombeau de Marcos Botsaris* in Greek translation by Nicolaos Pilavakis. As we shall see further below, Th.F. Constantinides became more widely known for his plays. Another earlier writer, Nearchos Fysentzides, printed in a single volume his short story *I megali Despoina* [Our grand Lady] (Alexandria 1916), which was later on (1920) launched in theatrical form.

During the thirty years of interwar, the case of N. Nicolaides prevails with three books of short stories, two novels and a novella. The three series of short stories he prints during the 1920s endow him with wider acclaim. Both critics and litterateurs noted and praised his work for its pronounced introspection and dramatic elements, symbolistic hypobole, the psychographic probing of narrative personae and careful elaboration of the texts' form. On the other hand, some inhibitions and objections were raised either concerning the linguistic form and narrative structure of the short stories or the idiomorphic narrative characters and the use of a "frigid" – ironic narrator. In his best moments (i.e. in the short stories "O Skelethras", "Skrofa", "I paramoni tou Sotiros", "Ta koroida", "Oi ypiretes", "Sa skyli" etc.) the writer employs introspective techniques in order to probe into the psyche of his narrative characters, pulling dreams and fantasies out unto the surface, alongside unspoken thoughts and repressed wishes, metaphysical pondering and psychological impasses. In many of his texts he outlines decadent narrative characters who escape the limits of normality and the socially acceptable, reminiscent of Demosthenes Voutyras' marginal heroes. These divergent heroes, lingering between fantasy and reality, are sketched out in an elliptic and esoteric manner with the method of symbolistic hypobole and abstraction or with expressionistic introspections. As such, they become a cause for negative comments as early as the 1920s and later on.

Nicolaides' first novel *To Stravoxilo* [The short-tempered man] (1922) was a juvenile, experimental and unequal text; yet, it is interesting from various points of view. As correctly pointed out by Str. Tsirkas, this narrative may be considered the first attempt within the Greek area to write a novel of personal development (Bildungsroman). The writer sets out to detail how "a human being [the adolescent Yiorgis in his tender teens] is molded". The initiation of the book's teenagers into forms of love or the concept of death,

the relation between disruption from or compliance with their social environment and the disposition to escape, the esoteric and exoteric learning journey, self-realization and self-determination that contribute to their psychological development, contact with nature that sometimes functions as a means of initiation into the concepts of *eros* and *thanatos*, the protagonist's wavering between binaries such as village/city, family/society, life/art, sexual love/idealized love etc. justify its association with Bildungsroman and especially with its subgenre: the novel of artistic initiation (Küstlerroman). The adolescent Yiorgis begins to realize and manifest his artistic inclinations (painting, music, storytelling), despite being mocked at by his social surroundings. Besides, it is here that the writer reveals in a more systematic manner his attempt to escape the clichés of traditional narration and try his hand, even in spermatic form, at new narrative techniques, with which he seeks to illuminate his heroes' (mostly Yiorgis') inner world. Critics like Stavros Karakasis and Stratis Tsirkas traced many autobiographical elements in this novel. Still, N. Nicolaides rushed to reply that this was not an autobiographical novel: "Not even one episode is real. However, this is how I would have felt and behaved if the circumstances and episodes I present as occurring to Yiorgis had been brought on me. Everything is transubstantiated, transformed."<sup>8</sup>

In his other lengthy prose pieces, the novella with the Nietzschean title *Per' ap' to kalo kai to kako* [Beyond good and evil] (1940) and his mature novel *Ta tria karfia* [The three nails] (1948), the writer attempts on the one hand to display the catalyst influence of society over the formation of his marginal and at the same time tragic narrative characters and on the other the will and the heroes' desperate efforts to resist "Social Fate" and "be redeemed" in the eyes of the world, even if they are forced to pay a high price. The novella is situated in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Nicosia (with references to old neighborhoods such as Rogiatiko and Tahtakalas). The title, *Per' ap' to kalo kai to kako* (referencing Nietzsche's homonymous book) appears to pre-signify the fortune of the two unfortunate heroines, Foteini and Chrysoula, both thrown into a desperate struggle to find themselves a husband who will make "decent women out of them" in compliance with social morality. In their endeavor, first the bolder Chrysoula and subsequently the more conservative Foteini step out of their own selves, transcend "bad fortune" and move beyond good and evil, ending up mad. The writer appears to recount the story of the two sisters, while at the same time making sure to imply his distance from the "plain" islanders' storytelling. The two heroines'

psyche is internally outlined in a series of episodes with introspective techniques. Just as Alexandros Papadiamantis' *Fonissa* [Murderess] reaches her own personal rationalization before setting out to murder little girls, the two unmarried women are similarly seen to "elevate their minds" in order to cancel or transcend the chains of dominating morality and common sense, by now ridden by madness.

In a somewhat analogous manner, N. Nicolaides works on the story of Kassianos in his following novel, *Ta tria karfia* (1948), again situated in 19<sup>th</sup> century Nicosia (from the end of the Turkish occupation up until the first year of the British rule). From the start, the writer-narrator is separated from the simple islanders that are supposed to have told him this story, in order to push aside the "legend's veil" and shed light on his hero's tragic persona. Step by step, using introspective techniques and successive episodes, the writer is observing the three nails that carve the face and life of Kassianos, who was "Branded by Satan": initially, the country boy drudges for fifteen years in the capital, in order to save enough money to open up a haberdashery and gain financial independence. Next, he endures loneliness and isolation, stigmatized by the relentless critique of the neighborhood "chorus" and peoples' mockery – as they treat him suspiciously identifying him with the Jew penny pincher. Eventually, after a failed marriage to the ever virgin Yiasemi, he weds the man-eater Andriana and on his deathbed he is obliged to recognize his wife's bastard son as his own. Financial security did not endow the stigmatized hero with social acclaim. On the verge of dying, pressed by the women's chorus and crushed from the "Social Fate" Kassianos compromises and makes the "bastard boy" his heir, since he had not been able to have a child of his own and secure the legacy of his name. The book's epilogue contains some interesting self-referencing comments. The writer-narrator confirms his intention to probe into the abyss of human psychology, especially of his hero. Yet, at the same time he remains doubtful of the artistic merit of his endeavor and points out that he does not feel redeemed. With this conclusion, the writer had obviously wanted to illustrate that Kassianos was no longer an isolated individual case; he became a generic, representative human type, since every society breeds its own "Kassianoï".

Aside from N. Nicolaides, other Cypriots that lived in Egypt during the interwar years worked at creative prose, sometimes with success and other times less effectively. Glafkos Alithersis published two books of unequal short-stories (*O gymnos anthropos* – The naked man, 1924 and *Arachnes* – Spiders, 1936),

wherein he appears to utilize, among other things, the example of D. Voutyras. The writer attempts to renew his narration by persistently interjecting self-referencing comments or loosening the structure of his texts. In his best moments he ponders over social questions with nonconformist intention or sketches up marginal narrative characters (“O Tsikinis”, “I Romanina”).

Yangos Pierides had been a more systematic prose writer. He lived in Alexandria until 1933 and between 1927 and 1970 he published seven books of short stories and novellas as well as a novel. This forgotten novelist is one of the few writers who approached the world of Egypt with sensitivity and an unbiased gaze, not only in his fictional pieces but also in commentaries and other journalistic texts that he published with the pseudonym “Skaravaïos” in Alexandrian journals in the 1920s. For instance, in the lengthy narrative “Oi sotires” [The saviors] he does not hesitate to showcase how the Greeks took advantage of the Egyptian natives.<sup>9</sup>

Maria Roussia published four books with commentaries, short stories, novellas and one traveling narrative on Cyprus during the period between 1942-1956. Her probably unfinished novel *To saraki* [The woodworm] (1982) was published post mortem. From her prose pieces, “Cypriot” short stories as well as the narratives and novellas that pivot around the life of *Aigyptiotes* during the hard years of the Second World War and the first postwar years stand out. Especially in her novella “O Xenos” [The Foreigner] (1951) she outlines the alienation of a community Greek, as he feels torn between two homelands and perceives the negative development of political and social matters which will eventually lead to the great “exodus” of Greeks from Egypt. Her antimilitarist narratives (“Alites!...” – Punks!..., “Sto N. tou N.”, “To paidi tou anthropou” – Man’s child), are also interesting as she uses them to outline with compassion soldiers suffering in war fronts and concentration camps in the Middle East, or their slow death in some Egyptian hospital, pondering over their pointless sacrifice. Also notable are some of her short stories containing Cypriot themes, in which she outlines beleaguered women living and suffering in the patriarchal rural society of Cyprus.

Around the same time, Y.Ph. Pierides publishes two books referring to the Egyptian period of his life: In the compartmentalized novella *Oi vamvakades* (1945) he handles with Doric frugality yet critically the relation between the Greeks and the Egyptian natives, not hesitating to display both a relation based on exploitation as well as images of harmonic symbiosis in a cotton processing factory in Upper Egypt (where the writer himself had worked). In the short stories of his second book, he ponders over the

misfortunes of Greek soldiers locked in prisons of the belligerent Middle East. In addition to that, in two mature books (1986 and 1995) he deposits “memories and stories” from Egypt either in the form of a chronicle or employing the fictional element. Certainly, the most notable aspect of Y.Ph. Pierides’ prosaic work is probably the four collections of short stories now coexisting in the volume *I tetralogia ton kairon* [Tetralogy of the times] (1989). As commented on by Yiorgos.P. Savvides,<sup>10</sup> in his mature short stories, the prose writer evolves into an anatomist of Cypriot urban society: Inspired by simple and authentic individuals of a long gone era, he denounces the behavior of arrogant bourgeois and those who are caught in the cogwheels of a party ideology. At the same time, he suggests and summarizes the historical mishaps of the newly established Cypriot Democracy within the personae of his central characters.

It should be noted here that Yeorgios Kitropoulos, Deimos Flegyas, Evgenia Palaiologou-Petronda and perhaps others too, published prose works during their stay in Egypt or later.

THEATRE. From early on, two preceding writers who had spent part of their lives in Alexandria, Yeorgios Sivitanides and Th.K. Constantinides worked in playwriting and more especially in the writing of historic dramas, embracing their era’s romantic spirit. In Y. Sivitanides’ play *I Kypros kai oi Naitai* [Cyprus and the Knights Templar] (Alexandria 1869) the principal focus is the rise of Cypriots against the Knights Templar’s tyrannical rule in Easter 1191, which led the latter to sell the island to the Lusignans. Even though the text falls short in terms of dramatic and staging appeal, it has been repeatedly staged; in 1931 it was republished in Nicosia, during a period of intensified ethnic demands.

Th.K. Constantinides wrote three plays, two of which draw their topics from the history of Cyprus. In the first one, the king of Cyprus Peter I Lusignan (1358-1369 AD) is depicted with the pronounced characteristics of a romantic hero: tyrannical, womanizer, violent, brash, hubristic to the divine but also human, with intense psychological shifts; in the end he appears crushed and full of remorse for the victims of his passions. This is probably the most well-staged Cypriot play of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, wherein the story of king Peter I – known to earlier Cypriot chroniclers – is recreated and utilized with relatively simplified language, effortless dialogues, dramatic tension and suspense, even though romantic exaggerations (ghosts, tragic coincidences, emotional perfusions and big talks) have found



their way into the play.

Th.K. Constantinides' second play, *Kucuk Mehemet i To 1821 stin Kypro* [Kucuk Mehemet or 1821 in Cyprus] (after its first publication in Alexandria, in 1888, it was republished twice in Nicosia, in 1895 and 1927) places its action in the years of Turkish occupation. The play was successfully staged, initially in Alexandria (1887) and subsequently in Cyprus, in repeated performances. The writer transcends official History and applying anachronisms and imaginary episodes he presents Archbishop Kyprianos organizing a revolution against the Turks, in cooperation with the dragoman Hadjiyeorgakis (who, however, had already been extinguished by the Turks in 1809). The play was completed one year before Y. Kepiades' *Apomnimonevmata* [Memoirs] came out and appears to have been one of V. Michaelides' sources for his thematically similar poetic synthesis.

1919 sees the publication of Nicos Nicolaides' juvenile "lyric fabled drama" *To galazio louloudi* [The blue flower], staged in Alexandria in 1923 with sufficient success by the company of Aimilios Veakis. Drawing on his knowledge of demotic tradition and the world of the fairy tale, but also on lessons from scholarly tradition (possibly by D. Kokkos' and Dimitris Koromilas' *komeidyllia*, from Agelos Sikelianos *Alafroiskiotos* [The Shadow Whisperer] or specimens of European symbolism and expressionism; i.e. A. Strindberg's or M. Maeterlinck's expressionistic dramas, translated into Greek), the writer creates a dreamy and fairylike atmosphere in order to deal with the quest for human happiness. Perhaps the text's fabled setting, "daydreams", symbols and rhythmic verses appear somewhat naïve or outdated today; still, this juvenile endeavor does not lose its historic significance. The text's one-off publication generally received positive reviews but also a few objections; some traced in the text derivations from the poetics of symbolism or raised reasonable doubts (mainly in terms of the text's verses), or even called it an imitation of R. Wagner's works and a mélange of ancient tragedies chorals and folksongs.

Glafkos Alithersis' two plays, *O pyrgos tis Vavel* [Babel Tower] (1937) and *Arodafnousa* (1939) are also worthy of note. Both plays first appeared in the *Kypriaka Grammata* journal. The first is based on the Bible's well-known incident, yet the playwright advances to social speculations with proletarian messages. The second is located in medieval Cyprus and recounts the well-known (from the *Hroniko* tou Mahaira – *Chronicle* of Machairas) erotic scandals of king Peter I Lusignan and his family. In addition to that, the young Yiangos Pierides published the theatrical piece *Oi navagoi* [The

castaways] (1921), whereas Aimilia Oreinou published six plays during the postwar years (1949-1959).

REVIEWS – STUDIES. Yeorgios Kepiades is one of the earlier writers who produced work in Alexandria (where he had settled since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century), with a series of historic and other studies. Among his books, the brief *Apomnimonevmata* is worthy of note, referencing Turkish atrocities against the Greeks of Cyprus in July 1821 (1888) as well as his study on the settling of Greeks in Egypt (1892). Evryviades Fragoudis and Y.S. Fragoudis also published historic studies on Cyprus. Other men of letters participated in the publication of periodicals mostly in Alexandria and sometimes in Cairo: N. Nicolaides joined the team of *Serapion* journal (1909-1910); Loucas Christofides published the journal *Foinikas* (Cairo, 1915-1916, 1918); Gl. Alithersis contributed to the publication of the journals *Skepsi* (1921), *Argo* and *Nea Zoi*, whereas subsequently, over the grueling years of the Second World War, Th. Pierides alongside Str. Tsirkas played a major role in the publication of the politically oriented *Ellin* journal (1942-1948).

Both N. Nicolaides and Gl. Alithersis worked (around 1920) as connective links for the first acquaintance of young Cypriot litterateurs and philologists with the poetry of C.P. Cavafy but also as good conductors with literary journals and personalities in Athens and Alexandria, such as Stephanos Pargas' noteworthy journal *Grammata* [Letters]. The journal publishes works by other Cypriots too, such as Yantos Eliades and Melis Nicolaides. At the same time, quite a few writers residing in Egypt, not only of Cypriot origin (i.e. Gl. Alithersis, Str. Tsirkas and Maria Roussia) enhance with their contributions the two basic Cypriot journals published on the island since the mid 1930s, *Kypriaka Grammata* [Cypriot Letters] and *Paphos*.

It was no surprise that both Gl. Alithersis and N. Nicolaides would be initially taken aback by the “new demons” born of Cavafy’s poetry. They would subsequently deal with it with embarrassment and silence, while later on they would either criticize or acknowledge it from the distance awarded by time.

In a special issue on Cavafy initiated by the *Nea Tehni* [New Art] journal (1924), N. Nicolaides avoids taking a clear stance on Cavafy’s poetry under the pretext that he is not a critic. Many years later, N. Nicolaides’ opinion of the poet Cavafy appears differentiated. In a later interview to E. Stamatiou, he states more clearly his revised opinion of the Alexandrian poet: he acknowledges remembrance as the “key” to Cavafian poetry; he even goes as far as placing Cavafy, alongside A. Sikelianos on the apex of Modern Greek

poetry. “Cavafy is Egypt’s greatest poet. He and Sikelianos occupy first place in the Greek poetry Parnassus. Cavafy and I used to be friends. In the beginning I could not grasp his work, I would actually fight it. One time, when he circulated a hedonistic poem in his familiar broadsheet form, I set out to ridicule him. I would keep it with me and read it to any acquaintance of mine I’d run into. I must have read it fifteen times. Then suddenly, on the sixteenth, I stopped. I had found the “key” to Cavafy’s poetry. It lies in remembrance!”<sup>11</sup> It is true that N. Nicolaides did not work in literary review; only in his youth had he published in the Alexandrian *Grammata* a few brief critical notes on books, wherein one discerns elements that coincide with the writer’s literary quests of the time but also more generally.

Gl. Alithersis is involved in literary review and study in a more systematic manner, displaying many good moments as well as quite a few mishits. As a loyal fan of K. Palamas’ poetry, he turned into an opponent of Cavafy’s poetry with his unjust book *To provlima Cavafy* [The Cavafy problem] (1934). Quite justifiably then, D. Daskalopoulos commented on this edition with the following: “One does reasonably wonder what his own anti-Cavafy book has to offer following the publication of Malanos’ book, which in fact he trails. It is actually more violent, flatly negative and surpasses Malanos in tone extremities.”<sup>12</sup> Gl. Alithersis approaches N. Nicolaides’ work on short-story writing in a rather contradictory manner, moving from juvenile enthusiasm (in a 1917 publication) to strong reservations and objections (in *Nea Zoi* article, 1927, published with very few alterations in *Nea Estia*, 1935). From the rest of his studies, his speech on K. Palamas’ “Foinikia” [Palm Tree] (*Nea Zoi*, 1927) where he comments on the poem’s symbolic character is worthy of note, as well as *Istoria tis neas ellinikis logotenis* [History of Modern Greek literature] (1938), which is neither very well-known nor especially noteworthy. In this monograph he places sufficient emphasis on demoticists and K. Palamas, with mentions of the younger A. Sikelianos, Kostas Varnalis, Kostas Ouranis, K.. Karyotakis, N. Kavvadias and even the more neoteric Yiorgos Seferis. In a supplement he refers to litterateurs of Alexandria, going past C.P. Cavafy in a rather hasty and depreciative manner, while insisting a bit more on N. Nicolaides. His brief monographs on Dimitris Lipertis (1934), V. Michaelides (1957), N. Nicolaides (1958), S. Skipe (1960), M. Malakasis (1961), R. Tagore (1961) and N. Santorinios (1965) are also noteworthy.

During the 1930s the little known Antonis Christodoulou publishes three peculiar books with the eloquent titles *Ymnos is tin oknirion* [A hymn to

sloth] (1933), *Don Kixotai epi pigasson* [Don Quixotes on Pegasi] (1934) and *O epistimonikos Theos* [The scientific God] (1933). In the preface of his first book, the author classifies it as being on the verge between a study and a draft literary piece. His two subsequent books are of a similar character. Drawing lessons from the satirical, playful style and witty and subversive spirit of E. Roides, A. Christodoulou ventures on a poignant critique of standardized values and institutions across religion, the Church, the arts and especially poetry. Among other things, he crushes poetry with provoking aphorisms such as: “Whoever has something to write about, writes prose. Whoever has nothing to write about, writes poetry”. “Poetry today has no reason whatsoever to exist; it comprises the lowest if not an inexplicable literary genre”. “Poetry was invented at a moment of boredom, just as painting and sculpting”. He claims that from the moment poetry became separated from music, the first ceased to offer something new or more essential than ancient poetry. He criticizes Dionysios Solomos’ *Ymnos eis tin Eleftherian* [Hymn to Freedom] (“a long-winded and in point of fact loquacious poem [...] it cannot even boast to have been created by a man employing his language esthetically and artistically”), as well as the demoticists’ poetry and the use of rhyme, while defending folk poetry.<sup>13</sup>

After World War II and mainly after leaving Egypt behind, the brothers Th. Pierides and Y.Ph. Pierides, Evgenia Paleologou Petronda, perhaps others too, worked on literary reviews and essays. The critical articles and essays by Y.Ph.. Pierides on his favorite writers and readings (A. Chekhov, F. Dostoyevski, Guy de Maupassant, R. Rolland, J. Swift, L. Tolstoy, H.D. Thoreau, K. Varnalis, N. Nicolaides and other *Aigyptiotes* litterateurs, the *Fyllada tou Megalexandrou* [Alexander the Great’s Pamphlet] and *Ta Paramythia tis Halimas* [Halima’s Fairy Tales]) have proven to be more mature and stronger to the test of time.

These texts enlighten from a different perspective the poetics of Y.Ph. Pierides the prose writer, who appears attracted by significant examples of realistic and humanistic prose as well as by the Orient’s folk and story telling. In contrast, Th. Pierides is rather guided (and often manipulated) by criteria of Leftist critique. His articles and notes on the *akritika* songs [songs of the border], poetry in general and P. Éluard, R. Rolland, W. Whitman, K. Varnalis, Andreas Kalvos, V. Michaelides, K. Palamas, A. Sikelianos et al. comprise interesting testimonies on the formulation of Leftist critique in the wider area of Hellenism and diaspora, revealing at the same time the poet’s literary quests.

It would be fitting to close this general grammatological review with words from Y.Ph. Pierides' later book *Mnimes kai istories apo tin Aigypto* [Memories and stories from Egypt] (1986), wherein the writer references his Egyptian life in nostalgic and self-critical mood:

I loved Egypt even when I lived there, in the same way that I love it now, but I didn't know it at the time... (p. 6). [In my youth] "the whole world" was to me the Greeks of the community. I had a peculiar perception of the existence of the others, the Egyptians; I would see them as part of my surrounding reality, as something tangible still irrelevant to "us", namely the immediate surroundings of my home, my friends, our church, our reveries. (p. 45)

The entire intellectual movement, our thoughts and actions were almost exclusively concentrated on Greek issues and problems. This did not stem from our negative disposition toward the country where we lived. Rather, it stemmed from the independence of the community's micro-society with which our whole social existence identified through the workings of causality- our national, familial, professional and intellectual existence. However this resulted in keeping us at a distance from our Egyptian counterparts. And it also kept them at a distance from us. (p. 89)

## NOTES

1. Slightly modified speech delivered in the framework of the Greek Book Exhibition (Athens, 24 May, 2006).
2. *Cypriot Litterateurs of Egypt, Symposium Proceedings*, Nicosia, Education Ministry Cultural Services, 1993.
3. See mostly Y.Ph. Pierides, "Ta neollinika grammata stin Aigypto" [Modern Greek Letters in Egypt] *Kypriaka Chronika* 69 (1971) 11-22 [= *Stohasmoi enos anagnosti – A reader's reflections*, Nicosia, Union of Cyprus Writers, 2004, pp. 17-34] and "Oi kyprioi logotehnes tis Aigypthou" [Cypriot literary figures of Egypt] in the collective volume *Kypriaki logotehnia. Oi rizes* [Cypriot Literature. The roots] Nicosia, Union of Cyprus Writers, 1980, pp. 84-97. Dimitris Daskalopoulos, "Oi Kyprioi logotehnes tis Aigypthou kai o K.P. Kavafis" [Cypriot literary figures of Egypt and C.P. Cavafy], *Oi kyprioi logotehnes tis Aigypthou*, see above, pages 49-61 [= *Sympathitiki melani*, Athens, Ermis, 1999, pp. 51-63]. Yiorgos Kehayoglou, "Opseis tou neollinikou "Anatolismou": I symvoli ton Kyprion tis Aigypthou" [Aspects of Modern Greek "Orientalism: The contribution of Cypriots of Egypt]

*Oi Kyprioi logotehnes tis Aigyptou*, see above, pp. 29-48 and “Anatolismos apo proto kai deftero heri: mia endiaferousa logotehniki opsi tou “parepidimou” Nicou Nicolaide” [Orientalism from first and second hand: an interesting literary aspect of the “sojourner” Nicos Nicolaides] in the collective volume *Nicos Nicolaides o Kyprios (1884-1956). Mia epanektimisi tou ergou tou* [Nicos Nicolaides, the Cypriot. A reevaluation of his work], Athens, Bibliorama, 2007, pp. 55-77. Natia Charalambidou, “O ‘allos’ kosmos kai oi *Bambakades* tou Y. F. Pieride” [The ‘other’ world and the *Cotton Factory Workers* by Y. Ph. Pierides, *Oi Kyprioi logotehnes tis Aigyptou*, see above, pp. 197-214. Costas Nicolaides, “Nicos Nicolaides kai Glafkos Alithersis: I ekaterothen kritiki” [Nicos Nicolaides and Glafkos Alithersis: Critique from both sides”, *Oi Kyprioi logotehnes tis Aigyptou*, see above, pp. 117-130; “Nicos Nicolaides, Stratis Tsirkas, Yiorgos Filippou Pierides: Epalliles poreies kai diaplokes” [Nicos Nicolaides, Stratis Tsirkas, Yiorgos Filippou Pierides: Successive paths and conflicts], *Porfyra* 105 (Oct.-Dec. 2002) 331-350; “I eikona tou Nicou Nicolaide stin allilographia tou Thodosi Pieride pros ton Strati Tsirka” [The image of Nicos Nicolaides in the correspondence of Thodosis Pierides to Stratis Tsirkas] (published in this issue of *Etudes Helleniques / Hellenic Studies*).

4. With regards to these reviews, see mostly D. Daskalopoulos, *Sympathitiki melani*, pp. 123-164.
5. Relevant topics are investigated in the recent PhD thesis by Manolis Marangoulis, “*Kairos na syhronisthomen: I Aigyptos apo ti skopia tis aigyptiotikis dianois tis mesopolemos*” [Time to coordinate: Egypt from the point of view of the interwar Aigyptiotes literati], approved by the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Cyprus, Nicosia 2006.
6. Y. F. Pierides, *Stohasmoi enos anagnosti*, p. 27.
7. As above, p. 28.
8. Stavros Karakasis, *I zoi kai to ergo tou Nicou Nicolaide* [The life and work of Nicos Nicolaides] Cairo, 1953, p. 79.
9. For more, see. M. Marangoulis, as above, pp. 306-321.
10. Y.P. Savvides, *Ta Nea*, 16 March 1993 [= *To spiti tis mnimis* – The house of memory, Athens, 1997, pp. 125-126].
11. *Tahydromos*, Alexandria, 12 Sept. 1954.
12. D. Daskalopoulos, *Sympathitiki melani*, as above, pages 54-55.
13. See also Yiannis Katsouris, “Antonis Christodoulou. Mia proti prosengisi” [Antonis Christodoulou. A first approach] *Oi Kyprioi Logotehnes tis Aigyptou*, as above, pp. 163-173.



## From the Island of Aphrodite to *Terra Australis*: Greek-Cypriot Literary Writing in Australia

George Kanarakis\*

### RÉSUMÉ

La littérature hellénique de la diaspora n'a pas encore été étudiée et de façon générale elle est absente des histoires de la littérature néohellénique les plus «officielles». Un grand nombre de Chypriotes grecs (surtout après 1974) vivent en Australie. Beaucoup d'entre eux puisent leurs inspirations à partir du monde et des péripéties historiques de Chypre, de la vie de leur nouvelle patrie, mais aussi de ce qui se passe dans le monde. Ils écrivent des poèmes et des narrations en grec, plus rarement en dialecte chypriote, quelquefois en anglais.

### ABSTRACT

The Greek literature of the diaspora hasn't been studied yet and is generally ignored by most "official" neohellenic histories of literature. A great many Greek Cypriots live in Australia, especially since 1974, and a large number of Cypriot-Australian authors draw their inspiration from the people and historic adventures of their motherland, Cyprus, as well as from their new country and the world at large. They write poems or narratives in Greek, more rarely in the Cypriot dialect and sometimes in English.

The earliest substantiated presence of Greek Cypriots on the vast continent of the South was sporadic and isolated and goes back to the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The first quantitatively notable Greek-Cypriot immigration occurred about eighty years later – e.g. with 502 individuals in the entire country in 1933 and most settling in Sydney. Their number would climb after the post-war years, increasing impressively after the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974.

Purely coincidentally, the literary journey of the Greek Cypriots in Australia followed the same pattern. The earliest cases of Greek-Cypriot literary activity in this country occurred sporadically – the first in 1913 and

\* Charles Sturt University, Australia



the second thirteen years later. (Kanarakis, 1985, p. 101; Kanarakis, 1991<sup>2</sup>, p. 76; Kanarakis, 2003a, p. 57). The number of the writers grew slowly from the late 1940s onwards with a noticeable surge after 1974. Consequently, the significant increase in the number of Greek-Cypriot writers in Australia was directly related to two immigration waves of Greek Cypriots after World War II: the first from the end of the 1940s to mid-1950s and the second from the beginning of the 1970s (mainly after the invasion in 1974) until today.

In parallel, with the significant increase in Greek-Cypriot immigration to Australia after 1974, another factor, purely Australian, encouraged the upsurge of Greek-Cypriot literary writing. This was the social concept of multiculturalism, first officially endorsed in 1972 by the government of Gough Whitlam (Kanarakis, 2003a, pp. 92-93). Whitlam's government recognised and enthusiastically supported the idea and the practice of the maintenance of immigrant cultural heritage and the expression of the immigrants' ethnic identity through artistic channels, including literature.<sup>2</sup> Among all those Greek Cypriots who emigrated to Australia from the end of the 1940s until 1974, a number exhibited literary interest and talent. For a variety of reasons (economic, social, adjustment time to the new society, etc.), however, not all writers started writing in the years immediately after their arrival. Additionally, some of them had immigrated as children, while others, among whom some had already written and published literary works before emigrating, did not give evidence of their literary ability until years later.

The Greek-Cypriot literary tradition in Australia, established after World War II, was initiated decades before by two individuals. The first was George Nicolaides, an immigrant from the village of Livadia, Larnaca (Kanarakis, 2003b). Nicolaides is a pioneer in Greek-Cypriot Letters being the earliest Greek Cypriot to give us published literary writings as well as, coincidentally, the first published writer of Greek descent in general, making him the founder of literary activity in all Australian Hellenism.

Nicolaides' extant literary writings are short Greek-language narratives which became known through the Melbourne newspaper *Afstralia* [Australia], the first Greek newspaper in this country (Kanarakis, 2000, p. 25 and passim; Kanarakis, 2003a, pp. 197-199). His first published story, "The Aeroplane", appeared in *Afstralia* (Issue No. 5, July 4, 1913), twenty-eight days after the first circulation of the newspaper and just twenty-nine days after his arrival in Australia from Egypt.

Unwittingly Nicolaides became a ground-breaker in Greek-Cypriot literary

history. He made 1913 a turning point in this field because in that one year he gave us the first evidence of written literature, the first published literary writings and the first prose texts. Significantly 1913 became an inaugural year in the history of literature of Australian Hellenism as it was the year the newspaper *Afstralia* appeared in Melbourne. Before, there had been no Greek-language newspapers or periodicals anywhere in Australia, and as a result there was no public forum through which writers could appear. Even after 1913 the lack of Greek-language publishing companies meant that for several decades publishing would be limited to the facilities of the Greek newspapers of Sydney and Melbourne.

Before Nicolaides' immigration to Australia, this intelligent, well-read man had immersed himself in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Alexandria and then in the Greek community of Aswan, south of Cairo. His experiences helped to shape the dynamic and diverse role he pursued in Greek community life in Australia, where he initiated a number of completely original undertakings as a press owner, editor, publisher and contributor,<sup>3</sup> as well as a book compiler.<sup>4</sup> Nicolaides' few surviving short stories were published in the Melbourne newspaper *Afstralia*. Copied from an exercise book, this hand-written collection, entitled *Diigimata* [Short Stories], is signed and dated (1.3.13) by him. Written when Nicolaides was a young man, they reveal influence of the nineteenth century Romantic period in Greece with its inherent tone of sentimental melancholy, frequently employing the dream as a literary device. They demonstrate an attempt by Nicolaides to move away from a simple story line to a more complex one.

If Nicolaides was the first Greek Cypriot (and first person of Greek descent) who opened the field of literature in print in Australia, the second of the two pre-World War II published writers was Edward Parry. He is acknowledged as the first Greek-Cypriot to publish English-language poems, short stories, long narratives, one-act plays, literary biographies of Greeks of antiquity and the Greek Revolution, and translations of Greek and Cypriot folk poems, including the "Hymn to Liberty" by Dionysios Solomos, as well as adaptations into English of Byzantine and Modern Greek prose works and poems (Kanarakis, 1985, pp. 101-102; Kanarakis, 1991<sup>2</sup>, pp. 76-77; Kanarakis, 1997, p. 108). Additionally he wrote and published a few Greek-language poems. Parry's original contribution lies in the fact that he was the first to initiate literature in the English language with publications in various genres.

What gave this prolific writer an advantage were the family, educational and social conditions which he experienced in contrast to Nicolaides. Born

in England (Liverpool), Parry completed secondary and university studies in English and French literature. His fluency in Greek was due to his Cypriot mother (his father was a Welsh seaman) and later (because of her influence) to the fact that the subjects he pursued at university included Ancient Greek, Byzantine and Modern Greek language and literature, interests which he never abandoned.

Parry, settled in Sydney from 1915 and socialising with the Greek people of that city, with whom he used the name Antonios Parris, published his writings exclusively in the Sydney newspaper *Panellinios Kiryx* [Panhellenic Herald] (Australia's second oldest Greek newspaper until today). He became a regular contributor from its first issue of 16 November 1926 until 9 July 1942 when he became ill and his contributions stopped abruptly. Some of the poems Parry published in *Panellinios Kiryx* in 1926-27 constitute part of his English-language poetry collection *Greek Anthology* which unfortunately was never published.

Therefore, before the beginning of World War II, in addition to George Nicolaides, the only other Greek-Cypriot writer whom my research has uncovered is the prolific Edward Parry. This small number of writers in those years is understandable since their number and rate of their increase are always proportionate to the size of their particular immigrant community and, of course, relevant to the annual net immigration intake from their homeland. The pre-World War II Greek-Cypriot immigration was significantly low resulting in a very slow rate of population growth overall. The Australian censuses record (including the few Cypriots not of Greek origin) 17 first-generation Cypriots in 1901, 26 in 1911, 40 in 1921 and 502 in 1933 (Price, 1990. See also Price, 2001, p. 419). After the war, however, an increasingly large scale Cypriot immigration to Australia was noted. It reflected the civil tension and turmoil as well as underemployment resulting from the war in Cyprus itself and the high demand for labour in an expanding Australian economy. So the Cypriot population in Australia started increasing quite rapidly: 681 Cypriots in 1947, 5773 in 1954, 10 703 in 1966, and especially in the years after the Turkish invasion: 22 216 in 1976, 24 038 in 1986 and 25 480 in 1990 (Price, 1990; Price, 2001, p. 419. See also Price, 1981, Table 2.1, pp. 10-11). It is not surprising that there were correspondingly more Cypriot immigrants with abilities and interests in literary writing.

The literature of the Greek Cypriots in Australia is an established corpus exhibiting vitality in its character and originality and variety in its genres,

themes, as well as its styles and forms. It consists mainly of prose and poetry works spanning from the humorous and light-hearted to the nostalgic and from social and political satire to the dramatic. The prose includes short stories, novels, children's literature, literary translations, etc., while poetry, ranges from the lyric to the epic, and includes oral versifications. Many poetic compositions follow the Modern Greek traditional rhyming verse which is based on the rhythmic speech pattern and in some cases imitates Cypriot folk songs. Free verse is used as well, while more recent years have witnessed modernistic works adding new dimensions and a new dynamism to Cypriot writing. Finally, playwriting comparatively is represented by few writers, with most plays remaining in manuscript form waiting to be staged or published.<sup>5</sup>

The largest part of this literature consists of published works – books, as well as prose and poetry compositions which appeared in Greek community newspapers and magazines. Quite a few works remained unpublished because of the financial limitations of their creators resulting either in being published long after they were written or remaining buried in personal papers and family albums. There was also often a lack of self-confidence in their talent or because these unpretentious and spontaneous oral improvisations were intended to entertain an audience and to provide social commentary, rather than to be published.

If literature reflects the state of the world and life itself, it should not be a surprise that immigrant writers keep returning to certain subjects, i.e. the distressing experiences of immigrant life, nostalgia for the homeland and the people left behind, the Odysseic dream of return, etc. Because of the particular characteristics of the geographical, sociocultural, linguistic and other conditions under which the Greek-Cypriot writers live and work, as well as the intellectual, historical and literary heritage they have carried with them or by which they have been deeply influenced, Cyprus plays a significant role. Whether as a source of direct influence or as a point of reference, the presence of Cyprus appears intense and multidimensional. It is evident in the reflection of rural and urban customs and mores, in the description of the natural beauty of the land, even in the memories and references to events related to the social, cultural and politico-military past of Cyprus (EOKA's struggle, the coup against Archbishop Makarios, the Turkish invasion, eviction and displacement in their own homeland, etc.).

It must not be assumed, however, that the writers of Cypriot origin restrict themselves to issues related only to Cyprus. There have always been works

written on a wide range of subjects, influenced, for example, by the effects of war, the global environment, international cultural trends, and social upheavals. In parallel with these influences there is the dynamic and broad influence of Greece (mythology, history, etc.) and of Australia (the impact of the physical and social environments, the immigrant's struggle in the new society, children caught between two cultures, etc.), as also happens with writers from Greece (Kanarakis, 1985, p. 5 and *passim* and Kanarakis 1991<sup>2</sup>, p. 3 and *passim*).

Up to now most of these literary works have been written in Greek, with quite a few in English. The Greek-language works, apart from Modern Greek Koine, have also been composed in the Cypriot idiom. These are of particular significance because they continue the Cypriot folk language tradition in a land culturally and historically different. They not only preserve it from inevitable disappearance in this country, but they give a new dimension to the entire body of the Cypriot and Greek literature in the Antipodes. In certain cases, for the sake of stylistic, socio-historical and other purposes, the writer uses both language forms in the same piece of work.

The Greek-Cypriot writers in their majority are first generation immigrants, including those who arrived in childhood, and a continuously increasing number of Australian-born individuals who write their works mainly in English. The content of many of their works, of either case, confirms that not only have they not been cut off from their Cypriot roots but that they also reflect the Cypriot family and the values of the Cypriot culture.

Of course, not all Greek-Cypriot writers are of the same high literary stature but undoubtedly the majors as well as the minors, according to the degree of their sensitivity and natural talent, contribute positively to the formulation of the fabric of this literature.

This literary corpus is not monopolised by men. Not only do we have a female Greek-Cypriot, and in general female Greek, literary presence, but additionally as the years pass, the more it becomes qualitatively felt, energetic and vital, with the clear imprint of its gender. Yet their numbers, despite their steady increase, have been and continue to be disproportionate compared to that of men. This phenomenon is directly related to demographic, social, cultural and family factors which have influenced the Greek-Cypriot woman's role and place in both the Greek community and the wider Australian society, a situation which started changing after the War due to the increased Greek-Cypriot immigrant numbers and also to the changing times.<sup>6</sup>

Almost all immigrant women writers started evidencing their literary ability and interest during the years after World War II, some as late as the decade of the 1970s and onwards. The reasons, apart from the increase of the post-War arrivals of Greek Cypriots, included: a) Greek-Cypriot immigrant women, at least since the mid-1960s, were more educated in comparison with those of the 1950s and the pre-War period; b) life in Australia was developing, broadening their experiences, and encouraging their intellectual and social independence; c) the appearance of multiculturalism in the 1970s encouraged the migrants to maintain their language and cultural patterns and through the Australia Council, started supporting their literary activities; and d) the post-War multiplication of Greek newspapers and magazines encouraged literary activity (Kanarakis, 2000, pp. 46, 81-98). To these Greek-language Cypriot women, we must add those born in Australia.

The women writers presented here are those who either emigrated to Australia or were born in this country up until 1974. They share a common characteristic in that all of them have written poetry in a variety of thematic landscapes. With a few exceptions, the rest have served other literary genres as well, such as short story writing, the novel and even playwrighting. Thematically the traditional theme of *xenitia* has taken on another form, with the writers displaying a different attitude revealing how facing life in the foreign land has changed. Some treat *xenitia* with sensitivity yet as a negative factor in immigrant life; others see it as a challenge which leads to increasing maturity and a wider perception of reality.

The first woman writer under examination is Zeny Giles, the Sydney-born daughter of a Cypriot father and Castellorizian mother. A multi-award winning English-language writer, Giles made her first literary appearance in the anthology *Hunter Valley Poets 1973*, while her first published prose piece appeared in 1979 in the *School Magazine* (New South Wales Department of Education). Since then she has contributed short stories and poems to various literary journals (*SCOPP*, *Inprint*, *Mattoïd*) and to newspapers (*The Newcastle Herald* and the *Age*) and has been included in several Australian poetry and prose anthologies. She has to her credit two short story collections (*Miracle of Waters*, Penguin, 1989 and *Caught in the Light*, Catchfire Press, 2002), one poetry collection (*Blackbutt Honey*, Koel Publications, 2005) and the novel *Between Two Worlds* (Saturday Centre Press, 1981) about a young Greek girl confronted by adversity and caught between two cultures in Australia.

Several other Greek-Cypriot women have followed Giles' creative path, most of them immigrants themselves (at least two, Dhora Moustrides and Anastasia Gonis, in childhood) and fewer born in Australia. Two of them, Aliki Roussou who emigrated in 1955 from Yermassoyia of Limassol, and Dhora Moustrides, from Eftagonia of Limassol who arrived in 1956, have found interest in poetic expression. Roussou composes poetry in Greek. Her poems are noted for their sensitive and unpretentious lyricism. Moustrides writes poetry in both Greek and English, frequently incorporating elements of her original Cypriot dialect. Her voice is dynamic and her themes quite provocative and varied, ranging from time and territory in mothers' and daughters' interrelationships to the diachrony and beauty of love to matters of her Cypriot heritage. In 1995 three of her poems were performed in "Women Folk: A Celebration of Women and Dance" under the aegis of the Adelaide Folk Society.

More Greek-Cypriot women extended their writing activities to other genres. To this group belong Anastasia Gonis from Limassol who emigrated to Australia in early childhood in 1952, Laura Palmer from Nicosia in 1973, Angela Costi born in Sydney, and Claire Gazi from Kaimakli near Nicosia who arrived in 1967.

Gonis, an English-language writer, started publishing in the early 1990s, although she had begun writing stories earlier. Her first published work was the short story "My Best Friends" in the Melbourne journal *Inkshed* 2 in 1991, followed in 1992 by a poem, "Under the Influence" in the *Box Hill College Magazine*. Since then she has published more poetry and short stories in the Melbourne journals *Inkshed* and *Antipodes*, as well as non-fiction in the newspapers *The Age*, the *West Australian*, the magazine *New Woman* and elsewhere. Her short stories have been included in anthologies and she has been acclaimed for the quality of her work. She has also received an Arts Victoria Grant for her autobiography *Prints of the Past*. Many of the subjects Gonis deals with relate to the experiences of her own immigrant life: internal discord and conflict as outcomes of cultural and environmental differences, social and geographical dislocation and alienation, the desperate efforts of the immigrant "to balance the two cultures".

Laura Palmer is a bilingual writer who, before coming to Australia, spent four years in London studying English language. Her literary activity occurred mainly in the 1980s while living in Sydney. The small number of powerful poems and short stories she wrote were published in literary journals of Sydney, such as *Aspect* and *To Yiofyri* [The Bridge]. She has also

published a few literary essays and has translated into Greek poems by Antigone Kefala, a noted Australian poet and prose writer of Greek origin, who Palmer acknowledged has influenced her own poetry writing.

Angela Costi and Claire Gonis are connected by a common link – the theatre. Costi, an English-language writer, has revealed a passion for the theatre on all levels as writer, actor and producer, since a university student. In 1995 this interest was expanded by an Australian National Languages and Literary Board travel grant which allowed her to study classic Greek theatre in Greece and Cyprus.

Within a year of her return, Costi had completed her first and best known play *Panayiota*, in which she explores the intense conflict and cultural differences experienced by second and third generation Greek Australians of Cypriot origin. In September 1996, the play was adapted for radio and produced on Radio National ABC and in June 1997 was first performed in Melbourne. It has also been published in the journal *Australasian Drama Studies* (Queensland University Press, April 1998) and selected by the Australian Script Centre for its '99 *Collection*. Other plays and poetic narratives she has written include *The Sounds of Incense* produced by Radio National ABC (1998), *Welcome Matt* (City of Kingston, 2000) and *Shimmer* (City of Darebin, 2001), all receiving critical acclaim. Costi continues to compose and perform poetry as well as write short fiction and essays, quite frequently reflecting her rich Cypriot heritage, and her work appears in prestigious print and online publications in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. Her two collections, *Dinted Halos* (Hit and Miss Publication, 2003) and the CD, *Prayers for the Wicked* (a selection of poetry put to music and soundscape launched in Melbourne in 2005), include lyrical and evocative verse. Currently she has been working on a third collection entitled *Honey and Salt Mix*.

Claire Gazis, a Greek-language writer, achieved recognition in 1997 when her short story "Itan Panselinos" received the second prize in the short-story competition of the Greek Australian Cultural League of Melbourne. Apart from a few short stories and poems, her original contribution lies in children's theatre. Gazis is the only Greek-Cypriot woman writer and one of the few Greek writers who has devoted her creative energy to this important area of art for children, both as stage production and theatre literature. Located in Melbourne, she has published two plays in book form, the three-act play *Oi galazopetres tou Ioniou* [The Ionian Bluestones] (2004) and the two-act play, *Stin Kastalia piyi* [At the Kastalia Spring]: *Our Water Our Future* (2006). The



first is directed at ten to fifteen-year-olds and is an enchanting tale of the magic birth of the Seven Islands in Greece, i.e. the *galazopetres tou Ioniou*. The play is theatrically well structured and convincingly conveys messages related to global coexistence, universal brotherhood and living in harmony with nature. The second work, published under the sponsorship of the Multicultural Commission of Victoria, Australia, aims to teach children, through the use of Greek mythology and the setting of the plot at the ancient site of the Castalia spring at Delphi, about the ecological issues related to the use of water in areas with dry climates, such as Cyprus and Australia. Both plays have been commended (2004 and 2005 correspondingly) by the Agelidis Foundation of Australia. The first play was also staged on the island of Lefkada in the summer cultural festival of the Palestrinian School. Currently, Gazis is working on a third play for children, *Diamantenia tou Notou* [Diamantenia of the South].

The production of Greek-Cypriot men, on the other hand, has its own merit. From the historical aspect, with the exception of George Nicolaides and Edward Parry, it appears from the end of World War II onwards.

The earliest Greek-language Cypriot I have traced<sup>7</sup> is the journalist and lawyer Dionysios Koutsakos from Paphos (Kanarakis, 1985, pp. 208-212 and Kanarakis, 1991<sup>2</sup>, pp. 153-156), who immigrated to Australia from Athens in 1948 and settled in Brisbane. From 1950 to 1952 he published and edited the weekly *Ellino-Australiana Nea* [Greek-Australian News]. His literary activity included novellas, travel stories, literary feature articles which he himself published or which appeared in other newspapers and periodicals of Cyprus, Greece and Australia. Many of these works satirised Greek customs, such as matchmaking, comical Greek community characters, etc., and appeared in his regular Greek-language column under the nom de plume “Eavesdropper”. Koutsakos’ aim was to sensitize the Greeks of Australia and encourage them to be proud of their country of origin and represent it worthily. At the end of 1992 he published a book in Sydney entitled *Ena kai Ena* [One and One], comprised of two long prose pieces, one narrative travel story set in Australia and one on current affairs, satirical in tone but serious in aim, that recounts both the day-to-day events of life and incidents from his years of experience in courthouses. What distinguishes him from other writers, however, are the efforts he made in the area of children’s literature. He provides us with the first evidence of writing for children.<sup>8</sup> Koutsakos’ interesting and somewhat didactic children’s stories regularly appeared in his newspaper in the Greek-language “Children’s Column” under the noms de plume “Grandpa” and “Aunt Mary”.

The year 1949 saw another three immigrants from Cyprus arrive who would make their impact on literary writing in Australia. They were Theodore Xenophou from Polystypos, a mountainous village of Pitsilia, Peter (Panayiotis) Lyssiotis from Xylotymbou of Larnaca who came at the age of five with his mother, and Costas Athanasiadis from Kalavassos of Larnaca.

Xenophou had already published two historical novels (*Brosta ston olethro* [Face to Face with Calamity] (1948) and *Oi Kataramenoi* [The Damned] (1948, 1950), the latter covering the history of Cyprus from 1821 to 1831) before coming to Australia in 1949. His return to writing came some twenty years later after establishing himself in his new homeland. Apart from his English-language novel on the struggle of EOKA, entitled *The Trojan Donkey* (Castle Publishing, 1989), he has written other English-language novels and made his mark as the first Cypriot writer to focus on contemporary social and scientific issues relating to the pollution of the environment and global warming (*Mountain in the Sky*, Castle Publishing, 1982), dealing with modern science fiction (*The Last God on Earth*, 2000) as well as human cloning in Australia and related ethical and social problems (*Sunset at Dawn*, unpublished). Furthermore, his original approach is exemplified in two Greek-language poems, *Iliolousta skotadia* [Sunlit Darkness] (1989) and *Ealo I polis* [Constantinople Has Fallen] (1989 unpublished), the former on the 1974 coup against Archbishop Makarios and the latter on the last fifty-nine days of the siege of Constantinople. Here Xenophou's originality lies in the structure of the poems, both heroic epics in style and length (7222 and 7500 fifteen-syllable lines in couplets respectively), with dialogue parts in the Cypriot dialect, and in addition his use in the former of the ancient technique, first encountered in Homer's *Odyssey* (Raps. XI), of the protagonist's descent into Hades.

Despite the adversities experienced in his new homeland, Xenophou's thematic interests have not been attracted to the usual immigrant subjects but almost totally inspired by the tragic history of his birthplace, Cyprus, as well as of Constantinople and by contemporary issues relating to science and the environment.

Similar problems in modern society, such as isolation and dislocation, exploitation, inequality, etc., trouble the widely regarded poet and avant-garde artist, photographer and photomonteur Peter Lyssiotis. Since 1975 in his innovative work Lyssiotis has followed a multi-communicative approach, combining text with the visual impact of his creative photography and surrealist photomontage.

Up to now his books include *Journey of a Wise Electron and Other Stories* (Champion Books, 1981), *Three Cheers for Civilization* (Champion Books, 1985), *Harbour Breathes*, with Anna Couani (Sea Cruise Books and Masterthief Enterprises, 1989), *CDs and Other Stories*, with Gyorgy Scrinis (Masterthief, 1994). His lyric poetry up to 1975 appeared in Greek in various community literary journals (*Allayi*, *Chronico*, *Epaphi*) and in his 2004 English-language collection *The Bird, the Belltower* (Owl Publishing, and in Greek translation with English introduction by Dimitris Vardoulakis in 2005). He has also published another fourteen books in limited editions (books of artwork) and produced films and videos.

The third writer of this group is Costas Athanasiadis<sup>9</sup> who emigrated to Melbourne in 1949 where he worked as a journalist for the Greek community newspapers *Afstralioellinas* [Australian Greek] and *Elliniki Phoni* [Hellenic Voice]. In May 1959 he emigrated again, this time to Astoria, New York, where he worked as a journalist for *Ethnikos Kirykas* until eighteen months later he bought the Greek-language newspaper *Campana* [The Bell], founded in 1917. During his residence in Australia Athanasiadis revealed his literary talent publishing a few poems but mainly short stories in newspapers and periodicals of Cyprus, Greece and Australia. Many of his short stories comprise light-hearted romances while others deal with social issues such as unemployment, family financial difficulties, the adversities of immigrant life, etc. Athanasiadis' pioneering contribution, however, is his novel *Daphne Miller* published in Melbourne in 1954. This is the first novel to appear in the Greek Letters of Australian Hellenism. It presents the story of the main character, a liberated, cosmopolitan woman, whose life is traced from a village near Rouen, France, through her entire immigrant life in Melbourne where she finally settles. Thematically and structurally this novel reminds us of the literature of the Romantic Movement in Greece. After Athanasiadis' emigration to the USA, this popular novel, which was already out of print, was published again, but in English translation. Finally, while still in Australia, in 1952 he published his Greek translation of Frank Hardy's short story "The Man from Clinkapella" in *Ellinoafstraliani Epitheorisi* [Greek Australian Review].

The exceptional folk versifier Charalambos Azinos from Philousa of Kelokedaron, Paphos<sup>10</sup> also belongs to the post-war writers of the 1950s. From 1956 when he emigrated to Melbourne, Azinos became well known for taking every opportunity to improvise oral verses to entertain, satirize, tease or just describe an event, out of a true spirit of genuine merriment and spontaneity. His verses, thematically reflecting everyday life, people and

situations in Cyprus and Australia, are noted for their smartness and humour, even for their often frequent obscene language. His poetic logos, traditionally rhyming and based on the tempo of the Cypriot idiom, follows the *myllomena traouthkia* [oral songs] of his homeland, not only in style but also in language, structure and technique. Two collections survive: *Oula ta satirika traouthkia ston paron tomon* <sic> [All the Satirical Songs in This Volume] (Limassol, 1972) published when in Cyprus for a visit and encouraged by friends, and *Ta myllomena traouthkia tou X.M. Azinou* [The Oral Songs of C.M. Azinos] (Nicosia, 1985) by Kapa G. Lamachos.<sup>11</sup>

Since the 1950s the Cypriot population has continued to increase. In 1966 the Cypriots in Australia had reached 10 703 (Price 1990). Among them was Haris Siamaris, from Lefkonoiko of Ammochostos, who had emigrated to Melbourne that year. He has produced two works, *Ta traouthkia tou horkati* [The Peasant's Songs] (Melbourne, 1995), poems published weekly during 1979 in the Melbourne newspaper *Neos Kosmos* and a collection of literary feature articles, *I phoni tou horkati* [The Peasant's Voice] (Nicosia: Presidential Commissioner's Office Publications, 2003), in 1978-80, also in *Neos Kosmos*.

Siamaris' poetic and prose works are characterised by the immediacy of his life experiences and the spontaneous expression of his feelings, all dressed in the lively Cypriot idiom. Sensitive, cleverly satirical and always amusing, he brings to mind the old folk *poiitarides* and the storytellers of daily reality, while his themes cover the gamut of Greek-Cypriot life in Australia, particularly in Melbourne with frequent references to the customs and mores of Cyprus and Cypriot culture in general. Ultimately, Siamaris' poetry and prose carry historical and folklore value for anyone interested in the Greek-Cypriot diaspora.

Finally, one of the last Greek-Cypriot writers who emigrated to Australia before the Turkish invasion is Christos Moudouros also from Polystypos of Pitsilia. He arrived with his family in 1972 and has resided in Adelaide since. Moudouros is a prose writer who started in his youth with short stories published in local newspapers and where in 1963 he won the first prize in a pan-Cypriot short story competition sponsored by the newspaper *Haravyi*. His literary energy came to the fore in Australia where he produced two short story collections, *I istoria mias eikonas kai alla diigimata* [The Story of an Icon and Other Short Stories] (1998, awarded first prize in 2000 in the Angelidio Foundation Pan-Australian Competition) and *Synevissan sti yi ton ayion* [These Occurred in the Land of the Saints] (2001), one novel, *I patitzii* [The Plague] (1994), and two collections of feature articles, *Mnimes kai sholia* [Memories

and Comments] (2002) from his column of the same title in the Adelaide newspaper *Paroikiako Vima* [Community Tribune] and *Taxidiotikes entyposeis kai diafora sholia* [Travel Impressions and Various Comments] (2007).

Moudouros' writings reveal his internal world, sensationally charged by the traumatic experiences of the tragedy of Cyprus and his personal interpretation and attitudes towards contemporary local, Cypriot and international issues. Moudouros has made a special literary contribution with *I patizii*, the first Greek-language folklore novel, delving into the treasury of his rich Cypriot heritage and culture, based on a folk story about a deadly plague which had spread throughout the island. For a more authentic effect Moudouros has his characters speak in the Cypriot dialect.

Although the majority of Greek-Cypriot writers in Australia are first generation immigrants, there is a continuously increasing number of English-language writers. They consist of the Australian-born, those who immigrated in childhood, and a few born or who lived in English-speaking environments other than Australia.

Among those born in Australia are Michael G. Michael and George Papaellinas from Sydney and John Charalambous from Melbourne.

Michael, a perfect bilingual, derives his Cypriot heritage from his father. He has extensive intellectual interests in philosophy, theology and literature which are reflected in his passion for literary writing, especially poetry. Many of his poems have appeared in Greek community newspapers and English-language journals such as *Westerly*, *Southerly*, *Studio*, *Ulitarra*, as well as in a number of Greek and Australian anthologies. Two of his short stories, "Associations A" and "Associations B" have received a "Worthy of Mention" from the Fellowship of Australian Writers (1998) and a "Highly Commended" in the Tom Howard Short Story Contest (2000). In 1992 Michael's poetry collection *Isle of Driftwood* appeared (Standard Publishing House), while several others (*Little Icons*, *Another Version of the Events* and *Parables*) and a volume of prose (*Short Stories Off the Wind*) await publication. He was invited by the International Library of Poetry to contribute to the anthology *Memories of the Millenium* (2000), and he has received a number of Australian poetry awards.

This gifted man's writings are sensitive and humble of heart and soul, bringing truth, understanding, and faith to a questing world. As Alison White, editor of *The Australasian Journal of New Poets*, wrote in 1992, "M.G. Michael's poetry is as surprising and unusual as the man himself", and in 1991 the publishers Elephas Books of Western Australia had noted, "Mr

Michael's poems are gentle and flow softly, but often their meaning carries a surprising sting of realisation or of truth".

George Papaellinas has made his mark with his short stories and novels. He first appeared in 1980, when still a university student, with the short prose work "No Second Thoughts" in *Newsweek*, the journal of the New South Wales Institute of Technology. Among other literary initiatives, in 1985 he founded the "Writers in the Park" readings at the Harold Park Hotel in Sydney and organised them over a number of years while in 1988 he started "Dis/Unities", the Writers Week part of Carnivale, Sydney multicultural festival. His first book was a short story collection, *Ikons* (Penguin, 1986, repr. 1990), followed in 1997 by his novel *No* (Vintage Press).

The eight stories in *Ikons* revolve around the Mavromatis family from Cyprus and their experiences with the loss of homeland and the strangeness of their new socio-cultural environment as well as the Australian-born grandson's search for identity and sense of place. The publishers comment that *Ikons* presents "a vivid and contentious portrayal of a family united only by society's view of them as outsiders" and sum up the author's intention as "an attempt to work through identity issues".

In his novel *No*, Papaellinas portrays an unemployed Greek youth who, in a 500-page monologue, ends his tirade emphatically, rejecting society as announced in the title of the book. The hero, a type of social misfit, accepts the reality that he, and people like him, have no place in this world, while the reader feels assured that these figures become more prominent as the gap between rich and poor in modern society widens.

Papaellinas has completed another novel, *Piecework*, and a film, *Baby Baby*. He has edited several anthologies (including the work of young writers) such as *Homeland* (Allen and Unwin, 1991), *Harbour* (Picador, 1993), *Gang* (Angus and Robertson, 1996), *More Beautiful Lies* (Random House, 1996), as well as the journal *Republica* (Harper Collins, early 1990s). In 1980 he was awarded a Young Writer's Fellowship by the Literature Board of Australia Council and in 1981 the Marten Bequest for a prose writer.

John Charalambous is the son of a Greek-Cypriot father and an Anglo-Australian mother. Born and educated in Melbourne, he began writing fiction while studying literature and creative writing at Melbourne University. Some of his early efforts appeared in Australian newspapers and magazines such as *The Bulletin Literary Supplement*. His two recent novels, *Furies* (University of Queensland Press, 2004) and *Silent Parts* (University of Queensland Press, 2006) have been acclaimed for their realism, sincerity and human warmth.

In the *Furies*, drawing on the author's own experiences in rural Victoria, this novel's central theme revolves around the main character, a Melbourne-born Greek woman, her failed search for an idyllic life away from the big city, and her resulting frustration by the reality she encounters, as well as the feelings of loneliness and isolation due to the lack of tolerance and acceptance of the people of the small-minded country town where she settles. This latter point is skilfully reflected by the title of the novel which refers to the vengeful figures of Ancient Greek mythology.

Charalambous' second novel, *Silent Parts*, is an unconventional and complex story about an Australian soldier in World War I who never returned, a fact which led to the rise of various speculations among his relatives until his great niece undertakes to separate myth from reality and reconstruct the true story. This book is not an account of battles and bloodshed, but as the critic Peter Pierce has suggested "one of the most poignant and unusual reflections on war and remembrance".

Finally, unusual cases yet still belonging to this group of language writers of Greek-Cypriot descent are those born not in Cyprus or in Australia but in a country of the Cypriot diaspora. The first is Laurence (Larry) Darrell (nom de plume of Solon Papadopoulos), borrowed from the leading character in Somerset Maugham's novel *The Razor's Edge*. Of Greek-Cypriot parentage, Darrell was born and grew up in cosmopolitan Alexandria where he got his education and became fluent in English. He felt the inclination for literary writing, in English, at the age of sixteen. A British subject during the Second World War, he served in the British navy. A year before his emigration to Melbourne in 1948, he published three short stories in an English-language newspaper in Alexandria. In Australia, it took him years to resume writing. In the early 1980s he wrote his first poem, "The Creator's Might". In 1999 he published his first collection of poetry and short essays entitled *Who Am I? A Poetic and Philosophic Journey of Self-Expression and Exploration* (London: Minerva Press). Today, Darrell writes poetry and short narratives with a compelling sincerity often addressing concerns of global human concern.

The second writer of this last group is the philosopher-poet A.B. Palma. Born in London, Greek-Cypriot on his father's side and British on his mother's, he lived his first seventeen years in Cyprus where he completed high school in Famagusta. This period influenced him to the extent that, although his poems have a cosmopolitan character and philosophical insight, those referring to Cyprus, thematically and even geographically, remind us of the island's rich culture and vitality. Palma lived in Paris and after his service in the

RAAF, he emigrated to Australia in 1951/52, settling in Sydney. In 1981 he published his only book of poems, *Stones in Summer* (Hale and Ironmonger), a selection of poems he wrote over twenty years. Palma was not a professional poet, nor part of the poetic establishment, however his poetry is carefully crafted, always honest, romantic but intelligent, alive and engaging. He admitted to me that he had been influenced by Sikelianos, Palamas, T.S. Eliot and the philosopher Wittgenstein. After his death in 1990, a three-act verse play, *Another World*, completed in 1987 was found unpublished. The philosophical trend of the play is indicated by the characters: Socrates, Plato, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and also Antonio and Higgins.

Without doubt, these are not the only literary exponents of Greek-Cypriot descent in Australia. There are others as well who, according to their talent and dedication, contribute to the growth and flowering of this body of literature in all its genres, forms and subjects. From the one writer at the beginning of the twentieth century, the post-war waves of Greek-Cypriot immigration caused a corresponding increase in the number of writers. These waves became the creative source for Australian-born writers of Greek-Cypriot descent. The result has been not only a significant increase of produced literary works but also a deeper maturity with some of these Greek-Cypriot writers already being acknowledged even beyond the boundaries of Australia. In addition, many of these writers dynamically maintain the literary traditions of Cyprus and eloquently keep alive the memory of the long heroic struggles of the Cypriot people and convey the worthy spirit of Cyprus.

## NOTES

This article comprises the first part of the literary contribution of the Greek Cypriots in Australia and considers the writers who emigrated to or were born in Australia until 1974. My colleague Maria Herodotou's article takes this study up to the present day.

1. The first documented Greek-Cypriot immigrant to Australia, Antonis Giovanni Meringas (known as Tony Miranda) arrived from England to Victoria in December 1854, attracted by the gold rushes. Another similar but not fully documented case is that of Yiorgis Kalenidis, who, for the same reason and around the same time, arrived in Sydney and settled in the gold mining town of Ballarat, Victoria. For Meringas, see Epaminondas, (October) 1984, p. 13. Cf. Price, 2001, p. 419 and Gilchrist, 1992, p. 100. For Kalenidis see Epaminondas, (September) 1984, p. 19.



2. Multiculturalism consisted of three main concepts which were a careful balance of social cohesion, cultural identity and equality of opportunity and access. Later, in 1982, under another government a fourth concept was added, that of equality (equal responsibility for, equal commitment to and equal participation in society). See also Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Office of Multicultural Affairs), 1989 p. vii.
3. Nicolaides' contribution is evidenced by his weekly newspaper *Okeanis* (1914-1916) published first in Adelaide and since 30 July 1915 in Sydney, the second newspaper of the Greek press in Australia, and his illustrated monthly magazine *Parthenon* (1921), the third Greek-language magazine in this country and the first in Sydney. See also Kanarakis, 2000, pp. 57-59, 61; Kanarakis, 2003b, pp. 74-77, 82-83, 110-111 [Bilingual].
4. In 1915/1916 Nicolaides published in his newspaper's printing facilities *Pragmateia peri ithikis* [Treatise on Ethics], the first Greek-language book in Australia, a Greek translation by the Sydney teacher Dimitris Sigalos of a treatise by Jules Payot, Chancellor of the University of Aix in France. Later, in 1929, he compiled the book *Diethnis emborikos odigos 1927/International Directory of 1927* which he co-published with Andreas Papadopoulos from Ithaca and George Etrelezis from Castellorizo through their company International Publications, Ltd. See also Kanarakis, 2000, p. 61 and Kanarakis, 2003b, pp. 106-109 and 124-139 correspondingly [Bilingual].
5. Apart from playwriting, there have been contributions to stage production and performance. One impressive theatre personality was Chrysostomos Mantouridis born in Cairo in 1915 of Cypriot parents. Devoted to the art of the theatre as a stage producer, actor, set designer, painter, sculptor and writer, from 1950 to 1979 he successfully staged over thirty plays in Sydney. See also Kanarakis, 1993 and Kanarakis 2003/2004, pp. 205-206.
6. For statistics of Greek women in Australia before World War II and the social constraints which kept them from getting involved in activities, such as literary writing, see Kanarakis, 2001, pp. 77, 78-79, 210, 212-213 [Bilingual].
7. The limitations of space do not allow me to present all male Greek-Cypriot writers. Therefore, I include writers who are distinguished by their original contributions, who initiated a genre or a particular type of literary work, etc.
8. Children's literature was neglected even by the Greek-born writers in Australia. It wasn't until the 1970s that writers, mainly women, began focusing vigorously on producing works in a variety of forms (poems, short stories, novels, etc.) for children in Greek and English.
9. My research recently uncovered further details about Athanasiades' life and literary activities in Australia and the USA. Cf. Kanarakis, 1985, pp. 225-226; Kanarakis, 1991<sup>2</sup>, pp. 169-170.

10. Other folk versifiers (*poiitarides*) belonging to this category include: John Neophytou from Achna of Paphos and Andreas Dimitriou-Diamantis, who both emigrated in 1951; John Papadopoulos from Pano Kyvides of Limassol (who produced poems, many satirical, novellas, plays and other narratives in Cypriot idiom), and Euthemios Louka from Aradippou (see his collection *Tha grafo, tha fonazo* [I'll Write, I'll Shout], Larnaca, 2003), who arrived in Australia in 1972 and 1969 respectively. Maria Herodotou (1999, p. 249) also mentions Christos Violaris, Kostas Georgiou, Soteriou and Kappalis. Some produced oral and/or written compositions either in the Cypriot dialect or in Modern Greek Koine or in a mixed form.
11. Lamachos published these poems based on an audio tape sent to him by the poet shortly before his death in 1979. He classifies them into *myllomena* of a few lines and *narrative myllomena*. See also K.G. Yiangoullis, 1995, pp. 45-71.

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## Cypriot Writers of the Diaspora

Maria Herodotou\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article un effort est fait de présenter les auteurs chypriotes grecs de la période après la Seconde Guerre Mondiale qui résident dans les plus grands centres de la diaspora grecque (ou qui y ont vécu pour un certain nombre d'années), comme la Grande Bretagne, l'Australie, le Canada et les États-Unis, où ils produisent leur œuvre littéraire. Mon but est de fournir aux chercheurs ou aux lecteurs intéressés un guide sur la vie de ces auteurs et leur œuvre, aussi bien que de faire reconnaître leur contribution à leur mère patrie et leur nouveau pays. Les auteurs sont présentés par ordre alphabétique. Cette présentation n'est pas complète, comme beaucoup de facteurs ont limité l'étendue de ma recherche. J'espère que celle-ci sera mieux étoffée plus tard.

### ABSTRACT

In this paper an attempt is being made to present Greek Cypriot writers of the post-World War II era, who reside in major centres of the Greek Diaspora (or who lived there for a number of years), such as Great Britain, Australia, Canada and the USA, where they have produced their literature. My aim is to provide interested researchers or readers a guide to these writers and their work, as well as to acknowledge their contribution to both their homeland and their new country. The writers are presented alphabetically. This presentation is not complete, as many factors have limited the scope of my research. I hope that it will be expanded at a later stage.

The movement of people from country to country either as colonists or as migrants (for various reasons) is an ancient phenomenon. The experience of migration is marked in Cyprus, which throughout its history has experienced invasions, occupations and political crises that have resulted in difficult social and economical situations for its people. In this paper, I will focus on the literary production of Cypriot writers who migrated to other countries in the post war period<sup>1</sup> and mainly after the Turkish invasion of 1974, which constitutes an important turning point in contemporary Cypriot migration. Many Greek Cypriots became refugees and were forced

\* La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

to migrate to countries such as England, Australia, Canada, the USA, Greece, etc. Cypriots, who migrated after 1974, were better educated in comparison with those who migrated during previous eras. Furthermore, the receiving countries were developed countries providing them with more educational and social opportunities. In this paper I will not be concerned with those Cypriots who settled and created literary (and other forms of intellectual) work in Greece or with isolated cases of writers in different countries. Writers who created their work in Greece did not experience the cultural and language conflict that the writers experienced in other countries. Rather, its main focus is on contemporary migration to Great Britain, Australia, Canada and USA, which have the greater concentration of Cypriot migrants. We will also include writers of Cypriot descent who were born, raised and created their work in the Diaspora, whose work exhibits their preoccupation with Cyprus and the Cypriot identity.

An important and controversial issue is the incorporation of these writers into a literary corpus. For example, for many years it was debated whether the literature created by Greek writers in Australia should have been considered a part of Australian or Greek literature. The literature of Cyprus itself and the meaning of the term “Cypriot Literature” was a contentious issue. Many views and suggestions were expressed regarding this topic. This issue, however, will not be discussed in this particular paper. My aim is to present (albeit incompletely) the literary works by Cypriots and of Cypriot descent writers from the countries mentioned above.

The Cypriot writers of the Diaspora constitute a subgroup of the Greek literature of the Diaspora. Most of them (as previously mentioned) migrated in more recent years in comparison with those who migrated from Greece. We must also take into consideration that most of these writers grew up on the island and received basic or advanced education either in Cyprus, Greece, or other countries and hence their first language is Greek. This is an important factor for the creation of literature and the use of language. In decades to follow, however, literature will be written in English.

The tumultuous political situation on the island and the dramatic events of 1974, which directly or indirectly caused their migration -and in many cases their refugee status- formed the main subject matter of their work. Although their thematic scope was gradually expanded, topics relating to Cyprus, as well as topics about preserving the Greek-Cypriot identity, the cultural conflict they experienced, or their nostalgia about their birthplace remain very important in their literary production.<sup>2</sup>

The greater part of this production consists of poetry. In comparison, prose works are limited in number. There is an evident preference towards short stories or short prose narratives, narrative poems, plays, *chronographimata*, short plays in the Cypriot dialect, and children's literature. Lengthy and complex works such as novels or novellas are very limited<sup>3</sup>.

I will now endeavour to present Cypriot writers who have created literature in major Greek centres of the Diaspora (*paroikies*). This presentation is not complete, as many factors have limited the scope of my research. Firstly, many of these writers published their work at their own expense or have it published by small publishing companies and thus distribution and accessibility of these works are very difficult. Secondly, many of the works produced in earlier years are not easily found. My aim is to provide to interested researchers or readers a guide to these writers and their work. This presentation is also an acknowledgement of their contribution to both their homeland as well as to their country of settlement. The writers are presented alphabetically.

### ***GREAT BRITAIN***

**Kypros Alasios** (Nicosia 1944- ) His real name is Dimitri Symeou. He went to England to study after graduating from the Pancyprian Gymnasium and settled in London. He has published one poetry collection titled *Ypostasi* (1971), short stories and plays.

**Sophocles Andreadis** (Gialousa 1921), who migrated to England in 1938 and settled in Manchester, wrote poetry motivated by nostalgia about his homeland.

**Tefkros Anthias:** One of the most significant and prolific writers, who lived abroad, is without a doubt Tefkros Anthias. Some may argue that it is difficult to classify him as a writer of the Diaspora as he was constantly on the move. However, because he lived in London for more than fifteen years<sup>4</sup>, where he died, I am including him as well. He was born in Kontea in 1903 with the real name Andreas Pavlou. He studied at the Lyceum of Commerce and the Theological School of Larnaca and after his graduation he worked as a schoolteacher in both Cyprus and Greece where he lived for seven years. In 1930 he returned to Cyprus and worked as a journalist in different newspapers [*Proti, Eleftheria, Neos Democrates, Charavgj*]. During his stay in Cyprus he became actively involved in the socialist movement. In London he also worked as a journalist and a correspondent for *Charavgj* and editor of the community newspaper *To Vima*.

His socialist ideology influenced his writing in which he projects social and political issues and themes on: social inequalities, social outcasts, people who are looked down on, the homeless and vagrants, etc. These themes reflect a social realism that is found in the work of many writers of the time like, for example, the work of Kostas Varnalis. Anthias wrote poetry, plays, prose, children's plays, folk poems, *chronographimata*, and literary criticism. He was also the editor of various journals. He usually signed his works using pseudonyms. He published more than thirty-three poetry collections<sup>5</sup>, prose and plays. I am not going to expand on a detailed report or evaluation of Tefkros Anthias's work on which there is a rich bibliography<sup>6</sup>.

**Antonis Eliakis** was born in Anafotia in 1930. When he graduated from the Commercial Lyceum of Larnaca, he went to England for further studies where he settled permanently. He published poems, treatises, and short stories, as well as essays on theatre and painting, in journals and other media publications in both Greece and Cyprus. His poetry is groundbreaking for its time. His collection of poetry is titled *Gothic Windows* (Famagusta 1958) and his narrative story *White Flowers Worth Twenty Pounds. Diary Entries* (Ἀσπρά Ἀνθή Ἀξίας Εἶκοσι Λιρών. Εγγράφες Ημερολογίου) [Limassol, Kyprogeneia Publ. 1999]. The main theme of his narrative story, which he formulated as diary entries, is the death of a young man from AIDS. It is a dramatic story without being melodramatic. The writer succeeds in subordinating the personal to the art of narration. This work was awarded the prize for best novel by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture. Some of his poems in both languages (Greek and English) were included in anthologies.

**Pantelis Kakolis** was born in Liopetri in 1933 and studied for a short period of time at the Lyceum of Famagusta. In Cyprus he worked as a farmer until his migration to England in 1956 (first to Blackpool and then permanently to Manchester). He has been writing poetry since 1964. His poems were published in newspapers of the Greek Community of England and in magazines in Cyprus. He mainly writes following the *poiitariki* tradition but has also produced poetry using the conventional style. Some of the main themes of his poetry are the juxtaposing of meanings of life and death, as well as love and social issues. He uses his poetry to protest against social institutions and customs. He also wrote poems expressing his feelings about Cyprus and his migration. Cyprus remains a nostalgic place where he wants to end his life, not willing for a death in England. He also wrote lyrical poems with the apparent influence of Greek mythology.<sup>7</sup> He published the following collections of poetry: *Τα Φύλλα της καρδιάς μου*, Nicosia 1978

(*My Heart's Leaves*), *Το Άλφα τζαι το Βήτα*, Nicosia 1979 (*The A and B*), and the bilingual collections *Κομμάτιν που τον Κόσμον μου*, Nicosia 1984 (*Part of my World*) and *Στημ Μέση δκνο Πολιτισμών* (*Between two Cultures*) translated by the poet himself with the help of his friend David J. Melling.

**Giannis Katsis** was born in Kalopanagiotis in 1919 and settled in London in 1954. He writes poetry following the *poiitariki* tradition as well as conventional poetry, which has been published in the newspaper *Democrat* (Cyprus), *Vima* and *Parikiaki Charavgi* (London). Cyprus and its history are central themes of his poetry.

**Chambis Konteatis** (Kontea 1918-London 1986) settled in London in 1974 and was actively involved in the affairs of the Cypriot Community in London. His poetry is both *poiitariki* and conventional. He published two poetry collections titled *Worries of my Father* (*Έννοιες του Τζιηρού μου*) and *Echoes* (*Antilaloï*).

**Zacharias Kosta** born in Kontea in 1925 worked as a farmer and as an interpreter for the army, before studying English literature in England. He then studied Medicine in France. He published the poetry collection *Redemption* (*Αύτρωση*).

**Christakis Kotsiamanis** (Morphou 1950) After finishing high school in his town, Christakis Kotsiamanis went to study in London where he graduated in 1975. He settled in London. He began writing poetry and chronographimata and started publishing them in journals and newspapers in Cyprus. Since settling in London he has been writing poetry in both Greek and English.

**Kostas Lavithis** was born in Nicosia in 1914 where he received his secondary education at English School. He worked as a radio journalist and then went to Great Britain for a number of years before returning to Cyprus. He published poetry and short stories in *Kypriaka Grammata* and literary criticism in *Philologiki Paphos*. In his work he uses satire and irony to a great extent. He also wrote *chronographimata* and *humorous stories*.<sup>8</sup>

**Julia Lara** (real name Eleni Papaioannou) was born in Kellaki. In 1926 she migrated to Egypt and in 1962 to Leeds, England. She published poetry, short stories and *chronographimata* in Greek newspapers and journals in Cyprus, Egypt, Greece and London. She published the following collections of poetry: *Νυχτολούλουδα* (1959), *Πολύ και Λίγο* (1968), *Εμπειρίες* (1972) and *Λιθοδομή* 1975. Short stories: *Από το Βυθό* (1981).

A selection of her work was published in 1984 in a volume titled *Συγχομυδή*.



**Andreas Lazarou** was born in 1940 in Nata in Paphos and lives in London where he has been working as a teacher. He has written a School Reader titled *Learning to read easily*, in addition to poetry. His Poems focus on Cyprus and the pain felt by its people due to the Turkish invasion.

**Stavros Lillitos** (1919-1971) was born in Gialousa and migrated to England in 1936 where he studied English literature (in Essex) and later medieval English literature in London. He worked in business and was elected president of the Cyprian Community of London. He wrote short stories and poems, which were published in the journal *Spotlight*, and also plays. His play *The old suitcase* (Η παλιά βαλίτσα) was presented on Cyprus Television. His plays *Down the Carob Trees* (Κάτω στες τερατσιές) and *the Migrant* (ο Μετανάστης) were written in the Cypriot dialect.

**Lia Apostolide-Pavlou** was born in Nicosia, studied at the Pancyprian Gymnasium and then Music and Classical Dance in Athens. She worked as a teacher. She migrated to London where she lives. She published poetry and music criticism in journals and newspapers. Poetry collections: *Μονόλογοι*, *Ηλιοτρόπιο*, *Ηλιοτρόπιο 2*.

**Pantelitsa Kokkinou Tims** born in Ammochostos. Her family migrated to England when she was very young and later worked in Liverpool at the Greek Embassy (1963-1975). Since 1976, she has been living in Manchester where she has been working as an interpreter at the “Alexandra” hospital.

**Panagiotis Vasileiou** was born in Davlos in 1946. After graduating from the A' Gymnasium of Famagusta, he studied Physics in London where he settled. He has written mostly poetry.

Other poets who have written in Greek are: Efthymia Christodoulou (born in Ayios Elias, Karpasia in 1923, migrated to Manchester in 1974), **Anthos Chrysos** (was born in Goudi, Paphos in 1930, studied Philologia in Athens and settled in England. He wrote poetry and Drama), **Kyriacos Erakleous**, **Sergios Florides** (Lapithos 1903-London 1988), **Lisa Georgiou** (born in London in 1966, studied English Literature and writes in both languages), **Lyssandros Ioannou**, **Xenia Gerolemidou**, **Giannis Kamenos** (born in Anafotia 1916, migrated to London and has written poetry using the Cypriot dialect), **Efie Mita** (born in Xero in 1949. Poetry collection *Εικόνες*, 1984), **Andreas Nichola**, **Lenin Evanthis Nikolaides**, **Evipridis Ornitharis** (who was born in 1963 in Kato Akourdalia, Paphos and has been living in London since 1977), **Roulla Pampou** (published the poetry collection *Step/Vema*), **Vasilis Panagi** (born in Syghari in 1947, migrated to London in 1975 and has been

working as a correspondent for the newspaper *Charavgi* and as an actor in theatre and movies), *Stas Paraskos* (Anafotia 1933, studied Art-painting in England), *Nedi Tofali* (Evrychou 1946, settled in London in 1963), *Antri Voukanari* (was born in Famagusta. When she was three years old her family migrated to London. She holds a BA in Geography, Psychology and Sociology. She writes poetry mostly in English. She has also written children's poetry).<sup>9</sup>

The following poets write in English:

**Rozanna Achilleos** was born in London in 1951 where she studied classical dance. She lived for a few years in Cyprus after she finished her studies but returned to London in 1978).

**Louset Kobbatzis** was born and grew up in England, wrote poetry and plays. Her poetry collection is titled *The Realization of Skipped Time*.

**Robert Arnold Papaleontiou** born in Liverpool in 1959, studied English literature at the University of Cambridge and worked as a teacher in Manchester. He published poetry in English. His collections are titled: *People Within* (1974) and *The Fred* (1989).

#### *AUSTRALIA*<sup>10</sup>

**Emilio Fintikides** was born in Famagusta in 1965. After the Turkish invasion he took refuge in Nicosia with his family where he finished his secondary education. In 1986 after completing his military service, he went to the USA. In 1989 he migrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide. He studied Social Sciences. He writes poetry and prose. In his poetry he uses irony extensively to convey the unreasonable facts of life and society. His memory of Cyprus acts in an oppositional way i.e., a wound and simultaneously a salvation, pain and hope.

**Andria Garivaldis** was born in Zodia in 1958 and attended the B' Gymnasium in Morphou until 1974 when she was forced to leave after the Turkish invasion. She continued her studies at the Pancyprian Gymnasium. She migrated to Melbourne in 1975 where she studied Computer Technology and then she obtained her Diploma in Translation and Interpreting. She also holds a BA in Greek and English Literature. She did postgraduate studies on the Greek literature of the Diaspora. She worked at state schools in Victoria and at Greek Community Schools. She has been writing literature since her high-school years. She has published a great number of poems in Greek journals in Melbourne such as *Antipodes* and

*Logos*. She has published the poetry collections *Ανάπλευση* in a collective volume with collections by three other poets of Melbourne, which has the indicative title *Tetralogia* (Nautilus Publications, 1996)<sup>11</sup> and the collection *Κυπριένια* (Nautilus Publications, 2001). She has received many awards in various literary competitions. Her second collection received the prize for best children's literature in Nicosia. Many of her poems were included in anthologies in Australia, Greece, Cyprus, and America<sup>12</sup>. The themes of her work are usually centered around the consequences of the tragedy of Cyprus, the migrant experience, and the pursuit of the individual for a better life.

In many of her poems Andria Garivaldis focuses on her homeland, Cyprus, and its present situation; A tragic situation, which the poet identifies with its pain, which she projects from different perspectives (the invasion, prisoners of war, the missing, and the partition). Garivaldis uses her art to awaken the consciousness of her readers, to preserve the memory of those events, as well as to maintain a sense of duty in her readers mind to continue the struggle for the vindication of the island and its people. She does not accept for a fact that in a Greek place, where the Greek tradition is deeply rooted, there is not a Greek "soul" left. At the same time she recreates the beauty of the island in general and the beauty of her birthplace (Zodia) in particular, in a nostalgic way. She constantly returns in spirit to that place with a romantic mood. On the contrary, her new country is mostly absent, creating in this way an intentional void. It remains a foreign land (*Xenitia*). It is a place where the dream and the reality are in constant conflict.

In another group of her poems she deals with various topics such as peace, love, loneliness, existence, death, as well as topics about poetics. She experiments with different poetic forms such as rhyming versus, strict poetic tempo, and freestyle. Her poems are lyrical and elegiac in tone.

**Mihalis Pais** was born in Lysi in 1945 where he was living until 1974. After the Turkish invasion he became a refugee and lived in Cyprus for approximately two years until 1976, when he migrated to Melbourne. He is interested in Science, Philosophy and Cosmology. He is an amateur astronomer. He published many poems in Greek journals in Melbourne such as *Antipodes* and *Logos*. His first Poetry collection was published in *Anthologia* a collective publication of six poets. He then published in bilingual editions (Greek-English) the poetry collections *From the Diary of the Century/ Από το Ημερολόγιο των Αιώνων*, Melbourne 1987 (translated in English by Iakovos Gavriel) and the *Adventures of the Sun/ Οι Περίπέτειες του Ήλιου*, Mount Copper Press Publications, 1990 (translated in English

by Pavlos Andronikos). A new poetry collection is ready for publication and he is also working on another poetic synthesis.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus became the starting point for Pais' literary production. In his earlier poems he expresses his sorrow and despair about the loss suffered as well as his anger about what he believed was a betrayal. Gradually, his emotions are controlled by art with significant verses. The personal and subjective aspect of his poetry is replaced by universal meanings and ideas, which are expressed with metaphorical and elliptical images. There is also the agony about the success of his efforts as a poet.

**Babis Rakis** was born in Alexandria to Cypriot parents. He finished the *Averofeion* Gymnasium in 1950 and soon after he began collaborating with the Greek newspaper of Alexandria *Tachydromos*. The political crisis in Egypt forced his family to return to Cyprus and to settle permanently in Nicosia. Rakis worked as a journalist for Cyprian newspapers and started writing short stories. After the Turkish invasion of 1974 his family became refugees and were forced to migrate to Australia (in 1975). They settled in Sydney where he began to work again as a journalist for the Greek newspapers *Panellenios Kerykas*, *Nea Patrida* and the magazine *Hellenis* of Sydney. He then worked at the multicultural Radio SBS (Special Broadcasting Services) for about ten years until his retirement in 1995. Since his retirement he has been working for the newspaper *Hellenikos Kerykas* writing the page "Paroikiakoi palmoi", which includes interviews, reporting, social and cultural issues pertaining to the Greek community.

In Cyprus Babis Rakis published short stories in various magazines, as well as the collection of short stories titled *The Young ones/ Oi Néoi* (Nicosia 1959), drawing his inspiration from the anti-colonial struggle of the Cypriots against the British. The same year he published the travelogue *Old and New China* (Nicosia, 1959). In Australia he has been writing notable short stories most of which have been published in magazines. In his writing he employs social realism to deal with topics such as the uprooting and refugee status of many Cypriots in Australia and their inability to adapt to their new country, aspects of the life and feelings of Greek migrants in Australia, their new way of life and their nostalgia for the past. His use of language convey the meanings in a lucid way.

**Erma Vasiliou** was born in Limassol in 1947, and migrated with her family at a very young age to the former Belgian Congo where they lived until 1974. She studied at the bilingual primary school of Bunia (Greek French), and was also taught the local language, Flemish. She continued her secondary

education at the bilingual Greek-French School of Saint Joseph in Athens. She migrated to Australia in 1987 and settled in Melbourne. She worked for a short period of time as a journalist for the newspaper *Greek Herald* in Sydney and the state radio station, SBS (Special Broadcasting Services). She studied Linguistics and conducted research on the medieval Cypriot dialect.

Erma Vasiliou is a prolific writer with significant literary work (which is mostly poetry), prose and narrative poems. She has also published treatises, essays, and literary translations (Baudelaire, L. Brett and Balzac). She is currently translating the medieval historical document written by Estienne de Lusignan titled "Description de Toute L' Isle de Chypre" from medieval French into Greek and into English, while simultaneously compiling the first grammar and syntax book of Medieval Greek Cypriot dialect. She has been awarded many prizes by many organizations. She also writes poetry in French. The focus of her work is Greek identity (including the Greek language), her personal need to be identified with Hellenism or to be part of a homeland, the position of women and others. Most importantly she is particularly interested in themes such as poetics, and finding means of expression (i.e., symbolism) which become the means by which she defends her individuality<sup>13</sup>. She holds a special place in the literature of the Greek Diaspora. Her writing (poetry and prose) is impressive, demanding and complex and her use of the Greek language exceptional. Vasiliou is successful in utilizing the pouch («μάρουπος») to use her own symbol, that is, a place where someone exists, develops and matures emotionally outside the main body. She has published the following literary work: Poetry: *Η Θέαλλη* (*The Storm*), Owl Publishing 1993, *Εώραχα* (*I have seen*), Collections Books 1996, *Η Αγγελιοφόρος Α'* (*The Messenger A*), EKEME 2003 (six poetry books in one volume), *Η Αγγελιοφόρος Β'* (*The Messenger B*) EKEME 2005 (six poetry books in one volume).<sup>14</sup> Prose: *Καλένδες* (*Calends*), Collections Books 1995, *Κλέλια* (*Clelia*), EKEME 2000 (novel).

Works ready for publication: *Η γυναίκα που έγινα Τόμος Α' & Τόμος Β'* (αυτοβιογραφία, non-fiction), Aphrodite Publications, *Κρυπτογραφίες* (poetry), *L' insurpassable* (ή *Ασώματοι στίχοι*) (poetry).

Other writers in Australia who have produced literary works are: **Pavlos Andronikos** who has written modernist poetry, music and literary translations, **Maro Gemeta** (has written, poetry and short narratives and short play-some of which in the Cypriot dialect/ κυπριακά σκετς), **Maro Nikolaou**, **Tefkros Panagiotou**. These writers have been publishing their work in magazines.

## CANADA

**Stephanos Constantinides** was born in Pentalia, Paphos. He graduated from Athens and Paris Universities where he studied philology. He also holds a PhD in Political Sciences from Sorbonne. He has been living in Montreal since 1976. He lectured in Political Sciences at Quebec University in Montreal, Laval University and University of Montreal. He is the Director of the Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research Canada-KEEK and the editor of the scientific bilingual journal (English-French), *Etudes helléniques/ Hellenic Studies*. Professor Constantinides published extensively in the fields of Sociology and Political Sciences. Constantinides is also a writer of significant poetry in which he expresses his anxiety on political and social issues. He transforms politics into poetry. He combines the ideal and the ordinary, and using irony he undermines the ideal to emphasize the prevalence of the ordinary. There is an evident sarcasm (including self-sarcasm) pertaining to the migrant and his futile attempts to maintain his identity or to create a new one. He exploits different forms of writing, modernistic in style, with impressive results. He has published four poetry collections, short stories, literary criticism and essays. He has also many poems ready for publication. His poetry was translated in French and English.

Poetry Collections: *Εναλία Κύπρος: ο θάνατος του Ονήσιλλου στα 1989 μ.χ.* (1990), *Antumes* (1984), *Παρακαλείσθε μην πτύετε εντός του λεωφορείου* (1979), *Επένδυση στο χρόνο ενός ονείρου και κάποιων μαρτυριών* (1969).

Upcoming collection of poetry: *Προκρούστη του Εναρέτου*

Short Stories Collection: *Ο γυρισμός του Αρχιερέα* (1980)

**Savas Patsalides** was born in Kyrenia in 1950. After completing his secondary education and his national service in the Cyprus army he went to Thessaloniki where he received his BA from the *Aristoteleion* University and continued postgraduate Studies. He then went to Canada for further postgraduate studies and received an MA from McGill and a PhD from Montreal Universities. He did his postgraduate studies in the fields of American prose writing and theatre/ drama. He has written and published extensively in these fields. Currently, S. Patsalides is a Professor of theatre at the *Aristoteleion* University in Thessaloniki and a theatre critic. He is considered as one of the most important theorists of post-modern theatre in Greece. He has written poetry, which was published in journals and newspapers of North America and the collection of poetry titled *Photoskiaseis* (Φωτοσκιάσεις). In his poetry he tries to formalize his agony as a poet who is constantly trying to

investigate his own existence as well as to balance reality and the imagination.

**Pavlos Leontiou Ioannou** lives in Toronto. He was born in the village Assia in Mesaoria in 1946 but soon after he was born his family moved to Nicosia. He started writing poetry from a very young age. His first poems were published in the magazine *Ephivos* of the Pancyprian Gymnasium of Kykkos. He was a regular contributor to the literary magazine *Kypriaka Chronika*. While in Cyprus he was very active in terms of his contribution to the cultural life of Cyprus. He was a founding member of the literary magazine *Krikos* and of the *Kypriakon Logotechnikon Omilo Neon (KLON)*. For a number of years he was the literary co-editor (with Kostas Olympios) of the newspaper *Telegram*. He worked as a nurse at the psychiatric hospital in Nicosia and in 1969 he went to Canada to study Psychology. When he completed his studies in Social Services and Individual Psychology, he wanted to return to Cyprus. However, the 1974 coup d'état and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus prevented him from returning. Since then he has been living in Toronto. He is the Director of the Special Services of the Toronto Social Services Division. He has also been playing an active role in the activities of the Greek and Cyprus Organizations/ Communities of Canada.

Pavlos Leontiou Ioannou has been writing poetry in Greek. He published the following poetry collections: *Επιμαρτυρία*, Nicosia 1968, *Καταμαρτυρία*, Toronto 1978, *Πάμε με τ' Αλακάτι* MAM Publications, Nicosia 2002 and *Οι Οραματισμοί της Ρωμοσύνης*, Nicosia 2004. Since 2005, however, he has been writing in English in an effort to be included in the Canadian literary tradition and has become a member of the Ontario Poetry Society. He has been publishing his work in the Society's literary magazine *Verse Afire*.

Cyprus as a place, culture and history is the focus of his poetry. It becomes part of the very existence of the individual. In his collection with the revealing title *Οραματισμοί της Ρωμοσύνης*, in a Homeric way gives us in twenty-four "rhapsodies" a synthesis of his vision of the history of Cyprus and his development as a poet. He owes this development/ creation to his birthplace and its history. In his poetry there is an evident Elytian influence. There is a conflict between good and the evil, light and darkness, justice and injustice. Powerful images create surrealistic yet easily understood poetry due to the underlying diachronic history of the island, which has a connecting effect. His poetic language is enriched with Cyprian dialectic elements, which reinforce the identity and the projection of his existential agony.

In his poetry in English he is preoccupied with contemporary man and social problems, alienation, emptiness and loneliness. War and its

consequences is a central theme in these poems formalized with daunting and cruel images. There is also the theme of the aimless man, who has no more weapons left to fight and a feeling of hopelessness and surrender to the cruel fact that Greece and Cyprus remain a vision, an ideal that cannot be reached, a place where man wants to escape and find refuge to no avail. Ultimately the only escape is poetry itself.

**Popi Sotiriou** was born in Nicosia in 1950 and migrated to Canada in 1969. She published a poetry collection titled *Προορισμένα*. Her writing is modern with extensive use of symbolism and metaphor. It is also enriched with the use of images and scenes from Cypriot history. These images from the distant past reappear in her memory and hence the reader loses their sense of time.

**Thalia Tassou** was born in Kalopanagiotis, Cyprus and completed her Studies in Sociology and in French philology and education in Paris. In 1976 she went to Canada where she settled. She worked as a teacher at colleges and Greek Community schools in Montreal and then she studied law. She now practices law. She has been writing poetry and short stories for a number of years. Her work has been published in various literary magazines such as *Nea Esperia* (New York) and has been included in *Anthologies*.

Cyprus and the inevitable changes that time has caused, is a central theme in her work as well as the political situation of the island which is expressed in a direct or indirect way. In her writing there is a feeling of nostalgia about the place and the people who she left behind and have now become a distant memory. She compares her life 'then' and her life 'now' from the perspective of her migrant experience. She comes to the bitter conclusion that a death has occurred, in a metaphorical way. In her short stories and in her poems nostalgia and memory bring together past and present, Cyprus and Montreal. There is also the topic of the position of women and the unfulfilled expectations of the new country and the inability to adapt. There is a dramatic questioning about whether what has been achieved in the new country is worth the sacrifices that the individual has made. There is a search for a way out, a tendency to escape. Her writing is clear, prosaic, and very dramatic.

## USA

**Polys Kyriacou** was born in Nicosia in 1957, graduated from the *Panteion* University in Athens and migrated to USA (New York) in 1982 where he is still residing. He completed his postgraduate studies (Graphic and Communication Design) at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. He was the Director



for the Arts of the Greek American newspaper *Proini* for a short period of time. Since 1986 has been a Graphic Designer/ Art Director. He is an active member of the Cyprian Federation of America and has served in various positions. He is a member of the Radio “Cosmos FM” Management Committee and the producer of the Greek programs: “We have to say” and “A World of Greek Song”. He was member of many organising committees for political and cultural activities (concerts, music festivals, etc.) of the Greek Community of the USA. He writes poetry and song lyrics. He published poems in Greek journals in Greece and Cyprus and has also written music and lyrics, several of which have received prizes in competitions. Music for his own song lyrics was written by acclaimed composers (P. Thalassinos, F. Pliatsikas, G. Andreou, L. Pliatsikas, Al Di Meola, S. Gadelli et al.). He has published the poetry collections: *Schimata* (A' prize for a new writer-Cyprus Ministry of Education, 1977) and *Metaschimatismoi* (1979).

**Loukia Maroulleti** was born in Egypt to Greek-Cypriot parents in 1930 and died in 2005 in New York. During War World II her family left Egypt and went to Cyprus and lived in Famagusta until the 1974 Turkish invasion of the island. Becoming a refugee she moved to London for a short period of time and then decided to migrate to USA. She settled in Astoria, New York, where she spent the rest of her life. Her contribution to the cultural life of the Greek community, as well as her contribution to the promotion of the Cypriot culture in USA has been vast. She was the cofounder of the Cyprian cultural organization *CYPRECO* and *AKTINA* Productions Inc. The latter was co-founded by her daughter who then produced TV and Radio programs. *Aktina* is the sponsor of the bilingual radio program and the English language television program *Aktina TV*. She co-hosted the radio program “Cyprus Horizons”, a highly rated folk arts show.

Loukia Maroulleti was a translator and a prolific writer. She translated the works of Greek poets, Greek-Cypriot folk poetry, mythology and ancient Greek plays into English. She established annual theatrical productions of ancient Greek plays in New York, which she translated herself and for which she designed the costumes. Her productions were so successful that she was nominated for several awards by the organization *Spotlight on Theatre*. Maroulleti was a prolific writer. She published the following works:

Plays: *Days of Wrath/ Μέρες Οργής* (which includes two plays: “Ένα Τριαντάφυλλο για την Ιωάννα”, “Η Λουκία του Αυγόρου”), *The Diner/ Η Ντάινα*

Novellas: *AR RI ANDHE, Ariadne/ Της Αριάδνης, He Marikkou/ Η Μαρικκού* (unpublished).

Poetry (bilingual editions): *The year Being 1990.../ Εν Έτει 1990...*, *Παιάνες και Θρήνοι, Έως Ανάκατε*

Chroniko: *The Echo of my Footsteps/ Η Ηχώ των Βημάτων μου*

Anthologies: *Anthology of Cypriot Poetry* (translated into English), Cypriot Folk Poetry (translated into English), *Once upon a time* (Cypriot folk tales translated into English)

Translations: *The Diary of Lt. Donisthorpe Donne/ Το Ημερολόγιο του Υπολοχαγού Donisthorpe Donne* (in to Greek)

Translation of plays into Greek: Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*, Tennessee Williams *Summer and Smoke*, Tennessee William, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Harold Pinter, *The Caretaker*, Terrence Rattigan, *The Winslow Boy*, Eugene O'Neill, *Before Breakfast*, Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, Jean Zenet, *The Maids*, Pirandello, *The Man with a Flower in his Mouth*, John Steinbeck, *Burning Bright*, Bertoldt Breht, *The Caucasian Circle*

Translation of plays into English (and adaptation): Euripides *Bachae*, *Ιφιγένεια Εν Αυλίδι*

Sophocles, *Οιδίπους Τύραννος*

In Press: *Καστελλιότισσα. Ενθύμημα, Νοέμβριος 2001*

**Petros Petrides** was born in Nicosia in 1961. He has been living in New York where he studied production of TV and radio programs in New Jersey. Since 1988 he has been the producer and presenter of the program "Our Cyprus", the first such program on American TV. He was also the founder and director of the Theatrical Group of the same program. Petrides has staged various plays with national and cultural content in New York and other States, and furthermore produced plays with Cypriot ethnography content.

Petros Petrides is also a photographer. The subjects of his photographs are scenes of every day life of the Cypriots in America, social activities and historical moments of Cyprus. The artist wants to promote the history of Cyprus as well as the struggle of its people for freedom. He also expresses the love of the Cypriots who live abroad for their mother country and their efforts/ agony to maintain their heritage and culture.

He is also a poet. He has published the poetry collections *Επιστροφή* and *Νύχτες της Σιωπής*. The central theme of his poetry is also the culture, the history and the struggle of Cypriots for freedom. The Turkish invasion, the missing, the agony about the fate of the island are projected in a lyrical and emotional way. Furthermore, he depicts life in a modern developed city like

New York with its multifaceted aspects and dangers such as the isolation and alienation of modern man. His writing is direct and sensitive without complex poetic images.

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*Thanks also to my colleague Dr Despina Michael for proof-reading the paper.*

### NOTES

1. Undoubtedly the interwar period has been a very important period for the Greek Cypriot letters as well as the Cyprus ethnic aspirations. Many Cypriot writers created major literary works in other countries such as Egypt (G. Alithersis, Th. Pierides, M. Roussia, G. Pierides), France (Valdaserides) and Greece (L. Akritas, P. Krinaios, B. Zenon, et al.).
2. I have focused on the theme of cultural identity in the literary works of Greek-Cypriot writers in Australia in another paper (Herodotou, 1999: pp. 235-251).
3. Notable novels have been written by Yola Damianou-Papadopoulou, who was born in Nicosia and grew up in Congo. Since 1969 she has been living in Nigeria. She has published, among other works, the collection of short stories, *Μπατούρε* and the novel *The Whispering of the Forest*, Nicosia 1992 (*Ο Ψίθυρος του Δάσους*), which is the story of a woman and her family who lived in Congo and experienced the political uprising of the rebels.
4. He first went to England in 1948 and lived in London until 1953. He then went to Cyprus and returned to London in 1957 where he lived until his death in 1968.
5. For a full list of his published works see Ph. Stavridis, L. Papaleontiou and S.Pavlou (2001: 102-108), Ch. Andreou, *Anthology of Cypriot Literature* (Poetry, Vol B', pp. 377-378) and K. Ioannides (1986: 153-158).

6. For full bibliography on T. Anthias, see Ph.. Stavrides, L. Papaleontiou and S. Pavlou (2001: 102-108).
7. See samples of his poetry in demotic Greek in Pavlou-Apostolide (1990: 28-30).
8. For a full list of his literary work see Ph. Stavrides, L. Papaleontiou and S. Pavlou (2001: 210) and K. Ioannides (1986: 287).
9. See samples of their work in Pavlou-Apostolide L. (1990). Ms Pavlou-Apostolide's Anthology has been a valuable source for writers who reside in England.
10. Here we will refer to the work of the writers in Australia who migrated after 1974. Writers of earlier years are presented in the paper written by Professor George Kanarakis in this special issue.
11. The other three collections which are included in this volume are: *Σκυφτές Ανεμώνες* by Soula Mousoura-Tsoukala, *Ψηφίδες* by Giannis Liaskos και *Απορροές* by Giannis Katsaras.
12. Anthology *Re-telling the Tale/ Με δικά μας λόγια*, Μελβούρνη: Owl Publishing 1994, by Nickas H. & Dounis, K. (eds); Aik. Georgoudakis, *Ποιήτριες Ελληνικής Καταγωγής στη Βόρεια Αμερική, Αυστραλία και Γερμανία: Ακροβατώντας ανάμεσα σε δυο πατρίδες*, Θεσσαλονίκη: University Studio Press 2002; *Ανθολόγιο της Διασποράς*, Ρέθυμνο: Πανεπιστήμιο Κρήτης, Ε.ΔΙΑ.Μ.ΜΕ 2004; *Ξενιτειά* (Ανθολογία), Βιβλιοθήκη Κυπριακής Διασποράς, Αρ. 1», Λευκωσία: Εκδόσεις Γραφείου Προεδρικού Επιτρόπου 2003; Εφημερίδα *Η Ζώδια* (Εκφραστικό Όργανο του Συλλόγου Αποφοίτων Ανωτέρων Σχολών Ζώδιας), Κύπρος; *Poetic Voices of America*, Sparrowgrass Poetry Forum, Inc. Sistersville, 1997.
13. For example, she is interested in finding her roots (in *Kornelia Treppa*), in the trial of the symbols of her writing, in the subject of tolerance (in *Brunswick Street*), the acceptance of life where every negative element is transformed into a positive (in *Megalos Ayiasmos*), the revolution of love in life (in *Ta erotica Onomata tis Parastasis*), the survival of the individual among many adverse circumstances in order for someone to feel special (*Planitis gia ena Katiko*), the role of harmony (*Anthos Armonias*), the primitive past and the attraction of the positive elements through memory (*He porta tis thalassou*) the preservation of youthfulness and innocence (*Prasino Stahi*).
14. Η Αγγελιοφόρος Α' (The Messenger A') includes the collections: *Πλανήτης για ένα κάτοικο*, *Τα ερωτικά ονόματα της επανάστασης*, *Σύμβολα Χαρίτων*, *Ωδές Αδύτων*, *Ωδές Υδάτων*, *Η μάρσιπος*.  
Η Αγγελιοφόρος Β' (The Messenger B') includes the collections: *Άνθος αρμονίας*, *Τα ποιητικά αίτια του έψιλον*, *Η τοξοβόλος*, *Η πόρτα της θαλάσσου*, *Χρονογραφία*, *Πράσινο στάχυ*.

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## Theatre in Cyprus (19<sup>th</sup> Century – 1959)

Yiannis Katsouris\*

### RÉSUMÉ

L'écriture théâtrale à Chypre pendant la période de l'occupation britannique demeure plutôt limitée. Pendant les mêmes années, augmentent de façon progressive les représentations théâtrales qui sont présentées autant par des groupes d'amateurs que par des troupes professionnelles provenant de la Grèce ou d'autres pays. Le répertoire des représentations présente une grande variété, et inclut des comédies, des comédies musicales, des tragédies néoclassiques, des drames historiques et patriotiques d'auteurs originaires de la Grèce, de Chypre et de l'espace international.

### ABSTRACT

The author of this article focuses on the term "Cypriot literature" and points out its prevalence on other terms used from time to time. He argues in favour of the term Cypriot literature because such terms as Greek literature of Cyprus and modern Greek literature of Cyprus make up a redundant and dangerous grammatological terminology that could exclude or eliminate the "Cypriot" dimension from various expressions of Cypriot life.

Modern theatrical activity in Cyprus may be traced back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Of course, the existence of ancient amphitheatres (Salamina, Kourion, Soloi etc), as well as information that came to us from the antiquity with regards to theatrical activity, playwrights, actors' guilds etc, verify that the dramatic art had a history of many centuries in Cyprus which, however, was often disrupted for long periods of time by conquests and other tragedies that time and again befell the island.

We shall begin our account from the last two or three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as our oldest evidence dates back from that period. First however we shall look into a number of historical events that had an explicit or implicit

\* Writer

effect on the development of theatre in Cyprus.

The first important event that in fact took place unbeknown to Cypriots was the passing of their country from the Ottoman Empire to Great Britain in 1878, be it at first in the form of rented territory! The study of historical events over the eighty or so years of British rule indicates that the new conqueror was no better than the one before. Nonetheless, as the British were not an oriental force and despite the obstacles they often raised, they allowed a somewhat more contemporary and European social life to develop on the island.

This had an explicit and positive effect on the flourishing of the arts, even though the British took no measure whatsoever in this direction.

The second important event was the setting up of the first printing office on the island in 1878 (first year of British rule), donated by the Cypriots of Egypt.

Books that up until then were being published in Smyrna, Alexandria, Venice, Athens etc, began coming out in Cyprus, but at first mostly weekly one-page or two-page newspapers would be printed. It is precisely these newspapers that provide us today with a unique source of information on the intellectual, artistic and social life of Cypriots that was obviously limited during the first years of the British rule. Newspapers also allow us to observe the course of theatre and theatrical movement in Cyprus which after all could not have gone unnoticed by the Press in the small urban zones of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Naturally, dispersed information on theatrical activity by amateur or Greek companies that visited the island is available from other sources even before 1878.<sup>1</sup>

Also, before moving on we need to refer to Cyprus' geographical position which during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in particular until the 1922 Catastrophe of Asia Minor, had played a significant role in the development of theatre.

Cyprus was located in the center of a sea route that united the Hellenism of Smyrna and the wider Asia Minor with their counterparts in Egypt (Alexandria and Cairo) and on the west coast of Asia (Yafa, Haifa etc.). Therefore, troupes setting out from Athens heading toward Constantinople and Smyrna or directly from Smyrna for the wealthy Greek communities of Egypt could easily make a stop in Cypriot cities such as Larnaka, Limassol and Nicosia. Obviously, after 1922, Asia Minor was removed from their itinerary. With aviation advancements after World War II, the itinerary of Greek troupes consisted mainly of Athens-Constantinople (unto the mid

1950s when the city was still inhabited by Greeks) – Cyprus – Egypt.

In the first years of the British rule and during World War I, theatrical movement was mainly supported by:

- (a) amateur groups, usually made up of students or Secondary Education graduates and
- (b) Greek troupes that arrived on the island in the manner described above.

Local groups usually performed patriotic or other populist or melodramatic plays, always in a didactic mood and with altruistic objectives, as all returns were dedicated to charitable causes – as if young amateurs were forbidden to declare that they acted for the joy of creativity or even for their own pleasure.

In addition to this, it should be noted that these were ephemeral groups, made up exclusively of men; in fact, they would usually break up with the end of a play's streak of performances. Bright exceptions to this were the Limassol "Aris" Theatrical Company in the 1880s,<sup>2</sup> Larnaka "Sophocles"<sup>3</sup> in 1909-1910 and the Nicosia groups of "Agapi tou Laou" [Love of People] and "Proodeftikos Syllogos" [Progressive Guild], also in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

It should be clarified, however, that many of these theatrical groups, for instance the Nicosia "Agapi tou Laou" were in the service of political movements rather than theatre itself; therefore, their groups gained in popularity over the first ten years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Cyprus was divided by the notorious "Archbishopric question".

In those years, mainly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Greek companies were small, often family troupes touring the wider Eastern Mediterranean area. Yet, since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Cyprus also hosted a few fine Greek companies with significant actors and contemporary plays. These companies were headed by actors such as Aimilios Veakis, Edmondo First, Rozalia Nika, Christina Kalogerikou, Pericles Gavrielides, Evangelia Paraskevopoulou etc. who staged plays that had been successfully received on the European stage.<sup>5</sup>

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and until 1914, a Greek actor, Xenophon Esaias played a significant role in the management of troupes visiting Cyprus. In fact, for a long period of time after 1900 Esaias took up residence on the island.

Apart from bringing his own troupes to the island, Esaias managed many other troupes, directed the Cypriots' amateur stage, starring with them too, and even published theatrical pieces applying the system of subscribers' pre-



registration. In all, Esaïas undertook quite a notable theatrical activity for his time.

There is no Cypriot counterpart for Xenophon Esaïas, during the same period. It should be noted however, that Aristeidis Zenon (1882-1919) was the first Cypriot actor to perform in Greece in his student years (as an “initiate” in K. Christomanos New Skini [New Stage] and a cooperator of Y. Mystriotis in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century staging of tragedies in ancient Greek).

In Cyprus, he became involved in amateur theatre (staging “Oedipus Rex”, staging and playing in “Antigone”) and active in the wider intellectual life, especially in Limassol, until his untimely death in 1919.<sup>6</sup>

During the interwar years (1918-1940), local theatrical activity was intensified, owing to:

- (a) amateur groups set up mainly in Limassol (ETHEL, Aischylos-Arion, EOL, THON etc.) and also in Larnaka (EPL, AMOL), that usually staged *revue* shows (musical variety theatre). In its Cypriot version, revue entertainment was a courtesy of the Markides brothers from Paphos and their three “Paphian Revues” (1918-1922) that were obviously imitations of Greek shows, especially with regards to sketches drawing on the Balkan Wars and World War I.
- (b) workers syndicates appearing in Cyprus in the 1920s as well as other guilds (i.e. “Panergatikos” in Nicosia) that used the theatre and its social messages for their own purposes, often staging populist, melodramatic plays highlighting albeit naively the exploitation of the poor from the rich and
- (c) Secondary Education schools that used to promote ancient Greek tragedy, which after all was part of their curriculum.

Around the end of this period (1938) the first Revue Company appears in Nicosia, the Mousiki Skini Lefkosias [Nicosia Musical Scene] which would lead up to the heyday of professional musical theatre during the World War II years.

At the same time, Greek companies increase their visits to Cyprus, following the same itinerary as in the previous period – excluding obviously, Smyrna and other Asia Minor coastline cities after the 1922 catastrophe.

In any event, the Asia Minor catastrophe and the consequent poverty that weighed heavily upon Greece with hundreds of thousands of refugees urged Greek troupes to seek employment in Cyprus and of course Egypt.

The result was an influx of fine Greek companies – of M. Kotopoule, V. Argyropoulou, Alikis and Costa Mousouri, Yannis Apostolides, Th. Naizer and K. Raftopoulou as well as smaller troupes that toured Cypriot towns and villages for months on end.

Actors Angelos Vazas and his wife Marika were members of one such troupe. The couple played a huge role in the development of local theatre, just as X. Esaïas did during the first period. Angelos and Marika Vazas took up permanent residency in Cyprus and became both impresarios and directors of Cypriot companies from 1931 until the end of World War II.<sup>7</sup>

Within this period, Cyprus got to see everything that was performed in Athens. Everything! From ancient Greek theatre (i.e. *Oedipus Rex* by Veakis) to contemporary European theatre, social theatre, the French boulevard, German low comedy etc. and plays by Greek playwrights such as Xenopoulos, Melas, Synodinos and musicians like Th. Sakellarides and N. Hadjiapostolou with their operettas.<sup>8</sup>

The Third Period, spanning from 1940 – 1959 is in fact divided in three sub-periods: the World War II years (1940-1945); the challenging postwar years (1945-1955); and the years of the struggle against the British rule (1955-1959).

As expected, the course of theatre on the island was entirely dependent on each period's dramatic events.

Therefore, during World War II, Greek theatre vanished completely as companies could not travel outside Greece because of the war. This meant that some room opened up for Cypriot theatre, which saw a rapid development mainly through local revue shows and the European and Greek operetta. War stress and living conditions were so gruesome that they could not but incite the need for a pleasant and light theatrical life.

Numerous professional companies were then set up in Cyprus, i.e. the "Lyrikon" [Lyrical], "Neon Lyrikon" [New Lyrical], "Enosis Kallitehnon Lefkosias" [Nicosia Artists Union], "Orpheas" etc. Soon after, local writers of revue shows made their debut (i.e. Costas Montis, Y. Stephanides, Y. Anthias etc.) with a group of talented actors performing unto the 1960s-1970s (N. Pantelides, Ph. Karaviotis, P. Philippides and shortly afterwards A. Moustras, E. Gavrielides who went on to become an acclaimed director, Phl. Demetriou etc.).

The scenery changed dramatically in the first postwar years. The Civil War and inescapable poverty that befell Greece because of the German

occupation led Greek theatre to job-hunting among Greeks living outside the Greek territory. The big exodus of Greek companies followed, tracing the familiar Constantinople-Cyprus-Egypt itinerary, now by plane.

It was then that Cyprus saw the greater actors of Hellenism performing with their companies. M. Kotopoule, V. Manolidou, M. Aroni, D. Horn, Y. Papas, Katerina, E. Hadjiargyri, E. Lambeti, the Kalouta sisters, comedians P. Kyriakos, V. Avlonites, V. Logothetides, M. Photopoulos, S. Stavrides endowed the island with a rich and contemporary repertoire of European and Greek plays staging unforgettable theatre nights.<sup>9</sup>

Inevitably, the frequent visits of Greek companies between 1945-1955 had a negative effect on local troupes that despite their heroic efforts had not been able to withstand competition. "Promitheas" (1945-1946), the first prosaic theatre in Cyprus is one of the victims of this predicament. Consequently, local theatre is on the decline without always managing to survive and when it does, it is usually sustained by low comedy acts of little acclaim.

Still, in the period between 1940-1955 one genre flourishes: the theatre of syndicates or better said trade-unionist theatre as well as plays staged by guilds and cultural or other associations. Within these years, the genre takes off to unprecedented heights. In fact, one would have trouble locating a rural community that did not stage one, two or more performances annually.

In the last sub-period, namely the years of the struggle for liberation from the British rule, theatrical activity could not have evolved in earnest. In dreadful conditions that include prohibitions and curfews, theatre is barely kept alive, mostly thanks to the "Kyrpiako Theatro" of N. Pantelides and the "Enomenoi Kallitehnes" [United Artists] of V. Kafkarides in the late 1950s. In contrast, guild theatre keeps up its activities albeit not to the extent of previous years.

Throughout the period under examination (19<sup>th</sup> century – 1960), Cypriot playwriting does not have much to show in terms of auspicious highlights.<sup>10</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, classicist pieces of low acclaim were written in the "katharevousa" [the "purified" Greek] imitating Greek playwrights (Vernardakis, Antoniadis, who in their turn replicate classic European writers i.e. Shakespeare). Yet, some of these plays were being successfully received on stage over a long period of time mostly because they referred to Cypriot historic events in a patriotic mood (i.e. "Kypros kai oi Naitai" [Cyprus and the Templar Knights] by Y. Sivitanides and the notorious "Kucuk Mehmet" by Th. Constantinides.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century a run of one-act comedies or brief dramas was published, indicating that something had changed in playwriting. From the 1920s onwards, dialectal ethnographies made their appearance (Galanos, Liasides, Akathkiotis) alongside plays written in the Modern Greek vernacular.

In the same period (1920s onwards) theatre in the Modern Greek vernacular can boast a few highlights, i.e. “Dikigoros” [Lawyer] by E. Zenonos (1923), “Demoprasia” [Auction] by Tefkros Anthias (1935), “Apogonos” [Offspring] by D. Demetriades (1950), “Omiroi” [Hostages] by Loukis Akritas (1956) and probably a few more. In any event, as the years go by, the Cypriot stage will become more welcoming to Cypriot ethnographies (A. Rodinis, M. Kyriakides) that survived over a period when in other parts of Hellenism they would have been considered entirely obsolete.

## NOTES

1. Yiannis Katsouris, *To theatro stin Kypro* [Theatre in Cyprus], Volume A, 1860-1939. Nicosia, 2005: p. 19. For the Greek troupes, see also: Theodoros Hadjipantazis, *Apo tou Neilou mehri tou Dounaveos* [From the Nile to the Danube] Herakleion, Crete, 2002: p. 2026 and Yiannis Katsouris, *To theatro stin Kypro*, Volume A, p. 31.
2. Yiannis Katsouris, *Ellinikon Theatron “Aris” Lemesou (1880-1881)* [Limassol “Aris” Greek Theatre], Nicosia 1990. Over a five-month span, “Aris” staged nine plays.
3. Over an eight-month span, “Sophocles” staged ten plays. See I.Ch. Hadjioannou, *O erasitehnikos dramatikos syllogos Larnakas o Sophocles* [Larnaka’s “Sophocles” amateur dramatic guild] Panhellenic Album of National Centenary 1821-1920, I hrysi vivlos tou Ellinismou [The Golden Bible of Hellenism] Volume D, Athens, 1927: p. 67.
4. For theatrical activity in Nicosia during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Yiannis Katsouris, *To theatro stin Kypro*, A. 1800-1939. Nicosia, 2005: p. 89.
5. Apart from populist melodramas of the time (“Dyo orphanai” [Two orphans], “Rakosyllektis ton Parision” [Ragman of Paris], “Pistis, Elpis, kai Eleos” [Faith, Hope and Mercy] etc.) plays by D’Ennery and his associates are staged; by Dumas, father and son, Giacometti, Sardou, Bernstein, Bataille, Hugo and even Shakespeare (i.e. “Othello”, “The taming of the shrew”); Molière (i.e. “The

Bourgeois Gentleman”), Ibsen (“Ghosts”, “A Doll’s House”) etc. Of course, within the said period the “komeidyllion” and dramatic idylls are in their heyday (“Tyhi tis Maroullas” [Maroulla’s Predicament], “Lyra tou gero Nikola” [Old Nicola’s lyre], “Agapitikos tis voskopoulas” [The Shepherdess’ Lover] and many more) as well as populist patriotic plays (“Choros tou Zalongou” [Dance of Zalongo], “Sklava” [Enslaved Woman], “Athanasios Diakos” etc) and other (i.e. “Melas”).

6. Yiannis Katsouris, *To theatro stin Kypro*, Volume A, 1860-1939, Nicosia 2005: 98. For the relation between Zenonos and Y. Mystriotis and his effort see Yiannis Sideris, *To Archaio Theatro stin Elliniki Skini 1817-1932* [Ancient Theatre in the Greek Stage], 1936, p. 2003.
7. Antis Pernaris, “O Angelos Vazas kai I Kypros” [Angelos Vazas and Cyprus], *Pnevmatiki Kypros*, XV, 171 (December 1974): 69-70. For more information see Yiannis Katsouris, *To theatro stin Kypro*, Volume B, 1940-1959, Nicosia 2005.
8. I.e. “Apahides ton Athinon” [Thugs of Athens], “Vaftistikos” [Godchild], “Halima”, “Christina”, “Mpoemiki Agapi” [Bohemian Love] etc.
9. Among contemporary playwrights, Eugene O’Neil (“Mourning becomes Electra”), Bernard Shaw (“Mrs Warren’s Profession”), Somerset Maugham (“Sacred Flame”), Jacques Anouilh (The waltz of the toreadors), Jean Paul Sartre (“Dirty hands”), Arthur Miller (“All my sons”), Tennessee Williams (“The Glass Menagerie”), Sheriff (“Journey’s End”) etc. are repeatedly put on stage. Nevertheless, many plays of older times are also performed.  
Among Greek playwrights, D. Psathas, Sakellarios-Giannakopoulos, Y. Rousos, St. Photiades, P. Kayias and of course Gr. Xenopoulos, D. Mpogris, Sp. Melas and the then young I. Kampanellis are staged, as well as ancient Greek drama (“Agamemnon”, “Oedipus Rex”, “Persians”).
10. For a complete catalogue of Cypriot plays see Yiannis Katsouris, *To theatro stin Kypro*, Volume B, 1940-1959, Nicosia 2005: 248-260.

## **Post - Independence Cypriot Dramaturgy (1960 Onwards)**

**Andri H. Constantinou\***

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Comment évolue l'écriture théâtrale pendant la période de l'indépendance (depuis 1960)? Il n'existe pas d'études systématiques sur ce sujet. Dans cet article sont analysées des œuvres de quelques auteurs dramatiques les plus représentatifs (Rina Katselli, Michalis Pitsillidis, Panos Ioannidis, Michalis Pasiardis et Yiorgos Neophytou) et sont résumées les lignes directrices de leur œuvre. Bien que les auteurs de la décennie 1960 continuent de créer en suivant la tradition du théâtre éthographique (théâtre de mœurs), on assiste à des efforts plus audacieux, qui tendent à une écriture théâtrale plus contemporaine.

### **ABSTRACT**

How did playwriting evolve in Cyprus since independence (1960 and afterwards)? There is a systematic absence of studies on the subject. The author of this article analyzes the work of some of the most important playwrights of the period (Rina Katselli, Michalis Pitsillidis, Panos Ioannidis, Michalis Pasiardis and Yiorgos Neophytou) and describes their main characteristics. Even though the writers of the 1960s continue to write in the naturalistic mode, others courageously follow more contemporary trends.

### **Introduction**

Theatrical activity in Cyprus pursued either by local playwrights or by permanent residents on the island established a solid presence and began acquiring professional characteristics around the mid-twentieth century. The declaration of Independence in 1960 provided the milestone for ample improvement of theatrical activity parameters on the island.

In this essay we will attempt to revisit Cypriot dramaturgy from 1960 onwards, always with relation to theatrical activity: the picture of a period's dramaturgic production is interlinked with the entire development of theatrical activity in a geographically and linguistically determined space. At

\* University of Cyprus

this point it should be clarified that our research field is limited to Greek speaking texts and the corresponding theatrical activity.<sup>1</sup>

The first plays in contemporary Cyprus can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century's last decades. They are mostly patriotic and romantic dramas with historical and mythological themes, influenced to a great extent by plays written in Greece during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first Cypriot dramas are acted out by the island's amateurs in gatherings of ethnic disposition whereas some are not but philological endeavors. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also sees plays with realistic dialogues in terms of style and social speculation in terms of content, as well as some poetic dramas. The works of this first period are initially written in the *katharevousa* (the "purified" Greek) and later on in the Modern Greek vernacular<sup>2</sup>.

In the meantime, since 1918 and henceforth the theatrical genre of *revue* (musical variety theatre) is successfully received on the Cypriot stage, which up until 1940 possesses an amateurish character. Initially, the Cypriot revue imitates the respective Greek genre that made its debut in Athens in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It gradually begins to form innate characteristics and delves into matters of local current affairs, satirizing persons and situations in the Cypriot society. Acts are written either in the Greek vernacular or the Cypriot dialect, depending on their subject.

## Ethography

The largest part of theatrical production, written by Greek Cypriots during the period between 1940-1980 is comprised of plays in the Cypriot dialect inspired by life in the countryside, for which the term *ethography* (Greek: *ethographia*) has prevailed. The 1960s are marked by an explosion in the writing and staging of such plays.

Ethography, both as a genre and a term was created in Greece and includes a category of early 20<sup>th</sup> century plays that sometimes put emphasis on the *couleur locale*, with dialectal elements (Gregorios Xenopoulos) and other times look into Athens' popular strata, with elements from the idiolect of social groups (Pantelis Horn)<sup>3</sup>. In Greece, ethography in the theatre comprised a relatively short and prolific phase in the evolution of playwriting. In contrast, the Cypriot version of theatrical ethography presents an impressive resilience throughout the years. This phenomenon helped bring to a halt the expansion of playwriting horizons at both the thematic and stylistic level.

Plays in this category are often comedies with elements of farce and more

rarely dramas, always drawing on subjects from Cypriot life, mostly in the villages: love-affairs stumbling on hindrances, confrontations that are sometimes related to life's modifications and the resistance of traditional populations to change<sup>4</sup>. Cypriot ethnography often contains music and songs, more or less organically incorporated into the action while sometimes the show includes traditional dances<sup>5</sup>. Revue sketches with a Cypriot subject written in the idiom contributed to the development of Cypriot ethnography, just as the Greek komeidyllio (music comedy with idyllic themes) and mainly the operetta (Greek but also Viennese) which were crowned with exceptional success in Cyprus since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The public became familiar with the operetta through the tours of companies on the island, mostly Greek ones.

Despite rapid changes in the Cypriot society experienced since the mid-twentieth century onwards (movement from the rural to the urban centers, a rise in the cultural level, the transformation of everyday life with the improvement of living conditions and the introduction of technology, political changes etc.) the genre's stereotypes were kept unchanged. It is obvious that even today the wider public – both the elder who formed their theatrical expertise in the 1960s or the younger ones, more familiar with the television and the radio rather than the theatre – identifies the term *Cypriot play* with these works: written in the Cypriot dialect, with subjects from the gone rural life in Cyprus and finally, with an idyllic inclination and a nostalgic mood for a forsaken reality that appears graphic today<sup>6</sup>.

### C. Theatrical Plays after Independence and their Onstage Reception

The unquestionable heyday of theatrical activity in the 1960s onwards was not hindered by the impending transitions, political unrest and the troupes' financial problems. In contrast, it led stage performances to a more mature phase, accompanied by successful appearances of the State Theatre in both Greece and other countries.<sup>7</sup> This heyday does not have an equivalent in playwriting. Even though there are some commendable playwrights, tracing their own productive course, we cannot talk of great pieces.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, in the period under investigation hundreds of theatrical works had been written. Many of them were published by the playwrights themselves.<sup>9</sup> The majority of pieces reaching the public, as we shall see further below, belong to the category of ethnographic comedy. Applying the criterion of performability, we shall follow the Cypriot playwrights whose plays came full circle after having been judged worthy of being put to the



staging test. There are however some rare cases of plays that were not acted out, owing to the fact that they could not be grasped in their time.

Large production in terms of quantity may be linked on the one hand to the dynamics of Independence itself. On the other, the writing of many plays that more or less fall within the ethnographic genre is also linked to the fact that the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (RIK) used to regularly proclaim playwriting contests, with the possibility of staging the winning plays for television and radio. This policy favored the by then established dialectal pieces of ethnographic content. The majority of radio pieces belong to the *Kypriotiko Sketch* category [short ethnographic radio or TV plays].<sup>10</sup>

Playwriting contests were launched throughout the years by various organizations while over recent years, they are being held on a regular basis by the Cyprus Theatre Organization (THOC), setting more ambitious targets in terms of the texts' thematological and stylistic spectrum.

The period immediately after the Independence of the island sees plays that refer to the recent struggle against the British colonial rule: the first playwriting contest proclaimed in 1962, by the then State-subsidized Cyprus Organization for the Development of Theatre (OTHAC), sought plays drawing on the 1955-1959 struggle for liberation. This first contest was won by the promising *Anaxios* [Unworthy] by Rina Katselli (staged by OTHAC, 1962). In addition, historic dramas drawing on the history of Cyprus, such as *Djuana* by Pavlos Xioutas (Neo Theatro, 1961) and plays by Kypros Chrysanthis can also be traced.

However, as already stated, the greater volume of plays is made up of dramatic ethnographies and to a larger extent, musical ethnographic comedies. The best representatives of the ethnographic genre, providing it with new impetus is Michalis Pitsillides and Michalis Pashardis with whom plays contained within this tradition are enriched with social speculations or invested with poetic dimension, leading the pursuit of the country's tradition well beyond folklore. The two playwrights will be visited more closely further below. Popular poet Pavlos Liasides (1901-1985) comprises a special case. Liasides wrote among others the metrical ethnographic dramas *I agapi nikitis* [Love wins] (staged for the first time by amateurs in 1935 and at the Neo Theatro in 1983); *O Alavrostoisiotis* [The Shadow-Whisperer] (initially acted out for the RIK radio and produced by THOC in 2002); and *O monogios* [The only-son] (acted out for RIK TV), all inoculated with his individual poetic signature.

From the Independence of Cyprus until the foundation of THOC in 1971, numerous names appear in the field of the purely entertaining scene:

ethographic comedy, music comedy, revue and political satire. Markos Georgiou, Achilleas Lymbourides, Sotos Oreitis, Anthos Rodinis, Savvas Savvides, Michalis Kyriakides, Dimitris Papadimitris, Andreas Potamitis are just a few of the playwrights of that period. Among them, some lay claim to a remarkably lengthy production: at least six of the plays by Markos Georgiou were staged during the 1960s whereas between 1960-1974, in an offhand listing we can find thirty (!) titles by Sotos Oreitis performed by professional companies (in some cases, the plays are co-written with other playwrights).

Pieces of an experimental nature, dramas with contemporary themes and comedies that reach beyond ethnography or dare the satire of contemporary life without being limited to the revue's ephemeral nature have not been endowed with an equivalent acme. Nonetheless, some playwrights try their luck in different forms and topics, reaching wider horizons. Panos Ioannides and Irena Ioannidou-Adamidou, trying their hand at experimentalism, are two of them.

In 1971, when the State theatre of Cyprus, THOC, is founded following persistent requests by the intellectual and artistic circles as well as many fermentations, one of the objectives set from the start is to provide support to Cypriot plays. Two years later, led by its president Socrates Karantinos, the new organization takes action toward this direction. As a result, forty plays by Cypriot playwrights were submitted that year to THOC. 1973 saw the first Cypriot play to be produced by THOC, *Theano*, an ethnographic drama by Michalis Pitsillides and the previously written *Omiroi* [Hostages] by Loukis Akritas, centering on the Greek resistance during Nazi occupation and stylistically reminiscent of poetic drama and ancient tragedy. In March 1974, Michalis Pashardis'<sup>11</sup> *To neron tou Dropi* (The snake's water) is staged.

In the years after the 1974 coup and invasion, many plays are written about the shock, the traumas and the differentiations, both explicit and implicit, brought upon Cypriot society by this political turning point. Among them are Panos Ioannides' *Ta xadelfia* [The cousins], *Dry Martini* and *I valitsa* [The suitcase]; Giorgos Neophytou's *Manolis* and *Full Meze*; Rina Katsellis' *Endoskopisi* [Introspection] (or *Galazia Falaina* – The Blue Whale); Maria Avraamidou's *Skliros Angelos* [Tough Angel]; Andreas Koukkides' *Ledras kai Rigainis* [Ledras and Rigainis corner]; Michalis Pashardis *To gatanin* [The maypole]. The stylistics of this particular crop follows on the constants of realistic structure and dialogue, with different undertones: the undertone of satire by Neophytou, the will for abstraction by Pashardis, the emphasis on soliloquy and sometimes of the symbolic

dimension by Katselli. Moreover, the interest in older topics of Cypriot history, both ancient and more recent, is being rekindled: Panos Ioannides' *Onisillos* and Petros Añ, Rina Katselli's *Xeniteia* [Estrangement], Christakis Georgiou's *Kalogeroi* [Monks], Michalis Pitsillides' *Aikaterini Kornaro*, Andros Pavlides' *Ioannikios* and *O Leontokardos stin Kypro* [The Lion-Heart in Cyprus], Giorgos Neophytou's *Stis Kyprou to vasilieio* [In the kingdom of Cyprus] – the two latter with a mood for satire and correlation with the island's contemporary politics and social reality.

In the era that followed July 1974, the plays of numerous playwrights were staged by THOC, on average one per theatrical season. As a whole in its 36 years of activities, the State theatre company produced 40 plays, among which 21 by Cypriot playwrights. THOC also presented a synthesis made up of texts from the history of revue in Cyprus entitled *Heirotimata* [Applause] (2000).

At the same time, Cypriot playwrights find their way to the stage through independent, subsidized companies, to a larger extent over the past years, following the implementation of an additional subsidization program for each Cypriot play production. The Satiriko Theatro has produced, among others, five plays by Andreas Koukkides (a combination of ethnography and satire, in some cases with a tendency toward political deliberating); ETHAL (Limassol Theatrical Development Company) has staged one play by Koukkides. Six plays by Nearchos Ioannou (plays which attempt a daring satire of everyday life in Cyprus but base their success on the embrace of prurient material and scurrility) have been staged at Theatro Ena, ETHAL and Theatro Anemona. Over the past few years, many more, mostly younger, playwrights have seen their plays acted out on Cypriot stages. Evridiki Pericleous-Papadopoulou is an interesting case, having provided poetic plays of an existential and metaphysical dimension. Her plays have been produced by Theatro Ena (*Feggari min klais*, 1996 – Don't cry, moon) and THOC (*To allo miso tou ouranou*, 2003 – The other half of heaven).

#### D. Most Important Playwrights

We shall now attempt to present the most important playwrights applying as basic criteria their contribution to the development of Cypriot dramaturgy, the formulation of a personal style and their plays' onstage presentation. They are quoted in terms of the date on which they made their professional theatre debut.

*Rina Katselli*<sup>12</sup>

Born in 1938 in Keryneia, Rina Katselli lived there until 1974. She published her first play *O exadelphos* [The cousin] at a very young age, using her paternal surname, Haralambidou. Since then, she has been using her husband's surname, Katselli. As early as in her youth she has been dynamic and active. She is the first woman to have been elected a Member of Parliament in 1981, with the Democratic Party (DIKO). Displacement and the loss of her birthplace, Keryneia, molded Rina Katselli as a writer. Place of birth is a source of inspiration in her work and an object of study in terms of its history, tradition and people. Katselli has written novels, numerous studies on the city of Keryneia and around thirty plays: full-length, one-acts and short plays for the television and the radio.

Katselli's work is daring, showcasing a critical mood against contemporary Cypriot society. In her first plays she tends to use the Modern Greek vernacular though she doesn't avoid words from the Cypriot dialect. However, in her later works, she leans more often toward the dialect; in fact, a convincing Cypriot dialect. She draws her topics from contemporary Cypriot reality. Her trademark is the steadfastness of her protagonists, both male and female: strong-willed characters, non-conventional and unyielding to social norms.

In 1962 her play *O Anaxios* [The Unworthy] is awarded a prize, as already noted, by the Department of Intellectual and Cultural Development of the Greek Communal Assembly (then charged with Education Ministry tasks) and is staged by OTHAC in the same year. The play toured in London and Rhodes in September 1963. *O Anaxios* deals with the 1955-59 Cypriot struggle for liberation featuring as hero a young man initially considered incapable of anything serious, until the day he is awakened and joins the struggle. In 1969, Katselli published the sum total of her work, in seven typed small volumes.

Her next play to be staged in professional theatre is *Endoskopisi* [Introspection] (THOC 1980). Both the play's and the preceding novel's (1978) initial title is *Galazia Falaina* [Blue Whale]. In *Endoskopisi*, the name of the protagonist is in fact his status: Uprooted Greek Cypriot. The play was written a few years after the invasion, when the traumas of displacement were still raw. The central character strives to survive as a refugee with his family while at the same time treading an inner path: from anger to giving up and finally to self-reformation. Even though its structure is not always functional at the level of dramaturgy, the play contains and may evoke genuine emotion.

The play *Giati efyen I Valou* [Why Valou left] is chronologically placed after the invasion, centering on a family getting adjusted and becoming rich while the central character, a saucy, unyielding peasant woman remains loyal to the principles of a purer era. *Treli giagia* [The mad grandmother] also ponders over post-war eudemonism. *Xeniteia* [Estrangement] refers to older times, owing to the playwright's interest in Orthodox monachism. Tooulis, the central hero, is another sinful but unconventional being. With the more recent *Pamen kala*, 1994 [We are doing well] and *Pano Geitonia*, 2005 [Upper Neighborhood] she turns to the satire of contemporary reality, whereas *Arkastos* written in 2001 in the framework of a drama workshop and staged in Italy, presents an unexpectedly archaic inclination, sharp-cut heroes and primitive passions. One of the play's driving forces is the lack of water motif, recurrent in Cypriot dramaturgy (see Mihalīs. Pashardis' *To neron tou Dropi* and M. Pitsillides' *Gia pion na vrexēi*, further below).

### *Michalis Pitsillides*<sup>13</sup>

Playwright Michalis Pitsillides was born in Limassol in 1920. He began working from a young age while at the same time attending night school. In his youth he took up poetry and commentary writing. He has written approximately twenty full-length plays and more than a hundred one-acts and radio plays. The majority of his plays are written in the Cypriot dialect.

He first appeared in the theatre at quite a mature age: he wrote his first plays in his forties, during the 1960s. The drama *Gia pion na vrexēi* [For whom it'd rain?] marked his debut in professional theatre. An award-winning play, it was staged by OTHAC in 1963 and centers on a rural community suffering from drought, an allegory of divine punishment for the injustices committed in the village.

Pitsillides is the scriptwriter of the first RIK TV series, *Katothkion tis Madaris* [Underneath Madari] (1960-1970). There is also the TV hit *Na kopiaseis kyrie Maki* [Welcome, Mr Makis], represented on stage too. Many of his plays were produced by professional companies in Cyprus and by THOC, while some were presented in Cypriot communities abroad.

A prolific popular writer, Pitsillides is blessed with the gift of creating vivid characters and the flair to set up juicy comic scenes, which are not devoid of farcical elements, such as the comedy *Ospollate arkontynamen* [Thank God we got rich]. The play has been also staged with the title *O sympetheros o Athanasīs* [Athanasīs, the father-in-law] apparently upon demand by

comedian Nicos Pantelides who played Athanasios (Thiasos Geliou [Laughter Troupe], 1969), while in the summer of 2006 it was produced by THOC in honor of the playwright. Three comedies staged by Vladimiro Kaskarides and the Musical Theatre Organization in 1969 (*Gyron-gyron tis Madaris, Eipen to nai I Andrianou* [Round and round Madari, Andrianou said she will] – published with the title *Vourate n'armasoumen tin Andrianou* [Hurry up – we'll wed Andrianou] and *Vourate n'armasoumen ton Firfirin* [Hurry up – we'll wed Firfiris]). These plays adopt a recipe for success with patterns and stereotypical situations.

In 1970 Pitsillides returns to drama with *Touti I gi einai diki mas* [This land is ours], which focuses on the inhabitants of a village, obliged to abandon their land on account of uncontrolled development. Three years later, Cyprus' official theatre, THOC, stages his award-winning play *Theano*. The main subject is the division of a fishing village with relation to the use of dynamite for fishing, subsequent confrontations and moral dilemmas. The play is written in mixed language, closer to the Modern Greek vernacular rather than the Cypriot dialect.

Many of Pitsillides' plays would be staged in the following years by THOC and other professional theatre groups. In 1990, THOC stages *Klironomoi* [The Inheritors], a play with quite a didactic intent. His next two plays to be represented by THOC come out of Cypriot history: the drama *Sta engata tis gis* [In the depths of the earth] (1984) is based on the miners' 1948 strike, attempting a venture into the field of social and political drama. *Aikaterini Kornaro* (1994) is inspired by the real-life historic figure of Kornaro. Finally, making the best of the success with which Pitsillides' plays are received by the wider public, in June 2007 THOC staged the drama *Gia pion na vrexei*, bringing the number of productions of his plays represented by THOC to six, more than any other playwright's. The Satirikon Theatro produced the comedy *Tofalos o Klonaritis*, a light satire of the social and political life in Cyprus after 1974 in two different versions (1990 and 1998).

Almost in its entirety, Pitsillides' work belongs to the wider sector of ethnography, enriched with elements of social speculation. Delivering plays that have always been well-received by the public, the playwright mainly observes aspects of the island that belong to the near past and have helped formulate the country's current reality. The homeland is placed in the center of interest: the historical fate of Cyprus and its people. Pitsillides' plays are not completely devoid of melodramatic traces while they also contain a didactic tone.

*Michalis Pashardis*<sup>14</sup>

Michalis Pashardis was born in the Nicosia village of Tseri in 1941. He had worked at RIK for many years and still cooperates with the Corporation. He is mostly known as a poet, laying claim to numerous collections and State awards.

His plays are characterized by a particular lyricism of effortless inspiration, where the theatrical dimension is interlinked with the poetic. His work possesses a singular coloration deriving from the playwright's close contact with popular tradition and his deep knowledge of the local culture. In terms of his subject-matter, he draws his material from the Cypriot tradition and the daily life of people, utilizing his knowledge and sensitivity. One could ascribe to him a sound understanding of theatrical codes and flair in the creation of dramatic intensity. However, his work lacks evolution in terms of contemporary subjects and forms. Pashardis is a master in the use of the Cypriot dialect, aware of its wealth and its layers throughout time. Only one of his plays is written in the Modern Greek vernacular.

He made his theatrical debut at a young age with *Yiallourou* [The Blue-Eyed Girl], in a 1968 Neo Theatro performance. The play had already been presented on the RIK radio in 1965 and is inspired by the poem "I Yialloura" by dialectal poet Dimitis Lipertis, almost wholly contained in the play. It is in fact a pastoral idyll, wherein naïve charm becomes a virtue.

In 1974, *To neron tou Dropi* [The water of the snake] becomes the second Cypriot play to be staged by THOC, with great success. Another version of the play was presented in 1968 by the RIK radio. Its structure could be characterized symmetrical as well as cinematographic: many-member scenes in internal spaces are interchanged with brief few-member street scenes which operate as interstices, enhancing the play's dynamics. Two intervening personae, the Narrator and the Singer introduce the events and comment on them, while the latter invests them with an elegiac tone. The play possesses an evocative ambiance and takes place in wintertime, when the abundant light of the Cypriot countryside is absent. The play's theme is based on the pattern of water rarity, the management of which provokes a dispute in the village, victimizing by chance the most innocent human being in the community. Finally, the conflict between good and evil in a traditional society is chronicled. The play contains sound stage economy and interesting characters but does not manage to avoid schematization in specific characters.

THOC also presents Pashardis' *Sta homata tis Mesarkas* [In the soil of Mesaoria] (1979), *To gatanin* [The maypole] (1985) and *T'alonias mas stous pano mahallaes* [Our threshing floors in the upper neighborhood] (1994).

Quite a few of his plays have been presented by the RIK television and radio. Perhaps the most important among them is the compartmented play *To gatanin*, made up of nine autonomous scenes which still contain internal cohesion in terms of themes and patterns. The play is held together by an internal thread which derives from the playwright's deep knowledge and understanding of the Cypriot people. It is characterized by stage and discourse economy bordering on minimalism: well-timed words and movements of the dramatis personae create vivid and well-built characters. The play's last two incidents connect the old Cypriot world (with its tenets, inescapable poverty, its dependence on social inflexibilities such as the dowry, virginity, the subordinate position of women, miserable marriages that cannot be resolved etc.) with the unexpected and completely subversive events of the 1974 coup and invasion. The characters are suffering from poverty and life's blows as they are caught in dilemmas between their wishes and social constants, while men who yield are also presented.

### *Panos Ioannides*<sup>15</sup>

Panos Ioannides was born in 1935 in Famagusta by parents of Asia-Minor origin. Having studied in the USA and Canada, he had worked in RIK for many years and was eventually promoted to Television Programs Director. Part of his work has been translated in many languages while some of his plays have been staged abroad.

In Ioannides' plays, written in the Greek vernacular, the history of Cyprus makes up both an object of observation and the pretext to talk about today in an implicit manner. He draws his topics from both the ancient history and the Middle Ages (*Onisillos*, THOC 1981, *Petros o A'* [Peter I], THOC, 1990) as well as from recent history as in *Gregory* (a realistic drama with moral dilemmas on the 1955-1959 struggle, Teatro RIK, 1970, *Dry martini*, *Tà Xadelfia* [The cousins], *I valitsa* [The suitcase] (featuring an *enclaved* couple [among the few thousand Greek Cypriots that after the 1974 Turkish invasion refused to leave their homes in the Turkish-occupied area] required to abandon their village, RIK television, 1984 and *Satiriko Teatro*, 1989). Within the same spirit, *Sypou skototheis gia to fos* [You, who got killed for the light] can also be placed. This historically notable synthesis of Cypriot literary texts dramatizes a sequence of Cypriot history highlights (staged in 1963). Also, the heroic *Photeinos* (broadcasted in 1969 by the RIK radio) draws on the example of Prometheus and may be interpreted as an allegory of the historic misadventures of contemporary Cyprus. These are also the writer's most poetic pieces.



The elements of irony and satire which he skillfully employs in his novels, are utilized in some of his theatrical pieces such as *To mbanio* [The bath] (THOC, 1978) with the central hero's obsessions, the enviable social status and promiscuous lifestyle he is trying to wash off and the unstaged *Leontios kai Smyrna* [Leontios and Smyrna] (2005), an extremely sarcastic play, with the shrewd mistress and corrupted heroes liberating their depravity, putting on another era's corruption. Ioannides observes contemporary Cypriot reality under the skewed perspective of parable and allegory. He is one of the few Cypriot writers to experiment with form; well beyond realistic conception and dialogue, he even introduces absurdist elements, quite discernable in the youth play *O anthropos apo ti Salina* [The man from Salina] (1962), *Oi Eggastrimythoi* [The Ventriloquists], (Peiramatiki Skini, 1974) and to a lesser extent in the *Mpanio* [The Bath], whereas the comedy *Pygmalion kai Galateia* (ETHOS Theatre, 1965) contains surrealist elements. As a rule, Panos Ioannides writes in the Modern Greek vernacular. In *Oi Eggastrimythoi* the language is peculiar, as one of the characters is a Turk speaking broken Greek.

### *Giorgos Neophytou*

Giorgos Neophytou was born in Nicosia in 1946. He studied veterinary medicine in Leipzig and is currently employed in the Department of Veterinary Services, where he has served as a director. He had also been appointed chairman of THOC's Executive Board (2003-2006). His first play, *Ena kyriakatiko sketch* [A Sunday sketch] was presented by the RIK television in 1984 making a very positive impression<sup>16</sup>. The play commented on the post-1974 Cypriot reality in a sincere manner. The plot unfolds in a Nursing Home, where the old women and a maid working at a bourgeois house express different views on the country's current situation. The title is an implicit comment on the presentation of Cypriot ethnographic plays on the radio, established in the 1950s and carried on to nowadays, repeating the same topics and codes.

Neophytou's next play *Mia aeropeirateia* [A hijacking] is linked to the *Kyriakatiko Sketch* by way of its thematology but also through a recurring character. The second play uses the codes of comedy, in fact, of a rather bitter comedy, and through caricatural exaggeration it exposes indifference about the country and the elitism of a social class that gained its wealth from the displacement of refugees. The play's concept pivots around the high-class wedding of a young daughter. The wedding is on the verge of postponement

as the extravagant wedding gown, ordered from Paris, is on its way on a plane that falls to the hands of hijackers. This event provides the pretext for exposing the dubious morality and priorities of this segment of Cypriot society. A similar topic also runs through *Full meze* (THOC, 1989) in which three friends, standing by the Nicosia dividing line, discuss buying and selling real estate; each of them reacts in a different manner when a soldier is shot a few meters away from them. All three plays are one-acts.

In 1987, the playwright's unique full-length play *Stis Kyprou to vasileio* [In the kingdom of Cyprus] was presented during the Nicosia Festival. A historically invested satire of Cypriot society, the play was staged by THOC a second time in 1992.

Finally, Giorgos Neophytou contributed a small gem to the Cypriot theatre, the soliloquy *Manolis...!* The protagonist is an elder woman recounting her personal drama, addressing the only being that keeps her company, her cat. Her only son was killed in the 1974 coup and the culprits remain unpunished. This one-act was initially staged by the London Cypriot community stage, Theatro Tehnis, in 1987. It was performed for the first time in Cyprus for the RIK television in 1988 and subsequently at THOC in 1990. It is one of the few Cypriot plays (mostly together with Panos Ioannides' plays) that tried their luck outside Cyprus, too: a translation of the play was presented by German radio stations while, adapted to a chamber opera (music by Vasos Argyrides) it was presented in various German cities. The one-act *Manolis...!* was also staged in Athens where both the text and the performance by Despina Bebedeli received flattering reviews<sup>17</sup>.

## Epilogue

Katselli, Pitsillides, Pashardis and Ioannides belong to the generation that made its debut in the 1960s and Neophytou to the post-1974 generation. In the years that followed, no other playwright has established a similarly substantial presence in terms of the power and volume of his/ her work.

As a whole, since the 1960s onwards, production of plays has been indeed quantitatively large but in its greater part it is made up of ethnographic pieces, among which some are true landmarks, having contributed to the enrichment and evolution of playwriting. Cypriot dramaturgy is taking timid steps; sometimes it regresses but throughout this large production remarkable plays have been dispersed, characterized by personal writing and

delving into bolder, contemporary topics.

The year 1974 became the milestone for about two decades, with the thematology of plays drawing almost exclusively on the historic events that marked Cyprus and their consequences. Over the last years, some of the plays that surface appear to ponder over the 21<sup>st</sup> century reality, with existential and diachronic topics, whereas experimentation in terms of form seems to be making a comeback. In fact, Cyprus' (Greek speaking) theatrical writing is in search of a new distinct signature.

### NOTES

1. This limitation does not stem from a qualitative classification; rather, it stems from methodological grounds due to the author's lack of access to Turkish bibliography and its corresponding primary sources.
2. For theatre in Cyprus before the Independence (playwrights and theatrical activity) see mostly Yiannis Katsouris' massive work, *To Theatro stin Kypro* [Theatre in Cyprus] (volume A': 1860-1939, volume B': 1940-1959), Nicosia 2005, wherein relevant bibliography.
3. The term is under investigation with regards to the Hellenic area's dramaturgy, too. For more on the relevant deliberations, see Efi Vafeiadi, "Eisagogi" [Introduction] to the publication *To Fhintanaki* by Pantelis Horn, Dodoni (Athens – Yiannina 1992): 9-21 and Walter Puchner, "O ethographismos" [Ethographism] in his *Anthologia Neoellinikis Dramaturgias, tomos B̂. Apo tin epanastasi tou 1821 os ti Mikrasiatiki katastrophi, Book 2* [Anthology of Modern Greek Dramaturgy. From the 1821 revolution to the Asia Minor Catastrophe], The Ethniki Bank Cultural Institution (Athens 2007): 615-620 and 627-635.
4. One of the first specimens of ethography is Kyriakos Akathiotis' *I agapi tis Marikkous* [The love of Marikkou] (1938), repeatedly performed by professional and amateur companies. The play was staged by THOC in the summer of 2004.
5. The first specimen of musical ethographic comedy is *To oneiro tou Tzypris tou Lefkariti* [The dream of Tzypris from Lefkara] by Costas Harakis, adapted by the composer Ahilleas Lymbourides. It is with this play that the "Kypriako Theatro" company embarked on its course (1951-1961).
6. I quote the questioning of the critic Nona Moleski on the staging of Michalis Pitsillides' *Oi Klironomoi* [The inheritors] by THOC: "I am a foreigner in Cyprus and sometimes when it comes to the appreciation of certain artistic events, I have the feeling that I am the only one who does not carry the magic

eyeglasses of nostalgia, emotion, condescension, that judging by the public's reaction must transform the play, invest it with an emotional aura, reinforce it with joint sweet memories". (*Empros* daily, June 17, 1990).

7. For the era's theatrical life, see Andri H. Constantinou, *To teatro stin Kypro (1960-1964). Oi thiasoi, I kratiki politiki kai ta prota hronia tou Theatricou Organismou Kyprou* [Theatre in Cyprus (1960-1964). Theatre companies, State policy and the first years of the Cyprus Theatre Organization], Athens: Kastaniotis, 2007) wherein relevant bibliography.
8. Scientific bibliography on the era's dramaturgy is limited. Yiannis Katsouris makes a first registration in his text "Ta hronia tis Kypriakis Demokratias" [The years of the Cypriot Democracy], in the *Anthologia Kypriakis Logotehnikias, tomos 9 (Theatro C)* [Anthology of Cypriot Literature, volume 9, Theatre C] (Nicosia: Chr. Andreou, 1986) 968-976.
9. Katsouris (see above, pages 968-969) estimates that during 1960-1986, approximately 140 one-acts and full length plays were written, whereas numerous publications printed by means of a hectograph also circulated. Also, many plays were published in periodicals.
10. The broadcasting of "kypriotika sketch" began in 1953, with the birth of radio broadcasting in Cyprus. As early as 1960, Kypros Chrysanthis talks of a decay of the genre ("To Kypriotiko Sketch", *Pneumatiki Kypros* [Intellectual Cyprus], issue 3, December 1960, p. 151). A few years later, the same columnist will note that these pieces were written offhand, due to the big demand for immediate presentation ("To "kypriotiko sketch" sto "Tris sinantisis kritikis tou periodikou Pneumatiki Kypros", ["The Cyprian Sketch" in "Three critical meetings of Pneumatiki Kypros journal], issues 92-93, May-June 1968, p. 240). In the context of the same publication, Andreas Fantides mentions that "many rural houses bought a radio for the sake of the Cyprian sketch" and that this specific genre "bore playwrights" (pp. 243-244).
11. In a note included in the performance bill, Andreas Christophides points out that the existence of THOC provides for the first time the possibility of investment in Cypriot plays. "Since we do not have at our disposal pieces preserved by our tradition and standing out as generally commendable, the presentation of Cypriot plays cannot but equal the presentation of the contemporary Cypriot play" which owing to the fact that it has not been tried on stage, will suffer from imperfections and weaknesses.
12. The playwright herself provides valuable information on her work in the typed edition *Parakatathesi 50* [Deposit 50], (Nicosia: Chrysopolitissa, 1986). This edition also includes a study on Katselli's life and work by Despo Yiannakides-Pantzarides. See also Nayia Roussou, Rina Katselli, Cyprus PEN Publications, Literary profiles, Nicosia 1995.

13. Sources are limited: Yiannis Katsouris, “Michalis G. Pitsillides”, preface in the publication of plays *Ospollate arkontynamen, To damalin tou ypermahou, Exiskopistiken o Athanasis*, (Nicosia: THOC Library, 2001) pages 5-6, Michalis Pitsillides, *Ospollate arkontynamen*, THOC 2005 (performance bill, research – selection of texts: Andri H. Constantinou).
14. Pashardis plays remain unpublished, with the exception of *Sta homata tis Mesarkas* [In the lands of Mesaoria] which is included in the *Anthologia kypriakis logotehnias* [Anthology of Cypriot Literature], volume 10 (Theatre D’), (Nicosia: Chr. Andreou, 1986) pages 1265-1301. We have not traced any bibliography on his theatrical work, other than critical notes on his plays’ performance bills. For the writer’s poetic personality, see Lefteris Papaleontiou, “O Piitis Michalis Pashardis” [The poet Michalis Pashiardis] *Nea Epochi* review, issue 286, autumn 2005, pages 39-48.
15. A comparably rich bibliography on the writer is available: George K. Ioannides, *Panos Ioannides*, Cyprus PEN Publications, Literary Profiles, Nicosia, 1995, Hara Bakonikola-Georgopoulou, “Gregory by Panos Ioannides” in *Kanones kai exaireseis. Keimena gia to neoelliniko teatro*. [Rules and exceptions. Texts on Modern Greek theatre] (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2000) pages. 94-96, Yiannis Katsouris, “To theatrico ergo tou Panou Ioannide: Mia syntomi theorisi” [Panos Ioannides’ theatrical work: A brief overview] *Nea Epochi* review, issue 267, 2001, pages 16-22, Xenia Georgopoulou, “Exousia kai diafthora sto teatro tou Panou Ioannide” [Authority and corruption in Panos Ioannides’ theatre] *Nea Epochi* review, issue 292, Spring 2007, pages 53-65 and Andreas Chrysostomou, “To theatrico ergo tou Panou Ioannide” [Panos Ioannides’ theatrical work] [2003] (graduate thesis, University of Athens, Theatre Studies Department, Library).
16. The playwright’s debut was favorably commented on by acclaimed columnists: Maria Doriti, “Tomi stin kypriaki pragmatikotita: *Ena kyriakatiko sketch*” [An incision through Cypriot reality: *A Sunday sketch*], *Apogevmatini* daily, 3/11/1984, Niki Marangou, “*Ena kyriakatiko sketch toso apla... alithino*” [A Sunday Sketch... simply real], *O Fileleptheros* daily, 30/10/1984, L[azaros] M[avros], “Kritiki sto *Ena kyriakatiko sketch* tis tileorasis: Otan I alitheia prokalei anakatosoura” [A review of *A Sunday sketch*: When the truth becomes meddlesome] *Kirykas*, 28/10/1984.
17. Costas Georgousopoulos characterized the soliloquy “stirring”. “Using a mature, simple, realistic language, taking off only in the form of mourning for the loss of life’s most essential, Giorgos Neophytou delivered a beautiful role, that requires a charismatic actress”. (“Penthos kai chara ek Kyprou” [Mourning and joy from Cyprus] *Ta Nea* [Athens] daily, 4/4/1990.

## **The Short Story in Cyprus from the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century until 1920**

**Christos Hadjiathanasiou\***

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Pendant les premières années de l'occupation britannique, parallèlement à la mise en circulation des premiers journaux locaux, certains jeunes écrivains commencent à cultiver le court récit en suivant la tradition éthographique (éthologique) développée en Grèce pendant la décennie 1880. De façon graduelle on publie des nouvelles avec plus d'exigences, dans lesquelles la thématique cède sa place à des représentations plus réalistes des aspects de la vie chypriote.

### **ABSTRACT**

During the first years of the British occupation, parallel to the publishing of the first local newspapers, some young writers start to cultivate the ethographic (naturalistic?) novel as it was shaped in Greece during the 1880s. Gradually, we witness the emergence of more sophisticated novels dealing with more realistic themes drawn from the various aspects of Cypriot life

The first short stories in Cyprus appear in local newspapers, that have been in print since 1878, in other words when the island passed from the long Turkish occupation into British administration. Until 1920 very few collections of short stories had circulated, while most short stories during this period are scattered in newspapers or other periodical publications.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the Cypriot short story of this period has an experimental character. There are no systematic storytellers. Only a very few new writers attempt to write short narratives (chronicles, travel sketches, impressions from everyday life and brief snapshots), that tend to take the form of short stories. These ambitious writers (that are studying to become or are working as journalists, lawyers, teachers, doctors) seem to be informed about the evolution and maturing of the Modern Greek short story during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and sometimes come into immediate contact with international storytelling, or attempt to translate samples from it.<sup>2</sup>

\* Philologist

The development of the so-called ethographic (convention-based) short story in Greece, guides the young Cypriot storytellers into writing similar narratives inspired by the Cypriot countryside. Already in the first storytelling attempts, the writers tend to adopt basic characteristics of the ethographic or ethnographic custom-based short story. In the anonymous, unfinished narrative “The great-grandfather and the great-granddaughter”, that appears to belong to Stylianos Chourmouzos, the new mores about fashion, marriage, dancing, entertainment, family relationships etc., are satirized, as they have developed in the city, in contrast to the traditional way of life of people in the countryside, which is confronted with a nostalgic disposition. The writer uses a mixed language, combined with several Cypriot idioms and elements of the spoken word. A second, more compact and meticulous narrative is attributed to the same writer, with the title “Confessions of a father”, where the viewpoint is projected that education influences youth in a negative way, since it distances them from the agricultural professions.<sup>3</sup>

In 1895 the term “moral-based” is used to define the short stories of Menelaos D. Frangoudis “How marriages are created. The gossip of people” “Theatre speeches”.<sup>4</sup> In reading these short stories it is clearly discernible that the term is used with the meaning of gossip, the comical caricature of peoples’ behaviour, that are related here to matchmaking and dowries or the viewing of a theatrical play. It is basically about the recording of observations of the writer about snapshots from life, without demanding myth-creating procedures (with the creation of a myth or action or fully fledged heroes), assigning, at first, a totally superficial, flat meaning to the term.

In a similar vein are several other short stories of this period. The writers mainly draw inspiration from the people of the countryside (while the world of the city is not completely absent) and attempt to present mores, customs, traditions, and insights into the life of its inhabitants. In several cases they approach through an idyllic and idealised optical angle, in many others, however, they use a relatively realistic approach and a more developed critical eye. It is obvious that folkloric science is served during this period by the ethographic short story. In an attempt to prove the Greek identity of the Cypriot people literature is recruited, which is called upon to assist in its way the scientific, political and ideological argument for ‘enosis’(union) of Cyprus with Greece.

The first attempt in the direction of realistic ethographic storytelling is made by Ioannis Kipiadis with his short story “The complaint of Anthoulla”,

one of three short stories in his mixed volume entitled *Fine Lines* (1894). Despite the romantic elements that exist here, there is enough ground to critically present the subjects of marriage, widowhood, superstition and poverty, that, in conjunction with his demotic language, differentiate it radically from the other two short stories in the volume.

An essential boost, however, to realistic ethnographic storytelling, is given by Demosthenis Stavrínides in 1898, with his ten *Cypriot short stories*. Indicative of the intentions of the young writer are the words that precede his book: His short stories “do not aim at adding something to Greek literature. They were written simply to depict the nature of life in my most Greek homeland, and no less than any other subjugated island that has been studied”. D. Stavrínides seems to be aware of the evolution of the Modern Greek short story, and to have been influenced by it, since he had been studying in Athens since 1896. One of the stories in his collection (“All around the fire”) is dedicated to the eminent critic of the time, Emmanuel Roidis, who had advised him before the publication of his short stories.<sup>5</sup> In a few of the stories romantic exaggeration, daydreaming and unfulfilled young love are evident, while over-elaborate perceptions become obvious in one short story. A leading role, however, is played by the scenes from rural and urban social life in Cyprus, that extend to a variety of subjects. The use of first-person narrative, the deliberate detail and the exposing eye at the life of the heroes and of everyday Cypriot life, constitute gauges in the writer’s attempt to depict matters with a realistic disposition. Several social problems parade in his short stories, such as the story of the village madwoman, the drama of the poor girl that works day and night to create her dowry and reinstate herself, the tragedy of the poor woman who sells all her household wares to pay off the debts of her husband, the marriage of two insignificant beings, miserliness, superstitions and others, enriched by mores, traditions and customs. The writer uses simple narrative techniques. In his subsequent short story “The confession of a monk”, that was praised at a contest by the Panionian Association (with critical committee members N.G. Politis, G. Drosinis and C. Palamas), the attempt of the storyteller to depict the mentality of the central hero is more distinctive. In the direction of realistic ethnographic storytelling are also three of the ten short stories contained in the *Collection of short stories* (1899) by Xenophon Pharmakides, while others are published in newspapers and magazines (*Alithia*, *Patris*, *Elikon*) and others in *Cypriot Mansions* (*Κυπριακά Σηηνογραφήματα*) (1922). Most of these are filled with romantic exaggerations or unbearable moral preaching.



Usually the writer is limited to sketching, with extremely rough brushstrokes, episodes from different periods in Cypriot history, without attempting to reconstruct the historical material or to present any significant action. However, in at least three short stories he draws inspiration from his contemporary Cypriot life and succeeds in overcoming many of the others' shortcomings. We refer to the short stories "The shylocks", "The card player" and "A victim", in which he stigmatises the harshness and cruelty of the shylocks of his time, the social scourge of card playing, which ruins consciences and leads people to squalor and the negative implications of mimicry and the trend towards unnecessary luxuries.

The *Philosophical short stories* (1905) by Kyriakos P. Rossides do not add anything new; two of three texts of the volume are rather a backward step towards the "death-persuader" world of romanticism. A certain value can be assigned to the third short story "The eye", which is based on Cypriot tradition.

As we have seen above, during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there are some primitive attempts aimed at making the most of Cypriot linguistic idiom in the short story. Stylianos Chourmouzos and to a lesser extent Ioannis Kipiades incorporate several Cypriot idioms, mainly during the dialogues of their texts, and also in the speech of the narrator. During the same period, Georgios S. Frangoudes (first with his short story "From Lemesos to the City (Lefkosia) on foot" and three years later with the short story "The Avowed") gives a more authoritative signal for the exploitation of the local dialect in the writing of short stories, in which there is an emphasis in the depiction of scenes from the life, the mores, the customs and the traditions of people in the Cypriot countryside. This explains the fact that Nikos Hadjigavriel dedicates, some time later, the first of four short stories to G.S. Frangoudes. In these interesting short stories, N. Hadjigavriel manages to convey with an idyllic disposition and humour, the mores, the traditions, the everydayness, the joys, the sorrows and the drama of people in the countryside, using a luscious idiomatic language, in combination with the naivety, the simplicity and the density of folkloric storytelling.<sup>6</sup>

In three of his short stories, Yiangos Lanitis takes advantage of the linguistic idioms of Patmos (where he was temporarily residing) to present comical stories from the people and the traditions of the island. Similar comical and ethnographic episodes (not in Patmos) are described in other short stories, that are published mainly in the *Salpinx* newspaper (1897-1898, 1907), using a simplified Katharevousa language which comes close to

the demotic language of the time. In general, however, we can say that idioms are not in widespread use during the specific period. In fact, where they are used, this is restricted to spoken dialogues or is used sporadically in the body of the narrative, itself being expressed either in Demotic (conventional Modern) Greek or in a simple Katharevousa language.

The establishment of the trend towards realistic ethnographic storytelling seems to be accomplished by the six "Cypriot short stories" that were published anonymously in the magazine *Avgi* (Lefkosia, 1910-1911) and are accredited to its editor and publisher, Constantinos G. Eleftheriades.<sup>7</sup> In his texts, this prematurely departed journalist, is not limited to the simple presentation of the viewpoint and situations of Cypriot life, whether these take place in a rural or urban environment, if we can characterise the environment of Cypriot towns in this way at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the rhetorical means that at certain times remind us of the storytelling works of Papadiamantis (detailed, meticulous outlining of the scenery that the action of the characters takes place, method of introducing characters, monikers and nicknames of heroes, manner of developing and ending the myth, longwinded articulation of the narrative speech, disruption of the simple Katharevousa language of the narrator by idiomatic words, use of idiomatic phrases in the relatively limited dialogues), the writer stares directly and with a critical disposition at the viewpoints and problems of Cypriot life. Themes such as poverty, the exploitation of the poor by the wealthy, usury, the destitution of man, fortune-hunting, the undignified position of women, nouveau richness, pedantic use of the katharevousa (logiotatismos), superstition, of peasants are recorded, satirised, reduced and criticized. Thus K.G. Eleftheriades transcends by a long way the idyllic description or the simple recording of Cypriot scenes that we come across in many previous short stories.

Yiannis Stavrinos Economides continues this realistic style originated by K.G. Eleftheriades, with three short stories ("Carmen or Love of the Englishwoman", "Simos Leventis", "Tinensis") of his prolusory collection *First short stories* (1915) and three other short stories that he publishes in newspapers a while later. The three stories are written in a mixed language, with the demotic predominating and some breaks into Katharevousa, enriched by words from the Cypriot dialect. In the dialogues between villagers the local idiom is used, while the words of other characters are conveyed accordingly; for example the words of the Englishwoman are broken, ungrammatical Greek. The texts are quite extensive and approach

the category of a novel, if we take into account the multitude of episodes, the abolition of the unity of space and time etc. Despite their weaknesses (chatter, literary references and narrative self-commentary at the expense of the narration), the writer manages to describe complete human characters and to stigmatise social problems such as ignorance, superstition, social injustice, the foreign status quo etc. He crosses beyond the borders of the Cypriot region and situates the action of his heroes in great urban centres abroad, such as Athens, Alexandria, London, Smyrna, Constantinople, imparting a certain cosmopolitan character to his short stories. The stories “The rifle a saviour”, “So it must” and “It cannot be insured” that were published in newspapers.<sup>8</sup> In these texts he presents with psychographic intensity and realistic detail and a sarcastic disposition, topics such as financial difficulties that prevent a young man from studying, the inability of money to cure an illness or to avert death, the dilemma of voluntary enlistment in the Greek army, and others. It is obvious that with his short stories, G.S. Economides has at least contributed to the broadening of the themes, the establishment of realistic moral-based storytelling and the infusion of a cosmopolitan character to the Cypriot short story, elements that have made him an authority of this style, always in conjunction with the facts and the capabilities of his time.

In the same direction moves the prolusory short story “Demetris” by Melis P. Nicolaides, even though his other short stories from this period are written in an entirely different style. This short story touches “bold” issues such as dishonesty, adultery, prostitution, alcoholism, degradation, the snatching of a Christian woman by a Muslim. All these constitute a dispiriting scene, in which any hint of an idyllic message is ruled out.<sup>9</sup>

Isolated and rather flat ethnographic short stories were published during this period by Georgios Th. Stavrinides, Neophytos P. Ioannides, Alekos N. Zenon, I. Christodoulides and others; their short stories have nothing new to add to the previous ones.

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On broad terms, it could be said that the short story is constantly evolving during the thirty year period that concerns us, and tends to crystallise more and more realistic characteristics. This particular trend holds a dominant position in the entire production of short stories during this period. However, this is not the only direction, since other short stories appear, others with more and others with less obvious elements of differentiation.

Specifically, during the decade of 1890 or the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

emerge certain other short-storytellers, that operate in a different style. Evgenios Zenon, for example, during the period of 1894-1905, publishes about ten short stories in newspapers, several of which are quite extensive and take place in large Greek urban centres, such as Athens and Constantinople. Their themes are taken from the life of these cities, mainly from Athens, where the writer studied. In these texts predominant are the erotic element (with romantic undertones), family and interpersonal relationships and scenes from military life, that are probably personal memories, since the writer enlisted voluntarily during the Greek-Turkish war of 1897. We come across snapshots from Athenian life, combined with philosophical contemplation, in all twelve short stories of the collection *Like life and like a fairy tale* (1907) by Kimon Michaelides.

Evangelos Hadjiioannou published in Cypriot newspapers (1898-1903) short stories inspired almost exclusively by the struggles of occupied Greek areas for emancipation from the Turks (particularly during the years 1896-1897), in which he took part as a volunteer. The short stories are permeated by over-idealism<sup>10</sup> and a beautification of the facts on the battlefield. In certain situations they are presented as personal experiences and tend towards military journalism. The very few short stories of Ioannis Pegasios have a similar character, during the period 1914-1916, in which he describes his experiences and memories from the struggle for the liberation of Epirus (1913-1914) in which he took part as a volunteer.

During his studies in Athens, Aristides N. Zenon published in the Lemesos newspaper *Alithia* (1898-1905) ten short stories, most of which are lightweight sketches from Athenian life. They have several similarities to the narratives of Kimon Michaelides, with the difference that the former's texts are filled with hope and optimism.

From the cases that we have mentioned it is evident that several Cypriot short story writers of this period (and certainly those who are studying in Athens) are living inside the literary fermentation that is brewing in Greece around 1900 and are receiving the new messages. At any rate, during the decade of 1910 (and after the beginning of World War I) it is obvious that idyllic ethnographic writing has given way to realism, without the absence of suggestions from other literary trends, such as symbolism and aestheticism. During this time the short stories of Georgios I. Kitropoulos, Persephone Papadopoulos, Georgia Lofitis, Charitini Kouppas, Xanthos Lyssiotis, Christakis Peristianides, Theocharis Theocharides, Leonidas Pavlides, Savvas Christis, and others, are published

G. Kitropoulos (who lived in Alexandria) gathered the short stories of his youth in his first volume (*The first*, 1911), in which he exploits with a philosophical and melancholic disposition the erotic element and general themes of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. Persephone Papadopoulos seems to be inspired by the aestheticism principles; in the few pieces of prose that she published, she praises the beauty of nature and provides examples for the superior behaviour of women, thus serving her cause of uplifting women. Charitini Kouppas in her five short stories published in 1914-1915, aims at giving positive examples and moral lessons for women, without resorting to beauty-worship like P. Papadopoulos. Conversely, one can observe signs of linguistic sensuality and beauty-worship in the first and limited attempts at short stories by Xanthos Lyssiotis, Christakis Peristianides and Pavlos Valdaserides, that are published in various newspapers of the time in the demotic tongue. It should be noted that all of the above experiment also with poetry.

Georgia Lofitis, that publishes short stories towards the end of the decade of 1910, seems to be influenced mainly by the poetry of symbolism. In almost all of her short stories, written in the demotic language, the principal characters are women lost in endless reverie, deep introspection, detached from everydayness, which they watch from a window or a mirror flowing slowly and prosaically. These short narratives usually take place during a fading autumn environment, that finally leads them (the women) to melancholy and decline, like the heroes in *Autumn* (1917) by K. Chatzopoulos.

In any case, Leonidas Pavlides and Savvas Christis to a lesser extent, in some very isolated short stories, written in a cultivated demotic filled with obsession about beauty and word hunts (lexitheria), reveal another trend, that is connected to the superman and Nietzscheanism that however does not have a continuation.

Two comprehensive short stories are published during 1918-1919 by Theocharis Theocharides, who was residing in Khartoum. One of them ("The pity") takes place in London and has the characteristics of a police story. The other ("The return") refers to two lovers, that are separated by their belief in different religious dogmas. These short stories bring something new to the themes of the Cypriot short story.

In general we can say that the fermentations that are brewing during this first phase of the Cypriot short story follow (at a smaller or greater distance) the developments in the Modern Greek short story of the same period. In

other words, from the romantic, melodramatic and idealised ethnographic depictions we move into the more down-to-earth, realistic and critical treatment of the viewpoints of daily life. These experimental attempts of young Cypriots encompass new possibilities that are registered more distinctly in Cypriot short story writing during the years between the Wars, and at the same time affirm that spiritual and literary pursuits never operate single-dimensionally and univocally.<sup>11</sup>

### NOTES

1. I have collected many of the short stories of this period, and it is expected that they will be contained in a volume to be published shortly by the Centre for Scientific Research(Cyprus).
2. In this article, many observations from the "Introduction" by Lefteris Papaleontiou are used, in the publication *Anthology of the Cypriot short story*, volume A', Nicosia, Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2006, pp. 13-36.
3. Both short stories were published in the Lemesos newspaper *Salpinx*; the first in 20 parts, from 7 Oct. 1889 until 21 Mar. 1892; the second in 4 parts, on 10,17 Sept. and 1,8 Oct. 1894.
4. Published in the newspapers *Alithia*, Lemesos, 6 Oct. 1895 and *Salpinx*, 1 Jan. 1897 respectively.
5. See Costas Nicolaides, "The 'presence' of Roidis in the *Cypriot short stories* of Demosthenes Stavrinides", *Akti* 1 (1989) 49-64.
6. These short stories were published in the newspaper *Alithia* during the years 1902-1908 and collected under the editorship of Chr. Hadjiathanasiou in the *Microphilologika Tetrada*, no. 2, Nicosia 2003 (a supplement of the magazine *Microphilologika*).
7. For this topic see L. Papaleontiou, "Two Cypriot short story writers: Nikos Hadjigavriel-K.G. Eleftheriades", *Akti* 13 (1992) 65-90, where the relevant bibliography can be found.
8. The first in *Alithia*, 28 Oct. 1916 and the other two in *Eleftheria*, 30 Mar., 6 Apr. 1918 and 20, 27 Jul. 1918. A previous one, "The pole" (*Kitian Diary of 1913*, pp. 98-109), is based on popular superstition about the existence of ghosts.

9. Published in the newspaper. *Echo of Cyprus*, 20 Jan. 1916 and later.
10. See mainly the short story “The real Greek girl”, newspaper *Alithia*, 8 Jan. 1898.
11. The most significant case of Nicos Nicolaides is not included here, who published his short stories in literature of the broader Greek region during the decade of 1910, and published three collections in the 1920’s. There is testimony that one of his short stories, “The servants”, was published in the long lost magazine *Melissa* of Nicosia (1919).

## Loukis Akritas' *Kampos* and Ethnographic Narrative Realism

Louiza Christodoulidou\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Dans les années 1930 Loukis Akritas, qui est installé à Athènes, tente d'écrire des narrations complexes, comme le roman *La plaine* (1936), s'inspirant des narrations sociales analogues de l'espace littéraire hellénique et international. À l'aide de techniques réalistes il essaie de montrer des confrontations intenses d'hommes de la campagne chypriote, qui arrivent à des comportements extrêmes, comme c'est le cas avec le protagoniste du récit de Konstantinos Theotokis *La vie et la mort de Karavelas* (1920).

### ABSTRACT

During the 1930s, Athens-based Loukis Akritas tackles more complex narratives, as in *The Plain* (1936), drawing his inspiration from social narratives of the Hellenic and world literature. Using realistic techniques, he tries to exploit intense confrontations of Cyprus's rural life, bringing them to a pitch, as in the case of Konstantinos Theotokis, the protagonist of *Life and Death of Karavelas* (1920).

In this paper, our investigation will focus on axes pivoting around social and psychological speculation as well as the description of space as a narrative *locale* - the invariables characterizing *Kampos* [Lowland] (1936) by L. Akritas. At the same time we will attempt a first intertextual approach between the aforesaid novel and K. Theotokis<sup>1</sup> narrative *I zoi kai o thanatos tou Karavela* [The life and death of Karavelas] (1920).

The story unfolds in the Cypriot countryside, namely in the Mesaoria lowland that survives or rather strives to survive with the cultivation of fields, especially those owned by landowners, when the weather allows it. The writer outlines the morals of a small rural village society, psychologically portrays characters and registers aspects of rural life.<sup>2</sup> He employs frugality to imprint his material, condensing the quintessence of primary instincts,

\* University of the Aegean



rampant passions and interests that rule the microcosm of an enclosed society. Limited action unfolds both in the interior (coffee-shop, Valetas' and Roidos' houses) as well as in external spaces (the lowland, farms).

*Kampos* contains an attitude toward life; it is a novel with a *thesis*, a *socialistic* novel, like *I zoi kai o thanatos tou Karavela* (1920).<sup>3</sup> It belongs to the so-called "protest prose",<sup>4</sup> it works interferingly, in a covert manner, without being explicitly didactic, admonitory or moralistic.<sup>5</sup>

We do not wish to place the novel into the genre of naturalism – rather, it leans toward realism; yet, some naturalistic traces can be found in *Kampos*, since the writer naturalistically renders the rural-popular mores and describes "characters that fall victim both to their internal impulses and to external social forces".<sup>6</sup> Oftentimes we observe that the above are transformed and rendered realistically. In other words, they represent reality more faithfully and with precision, sometimes with cynicism but also with harsh rawness. In that way, events can actually speak for themselves and lead to verisimilitude, that is why the characters' actions make us sad and frightened without however surprising us as they portray truth, albeit cruelly. *Kampos* may be described as an ethnographic novel, but in its renewed form, namely realistic ethnography, as the writer is not limited to a photographic depiction of the natural environment, defined by naturalism and descriptive narration, neither does he stop at a superficial description of his characters' and situations' external characteristics. In contrast, he delves into them, shedding light on details that better portray them, through a realistic account of the exhaustive clash between two landowners.<sup>7</sup> Through the villagers' discussions (i.e. Alexis' and Valetas' philosophical thinking) penetration into the internal world of the fictional manpower is achieved. Action unfolds within a setting that allows Akritas to successfully transcend the context of ethnography. *Kampos* recounts "a story that would run the risk of moving within the stereotypes of ethnography if it weren't for dynamic realism in the clash between two rival families – a realism that takes off through epic-lyric descriptions" (A. Zeras). On the other hand, the writer does not revoke the ethnographic dimension neither does he displaces his directorial and scenographic framework – from the countryside to the city – as proposed by many of his contemporary prose writers who embraced urban ethnography. Akritas brought a new hue to the ethnographic dimension, the hue of the psychological portrayal of characters, leaving his own mark of renewal unto Cypriot prose discourse. He recounts space, the countryside, the way its structures change, social diarthrosis, the laws governing the

lowland that are clearly different than those of the city and the relations between men and women. In addition to that, the writer introduces a new element: he recounts the attitude and mentality of the collective consciousness of a large group among the novel's characters, going beyond individual consciousness; at the same time "he nods encouragingly to human power, to a man's tenaciousness to attain his self-ruling" (A. Zeras).

Akritas probes into topics that relate to the love for the land – bordering on pathology – to eroticism, incited by primary and animal instincts, to the authoritative power that emanates from the acquisition of more land, to greed, money, usury. The writer displays the ethical or unethical behavior of the villagers', whose actions are some times consistent with the surrounding space<sup>8</sup> and stem from internal or external factors: passions, wealth or poverty and hunger, the agony for tomorrow, predominance or contempt, isolation and dead-ends, situations affecting their psychic world, allowing impulses to surface. Oftentimes, these impulses are not only extremely remote from the social conventions that should govern life; they are also dangerous.

Here in the villages, we are the most damned people on earth. We never cease to fight people, to fight the sky... Say it forsakes us for a year and we are all willing to sell our very soul to Satan... (1981: 81)

The atmosphere of that time is skillfully reproduced in the novel, while destitution is also depicted. The individual's loneliness surfaces through fiction, alongside alienation, phobia and contempt for letters, since the villagers consider cultivated people as something strange, foreign to them; that is why they disdain and write them off, cutting them off from their lives.

To him, [Alexis] was a loser, as he stepped out of his class and ended up selling books. [...] This was not a job worthy of his race. (1981: 32)

There is a very strong feeling that the law of the mightiest, namely the landowner, weighs upon the village; and this has been handed down to small societies, to this day. "We are insignificant" Christofis admits replying to Leousis, "and it is not befitting for us to judge the deeds of the great. We accept the world as we find it" (1981: 67) Indeed, economic and land supremacy is what determines the behavior and attitude of landowners toward the poor villager, who either did not inherit a lot or was deprived of it. At the same time, primitive, primordial competitiveness bordering on the tragic makes its way into the landowners, Leousis and Roidos, over land supremacy, and also into the self-conceited (like Leousis) and the landless villagers over the untouchable

dream of private property or even bitterness for the loss of plots because of debts. Therefore, on the one hand the archetypal “conflict” between masters and plebeians is recalled in an intense and unremitting manner, with each side utilizing every means within their reach, mostly covertly in order to develop and mobilize their defense and survive. On the other hand, most villagers are characterized by a potentially simulated servile behavior toward the masters, led by the feeling of fear with the ultimate aim to make their living.

The villagers, Valetas too, bowed their heads, just like servants, upon seeing the master from afar riding his rutting horse, snorting and jumping over ridges and ditches. (1981: 21)

Each time he'd enter the coffee-shop, they would rise. The old would crouch their bodies, ready to bow some more, if he wouldn't rush to sit down. (1981: 225)

The feeling of avowed fear imposes silence upon the poor: “We are all afraid of you” Christofis will say to Roidos. The lack of slightest resistance on behalf of the poor rural folk is both pronounced and entirely justified. The only two who do resist and are perhaps the most dignified fictional characters are Valetas, Annoula's father and Alexis, Leousis' brother. Valetas, a mellow man with philosophical disposition is a balancing and regulatory factor, even though the extent of a villager's intellect does raise a few questions. The same could be said for the bookseller Alexis, the other “intellectual”, even though the latter is well-traveled and obviously knowledgeable of things.<sup>9</sup>

Confessions from the past, *analepses* and discussions in the penumbra between these two characters display the writer's sensitivity and reveal his ideological universe. Through Valetas and Alexis, Akritas states his own world view as he ponders over life with an obvious wish to remodel the world. It is only through the discussions of these two that this takes place. In no other case does the writer suggest, judge or deliver a social sermon. He merely describes and awakens his reader with regards to sensitive demands. What we are to understand is that both Theotokis and Akritas effortlessly urge their reader toward the human process of empathy/ sympathy for the fictional hero or of contempt/dislike against him. They urge him toward the emotive effect of a beautiful picture of the natural environment and of frustration for injustice and evil.

The writer's imagery is showcased through lyrical descriptions in which nature is thoroughly represented and described. Akritas systematically adopts

the tactic of the description of space, mostly of the natural landscape, and of characters too, just as Theotokis does (albeit rarely in terms of nature's description), in order to pass from one event to the other or to make a pause in action. Nevertheless, the depictions of landscapes and nature stand in general in complete contrast to the events that take place, not only in the soul and mind but also in the actions of fictional heroes. The idealization of habitat and idyllic descriptions run contrary to the hard life of poor villagers and also to the harshness of the landowners that becomes externalized through cruel manifestations. Nonetheless, through the descriptions of nature and the landscape the tender covert side of people is often put forward, even if it belongs to a dimension we are having trouble accepting when juxtaposed with persons and characters whose behavior is in fact ill-assorted with such sensitivities.<sup>10</sup> All this of course is entirely compatible on the one hand with the masters' passionate bond with the land and with the hard way with which they manage rural tasks and on the other hand with their more or less contented lives. In the one instance, the land is proven life-bearing for man. In the other, the power it exercises may become disastrous for him, which is actually the case with the two landowners and eventually, whilst unanticipated and unexpected with Vasilis, Roidos' son too.<sup>11</sup> The polite, kind-hearted and somewhat naive young man, who cared very little for land property, was transformed and gradually led to self-alienation, when he inherited the land after his father's death. The thoughts of his father-in-law, Valetas, plead the same view:

And he heard him speak with a familiar tone, as if something came out upon him that tore him apart. He became frightened of this young lad, the wealthy lad that loved his daughter. Something crossed his mind, a fear that dared him at nights. (1981: 191)

Aim. Hourmouzios' review of the novel *I zoi kai o thanatos tou Karavela*, could in many instances apply to the events unfolding in *Kampos*, as it contains analogies and common features with K. Theotokis' novel.<sup>12</sup> In both works the element of nativity is recorded to such an extent that it allows us to assume the writers are inspired by true events when focusing on characters and space. They create personae and facades and depict characters, attitudes and situations within the context of realistic ethnography. Men are the masters of the game, while women remain oppressed, one way or another.

Akritas proportionally echoes the typology of Theotokis' narrative heroes: comic-tragic personae that touch on the limits of grotesque, slimy types,

dislikable characters such as Christofis, who could be juxtaposed with Karavelas' figure, "a dark pariah",<sup>13</sup> as one of them is possessed by slyness and passion for money and the other by slyness, malice and sexual passion for a woman. Both of them are prone to criminal vengeance (Christofis attempts to murder Leousis, following an implicit suggestion both by Roidos, for economic gain, and by his wife, so that he becomes worthy in her eyes). Even animals, namely oxen, owned by prosperous villagers are tragic "protagonists" in both novels, as they comprise the object of vengeance of the two aforementioned pathetic human caricatures: of the hideous Christofis, the master's pawn and the tragicomic figure of Karavelas, who ends up the laughing stock of the village. There are two principal reasons for his fall which are interlinked: Argyris' greed and the guile of the attractive Maria, who took advantage of the old man's love in order for her family to appropriate his fortune.

The wealthy landowners' greed, combined with their guile and exploitation of the weak, with unlawful transactions, leads to the creation of sub-humans on both sides, executioners and victims. Of course, we have the feeling that Akritas' novel contains a more toned-down realistic rawness than Theotokis'. The latter penetrates deeper into human psychology in order to display impunity and lack of humanity, even though the Cypriot writer's heroes appear in some cases as unfeeling, corrupted or criminals. On the other hand, the likeable characters of Vasilis (in the beginning), Annoula, Alexis or Valetas, "idealized personae leaning toward the dream" (Al. Alafouzou) are completely absent from Theotokis' novel, in which even children are sly and behave with irony.

Akritas' male protagonists are possessed by stubbornness that touches the limits of animal behavior, whether this concerns the poor and their survival or the rich and their predominance. Men escape to the coffee-shop, an exclusively male meeting place. It is there that they cut business deals, that they have discussions and gossip-talks, disputes, pronounced altercations, there that imagination runs wild and magnifies things.

Two types of women prevail in *Kampos*: On the one side stands the woman-courage, who follows her fate silently, ungrudgingly, with patience and perseverance, putting up with man's fancies.<sup>14</sup> She has not the right to life; she lives in total isolation inside a dead-end, leading something that resembles a life. This even applies to the wealthy Athena:

The drained look of Athena, Roidos' wife. Two sad eyes, moist, with the black kerchief on her head; speechless, crying, sinking inside her

garden. She is a slave to Roidos from one morning to the other, and she will remain his slave until the day she dies. (1981: 86)

Athena and Leousis' wife, whose name is not mentioned, are low profile, almost absent women, completely dedicated to the role imposed upon them by the ways of the village: "Don't forget you're a woman!" (1981: 25), Roidos will tell his wife. Even Vasilis, upon the first blow, thinks scornfully of Annoula: "Women are somewhat inferior, just like geese brawling in the pits, ending up with nothing to eat". 1981: 186).

On the other side, the women of poor villagers like Anastasia, Christofis' wife, offers herself to the masters with ample ease for one kilo of wheat. Anneta too, the lecherous young woman whose husband is working away in ships, is sexually provocative to Vasilis. They are cunning and lush women, ready to erotically submit to the rich landowner in exchange for his favor, selling themselves out without the least sign of shame or inhibitions.

The personal impasses of the women in *Kampos* emerge vividly as they compromise by stepping into calculated marriages. Numerous social problems crop up from the institution of dowry. If a woman possesses a dowry then she will be "made an honest woman of", even if she's not beautiful, even in the absence of love. Inescapably, the couple becomes alienated and extramarital affairs ensue. The feeling of love is on the one hand forbidden; Roidos confesses: "I hate all those who love women" (1981: 100). On the other hand, it is shameful and becomes an object of mockery; therefore, even those who know and are able to love, end up hiding it. Athena reveals the reality of repressed feelings:

Our village is small, Vasilis, and our love shows. You should know that people hate those who love. If I kiss you in front of them, the whole village will taunt: "Athena kissed her son". And I will hide my face in shame. (1981: 44)

Whereas Vasilis declares for his beloved that:

He will kiss her in front of the whole village, just to confess in all directions that Annoula was the only woman he ever loved and no lass will ever be able to make him stray (1981: 202).

Annoula's fulfilled wish to marry the young man she loves, namely Roidos' son, will not bring the desired effect; it will be categorically refuted. The loss of her newborn, right after birth, will multiply her sadness for Vasilis' unfaithfulness leading her to despair. Her father's intervention will save her

marriage but it will not render her free. This event draws to the surface the delicate balances between people whose connecting joints are often precarious. Up until that point, her father's unconventional thinking and dignity had been vividly demonstrated, therefore one would expect them to lead him to transcendence. Eventually, however, acceptance of the status quo and fate will prevail together with conventionality of actions, stemming from unwritten laws or perhaps an innate humility.

Akritas' writing bore the invention of characters and situations within a context where the lowland, both as "*cursed*" and "*blessed*", remains without a doubt the great protagonist of the novel, as everything evolves around it. Fictional heroes often waver, postpone, keep their distance or even cancel out plans; therefore transcendence will not be attempted, let alone achieved. Nonetheless, catharsis will come in part with the deaths of Roidos and Christofis but also with Leouis' incarceration. But it is still "in part" since Vasilis, "the new master" thinks just like his father, joyful of the fact that "now he is alone, all alone!" (1981: 227) and will strive to maintain his predominance in order to empower his ego. His lurid, horrific cry (1981: 231), identical to his father's, when he touches the land with passion, reveals a primitive bond with it. His relation to land is "possessive" (A. Zeras); it is an erotic affair (the juxtaposition of land/ rural tasks with sexuality are quite obvious) setting up the continuity of a close-knit future, in which Roidos' descendant will be flourishing and becoming richer. At the same time, he will be treading with mathematical precision on the course his father had opened just as the old man predicted he would, at a time when no one thought so: be the master with everything that entailed. But in the meantime:

The lowland will be flooded with livestock and people once more and it will cleanse the skin from the mine's sickness. And if they're hungry here, as they are hungry elsewhere, it is because they have been created poor and the lowland must be ruled by the masters, until things change. Until each villager works the lowland alongside others, but without owning it. Or else it will drown them, make masters out of them. (1981: 229)

## NOTES

1. I extend my thanks to Professor Yiorgos Kehayoglou for pointing this out and for the fertile discussion we had with regards to this project. I would also like to thank the publisher Mr. Filippotis for kindly providing me with a copy of the novel.
2. See Y. Katsouris, *Pneumatiki Kypros*, 353-355 (1990) 129.
3. See Aim. Hourmouzios, *Constantinos Theotokis, O eisigitis tou koinonistikou mythistorimatos stin Ellada* [Constantinos Theotokis, The introducer of the socialistic novel to Greece] Athens, Ikaros, 1941.
4. I. M. Panayiotopoulos, *Ta prosopa kai ta keimena* [The persons and the texts], Athens, 1943, pp. 35-36. A. Zeras, "Loukis Akritas: I ekmetrisi tou anthropinou tharrou" [Loukis Akritas: the measurement of human courage], *I mesopolemiki pezographia* [Interwar prose], Vol. 2, Athens, Sokole, 1992, pp. 126-127.
5. Perhaps with the exception of the tale of Regaina, contained within the novel.
6. M.H Abrams, *Lexiko logoteknikon oron* [Dictionary of literary terms], Athens, Patakis, 2006, p. 375.
7. L. Akritas appears at first to follow on the traces of early Cypriot short-story writers such as I.B. Kepiades ("To paraponon tis Anthoullas") [Anthoullas's complaint] and especially D. Stavriniades (*Kypriaka diigimata*, 1898) [Cypriot short stories], of N. Hadjigavriel and K.G. Eleftheriades. For more on the course and historic evolution of the Cypriot short-story, see L. Papaleontiou, Introduction to the *Anthologia kypriakou diigimatos* [Anthology of the Cypriot short-story] Vol. 1, Nicosia, Ministry of Education and Culture, 2005, pp. 13-36.
8. "It represents a rural drama [...] by no means a rural drama with ethnographic parameters, but definitely a story in which characters, conflicts, attitudes and problematics are at least at a first level, dependent on the space wherein the drama unfolds." A. Zeras, "Loukis Akritas: the measurement of human courage" p. 124.
9. Al. Alafouzou talked of "exaggerated and unnatural intellect in Akritas' peasants". *Neoi Protoporoi* 7 (July 1936) 273-275. See also the equivalent views of A. Ziras (as above), Y. Katsouris (as above) and L. Papaleontiou in the Proceedings of the Symposium *Kyprioi logoteknes pou ezisan stin Ellada* [Cypriot literary figures who lived in Greece], Nicosia, Ministry of Education and Culture 1999, pp. 75-78.
10. Through the symbolism of the landscape and of narrative description, one traces psychoanalytic decipherments of the persons' deeper being, i.e. as it emerges through Leousis' apology during his trial (1981: 139).
11. "The writer submits to the reader a nexus of biotheoretical views on the fatal results that the power of land (and consequently of nature) may have on a man's life": A. Ziras, as above p. 68.



12. Aim. Hourmouzos, *Const. Theotokis*, 1946, p. 131.
13. Y. Dallas, *Constantinos Theotokis*, Athena, Sokole, 2001, p. 194.
14. In contrast, Theotokis' women are in their majority unyielding, pusillanimous, self-serving and vicious.

## Costas Montis' *Afentis Battistas etc.*: Narrative as a Defeat

Elli Philokyprou\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Dans son roman *Le Seigneur Batistas et autres* (1980) Costas Montis donne un caractère mythique à des vécus personnels et collectifs du monde de Chypre. En même temps, dans ce roman, il se mesure avec les possibilités de la narration; l'auteur narrateur a continuellement le sentiment que le récit lui échappe, qu'il est contrôlé par ce dernier. À la fin, il soumet au lecteur que son récit n'arrive pas à un dénouement, étant donné qu'il n'arrive pas à établir l'identité de ses ancêtres.

### ABSTRACT

In his novel *Afentis Battistas etc.* (1980) Kostas Montis gives a mythical aspect to his personal experiences as well as the collective experiences of the Cypriot people. All the while, the author-narrator struggles with the possibilities of the narration and constantly feels that the narrative escapes him, that it is the one leading the writing. At the end, he admits to the reader that the narrative fails to reach an outcome since he, himself, has failed to establish his ancestors' identity.

Costas Montis' novel, *Ο αφέντης Μπατίστας και τ' άλλα* (*Afentis Battistas etc.*) is about the author's past: both the distant part of his ancestors and the more recent past of his childhood. It is also a novel about narration: its causes, its effects, its power.<sup>1</sup> It is to the act of narration that the very first phrase of the novel refers: *Even if afentis Battistas may not be the central figure in the narrative —I don't even know if there is a central figure [...]* (p. 7<sup>2</sup>). Afentis Battistas, the grandfather of the author's maternal grandmother, is the scion of a Venetian aristocratic family, which, in common with many others, was dispersed at the time of the 1571 Turkish invasion, to avoid persecution. About three centuries later, the family has apparently retained its wealth and afentis Battistas figures in the grandmother's tales as extremely rich and

\* University of Athens

generous to the point of indifference or even contempt towards his riches: when his granddaughter rushes to inform him that the coffer containing his gold is open, he replies: *If the coffer wasn't open, how would the gold see a bee buzz?* (p. 14) and fills the girl's jug to the brim with gold coins, as if they were pebbles. A few years later, the family has become impoverished: as a young girl, the author's mother works as an apprentice to a seamstress; their poverty is one of the reasons why her mother permits her marriage to a man fifteen years her senior, the author's father. The couple has six children of whom the author is the youngest. The two elder boys, Yiorgos and Nikos, die within three weeks of each other: Yiorgos at 21, Nikos at 16; of consumption and leukemia respectively. Four years later, the mother dies too.<sup>3</sup>

It is then that Costas Montis, thirteen years old at the time of his mother's death, becomes obsessed with *afentis Battistas*. Profoundly shaken by the four deaths (the first was his grandmother's), he harks back to a past when his family was whole and he, together with his siblings, was listening to his grandmother's tales. At the same time, his interest in a wealthy and powerful ancestor also derives from his family's disaster; he is probably trying to make up for a shattered present by recreating a golden past. Narration is therefore both a need and a cure; and the narrative needs a hero –*afentis Battistas*– even if it is going to talk more about the «*et cetera*»: the traumatic events of the author's childhood, the traumatic consequences of the 1974 Turkish invasion and occupation.

In this paper, we shall focus on the course of the narrative: the author's preoccupation with his narrative, his digressions, and the narrative outcome.

### (a) Preoccupation with the Narrative

His grandmother's most faithful customer (p. 11), the author loses, at her death, a world of words. Mounting the stairs that led to her room, he used to *arrive* there triumphantly (*it's as if you climb and nail your flag to the tower*) and ask for her stories. After her death he misses this *arrival*:

*Later, I have longed for it many times on a thousand occasions when I arrived but did not arrive, when I set off for grandma's room and there was no room, there was not even a signpost and there was no breath, no grandmother, no fairy tale to await me*

(- *Grandma? What grandma? We can't hear you. Fairy tale? What fairy tale? We can't hear you. You have made a mistake.*) (p. 11).

«Later» probably refers both to a childhood deprived of his grandmother's stories and to adult life, in which the author experiences a lack of purpose or achievement (*I arrived and did not arrive*), possibly in connection with his writing. It is in his grandmother's stories that the author believes the seeds of his own poems or stories are to be found: *As I grew up, grandma's narrations acquired other dimensions inside me, stopped being seeds, brought forth shoots, became broader, got completed on their own* (p. 13). This is what happened to the story of afentis Battistas. Nevertheless, the grandmother's stories represented not only another world –of the past or of imagination– but also a sense of well-being and serenity in the family itself: her audience are the six grandchildren and her stories compete with those of the author's father. Recalling that feeling the author mourns its loss and abandons his grandmother's narrations to talk about the fate of their recipients, especially that of his two brothers, Yorgos and Nikos.

The father's stories belong to the same happy atmosphere, but differ from grandmother's in that they refer to more recent times (events experienced by the father himself). They are therefore connected with the family: for example, the father's beloved horse is named in honour of two famous bandits whose deeds the father narrates; and it was on this horse that he used to travel a long way to woo his future wife. The couple's romance and the first years of family happiness contrast sharply with the events that follow. The contrast is not only between happiness and desolation, but also between the controlled, logical sequence of narrative events and the absurdity of life itself, in which a feeling of helplessness prevails.

The author is thus unable (or unwilling) to follow the thread of his grandmother's or father's narration. His own narration consists of the contrasts mentioned above, while it also comprises his own childhood memories from before the disaster, but in the light of the disaster. Despite this, or because of it, he remains true to his aim: to continue a narrative which has been interrupted by life. He does not, however, stay with his hero for more than a few lines before the middle of his book. It is here that he states, once again, his preoccupation with his narrative, wondering about its title: a novel, a friend tells him, *allows decentralizations because in this way it broadens itself, it embraces its surroundings, it sheds light on life's inter-relations* (p. 112). Thus the author feels free to retain his title, *Afentis Battistas*.

*I simply added: «etc.». I admit that some of the «et cetera» was not distant as the mainspring was, nor did it emerge from soulless papers. In contrast, it had much more direct*

*contact with me than afentis Battistas did; but, as I have said, afentis Battistas was the cover-story, even if it looks as though I am narrating the other things as side-issues* (pp. 112-13).

The mainspring and a cover-story: afentis Battistas is the centre of a narrative that not only permits decentralizations, but consists of them. In searching for him, the author relates his reasons for doing so and his failure to capture his hero: in this way he loses a hero but finds a narrative.

### (a) Digressions

Under the cover of afentis Battistas, the author's digressions constitute the greater part of the first half of the narrative (up to p. 116). The digressions are about the parents' past, about the family's losses, about characters from the author's childhood or adult life. These characters are mostly semi-crazy (*innocents*) or eccentric people; anecdotes about their behaviour constitute an oral, everyday narrative in the neighbourhood and, as such, finds their way into the author's narrative. Their infirmities, whether of body or of mind, render them tragi-comic figures. It is through them that the author chooses to refer to the island's recent history. He recalls, for example, an *innocent* who during the First World War used to become extremely upset whenever children taunted him: «*You are German*». «*I am not German! I am not German!*» he would scream. Women scolded the children, while enjoying the scene, and consoled the man: «*Don't listen to them. You are English*». After the British and American collaboration with the Turks in the 1974 invasion, says the author, his guilt for that childish cruelty has somewhat faded: he can imagine the *German* fervently denying British or American identity: «*I am not English! I am not American!*» (pp.120-22).

Moving between past and present, speaking from the perspective either of a child or of an adult,<sup>4</sup> confessing his guilt for laughing at a mentally handicapped person, offering at the same time a glimpse of a society where people know and protect each other, however roughly, the author manages at the same time to talk about the open wound of the invasion and occupation of Cyprus (and of the powers behind it). It is typical of his technique that he only refers to this open in passing, as an afterthought to a digression. This is one of the ways in which digressions function in this narrative: it is through them that the most traumatic events or the most acute feelings are hinted at or confessed. The need to narrate stems from the author's losses; but his narrative

cannot focus on these. It must have a pretext: a distant hero, serene and untouched by calamities. In order to function, the narrative must have a centre which it will practically ignore. It can only refer to emotionally central things by pretending to be doing so by chance.

At the same time, digressions constitute an escape at points where the narrative touches on the author's deepest feelings or most painful experiences.<sup>5</sup> One of these is his mother's tuberculosis (mentioned on p. 99). As soon as she is diagnosed, the father takes his only remaining son to Lefkara, to protect him from infection. Lefkara offers the author a first way out of relating his mother's illness and death: a flash-back to family vacations in the same village. He returns to his subject only for a few lines (p. 101); father and son await news of the mother every day, hoping against hope for a miracle cure. News is brought by Hoppas' carriage. Mentioning this offers the author a new way out: for the next few pages he talks about Hoppas' bad temper and adds some anecdotes concerning other characters.

The mother's death is not the only painful thing he postpones narrating; there is also his guilt for being the unwitting cause of his parents' separation during his mother's last days.

Avoiding, postponing and confessing are all parts of a narrative based on digressions. The events of the mother's death are related in a digression from the main topic, *afentis Battistas*; and are in their turn postponed in the narration because of other digressions. Their narration contains two difficult confessions: that of the author's guilt and the fact that his mother, like his eldest brother, died of tuberculosis: until this book was published, *Montis* had followed his sister's advice: afraid he would be avoided by friends and girls, he had lied about the cause: *it is only now, it is only from this narrative that my wife, my children and my friends will learn that [...] I came from a consumptive family.* (p. 107).

These confessions could perhaps be considered to be a necessary part of the narrative, and therefore almost inevitable from the moment the author decided to include a digression about his mother's death. However, it would be difficult to argue this about other confessions. For example, when talking about friends avoiding him after *Yorgos*' death for fear of tuberculosis, he digresses into a confession of his own cruelty to another boy whose father was in prison: One day, during a fight,

*I shouted: «You go and find your father in prison!» He left, his head lowered, without answering [...] For half a century the wound I inflicted on him has been on my conscience. A wound that became*

*more painful when, about fifteen years after that event, I heard he was in the asylum. I went to see him. I found him in the yard, gentle as a lamb, building little clay houses. I spoke to him, he did not recognize me. [...] I realized there was no longer any way for me to soothe my conscience.* (p. 99)

It is the act of narration itself that compels to the truth. We can perhaps argue that the need to confess leads to the narrative; but it also works the other way round. Montis himself acknowledges this interrelationship between authorship and honesty in connection with his poetry: *Couldn't you at least imagine that one of your sons might perhaps write verses and how could he avoid issues, how could he suppress them?* (p. 32).<sup>6</sup> The question is addressed to his dead father (*I was thus opening a painful subject, I was opening a wound for an unimaginably beloved father, years dead now*; Montis' father died in 1930, when the author was 16 years old). At eighteen the father had enlisted in the British army and fought at Transvaal –*he was, he said, in dire need of money and had also been misled by British propaganda*. His sergeant, a cruel man, used to kick little Zulu children until they bled. «*Was it these children you had come to kill, father, these eyes you had come to shut?*» the author asks years later when on a visit to South Africa, the memory of his father's stories strikes him afresh. Writing verses or stories, the author is unable to suppress; but he needs to find his own way to confession.

Digressions, then, serve a multiple purpose: they postpone the narration of painful events; they include painful events as if by accident, and they offer glimpses of the author's conscience or of the island's history that need to be voiced. Digressions, however, become less frequent in the second part of the book, when the author finally embarks upon his subject: Battistas. This means that they are also connected with a narrative hesitation, which in turn constitutes an important theme in the story. Their overall function is to decentralize the narrative; and this function is crucial to a narrative that is seeking a centre, while at the same time it stems from open wounds at the centre of the author's personality.

## (b) Narrative Outcome

Narrative hesitation is resolved in the second part of the novel, when the author, after extensive research in historical archives, hits upon a new *mainspring* (p. 111): another Battistas who lived in the 1700s. No explanation

for this change of focus is offered except that of importance and, perhaps, ancestry: *I could see now that the mainspring of the family was another; a mainspring of which grandma did not know so as to narrate it and make our childish eyes four times larger, make our breasts burst and completely wipe out father's stories* (p. 111). Thus the author enters a family competition: if his grandmother's stories captivated the audience more than his father's did, the author as an adult wishes to triumph over her as well.

This, however, is not the only reason behind his choice; but before we consider his reasons we have to look at his new heroes. Battistas, the author tells us, was proud of his Venetian origins. He refers to Venice as his homeland even though he is discovered towards the end of his life to neither speak nor understand the language. Because of his proud origins and his wealth, he is regarded as the unofficial leader in his village (he lives in the Troodos' Krassohoria). This role he tends to emphasize by assuming responsibilities pertaining to the whole village such as the relations with the neighbouring Turkish village Klavia. Lots of his fellow-villagers work for him on his estate, but his prestige is not only due to financial superiority. Hinting at high friendships in Constantinople, he is tolerated, even respected, by the Turkish authorities of the area. He has, however, a price to pay to maintain his position: conversion to Islam. The greatest part of the narrative concerning him moves around this event: the changed, hushed atmosphere and the strange comings and goings of his wife's family before the decision is taken; the villagers' reaction; the local priest's forced visit to him.

Although the author has found very few facts during his research in the historical archive and fills the rest of the story using his own imagination,<sup>7</sup> he tells us nothing about Battistas' feelings. We have only glimpses of unhappiness in the family (his wife's prayers and tears) as well as resentment and conflict – a few words that escape his son. We can, however, assume a deep undercurrent of bitterness by the fact of his re-conversion to Christianity on his death bed: a decision attributed to him by his son, although the readers are not allowed inside information about it.

The author's hero –the new mainspring that fulfills his initial aim of talking about a powerful ancestor of Venetian origin– is not, after all, a glorious figure. He is, rather, a compromised person maintaining outward dignity but experiencing isolation (the villagers, though in awe of him, judge him and keep their distance) as well as helplessness when confronted with real power.

Where the father compromises, the son rebels –and is defeated. Battistas' son, Antonellos, the other central figure of the narrative, epitomizes the ideal



hero: brave, handsome and just, he is admired by his friends and adored by the girls. He often assumes the role of protector; he forgives workers fired by his father for various misdeeds and sends them back to work without even consulting or informing his father, who tries to save face by pretending it was his own decision. Admiration and love for Antonellos create, in their turn, a protective net around the family: his friends offer moral support to his mother during Battistas' illness while Antonellos is in Venice, and they allow no insulting hints concerning Battistas' conversion. Antonellos' story looks bright and full of promise until a little before the end. Married to a beautiful Venetian girl,<sup>8</sup> he assumes control of the estate, refuses the Hodja access to the dying Battistas, assumes responsibility for Battistas' Christian burial and is the acknowledged head of the village. Battistas' earlier half-hearted attempts to place him, too, under the protection of Islam have long since been defeated: Antonellos had been made to put on a fez, as a first step towards conversion; on his return from Venice the fez has vanished. His independent spirit provokes the authorities' displeasure. The Turks of the neighbouring village are allowed to steal land belonging to the estate and the Pasha's doors are closed to Antonellos when he tries to protest. Still, this is to be expected and can perhaps be dealt with. Defeat for Antonellos comes in the form not of inimical manipulations or veiled threats but of an open struggle, unavoidable because of Antonellos' pride and dignity: Alis, a childhood friend and the son of a local aga, provokes him in the village square by putting a big dirty fez on Antonellos' head (*you forgot it in Venice*, p. 222) and throwing another one at him: *and this for your father, Turkobattistas', tomb*. Antonellos attacks and kills Alis on the spot, despite the villagers' cries: *Don't, Antonellos! Think of your mother, your wife, the child*. The last reported words of Antonellos before he and his family flee the island for Venice (with the Pasha's tacit consent) are: *Forgive me, father, I didn't manage until the end* (p. 223). This sense of failure probably refers to the role of village leader, inherited by Battistas, and at the same time to the family's position: led by his pride and free spirit, Antonellos has destroyed all his family's aspirations in Cyprus.

Nevertheless, if for Antonellos the end of his Cyprus story is bitter, for the author who writes during another Turkish occupation, it contains glory, hence his preference for Antonellos stated on the last page: *We did not know then about Antonellos to ask grandma of him; of him only* (p. 224). Unlike the compromised Turkobattistas, Antonellos can be the aim and centre of a narrative looking for a heroic figure to atone for the family's decline as well as for the pain and loss which life has inflicted on the author. Pain and loss fall

to Antonellos' share too, but they are not arbitrary: he loses his homeland because he has refused to be a slave. He is therefore a person on whom the author can focus: a worthy ancestor, *foretelling our Yorgos* (it is with Yorgos the author identifies Antonellos, p. 180), while he is himself foretold by another ancestor painted by Turkobattistas – a portrait that provokes the Pasha's displeasure: a Venetian officer (p. 159), probably of the time of the fight against the Turks, who bears a striking similarity to Antonellos. Moreover, like the author himself, Antonellos bears the weight of having to continue the family, as the only male offspring; the author feels this weight crushing him after the deaths of his brothers. For all these reasons, the narrative seems to have finally found its focus and its centre. The snatches of an autobiographical novel and the snatches of a historical novel can finally merge into each other and be rendered whole in the figure of this ancestor.

There is, however, a major snag: at the end of the novel, we are told that Antonellos had to leave, with his family, for Venice, where presumably his children grew up and stayed.<sup>9</sup> This means that there is only a very remote connection between him and the author's family: great-great-grandfather Battistas must have descended from a different branch from that of Turkobattistas and Antonellos.

The author had been warned before he embarked on his historical narrative:

*a friend at the Centre of Cultural Research disappointed me: «You are trying to squeeze blood from a stone. Turkobattistas was different. And you chose now, when the Turks are here once again, to butt in!»* (p. 118). The author himself has doubts: *Was it another family or was it the same river that surfaced in such an unorthodox way, not at the river-mouth but high up in the Troodos Krassohoria? If it was the same family, there is some cohesion in this narrative. Otherwise, you have two narratives, two units, I don't know* (p. 118). Despite his doubts, the author begins his narrative immediately after his friend's castigation. The end necessarily confirms his doubts: Antonellos' story is fascinating and moving; it cannot, however, be the story of an ancestor.

The novel ends with an imaginary dialogue between the grandmother and her audience: *We did not know then*, says the author, *about Antonellos, to ask her [...] «Antonellos? What was he to you, grandma?» «Antonellos? What Antonellos?»* Grandmother's imaginary question recalls that other one posed by invisible voices near the beginning of the novel when the author, having lost the sense of *arrival* he used to experience as a child on reaching his grandmother's room, says: *and there was no grandma, nor fairy-tale to await*

*me (-Grandma? What grandma? Fairy tale? What fairy tale? We can't hear you. You have made a mistake).* There is no *arrival*, then, for the author who has finished his novel. The end does not correspond to the beginning, and the ideal ancestor who would have served as a consolation or a refuge has not been found.

The question is why: why has the author chosen to drive his narrative to this non-arrival point? Why has he undermined its very centre after it took him so long to find it? The answer probably lies in his initial needs and aims. The grandmother's *afentis* Battistas was a successful and serene figure: rich and detached from his riches, he ruled, austere but benevolently, over his fellow-villagers, foresaw his own death and used this knowledge to cancel everybody's debts. He died at peace with himself, the world and God. His story offers the impoverished family a sense of a prosperous past, and the atmosphere it creates matches the serene atmosphere of the author's family before they were hit by illness and death. Having become obsessed with that Battistas because of these factors, the author abandons him for the self same reasons. His family's and his homeland's disaster render a story of success and serenity irrelevant.

The story he focuses on instead contains failure and compromise as well as boldness and independence. Turkobattistas and Antonellos are chiefly presented through their relationship to the Turks. The author chooses to talk about them precisely because *the Turks are here once again*, as his friend remarks. Father and son offer two different options concerning stance towards the rulers: compromise or rebellion. Neither solution is a happy one, as we have seen, and neither is total. Battistas secretly sides with Antonellos in his abhorrence of the fez (when sending Antonellos to study in Venice, he surprises him: *there you can throw the fez away!*, p. 185). Antonellos, on the other hand, is tolerated by the authorities because of his father's conversion to Islam. It is only after his father's death that he is unprotected and threatened (*Two years went by. Various signs assured Antonellos that the Turks were playing with him as a cat does with a mouse*, p. 220). Neither Battistas' nor Antonellos' route leads to any happy or permanent solution. There is no way to maintain both one's integrity and one's peace under the oppressors. This bitter conclusion seems to underpin the novel.

There is, therefore, no way for the historical past to serve as balm for the painful present. Moreover the attempt at a historical novel has failed, because history tends to repeat itself; not only does the mixture of compromise and rebellion towards the Turks recall Montis' father's stance towards the British rulers of his time, for whom he used to feel a deep hatred

(p. 33), but also, with *the Turks here once again*, the necessary distance between today's readers and the heroes of the novel has been obliterated. At the same time, both the autobiographical and the historical part of the novel narrate disaster stories. If the past cannot serve as balm or refuge, neither can the narration: it does not take the author (and his readers) to the safe realm of fairy-tales; rather it reopens wounds, siding with reality.

Having lost half his family and half his homeland, the author loses also, on purpose this time, the narrative he initially planned. As we have seen, narrative compels to the truth. Not only does it extract confessions but it also demands truth for its own sake. A story about the grandmother's Battistas would have been false, not because of any invention of facts but because it would not have corresponded to the author's reality, whether external reality or his inner world. The relationship between the author and his narrative is, it seems, far from simple. Being its creator does not mean that he can either lead it to the end he desires or that he can use it to serve his own purposes, as a refuge, for example, or as a consolation.

A similar process occurs in Dimitris Hatzis' *Double Book* (1976).<sup>10</sup> Here, the *Author* (one of the two central figures in the narrative) purports to create a story that will reveal the essence of Greece: its recent history, the poverty of its people, their resilience. He chooses a hero, Kostas, an immigrant to Germany, whom he asks to narrate his personal history. This will be both complemented and generalised by the *Author*: historical and social background appertain to him. The plan fails as the *Author* gradually becomes involved in the narrative (and his hero's life). Unable to preserve his detachment, he does not achieve the novel he had planned (a totality consisting of a specific example and general conclusions) but ends up with a shattered narrative he fails to complete. It is his hero, Kostas, who, having matured through the narrative process, assembles the pieces and concludes the story. For Hatzis, as for Montis, narrative does not conform to plans or goals; not because it is written independently of its author but, on the contrary, because it is profoundly linked to the author's real self. Plans and goals, whether to console oneself or to capture the essence of one's homeland, belong to the surface self. Narrative changes its course because its very existence pierces the surface and reveals inner reality, even if this course proves self-destructive for the author.

In Hatzis' novel, the *Author* dies with his book unfinished. Costas Montis finishes his narrative, but opts for defeat too: that of the author in his endeavour to tell the story of important ancestors; that of his heroes in their

effort to preserve at the same time their integrity, their family and their homeland, and that of the narrative in its attempt to offer an escape and an *arrival*. Encompassing past and present, snatches of collective life and private feelings; alternating between detachment and involvement; sketching in the figure of Antonellos a portrait that can function as an *aim and guide* (p. 194), the way the Venetian officer's portrait functions for Antonellos himself according to the Pasha's correct suspicions, Kostas Montis creates, as Lefteris Papaleontiou has pointed out, the novel of the «world of Cyprus»<sup>11</sup>. If this is his victory, it is, like Antonellos' own, a bitter one: «Cyprus? What Cyprus?» we can imagine invisible voices echoing. The author depicts a defeated world; his achievement is, therefore, his non-*arrival* (and vice-versa); an inevitable defeat, to which he is led through the reality and truth of his narrative.

## NOTES

1. Cf. Maria Herodotou's observation: the beginning of the novel poses questions pertaining to the narrative process and shows the author's critical stance towards the prerequisites for novel writing (Μαρία Ηροδότου, «Ο αφέντης Μπατίστας και τ' άλλα του Κώστα Μόντη: ένα Διπλό βιβλίο», *Ακμή*, έτος Ε', τ. 20 (1994) 506.  
Cf. Also Lefteris Papaleontiou's remark: «the meagre fiction is substituted by the adventure of narrative»: «Ο αφέντης Μπατίστας και τ' άλλα του Κ. Μόντη. Μυθοποίηση της προσωπικής και συλλογικής ιστορίας» [1999], now in L. Papaleontiou's book: *Όψεις της ποιητικής του Κώστα Μόντη*, Αθήνα, Σοκόλης, 2006, p. 124.
2. All references are to the edition: Κώστας Μόντης, *Ο αφέντης Μπατίστας και τ' άλλα*, Αθήνα, Ερμής, 1980. There is, as L. Papaleontiou mentions, a translation of the novel into English (2006), but for the purpose of this paper, the translations of the passages cited are my own.
3. For dates and events in Costas Montis' life, see Θεοδώρα Μυλωνά-Πιερή, «Σχεδιάσμα εργοβιογραφίας Κώστα Μόντη», *Η λέξη* 152 (1999) 472-78.
4. For view-point changes and their narrative consequences, see L. Papaleontiou, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-37.
5. «In some cases, especially when the author is talking about successive deaths or the island's historical adventures, he inserts funny, humorous stories which frequently serve as relieving intervals and alleviate the heavy atmosphere»: L. Papaleontiou, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

6. Michalis Pieris points out that a subject central in Montis' poetry is «the dignity that emanates from a full, outright exposure of our real selves»: «Κώστας Μόντης. Ο 'ενοχλητικός' ποιητής» [1979, 1981], *Από το μερτικόν της Κύπρου (1979-1990)*, Αθήνα, Καστανιώτης, 1991, p. 22.
7. Kyriakos Charalambides remarks that Montis creates his ancestor «in accordance with the myth of his own soul and his own personal history»: «Στιγμές του αφέντη Μπατίστα», *Η λέξη* 152 (1999) 325.
8. As L. Papaleontiou points out (*op. cit.*, pp. 126, 137), Montis refers to marriages or love-affairs between Greeks, Venetians and Turks during the long occupations of the island, thereby reassessing the questions of identity and otherness and trying to go beyond national stereotypes.
9. Cf. L. Papaleontiou: «the novel does not reach a positive 'solution' with regard to the roots of the Battista family, which are lost in the mists of time. The figures of [...] Turkobattistas and his son Antonellos remain an unsolved riddle», *op. cit.*, p. 125.
10. Maria Herodotou points out some very interesting parallels between Montis' and Hatzis' novels: that some of the chapters could be said to form autonomous stories; that both books revolve around a double, tormented individual and a national quest; that both books are preoccupied with the process of writing. Both have been castigated by critics for compositional inadequacies, whereas in both cases we can see a modern novel, de-composed. Montis' book can be characterized «a double book» because it combines elements of a conventional and a modern novel. It was Montis himself, M. Irodotou says, who spelt out his debt to Dimitris Hatzis' book (M. Irodotou, «Ο αφέντης Μπατίστας...», *Ακμή* [1994] 502, 504, 507).
11. L. Papaleontiou, *op. cit.*, p. 137 – a phrase obviously referring to Adamantios Diamantis' well-known painting, «The World of Cyprus».

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## Strangers at Home: Images of Turkish-Cypriot 'Others' in Contemporary Greek-Cypriot Fiction

Maria Kallousia\*

### RÉSUMÉ

La situation de facto que la Turquie a créée à Chypre depuis 1974 n'a pas encore réussi à faire disparaître le désir des Chypriotes grecs et des Chypriotes turcs de vivre ensemble de façon pacifique. L'espace de la littérature (ici de la prose des Chypriotes grecs) reste le terrain le plus propice pour réaliser ce désir. Dans ce cas l'«Autre» est le Chypriote turc d'une autre religion et qui bien souvent se différencie du colon turc venu de l'Anatolie.

### ABSTRACT

The de facto situation created by the Turkish invasion of Cyprus since 1974 hasn't quashed the desire of Greek and Turkish Cypriots to live together in peace. Literature, namely Greek-Cypriot prose, remains the most propitious vehicle for this desire. Here, the "other" is Turkish Cypriot, has a distinct religion, and is frequently portrayed as different from the settler who came from Anatolia

This is a condensation of work done for a Master of Philosophy in Modern Greek Studies in Birmingham University under the supervision of doctor Dimitris Tziouvas. The original idea and the primary literary sources were given to me by professor Lefteris Papaleontiou. The central issue is how Greek-Cypriot authors present Turkish-Cypriot and Turkish characters as the Other in relation to Greek-Cypriot characters and how this demarcation of an ethnic Other is related to the process of identity construction. The aim was to show that in the Greek-Cypriot fiction that dates after the 1974 war, the presentation of Greek-Cypriots' literary Other, being Turkish-Cypriot and Turkish, is a positive one and that this positive image reflects a Cypriot identity which differentiates itself from the Greek or Turkish identity, in the same way as most of the fictional characters of these texts differentiate themselves from mainland Greeks and Turks.

\* Philologist



It is a qualitative study and the resources used for this research have been selected from various disciplines; anthropology, social science, critical and cultural theory, education, and literature. The primary literary sources have been drawn from a study of twenty-eight literary texts (novels, novellas, short stories and narrations) by sixteen Greek-Cypriot authors of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The texts concerned were published between 1954 and 2004 with a greater concentration in the period after 1974 (only six of the selected works were published before 1974, the greater part being published between 1974 and 2004). What this study aimed to achieve was find traces of the vague concept of the Other in contemporary Greek-Cypriot fiction and to deduce how this concept may be associated with the determination of a Cypriot identity that disassociates itself from Greek or Turkish identity affiliations.

### Differentiation from 'Motherlands'

In semiotics, *differentiation* is the principle of meaning production. "A sign does not *have* meaning, but *receives* meaning in its contradistinctive relation with other signs. A meaning is not a thing which exists, but the product of the process of differentiation".<sup>1</sup> According to Marco Cinnirella, the "differentiation function" of social stereotypes, which was introduced in social identity theory by Henri Tajfel, "helps the ingroup maintain positive distinctiveness from other groups".<sup>2</sup> On the micro-social level, this "differentiation function" was utilized by Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots alike to differentiate one from the other, especially during periods of inter-communal dispute. During such periods, both communities, in order to protect their sense of identity, had to find support from an independent state (Greece or Turkey), through linguistic and religious identification. In other historical and social contexts though, this "differentiation function" worked on the macro-political level, differentiating Cypriots from foreigners, that is, British colonizers, mainland Greeks and mainland Turks.

In some passages of the texts examined, there is a tendency to 'other' the Turks and Greeks. As postcolonial theoreticians have shown, it is necessary for a group to identify its Others, so as to identify itself as a coherent group that is different from those Others. Joep Leerssen notes that "a nation is most itself in those aspects wherein it is most unlike the others" and because of that, "what is described is always a cultural difference, a sense in which one nation is perceived to be 'different from the rest'".<sup>3</sup> Instances of such

'othering' of the Turks (by the Turkish Cypriots) and the Greeks (by the Greek Cypriots) are evident in a number of Greek-Cypriot literary texts; they do not, however, indicate that these Greek-Cypriot texts can speak for the reality of Turkish Cypriots or the psychological reality of either Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots. The texts will merely represent their authors' ideological viewpoint, and the complex fabric of national identity.

The novel *Proteleftea Epohi* [*Penultimate Era*, 1981] by Ivi Meleagrou has several instances of such 'othering' articulated by Turkish-Cypriot characters.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the Turkish-Cypriot character Hanoumissa blames mainland Turks for her community's misfortunes and their recent misery, saying that "those Turks destroyed us, this is what I know. Had they not come, we would have been in our village now".<sup>5</sup> As well as Hanoumissa, another Turkish-Cypriot character in the same novel, Zaim-beis, expresses his frustration against the Turks, who – according to him – took over their properties and "deceived the peasants with the Koran and the national flags [...] and there is no one [...] to tell them to get out of here..."<sup>6</sup> A third Turkish-Cypriot character who differentiates himself from the Turks is Halil in the short story "Proskarteria" ["Waiting For", 1978] by George Filippou-Pierides.<sup>7</sup> Halil refers to the Turks as 'rascals', thus showing his disapproval of their actions against his Greek-Cypriots compatriots and expressing his idea of them as the intruders who invaded Cyprus and caused destruction and the division of the island. More specifically, Halil, in discussion with his Greek-Cypriot friend Zenios, says that mainland Turks are destroying Greek-Cypriot properties: "The rascals are plundering your homes".<sup>8</sup>

Andreas Onoufriou also differentiates between mainland Turk and Turkish-Cypriot characters in many parts of his novel *I Gi pou mas Gennise* [*The Native Land*, 1989].<sup>9</sup> The Greek-Cypriot character Fotis conveys the idea that Turkish Cypriots were not to be blamed for the hostility that grew up between the two communities, since they were propelled by mainland Turks.<sup>10</sup> In another part of his novel, Onoufriou describes in a vivid way the acts of violence perpetrated by mainland Turkish soldiers against Greek-Cypriot characters in the book. The Greek-Cypriot character Marios has been violently beaten and then slaughtered by a group of five Turkish soldiers, while Stella has been raped by the same group of Turkish soldiers.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the Turkish-Cypriot character Salih is presented as a modest, decent person who maintains his humanity and sensitivity and who helps the Greek-Cypriot character Michalis by sending representatives of the Red Cross to him and his family.<sup>12</sup> The narrator comments on the decent

behaviour of the Turkish-Cypriot character that “there was still some pride left during these dark hours of loss”.<sup>13</sup> The portrayal of such incidents supports the opposition between the Turkish Other (which is vicious and violent) and the Turkish-Cypriot Self (which is decent and sensitive), an opposition which runs through the whole novel.

The same opposition is conveyed in a number of other Greek-Cypriot fiction texts, such as the short stories “Kravyi” [“Outcry”, 1977] by Andreas Onoufriou and “I Mana tou Agnooumenou” [“A Missing Person’s Mother”, 1989] by Aggeliki Smyrli,<sup>14</sup> as well as the novels *Refugee in my Homeland: Cyprus 1974* [1979] by Rina Katselli and *Archipelagos: I Pagida* [*Archipelagos: The Trap*, 2002] by Christakis Georgiou.<sup>15</sup> The short story “Kravyi” [“Outcry”, 1977] presents an encounter between a Greek-Cypriot soldier and a Turkish-Cypriot girl during the 1974 war. The Turkish-Cypriot girl helps the Greek-Cypriot soldier by dressing his wounds (“She stood up, brought some water, cleaned away the blood, and made some coffee for him”),<sup>16</sup> while the Greek-Cypriot soldier intervenes in an effort to prevent the young girl’s rape by a group of Turkish soldiers. In this case, the Greek-Cypriot Self identifies and sympathises with its Turkish-Cypriot Other, which feels part of that Self since the characters help one another and unite against the Turkish Other. The sensitivity expressed by a Turkish-Cypriot female character is contrasted with the brutality shown by Turkish soldiers, suggesting the distinction between Turkish-Cypriot and Turkish characters in fiction.

In her short story “I Mana tou Agnooumenou” [“A Missing Person’s Mother”, 1989], Aggeliki Smyrli also draws a distinction between Turkish and Turkish-Cypriot characters. The Turkish-Cypriot character Niazi supports the wife of his Greek-Cypriot friend, Giangos, who was killed during the 1974 war, and participates in her efforts to find her missing son, Alexandros: “I’m looking for him each and every day, said Niazi, and, by the look and the sorrow that came up on his face, I realized that he was telling the truth.”<sup>17</sup> The author conveys the words of Niazi, who refers to mainland Turks as Others (“... , now others have the authority, they won’t even think of letting me out of the village.”),<sup>18</sup> differentiating himself from them and identifying himself with Greek Cypriots.

Another example of differentiating tendencies in relation to mainland Turks expressed by Turkish-Cypriot characters is detected in the novel *Refugee in my Homeland: Cyprus 1974* [1979] by Rina Katselli.<sup>19</sup> The Turkish-Cypriot character, who is friends with the Greek-Cypriot character Eleni, appears to distinguish himself and a number of other Turkish Cypriots

from Turks, by expressing a desire to be rid of the Turks' interventions and presence on the island. His declaration: "we want neither mainland Greeks nor mainland Turks. Let them leave us alone" is used by the author to claim that even for Turkish Cypriots, mainland Turks are intruders and foreigners.

In *Archipelagos: I Pagida* [*Archipelagos: The Trap*, 2002], Christakis Georgiou portrays both the Turkish-Cypriot and the Greek-Cypriot characters of his novel as working people who are united in their day-to-day labour in the fields, in their common anxiety to put food on the table and to care for their families. These characters are represented in this way to make the author's point that whatever propagandist nationalistic sentiments others (mainly mainland Turks and Greeks, or those affiliated with the mainlanders) tried to infuse in them, were lost on these labourers: "The man in charge who came from Turkey was an officer of the Turkish army...He used to repeat the same words...about a great Turkey and a strong army. [...] Young people enjoyed it, middle-aged people began to lose patience. Somewhere in between, the people in their thirties remained totally indifferent."<sup>20</sup> The village people described in *Archipelagos* are more or less united in their way of thinking, and they express these feelings of unison in their choice of clothing and their choice of language, which is a fusion of both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot dialects: "For them, the two languages became one and the same and, any attempt by each language to dispose of the other's elements collided with their weariness and sweat, and failed in the field of daily experience."<sup>21</sup>

As well as Turkish-Cypriot fictional characters, Greek-Cypriot literary discourse introduces several Greek-Cypriot fictional characters who differentiate themselves from mainland Greek characters in a group of texts. These include the short stories "Simptoseis tou Kerata" ["Cuckold's Coincidences", 2001] and "Na Ntrepomaste na Poume t' Onoma mas" ["Ashamed to Speak our Name", 2001] by Christos Hadjipapas,<sup>22</sup> as well as the novels *Anne Simeni Mana* [*Anne Means Mother*, 2003] by Stelios D. Stylianou,<sup>23</sup> *I Gi pou mas Gennise* [*The Native Land*, 1989] by Andreas Onoufriou and the chronicle *Refugee in my Homeland: Cyprus 1974* [1979] by Rina Katselli.<sup>24</sup> For example, the son of the narrator of the short story "Simptosis tou Kerata" ["Cuckold's Coincidences", 2001], Avgerinos, believes that the events of 1974 were caused by nationalistic tendencies on the part of some Greek Cypriots, tendencies that were fuelled by the then totalitarian Greek government. The author communicates to the reader these political beliefs in a narrative monologue: "No enemy could ever harm

someone more than he could hurt himself”,<sup>25</sup> implying that Greek Cypriots provided the excuse for the war to begin. The author’s ideological stance is reflected in Avgerinos’ depiction as a Greek-Cypriot who had the opportunity to study in Greece, but chose to study in Germany instead, in an attempt to “erase his Greekness” (“afellinisti”): “But why Germany? He had always been a good student, he could have chosen anywhere he wanted and, above all Greece. However, he went there to “erase his Greekness””.<sup>26</sup> The character’s choice reveals his sense of a Cypriot identity rather than a Greek one, since he distinguishes his Cypriot Self from mainland Greeks.

Similarly, the Greek-Cypriot character Michalis of the short story “Na Ntrepomaste na Poume t’ Onoma mas” [“Ashamed to Speak our Name”, 2001] ascribes the responsibility for the 1974 war to the Greeks, and declares that it was “the biggest, the most conscious, the most organised betrayal by Greeks” against the Greek Cypriots and that “from now on, we should be ashamed to speak our name” [that is, calling ourselves “Greeks”].<sup>27</sup> This differentiation from mainland Greeks expressed by a Greek-Cypriot fictional character in Hadjipapas’ short story relates to the argument that Greek-Cypriots do not aspire to establish a Greek identity. Social analysis endorses such claims. According to Argyrou, during the 1970s, Greek-Cypriots “began to draw an unequivocal cultural boundary between themselves and their “brothers” on the mainland”.<sup>28</sup>

Such a cultural boundary is also noted in *Refugee in my Homeland: Cyprus 1974* [1979], by Rina Katselli. The Greek-Cypriot narrator prefers to attribute to herself a Greek identity that has nothing to do with contemporary mainland Greeks: “We knew of the civil war in Greece after the Second World War, but we said, ‘No, it’s not possible that we Cypriots could go that far. We are not Kalamarades’. By that we meant that we were more genuine Greeks and that we would never sacrifice our age-old bonds of race and kinship in order to take up arms against each other”.<sup>29</sup>

Katselli’s narrator uses the term ‘Kalamarades’ when referring to mainland Greeks, indicating the difference between Greek-Cypriots and mainland Greeks. The term ‘Kalamarades’ has negative connotations for Greek Cypriots, and is used by the author to express the hostility that the Greek-Cypriot characters felt against those who took control of the island with the excuse of protecting them from the ‘Turk’. Greek-Cypriot characters in the chronicle complain about the Greek soldiers who invaded their island and took control of everything; “But what is happening now at the General Hospital is unimaginable. Mainland Greek soldiers, swearing and threatening, hold guns

over the doctors and tell them who to treat and who to leave to die. Unimaginable!”<sup>30</sup> In this case, Greek characters are sketched as arrogant, cruel, rude and dictatorial. According to Ioanna Oikonomou-Agorastou, the employment of negative stereotypes of ethnic Others in literature helps to establish or consolidate “antithetic constituents in the group that the author represents”.<sup>31</sup> The characteristics that the author ascribes to mainland Greek characters in her chronicle could reveal just such an antithetic function.

A similar delineation of mainland Greeks is suggested in the novel *Anne Simeni Mana* [*Anne Means Mother*, 2003] by Stelios D. Stylianou. In a discussion that takes place in the central jail of Nicosia in 1973, some political prisoners refer to mainland Greek officers, describing them in a negative way. The narrator explains how the prisoners’ discussion ended in a quarrel, since “most of them did not trust the mainland Greek officers”.<sup>32</sup> Greek-Cypriot characters who take part in the discussion differentiate themselves from mainland Greeks. The Greek-Cypriot character Kimonas conveys the idea that mainland Greeks are opportunists who had taken advantage of the situation in Cyprus for their own benefit: “All that they do is buy cheap English cashmere and cigarette lighters to sell them back in Greece ... I cannot trust those wheeler-dealers”.<sup>33</sup>

Andreas Onoufriou, in his novel *I Gi pou mas Gennise* [*The Native Land*, 1989], also presents a negative image of mainland Greek characters and, through the words of the Greek-Cypriot character Notis, conveys the idea that officers of the Greek Junta were trying to impose a dictatorship on the island by causing discord among Cypriots.<sup>34</sup> The negativity of the Greek characters’ image contrasts with the harmony of the two Cypriot communities, which is emphasized by the narrator in several passages in the novel: “We Cypriots, Christians and Muslims, have been living together in brotherhood for ages...”,<sup>35</sup> and, “Both Turks and Greeks were people who had nothing to split. Others caused feelings of antagonism among them to serve their own interests.”<sup>36</sup> These passages suggest a notion of a unified Cypriot Self that emerged after the 1974 war; a Self that feels the need to form a Cypriot identity (which is never stable or unified) by drawing attention to elements that unite the two communities and by presenting the representatives of ‘motherlands’ as foreigners and Others: “Cyprus belongs to those who inhabit and care for it”.<sup>37</sup>

This Other that helps the narrator and, by extension, the Greek-Cypriot author, to build a sense of Self is portrayed in a negative context (negative stereotypes). The Greek army officer labels Cypriots as ‘uncivilized

Easterners': "Shut up you stupid man! Have I given you the right to speak? You Cypriot donkey! ...Everyone in this dammed place is just a donkey. Barbarous, uneducated ...Uncivilized Easterners!"<sup>38</sup> In this case, there is fusion of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, since the word 'easterners' is used here negatively, like the ancient 'barbarians', and points to a perception of Cyprus as the 'East' of the Western world. Such perceptions reveal the disjuncture between self-images of many Cypriots (who wish to be recognised as "western people", e.g. by entering into the E.U.) and the overall picture that Others attribute to Cypriots, a picture which often identifies them with the East.

The authors of the novels mentioned above have stated their ideological stance on the idea of 'Cypriotness' through their characters. They have used their Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot characters as signs of a new national identity, that of the Cypriot, as opposed to the Greek or the Turk. Therefore, differentiation between the Cypriot characters and the mainland Greeks and Turks has been essential in these Greek-Cypriot literary creations, in order to give credibility to this new identity. In "Image and Power", Jan Nederveen Pieterse notes that "assigning attributes of otherness serves multiple functions for the labelling group. It may be an expression of critical social distance, of a claim to status on the part of the labelling group. It may serve to negotiate internal group relations by reference to an out group".<sup>39</sup> The new Cypriot implicitly portrayed by the authors mentioned in this research is still unsure of how to 'feel' him/herself. If the assigned identities of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot are to be deconstructed, and a new identity to be proposed (one that would be dynamic and not stable and barren), the Others of this identity need to be delineated. Pieterse's conclusions are once again pertinent here: "Otherness is the boundary of normality. As such, images of otherness exercise a disciplinary function, as mirrors of difference, as markers and warning signals".<sup>40</sup>

## NOTES

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## The Cypriot Generation of the Poets of the Invasion

Alexis Ziras\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Dans son article, Alexis Ziras se réfère aux poètes chypriotes de la période de l'invasion turque de l'île en 1974. Il met en évidence l'influence exercée sur la poésie chypriote par les événements tragiques de 1974. Il cherche par ailleurs les particularités linguistiques et stylistiques de cette production.

### ABSTRACT

In this article, Alexis Ziras focuses on the Cypriot generation of poets of the invasion. He refers to the historic tragedy of 1974 when Turkey invaded Cyprus, and its impact on Cypriot poetry. He also looks at the linguistic and stylistic characteristics.

The term “generation of the invasion” has been considered by grammatologists and historians of Cypriot literature as the most pertinent to describe and define mainly the poets and to a lesser extent prose writers who made their debut shortly before or shortly after the 1974 Turkish invasion. These litterateurs have incorporated in their early but also in their subsequent work the experience of the historic tragedy in the form of the personal or collective fixed sensation that transformed their lives.

Obviously, in the consciousnesses of all Cypriot litterateurs, the extent and depth of this experience possess more distinct and macabre impressions of a political or existential nature. But for the younger ones, those “of the invasion” who at that time were crossing over from adolescence to biological maturity, these impressions are more intense, owing to the fact that they were created during the period of their early molding. Therefore, to begin with a few primary comparisons, Greek poets of the 1970s present their poetry books rid of historic connotations from which the spirit of the age may be inferred, whilst their Cypriot peers unfailingly revisit the same source whence the trauma originated. It is precisely the memory of this trauma that

\* Literary critic

often leads poetic imagination to restructuring and to the redefinition of political and physical pain.

Admittedly, poems written when the images of the 1974 catastrophe were still fresh rarely stand out for their technical completion or meticulous language. They are either polemics or poems of an explicit deposition of painful experiences; therefore, to a great extent, their form is defined by their sentimental load. In the main, it could be noted that in terms of means of expression they use the image or the finding but with an “in the heat of the moment wording” as their motive. However, before long, sarcasm, their apothegmatic style and elegiac rhetoric will in many cases become reminiscent of the sentimental redeployment and hollow rage of the post World War II poets – an amalgam of Cavafyan sophistry on the meaning of history and the lyric nostalgia of Yorgos Seferis and Yiannis Ritsos for the lost unity between man and world. Poets such as Andreas Sismanis, Yiorgos Moleskis, Demetris Gotsis, Louis Perentos, Savvas Pavlou, Stephanos Constantinides, Christos Mavris, Marios Agathocleous, Lefkios Zafeiriou, Nicos Orfanides and Andreas Antoniadis converge to a poetic locale that albeit shaped by different voices – proclaiming epigrammatism, didacticism, irony or an erosive satirical disposition – is patterned along the lines of heartache and the ripping of the young consciousness. Their common reference point is not war, as a bloody event, as much as the “aftertaste” of the passage of history, the almost connotative recourse of all of memory’s movements to the carving up of the country (and of the human body), something that has been unremittingly mutilating poetic imagination ever since.

Thematic references within Cypriot poetry, notes Nadia Charalambidou in her review of the Anthology of contemporary Cypriot poetry (1985) *are entirely different from the references of Helladic poetry, albeit relevant to them, owing to the special socio-historic conditions prevailing in Cyprus. [...] A careful, comparative look at the poems of both Cypriots and Greeks in the 1970s would perhaps display a few significant differences, not only in terms of viewpoint but also in terms of the employed poetic techniques. [...] Despite the use of irony on behalf of both generations in their poetry, the nostalgic nature [...] of most Cypriot poems collides with the cynical disposition that characterizes many of the poems of the Greek generation of the 1970s. Further, whilst many Greeks [...] appear to count on the ironic juxtaposition of specific and tangible images and on the extensive usage of colloquial discourse, with an extremely limited presence of abstract nouns and adjectives [...] most Cypriot poets appear to be much closer to the model of Seferis; in fact, they often reverberate Cavafy.*

Perhaps the element of cynicism in the form of poignant irony was not unknown to earlier Cypriot poetry – in fact, it is present in the work of Pantelis Michanikos, an emblematic poet of the period 1960-1980. Undoubtedly though, the sum total of poetry after 1974 is articulated along the lines of sarcastic and furiously ironic style. For a long period of time, at least until 1990, there seemed to be a bridgeless gap between the poets of the invasion and the poets that made their debut around 1960 – the year of Cypriot Independence. This gap is mostly discerned in the intensely critical attitude of the younger litterateurs toward the idealistic self-delusions of the past and the way this lyrical conceit was wrecked by various political diversions. Therefore, in the poetic discourse of Elena Toumazi, Michalis Zafeiris, Eleni Theoharous, Panayiotis Avraam, Doros Loizou, one may discern the feeling of despair – a precondition for Karyotakis' nihilism rather than traces of Seferis' composed poetic art, which looked to the integrated myth of man and space. In fact, the prevalence of a broken, inarticulate voice is partly due to the fact that many among the poets of the generation of the invasion coexisted with their 1970s Greek peers over the course of their studies in Greece, formulating a joint speech amidst the deadlocks of the time.

However, even that period of coexistence was not void of differentiations. Certain thematic elements of contemporary Cypriots like the feeling of *nostos* [return to the homeland] and a number of linguistic ones like their dialogue with the idiom of folk poets whence stemmed a more robust and sturdy poetic speech, projected by implication the perception of a tradition that was different to that of the 1970s' poets. As a result, the identity crisis reflected on the poetry of the generation of the invasion after 1974 was much deeper and complete: it has been at the same time a crisis of collective consciousness and an existential crisis, a political crisis and a crisis of means of expression, hence the survival of elevated tone in their work over an impressively long period (the poetry of Kyriakos Charalambides is a representative example) but also cynical nihilism or dramatic elegy (in Theodosia Nicolaou and Costas Vasileiou). Refusal to compromise as well as the repudiation of venality in Cyprus that was nonetheless undergoing rapid changes, became standardized as rules of poetic ethics for many poets of the generation of Independence. Similarly, for numerous subsequent poets (Nasa Patapiou, Yiorgos Moraris, Andriana Ierodiaconou, Niki Marangou, Mona Savvidou), it is certain that the feeling of malaise in the present has contributed to the creation of poetic worlds, where the concept of homeland transcends history's restrictions and seeks itself or its mythical image in a

diachronic panorama of odors, tastes, touches and forms.

Setting as indisputable precondition the colloquial, everyday language, which in the first years after 1974 is driven by a combative disposition with sharp tones, thus personifying the collective experiences of Hellenism, along general lines the poets of the invasion collaborate, “consenting” over the use of a metaphorical discourse that, as the discourse of post-war poetry in Greece, looks to frugal expression, grounding of feelings and straightforwardness in the conveyance of a meditative meaning. As the years go by and the particularities of each voice develop, these “collaborations” become more and more rare. Around 1985 onwards, the abilities of each one of them to “diverge” from the current of common topics and shared discourse begin to surface, usually progressing from the unfurled epic-lyric rhetoric to the retrorse, meditative one. In that sense, poets such as Elias Constantinou, Christos Mavris, Marios Agathocleous, Yiorgos Kythraiotis, Frosoula Kolossiatou change their focal point, transforming their sharp, sarcastic or cynic look to a look that now stands questioning and investigating opposite the spiral movement of poetic imagination that a few years back identified the personal trauma with the collective one.

A characteristic indication of this change is the obvious withdrawal of fragmentation from the poetic rhetoric of the generation of the invasion. Fragmentation was almost completely interlinked with the enraged style, subversive disposition and asthmatic density that readily stood out in the verses of most poetry books.

The minimization of fragmented discourse was accompanied by the recurrence of lyricism – a contrary and supplementary phenomenon – and the renewal of the generation’s interest in eurhythmty and freedom in terms of the poem’s development. This so to speak restructuring of the way the poet’s imagination moves had among other things a very interesting consequence that in my opinion has completely changed the landscape of modern Cypriot poetry.

On the one hand, it meant the disengagement of imagination from the coincidental point in time – the present-day element – that would gradually and inevitably weaken the previous potency of the poetic discourse; on the other hand it opened to a broad temporal perspective. It is not by chance that a large part of Cypriot poetry today communes at the scale of diachronicness. As a pattern, diachronicness has contributed to the work of Cavafy, Seferis and T.S. Eliot. It enabled poets such as Nasa Patapiou, Michalis Pieris, Nicos Orphanides, Yiorgos Moraris, Mona Savvidou, Takis

Hadjigeorgiou and Niki Marangou to activate the mechanism of a pendulant that launches the connotative function of the imagination so that forms of different eras are intermingled: mental and geographical spaces, legendary and anonymous faces, the knowledge of a homeland through the surge of primary feelings or traumatic memories and the knowledge of the same homeland through historicized time.

All the above do not imply that the elements of neurosis, contempt for reality and subversive satire – the poetry of Savvas Pavlou and Lefkios Zafeiriou are evidence of this rhetoric form – have disappeared from many of the 1974-1990 poets. Nonetheless, the conversion of Cypriot poetry as a whole since 1985 has been undeniable.

In my opinion, the physical touching of the birth-land, a recurrent pattern in both earlier and contemporary poets has been empowered by the lessening of continuous references to the historic reality. On the other hand, the diachronic function of symbols has contributed to the synaeresis of poetic and political ethics, of the vision for a united Cypriot space and the sorrow or intensity of an erotic passion.

I have often witnessed all the above intercrossing in a palimpsest simulacrum of a poetry that lives through history and when it emerges from it, it does so in order to commune more freely with its inherited texts: from Dionysios Solomos, Andreas Calvos, Yorgos Seferis or Odysseas Elytis and its medieval forefathers, Leontios Machairas, Yeorgios Voustronios to the dialectal poets of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Vasilis Michaelides and Demetris Lipertis and of course their later sequel, Costas Montis.



## Despite Praise: Techniques of Paradoxology and Paradoxography in the Work of Kyriakos Charalambides

*This really needs help  
“For Bone”, Quince apple*

**Theodosios Pylarinos\***

### RÉSUMÉ

À plusieurs reprises la critique a signalé que la poésie de Kyriakos Charalambidis présente beaucoup de résistances et des difficultés même pour les lecteurs les plus initiés. Dans cet article sont examinées des techniques rhétoriques de style à l'aide desquelles le poète orchestre ses inspirations poétiques: des parenthèses, des phrases stéréotypées, correctives, et annonciatrices, des sous-entendus, des questions directes et indirectes, des scènes comiques, etc.

### ABSTRACT

Critics have often said that Kyriakos Charalambides' poetry is hard and challenging even for the most cultivated and well-read reader. The author of the article examines the techniques of rhetoric style with which the poet orchestrates his inspirations: parentheses, stereotypical, corrective and introductory phrases, innuendoes, direct and indirect questions, comic scenes, etc.

It has been said by many valid philologists and critics (G.P. Savvides, George Kehayoglou, Andreas Voskos, and others) that Kyriakos Charalambides is a poeta doctus. Literary evidence (Takis Papatsonis, Nikiforos Vrettakos, Nora Anagnostaki), very early on actually, has implied as such, in its prophetic and perceptive regard, in other words of course, but in a substantial and earnest manner. The characterisation of this “literary poet”, correct in our opinion, involves the union of poetry and literacy, inspiration and knowledge, expertise in form and substance of content, structural superiority and sensitivity, as well as knowledge of complex techniques.

\* Ionion University



Since we shall concern ourselves with techniques, specifically composition, conception, presentation methods and ‘machines’ –the latter with the ancient meaning of the word–, we shall reiterate that the ways of expression and projection of volitional words comprise, in common with language, and always with its dynamic support, the projectile type weapons of a poet of this kind, as we have predefined them. We suggest that the verbal missiles of Charalambides sprout where least expected and explode, sometimes scattering terrible projectiles that wedge themselves on the walls of the soul, and at other times their explosion reminds us of the goatskin of the poem titles “Story with a horse”, of his *Metahistory*, that would have the reader in a fit of laughter while watching it *deflate*, and the *brave lads running away*.<sup>1</sup>

Kyriakos Charalambides has been lauded for the depth of his thinking, the quality of his inspiration, the beauty of his polymorphic words, his philosophical outlook and his methistorical prose, that subverts the prevailing viewpoints on the relation of history and myth; however students of his poetry have dealt very little with –and only coincidentally– his expressive techniques. We consider, to start with, that their quality and frequency, their inventiveness and fiendishness, their subversive poetic effect, confirm the characterisation that we have given, if we take into account that the poeta doctus reveals evidence of his worth at all levels of his work, and most frequently in his critical communication with his reader, that takes place with his written and stylistic approach methods or more accurately, his altruistic, poetic, that is to say skilful, enticement and enlistment.

We shall detect then, and interpret –as much as the hospitality of these pages will allow us– a number of, the key ones in our opinion, techniques with which Kyr. Charalambides accesses his themes and engineers with, ingenious schemes their transmission, either drop by drop or in short blasts:

### a. Parentheses

As parentheses we consider, in general, lines, the parenthetically positioned words or phrases, the words inside parentheses, as well as what is separated by hyphens from the core of the sentence. The use of the parenthetical word is very frequent and functional in Charalambides’ poetry. Specifically, because of him, it provokes the attention of the reader, at other times it highlights the exceptional and unexpected,<sup>2</sup> yet again it emphatically emphasizes the content of the entire phrase in which he places his parenthetical material, but mainly it avoids excess words,<sup>3</sup> and harmful and

antipoetic grandiosity. At other times, with mirth,<sup>4</sup> with disarming naivety<sup>5</sup> or with irony, it gives an idiomorphic vitality to his words, since the parenthesized words, because of their apparent independence, operate on other wavelengths, and as a consequence are involved in bipolar views and various standpoints and the narrator intervening in a regulatory way -and often contrapuntally, controversially, subversively, or anarchically- in the proceedings with interstitial words and cues, that instead of resolving questions, further complicate things, showing the paradox of human behaviour. At other times, the parenthetic word explains and interprets in a simple manner, the difficult aspects of his allusive and warped (and often purposefully ambiguous and prophetic) poetry; and moreover, it becomes a motive to distribute confessions of the insider-narrator, who the relentless words do not allow to express in any other way. It concerns, in other words, the bipolar functioning of the poet's word, where conventions and commonly accepted facts are penetrated and undermined by another, different or strange viewpoint, as this is contained in parenthetic usage.

Especially frequent is the use of the parenthetic sentence in a verbal aspect ("he said", "he says", etc.). With this technique that does not adhere to the practice of indicating the alternating speaker, a common practice in narrative texts, but rather the development of the unknown or the controversy of the speaker or thinker, mainly of the poet himself, he manages to participate uninvited in the proceedings, to wit in the name of glory; consequently he manages to integrate in the verse persons that are not involved in the events, adhering again to his bipolar tactic.<sup>6</sup>

The parenthetic phrase on other occasions works in a confessional way, leaping from fantasy, gaffe and myth to reality, bringing into conflict the two perspectives on matters that the poet highlights persistently, in paradoxology.<sup>7</sup> These two perspectives are presented in two-faced techniques, with visions and miracles, with distinctions on two levels, predominantly on the vertical axis of heaven and earth. It is, however, the two perspectives on life, the hidden and the visible, the real and the false, the delusion and the tangible reality, the right to dream and fear in the face of the agony of reality. In a single word, it is the paradox, again, of human presence.<sup>8</sup> This alternation of images, the dual view of things, the mixture of tragic and comic elements, constitute the driving force in the production of so many and varied techniques. In other situations, the parenthetic word is used simply in an explanatory manner.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, under the entire explanatory scheme that functions as a pretext, since it is often redundant, are two hidden worlds, two

conflicting standpoints,<sup>10</sup> two ideologically contending schemes.<sup>11</sup>

With his parenthetical material, Kyr. Charalambides also conveys, sometimes playing (and misleading) and sometimes in a serious mode, elements that concern the chronological<sup>12</sup> or geographical placement of his writing. These elements may have a historical basis, though they may be his own inventions that lead the reader to dead-end mythical paths, where however there are hidden treasures, nuggets of greater truths. The analytical presentation of parenthetical examples could take us a long way. We will stop at a form of structural economy, that relates however to density<sup>13</sup> of speech in relation to the exploitation of the coordinating-subordinating sentence conjunction: Charalambides exploits –being a philologist– the parenthesis, avoiding words, and therefore the tedious, systematic use of the analytical subordinating word. In a single sentence of two or three words, he can express what should take him more than one sentence.<sup>14</sup> In the narrative style of the poet are also supporting, sparing, parenthetical sentences in a verbal style, a purely reductive practice that we have referred to above.<sup>15</sup>

We will conclude with the critical character of various parenthetical phrases used by the poet. He is judged and simultaneously justified for his way of writing, between humorous and serious, so that the tone of this interjection becomes confessional: “And you this town (this one again!) that swelled up on the barren foothills of the mountain [...]”.<sup>16</sup> Moreover: ironic disapproval and bitter approval, a double-edged practice, is the parenthetical placement of phrases with which he mocks or accepts cautiously historical descriptions or references.<sup>17</sup>

## **b. The Polymorphic Function of the Stereotypical Phrase**

The stereotypical phrase<sup>18</sup> – proverbial,<sup>19</sup> idiomatic,<sup>20</sup> allusive, dogmatic,<sup>21</sup> literary-fossilised,<sup>22</sup> popular, common,<sup>23</sup> with sexual innuendos<sup>24</sup> – grants an idiomorphic tone to Charalambides’ verse. Firstly, we shall associate the plethora of this kind of phrase that populates his poems, with his profound knowledge of Greek vocabulary, and of the style and character of the Greek language. For if the stereotypical phrase does not complement fundamentally with the whole content and specific environment that it penetrates, it loses its meaning and leads to misunderstandings. Charalambides “wedges” these phrases with exceptional mastery, colouring his words accordingly, sometimes making their difficult content more navigable, and at other times striking at the core with the metaphor that

usually runs through them. While one could, in other circumstances, disapprove of their frequent use, in his work however the phrase harmonises so well with the content, that it forms a single body, despite its incongruous origin, since it concerns linguistic material of intertextual value and varied stratification, if one considers that this originates from archaic times and passing through all Hellenistic phases ends up in idiolects and expressions of everyday, philosophical, popular words. Furthermore, in some verses the poet does not use these stereotypical phrases unedited, in their original, established and conventional form, but in paradoxology, integrated in a different syntactical form in his own words.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, it should not be overlooked that with this technique he expresses his sentiments and mental passions (mainly his anger and his disappointment about human affairs) and through the simplicity that distinguishes him, he endears the reader and -crucially- he makes his otherwise difficult poetry more accessible, in which parody and allusion predominate, methods that darken the horizon and demand an experienced reader's eye.

### c. Corrective Phrases

In the framework of the familiarizing words and the simplicity, a misleading or rather relieving simplicity of the difficulties of his verse, Charalambides pretends to cross the limits and restrains himself. This technique, an indication of the dynamic, and personal, participation in the action, is known from the Calvic odes that Charalambides, of course is well aware of. At any rate, his involvement in the plot of his poems as the central hero and the use of the first person, have the same origin.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, for Charalambides this technique is not permanent and since he intends to preserve his low tone and humility –another basic behaviour of his heroes-, he invents the character of Rimako, his (idiomorphic, to some extent) alter ego, through whom he passes on his disguised point of view.

A well known suspenseful-corrective-rectifying phrase is “what am I saying”,<sup>27</sup> with which he cleverly brings to an end, where he should go no further,<sup>28</sup> leaving the reader's imagination to itself, and at other times is an exclamation of naive self-admiration (see the phrase “The things I say!”<sup>29</sup> [=what things that I say!], or of wondering “What am I saying?”<sup>30</sup>). Certain phrases that do not correspond to matters but work teasingly, are said due to the writer's so called doubt or forgetfulness<sup>31</sup> or, even, faked exclamation that depending on the style of reading may lead to the opposite result.<sup>32</sup>

We shall refer to the examples that act correctively to the meaning preceding them, and do not have the typical attributes of parenthesised words, even though they act as a type of parenthesis, as indicated by the meaning, their placement and the few words that constitute them. These have a role of ironic detachment-distancing or separation of the poet's standpoint from things.<sup>33</sup> It is common practice by the poet to stick his neck out, and through others to say what he wants and how he wants to say it, without exposing or revealing himself, and then taking advantage of his reserves at another point in the poem.

#### **d. Pre-Announcing Phrases**

Charalambides' parenthetical phrases work in a broadly proclaiming sense, or, specifically, with the terms of operation of the pre-announcing juxtaposition<sup>34</sup> or even to avoid, even in this case, unmanageable, excessive words. It is about, to express it differently, words that predict things, and apparently do not have a purely decorative role.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, unexpectedly and certainly, despite what is customary, he successfully inserts small phrases that foretell what follows, predisposing the reader and operating again in a facilitating manner with unexpected submission.<sup>36</sup> Other phrases however, without the external attributes of the typical parenthetical form, operate as a kind of pre-announcing parenthesis, due to their gnomic-epigrammatic tone.<sup>37</sup>

#### **e. Direct and Indirect Questions**

Frequent questions, sometimes rhetorical and sometimes unanswered, provoke commotion, impatience, and curiosity for the reader. Even more when they are placed at the beginning of poems or at such positions as to regulate the whole economy of the poem; or when, accompanied by affirmative words (e.g. "really"), they create a feeling of insecurity due to their ambiguity<sup>38</sup>. In general the poet, with the question, places on the table and prioritises some vital point and specifically enlivens the narrative part of his poems.<sup>39</sup> Rarely does the question come as a manifestation of arrogance, or indifference created by Charalambides, as a consequence of an unbelievable event. The question then functions supposedly naively, but is armed with caustic irony about the paradoxes of the story, the story of all ages.<sup>40</sup>

## f. Erotic and other Innuendos, Decent or Indecent, Accordingly

The poet's humour unavoidably would also be based on contexts regarding the sexual act. It is the curious and shameful nature that excite man, when he hears stories about sex or death. However, we should observe how cleverly he condemns and acquits the words that relate to the erotic act and its surroundings, according to his context. In this case, therefore, words or phrases are recruited to insinuate or imply what is hiding behind the thoughts of the poet, who artfully leaves an interpretive gap;<sup>41</sup> by not calling things by their name but through parables, metaphors and allusions, sticks his neck out once again, leaving the reader to bear the burden of his suspicions.<sup>42</sup> Subsequently we detect in this case under examination the cryptic, metaphorical and dark words, that relate to sarcasm and mainly irony.

## g. The Vulgar Word

The use of words from all the chronological layers of the Greek language, and every class origin, irrespective prudery or coyness, brings to mind the monumental phrase of Lorentzos Mavilis in the Greek Parliament, when there was a debate about the language issue. Charalambides seems to have adopted his message, that there are no vulgar words, only vulgar people. With the assumption that whenever a stigmatised word is used, it should succeed, it should strike a crucial blow to its target, and rouse sentiment.

We should not forget that Charalambides has served under surrealism and knows in depth its therapeutic messages about the devotion of the word, and even the reconciliation of the demotic, literary and 'Katharevousa' languages.<sup>43</sup>

One should not regard that having said the above, we mean abusive or vulgar or morally reprehensible words. These of course, lurk in Charalambides' poems, ready to leap out when needed and strike down the prudish.<sup>44</sup> Apart from these, we come across a plethora of words of the everyday, and even the colloquial vocabulary, that are hammered like nails in the flesh of the verses and become sacred. Unexpected words, literarily strange, vulgar or prostitute, in a word poetically paradoxical, that as if by magic gain meaning in his words, gain a personality, and contribute to the establishment of the meaning. Moreover, there are daring conjugations, analogous to his images - we shall say a few words about these later - where words from alien environments cohabit harmoniously.<sup>45</sup> These words constitute, with their neighbouring ones, idiomorphic couplings of disparate

parts,<sup>46</sup> that merge with the specific context, giving them vitality, figurativeness and most of all, authenticity.

## h. Cries and Exclamatory Sounds

In the linguistic arsenal of Charalambides, in the framework of both theatricality<sup>47</sup> and the imaginative rendering of situations, as well as the recording of everyday life in his texts, are integrated, a kind of small explosive or pyrotechnic, single-word exclamations; they are a type of shout, that arouse many and varied sentiments (friendly disposition, nostalgia, pain,<sup>48</sup> frustration, fear, surprise, etc). Indicatively we shall document a few of these to illustrate their variation and the inventiveness of the poet: “de” (*Essay*, p. 39), “whoa” (p. 44), “ftou (damn)” (p. 48, “yep” (p. 67), etc, etc.<sup>49</sup> We shall add the Latin-based *salute* (p. 39), a word that grants, in an exclamatory connection, a pompous, deifying, Roman salutation to the fart of Nikokreon’s wife.

The different sounds are part of the sound effects of the poet, with which he attempts dangerous dives, expressive however of the internal character of each poem, that unpretentiously convey, acoustically or optically the relative portrayal. With these words he creates the relevant level and subjects the reader negatively or positively, exhilarating, ridiculing and sanctifying and deifying, reinforcing the basic idea that he wishes to highlight in each case. For example, we shall quote the first part of the poem “Submission”, where the military and simultaneously ridiculous sound “Tara tatam!” fires off inwardly the suitable tragicomic atmosphere of engagement, to give meaning, to emphasize and to contribute to the obvious arrival of the two last lines of the section that we shall quote, from which the whole clarity of the poem is released and its title becomes more comprehensible:<sup>50</sup>

*The sun has fainted long ago  
his crooked legs cannot carry him.  
A wave cast on the sand surrenders  
its last breath to the moon.*

*Second-in-command! Present peckers.  
Tie our angel hands-behind-back.*

*Tara tatam! Listen frolickers:  
The lie is a tightrope walker, the dream a sleepwalker  
and the night a footprint of shame; [...]*

### i. Comic Scenes – Changes of Setting

Phrases or long poetic periods of Chralambides, form comic images or hilarious comic scenes or theatrical gaffes. These also are incorporated in the spirit of familiarising the reader with the otherwise inapprehensible poem, and in his sympathetic approach and interpretation, leaving pleasant gaps, a relief from the difficulties and existential dilemmas of the poet. However, the words and their formation crystallise the images so that they transmit the feeling of farce, laughter, and tragicomedy.

What is of exceptional interest is the change of setting within the same poem, often more than two. We have discussed at length elsewhere about the two levels that the poets places his actions and holy acts -earth and heaven- and about the disguises of his heroes. With the same reasoning, but with different results, he paints pictures of everyday life with a simple popularity, and in contrast, always within the same poem, serious performances of historical or social events, interweaving the past with the present, glorious antiquity with the Cypriot tragedy, the everydayness with the metaphysical anguish.<sup>51</sup>

However, the double-faced or multi-faced aspect of life is not a simple game; on the contrary it constitutes a questioning nature, the great question of the poet about how life should be taken. His cynical humour concerns this unanswerable question; that is why it is two sided, sweet and bitter, bittersweet, to use a characteristic adjective that encompasses both contrasting views. He interprets it himself, at an unexpected and unsuspecting time, this standpoint writing in the poem “Winged sun”: “The truth does not lie in what you see; do not believe in miracles and their bitter slaughter”.<sup>52</sup>

### j. Hubris and Derogatory Characterisations

After all that has been said, swearing and humiliating characterisation have a warranted place in Charalambides’ poems. Moreover, they are unambiguously declaratory, and forthright, of his sentiments and they provoke the attention of the reader with their provocative nature. Other such phrases are more stereotypical and operate naively in everyday vocabulary,<sup>53</sup> others again “decorate” appropriately those that receive the characterisation<sup>54</sup> and yet others are punches thrown against persons, groups, systems, that operate in closed circuits.<sup>55</sup>



### k. Misleading Outside Reports

Using the playful manner that characterises him, Charalambides recruits the outside good report parenthetically, something that cannot be verified. Thus despite its unsubstantiated or false nature it gains credibility, even if its exaggerated or pointless appeal is testament to the mocking mood of the poet.<sup>56</sup> At any rate, these outside reports are basically uncontrollable, we consider them to be fabricated, therefore fake, even if seemingly truthful; subsequently according to Charalambides methistorical system<sup>57</sup> they are reliable.

One could speak at great length, researching the techniques and devices that Kyriacos Charalambides employs, discovering quantitatively minor cases; or to categorise them in detail, resorting to subcategories<sup>58</sup> of those already cited as categories; or even to expand to non-linguistic phenomena, like theatricality. We have already dealt with transformations in his poetry, its visionary dimensions and thaumaturgy elsewhere;<sup>59</sup> there is however plenty of other material that as a whole composes an incredible mosaic, where on offer to be studied are idiomorphic aversions, deliberate repetitions,<sup>60</sup> rhymes<sup>61</sup> assorted salutations, facetious capers and tricks on words or multifaceted etymological or sub-etymological puns,<sup>62</sup> bittersweet plays on words, and others. Furthermore, theatrical silences, deliberate stylistic (linguistic, grammatical,<sup>63</sup> syntactical) imitations,<sup>64</sup> that either transport to the ethical source or with their ever-changing way trivialise it; disguises, festive or carnivalistic actions, deifications (genuine and directed, that can lead to what is commonly known as “hooting”), anachronisms, conjuring moves and many others.

As a sample, we have attempted to illustrate using specific categories (and to imply-incite by simply recording others), the vitality of Kyr. Charalambides' language, the vitality of the language used by true poetry, that transcends the conventional, the predictable and the prudish, when it really does have something to say.

## NOTES

1. *Metahistory*, Agra, Athens 1995, p. 12.
2. *Metahistory*, p. 11: "But on a day like this –strange!-I saw / what they talked about".
3. *Metahistory*, p. 26: "he painted his skylight –that of his nourishment- in black", where this is not a conventional explanation, but a vital element of the drama that the central character of the poem "Noneciolo" is living.
4. *Metahistory*, p. 12: "I take a reed from the swamp / and pretend to joust-a terrible pole-".
5. *Metahistory*, p. 11: "I try to greet from my earth / my heaven-sent self –such a fool / has never been born in the world".
6. *Metahistory*, p. 17: "God passed by on a bicycle from high up; [...] "Mr Ypatides" I said [...]".
7. *Metahistory*, p. 18: "I am grateful and I took the nail / and punctured his bicycle wheel / and from the great effort in remembering me he made me / unable to stop - I write poems and the blood again is distanced from my body". In such instances the poet reveals his poeticism, passing from amusement or myth to the interpretation of his poetic creation or his spiritual world. However, in this parallel manner, the personal aspect seems to pass into secondary importance, and so the vibrations of boasting and navel-gazing are absorbed, that could have been attributed to him. See *in the same*: "I went looking for the devil's therapy, / I cut out my liver. / Serves me right, and I advise you – / I have known you since a young age, I love you damn it – / avoid me, like the devil to incense."
8. *Metahistory*, p. 11: "But on a day like this –strange!-I saw / what they talked about". The word "strange" denotes the paradox here.
9. *Quince apple*, p. 47: "the sea –the pontus- to his ships", where this is a play on the ancient source of the word by the poet.
10. See, for example, the different meaning taken on by the word "hawk", given ironically by the ancient word "hierax" (*Metahistory*, p. 45). This is another way of articulating the phrase used elsewhere as "Pardon my language".
11. *Metahistory*, p. 19: "a mast is raised / and then Totus Christus –the Entire Christ– / Caput et Christus –Head and Body– / emerges from the surf [...]".
12. *Metahistory*, p. 31 "Straight away he opens Julius Caesar and Macbeth – / it was the month of March, the sun was setting-and what does he read:".
13. Since Charalambides' capabilities are so abundant, they are not restricted to the techniques that we document, regardless that their frequency is an exploitable element. For example, density is sometimes replaced by an analytical disposition; cleverly given so that it does not digress. In fact its elegant method of expression

exalts it wherever we meet it, and with humour and the literary diversity that permeates it, often gives a colourful or mocking note. See, indicatively, *Ordeal*, p. 11: “He said his palaver, susceptible / to the ovulation of speech”, where the one susceptible to the ovulation of speech is the babbler, the chatterbox, the prattler. It is worth noting that ovulation is the satirical key, where this is associated with the ovulation period of women, but attributed to a man. See also *Quince apple*, p. 26: “in the fold of the breasts / paired by Hera (a safe hideaway) they ploughed [...]”. Another kind of association, intertextual this time, is made in *Quince apple*, p. 50, where the reader’s mind is directed to liturgical texts: “overcome by fear”, after “by the fear of God”.

14. *Metahistory*, p. 31: “He made his decision – he listened to me”.
15. *Essay*, p. 15: “He dragged, as they say, by the hair [...]”.
16. *Ammochostos Regina*, p. 59.
17. *Metahistory*, p. 46: “‘we shall die voluntarily’ (it was a good historical phrase)”.
18. *Ammochostos Regina*, p. 34: “wanting or not”, 50: “by a whisker”, 52: “with a thousand pleadings”, 87: “since her birth”, etc.
19. *Quince apple*, p. 94: “Poetry is the birthplace of excess”.
20. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 41: “the sky came down on them [...] you see”, 117: “blessed be their name”, 122: “may your dead be forgiven”. *Ordeal*, p. 43: “nice work”, 82: “he didn’t grab the bull by the horns” – *First source*, p. 12: “we ate bread and salt together”, 16: “Light from light”, 29: “it came down heavily on you” – *Metahistory*, p. 13: “we ploughed through the villages”, 40: “he is flat broke”, “in his own world”, 48: “he gets them on credit”, 111: “you should have stood ground”, 117: “he would never live [...] a halcyon day”, 132: “long time no see”, 137: “strike from the map”, etc.
21. *Metahistory*, p. 15: “(the sky that they laid down on top of you)”.
22. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 33: “from experience”, 51: “in a bad way”, etc.
23. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 27: “on the flesh”, 28: “limping”, “damn it”, 33: “at the drop of a hat”, 36: “farewell”, 65: “teeth grinding”, 72: “we should take measures”, 79: “we lost you right in front of our eyes”, 85: “spitting blood”, 104: “he ran way”, 130: “clear out my corner”, 131: “they made wings”. – *First Source*, p. 38: “I shall put on my best (clothes)”. It should be said that Charalambides, a master of the diachronic Greek language, takes advantage of his own compositions in similes, disintegrating their stereotypical and fossilised character. Instead of “my liver is cut out”, with a variation of the composition he creates the phrase “I cut out my liver”, rejuvenating the creative power of the words that constitute the specific phrase (*Metahistory*, p. 18). Furthermore, “they received good news” (*Metahistory*, p. 43), from the phrase “I have good news”, or 55: “her mother’s pride”, a slight modification of the well-known children’s poem.

24. *Metahistory*, p.129; “*her handle stayed in my hand*”, where the first part of the phrase refers to a well known, vulgar, innuendo of sexual disappointment, that the poet skilfully weaves into the meaning of his phrase. See also p. 131: “I don’t get misty eyed any more”.
25. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 16: “on top of me flowed the glass and nails of the city”, that reminds us of the well known phrase “he made everything glass and nails (he made a mess of everything)”, the meaning of which the poet gives by association to the specific phrase. Slightly altered is the popular phrase “As for myself, I didn’t understand a thing, fiddling while Rome burns”, where the phrase emphasizes what has been said by “As for myself, I didn’t understand a thing “. Again, p. 35: “edge to edge” instead of “from edge to edge”.
26. Elsewhere, again, with his parenthetic tactic he attempts personal interventions. See *Quince apple*, p. 48: we (I mean the Greeks) are not [...]”.
27. *Ordeal*, p. 11: “ And he said about our Helen the daughter / of Leda and Tyndareos, and ... what am I saying! / He said about our Helen [...]”. See also p. 83: “let them say!”. With the pretext of the last example, let us note the very frequent use of the exclamation mark by Charalambides, further proof of the paradox that we have met so often even in the relatively few quotations of this study.
28. The specific phrases give a droll colour due to their delirious nature, another game by the playful poet that appears not to be able to control his words.
29. *Quince apple*, p. 18:, and *Metahistory*, p. 57.
30. For the Calvic precedent see in *Lyra*, the ode “To Chios”, verse 12 “Where has my pain brought me?...what am I saying?...”.
31. *Ordeal*, p. 67: “Besides the Boeotians –I think we said it – [...]”. With “I think” it acquits it from the lie that the verb “we said” declares, since it has said nothing before. Simultaneously, it grants a narrative tone, a basic characteristic of his poetic word. Most common, with a similar use, is the verb “dare” (see pp. 15, 53 and others, and *Metahistory*, p. 45). See also the use of the parenthetic “say” in *Quince apple*, p. 65, in the 1st verse (“he said”), and *Metahistory*, p. 45: “of the inhabitants –he says- in it”; as well as the rare (allegedly beseeching and wrongly authoritative) “please” (*Metahistory*, p. 72), where creating an anteposition and transporting us to everyday dialogue, it grants an emphatic tone to the phrase; “Don’t let it, please, elude you”.
32. *Metahistory*, p. 109: “she ended up, as queen of England, being the richest mortal on earth –a lot of good!”.
33. *Metahistory*, p. 44: “Pardon my language”, elsewhere attributed as “we can treat you to coffee”.
34. *Ordeal*, p. 55: “he knew –and that is amazing!- how [...]”.

35. *Quince apple*, p. 15: "Strange Dream (she caught him out of the corner of her eye going out of the window) he broke, she says the window of her face".
36. *Ordeal*, p. 28: "That is why –honourable men- we sent Aristodikos [...]", p. 38: "She –Olympias! –an experienced eye [...]".
37. *Metahistory*, p. 64 "Besides you know the story:".
38. *Ordeal*, p. 37: "We truly don't know why Alexander sent him to his mother; to get rid of her beauty? so she wouldn't defile his army? to show what he had available in the rear?".
39. *Ordeal*, p. 51: "the Apollonian lyre [...] –abandoned by whom?- he grabs it".
40. *Metahistory*, p. 34: "So he always finishes first / without a carriage –and so what?".
41. It is worth mentioning here an interpretation of a sub-etymological kind, an idiomorphic insult, that with the dexterous exploitation of the language conveys, by mimicking the primary grammatical style, the essence of things: "Take away from here, Idolian" (instead of Julian), *Quince apple*, p. 93. Parenthetically the poet conveys the substance, referring to the whole meaning of the poem, in the tragic poem "Pyrros Demas" (*Quince apple*, p. 129) with the phrase "(theirs also)", right at the end, a reminder of the Kavafic selective, hindmost technique.
42. *Ordeal*, p. 37: "She was certainly a sensuous woman; / Alexander was aware of that –he didn't want / to touch her: Be careful! It deepens", where the last verb, dark in itself, can lead only to mischievous thoughts of a sexual content.
43. See Theodosios Pylarinos, "Andreas Empirikos, *The Great Eastern* or [...] *Shapeless words yesterday, but defined today / Well formed clearly professed / After overcoming the initial hesitations [...]*", *Porphyras*, issue 101 (2001), pp. 341-348.
44. *Ordeal*, p. 39: "he farted upon razzle [...]".
45. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 63, where "chef" and "Hellanodic poet" cohabit: "where a Greek poet, chef of good things, [...]"; or on p. 62, the imaginative phrase "present peckers", replaces the military command "present arms".
46. *Ordeal*, p. 48: "Ah, by Artemis Orthia, his manhood must have woken up, he wants to raise his statue next to her so he can roust!" where the verb stirs up erotic feelings, in combination with the adjective "Orthia" (Erect) given to Artemis. – On p. 28: "they swiped all the statues", and *Quince apple*, p. 43: "I don't dig such things".
47. This theatricality is brilliantly conveyed, playfully, in the stage directions of the poem "Ardana" (*Famagusta Regina*, pp. 107-108) as follows: "She turned silently, without talking / and does something like this (hand movement) / as if saying to him [...]".
48. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 115: "The love, oh, the love for my city [...]".
49. See also *Metahistory*, p. 31: "Ay, ay".

50. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 61.
51. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 63, where amongst the various images, the scene of the Cypriot market springs up, the street market with the consumables, that is the foodstuffs, the consumable nutritional goods: "Watermelons, potatoes, / courgettes, cucumbers and tomatoes are on sale cheaply".
52. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 110.
53. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 58: "Damn, that's right!".
54. *Famagusta Regina*, p. 27: "You liberated the city, deans of the spirit and fashion victims", 103: "the cross-eyed hand of the pasteurised God".
55. *Metahistory*, p. 14: "Shut up", 49; "Venetian tyke". – *Quince apple*, 93: "Aphrodite the whore (servant of vulgar marriages)".
56. *Quince apple*, p. 67: "This cat Prince is not able – Smyrnis knew well - to counter [...]", and p. 54: "Many people say – Camus for example- that real conmen have to know everything".
57. Thedosis Pylarinos, *Metahistory: Myth and History in the poetry of Kyriakos Charalambides*, Herodotos, Athens 2007.
58. Such as naive explanations, misleading or exonerating parenthetical phrases, and others.
59. See Th. Pylarinos, *in the same*.
60. *Metahistory*, p. 67, the dramatic repetition of the word "death" from verse to verse, in the beginning.
61. It is worth remembering a typical example from *Quince apple*, p. 32, "Artemis' misery": "Like a man who denied violence and adulteration, / the divine night emerged with open sails" («Σαν άνθρωπος που αρνήστηκε τη βία και τη νοθεία / ξεπρόβαλλε μ' ολάνοιχτα πανιά η νύχτα η θεία»), and p. 39, in the last two lines of the first verse. Also an esoteric self-sufficient quote in the same book, p. 95: "The world is inexperienced and invalid" («Ο κόσμος είναι άπειρος και ανάπηρος»).
62. *Quince apple*, p. 65: "He was rushing for the Gregorians" («των Γρηγορίων, εγρηγορούσε», Γρηγόρης: Gregory, γρηγορώ (verb): to hurry up), p. 95: "infinite inexperience of torment". – *First source*, p. 12: "the growl is an infinite chaos is angst", and "I respect the sea deeply to its deepest depth", p. 41: "they were filtering, digging tunnels and sliding and rolling" («λαγάζιζαν, λαγούμιζαν και κύλααν και κυλούσαν»). See also in *Metahistory* (p. 17), the most imaginative sub-etymological droll saying with the words "Ypatides-hepatitis", the alliterations of the sound pi in the relevant verse with the form "Ypatides- I speak-up-hepatitis" and the conversation of all of these in the fabricated, proverbial phrase-hint of the next page: "I cut out my liver".

63. *Quince apple*, p. 94, where the pleonastic joining of the conjunctions “that how” is done as an imitation of post Byzantine, mainly popular, texts: “Well what do you want me to say now? That how exaltation is a new thing [...]”.
64. The many mottos, although in themselves do not imitate, operate in interpretative way and convey the surrounding atmosphere of the time, to which the relevant poem refers, and also with the contrapuntal way of including them in the poem, in the diffusion of the methistoric way of thinking by the poet, that in the final analysis is his ultimate aim, but also in the readers’ key for his entire work. There is imitation in the use of words, especially of everyday language, from different social or historical periods.

## The Responsibility of Testimony. Literature and History in Contemporary Cypriot Literature

Evripides Garantoudes\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Des données dont nous disposons, extrêmement peu d'écrivains Grecs (poètes ou écrivains de prose) se sont inspirés de la tragédie chypriote de 1974. Au contraire, tant dans le dernier recueil de poèmes de Kyriakos Charalambidis que dans le deuxième récit de Yiorgos Haritonidis, ces auteurs se concentrent sur la relation de la littérature à l'histoire, ou continuent d'exprimer la douleur diachronique et contemporaine de la grécité.

### ABSTRACT

As far as we know, only a handful of Greek writers (of poetry or prose) drew their inspiration from the Cypriot tragedy of 1974. On the contrary, the last collection of poetry of Kyriakos Charalambidis and the narration of Yiorgos Charitonidis focus on the relationship between literature and history, and continue to express the diachronic and contemporary pain of romiosini.

In 1973, George P. Savvides, in critiquing Kyriakos Charalambides' poetic book, *'To aggeio me ta sximata'* [The vessel with the shapes] formulated the following essential, if considered from a current perspective, remarks: "Logically, Cyprus remains as the only place outside of Greece from which we can expect a direct renewal of our poetics – a renewal analogous with those which were offered at times during modern Hellenism by Crete, The Seven Isles, Alexandria, and Asia Minor. I do not support that the renewal of our poetic discourse can be derived *solely* from a place found beyond the borders of the State, but that, if it is not to come from within the Greek melting pot, it appears to me more plausible for it to be given from the Greeks of Cyprus rather than from American-Greeks or foreigners of the West or Eastern Europe. I support even less that a possible renewal of poetics from Cyprus is prescribed by 'historical necessity'...I merely note that I consider it possible,

\* University of Crete



according to our common philological experience: possible and desirable, not predetermined and 'fated.'"<sup>1</sup>

Judging Savvides' estimation that Cypriot poetry may offer a 'direct renewal' of the poetics of Greek *logos* from the distance awarded by time, I would remark, firstly, that this estimation was not realized, if I were to judge by the fact that Greek philological and literary criticism, throughout the entire duration of the post-authoritarian period and till today, dealt little, and only occasionally with Cypriot poetics and more generally with literary production, in this way cutting it off from the body of Greek literature. At the same time, interest is generated by Savvides' comment that "a possible renewal of poetics from Cyprus" is disconnected from any type of "historical necessity." Having written his critique almost an entire year prior to the tragic events of the Turkish invasion and eventual occupation, Savvides was not of course in a position to know that as of the summer of '74 and till today, the historical necessity of the Cypriot and national tragedy would outline, more precisely would determine, the essential thematic axis of Cypriot literature, particularly poetry. Therefore, following the events of '74 and all that ensued as a consequence till today, Savvides' prediction can be broken down into a series of inter-related questions. The first is formulated in Savvides' own way: has or hasn't the Cypriot literature of the past 34 years, determined by historical events which marked and continue to mark the island, directly renewed Greek literary logos, particularly poetic discourse? Let us further specify the general question aforementioned in such a way that it will reflect the distinctiveness of modern Cypriot literature: has Cypriot literature enriched Greek literature, particularly poetry with thematic areas and expressive methods which during the same time period were cultivated much less by Greek litterateurs? Finally, let's place the two questions mentioned above within a historical context using as a point of reference the generally accepted lack of recognition of Cypriot literature by the Greek philologists and critics: Could it be perhaps that this enrichment has and continues to occur, but remains latent, precisely because, and in a paradoxical manner, Cypriot literature doesn't concern the community of Greek philologists and critics?

My indicative reference to two contemporary books by Cypriot authors, the collection of poems '*Kydonion milon*' [Quince apple] (2006) by Kyriakos Charalambides and the prose piece '*Me diavatirio kai visa mias meras*' (2006) [On a passport and one-day visa] by George Charitonides, books which were both published in Athens<sup>2</sup>, has as its intent the subtle discussion of two issues which these books posit. I focus my attention on the issues in question

because it is within these, in my opinion, that the continued contribution of Cypriot literature to Greek literature can largely be found. ‘*Quince apple*,’ tenth in row and seventh of the books by Charalambides following the period of the Turkish invasion and occupation, stable in its focus on the relationship between poetry and history, continues to express the diachronic and contemporary anguish of *Romiosyni* [Greek race] testing the endurance of national poetry in our times. On the other hand, George Charitonides’ emotive narrative, which has as its central theme the psycho-sentimental reactions of the first person narrator and hero’s visit to the occupied territory, brings to the foreground the inescapable bond between literature and history, as seen from the perspective of the individual subject.

Perhaps concealed behind the gradual success of Kyriakos Charalambides’ poetry over the past 30 years is the compliant acceptance of a Cypriot poet who was able to achieve recognition by the society of Greek literati and critics who, as a general rule, are guarded, if not dismissive of Cypriot litterateurs. I am of the opinion that the long-time successful and highly aesthetic worth of Charalambides’ poetry has allowed him to emerge as one of the most important Greek poets of the post-war and post-authoritarian period. In essence, the appreciation of the great worth of his poetry and the verification of its position run parallel with all its distinguishing features (relationship with literary tradition, thematics, linguistic ethos, moral demands) which allow it to differ noticeably, if not to be found at the antipodes, in contrast with the leading trends of contemporary Greek poetry.

Since the collection *Axaion akti* (1977) [Greek’s coast] and in all his consecutive books (*Ammochostos Vasilevousa* (1982) [Famagusta Regina], *Tholos* (1989) [Dome], *Methistoria* (1995) [Metahistory], *Dokimin* (2000) [Ordeal] and *Aigialousis episkepsis* (2003) [Visit to Aigialousa], the central themes of Charalambides’ poetry are the tragic, both direct and indirect, consequences of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus from 1974 to date. Charalambides, a man who carries within him the anguish of the lost homeland and a poet with a deeply rooted Greek national consciousness, could not but choose- a choice he continues to live by till today- to serve a poetic awareness which Greek post-authoritarian poetry, to a large degree, abandoned along its lengthy and illustrious modernistic past. I refer to the awareness of national poetry. To avoid any misunderstanding, I classify Charalambides as a national poet, using the term not axiologically but typologically, as within his poetry I discern both a contemporary and valid version of those features which were once used to define the category of the national poet.

I will attempt to present a schema of some of these features, using as a point of reference the book *Quince apple*. Of the 86 poems which are distributed within 9 parts, and as is the case in Charalambides' previous books, poetry contained within the firm learned consciousness of its creator is developed. With the poems of *Quince apple*, a dense dialogical relationship with the entirety of Greek literary and grammatological tradition is woven: with ancient Greek, Byzantine and modern texts, demotic songs, modern poetry. Although one would expect Charalambides' poems to sink beneath the burden of their own literariness, on the contrary within *Quince apple*, and with more success than his preceding book, Charalambides manages to imprint the traces of the Greek linguistic diachrony in words which are poetically animated. That which in essence vitalizes Charalambides' poetic discourse is its refined dialogue with Kavafian and Seferian poetry. At the centre of the relationship with the poetry of Kavafis is Charalambides' ironic or even sarcastic attitude towards history. The thematic and ethical focus of Charalambides' poetry can be located in his relationship with Seferian poetry, as that which could be defined in Seferian terms as "the anguish of the Romiosyni." I mean to say that as with Seferis, Charalambides also projects and immortalizes the harsh fate, the hardships, the difficulties and the injustices which characterize the diachronic course of Hellenism, particularly Cypriot Hellenism, throughout the hardships of History. Furthermore, and as occurs in Seferian poetry, so too in the poetry of Charalambides the depiction of the "anguish of Romiosyni" is transmitted to the reader on account of the fact that the juxtaposition of both individual with collective experience and contemporary with diachronic experience is achieved.

Charalambides continues to write national poetry, with a deeply assimilated knowledge of the Greek literary tradition, an active historical consciousness, a rare linguistic sensitivity and unique poetic rhyme, whilst no other Greek poet worthy of note considers attempting something similar. This acknowledgement is critical, as Charalambides' poetry confronts us with the question of whether a contemporary version of the national poet can exist today, that is in a period and place where this type of poet has long since been deemed poetically inactive and ideologically suspect. My opinion is that an affirmative response to the aforementioned question is provided by Charalambides' poetry itself on account of its distinctive uniqueness.

The narrative *'Me diavatirio kai visa mias meras'* [On a passport and one-day visa] comes as the continuation of George Charitonides' first book

*Anamniseis me polla koukoutsia*' (2003) [Memories with many seeds]. In that first book, the author, who has lived and worked in Athens for many years now, posits a personal literary testimony of the events of the Turkish invasion in Cyprus in 1974 (participation in the defense of the Island, captivity, freedom). The topic of his second book is a visit to his birthplace, the region of Keryneia, following the opening of the roadblocks towards the occupied areas. A short narrative, *Me diavatirio kai visa mias meras*' is comprised of 2 introductions, an epilogue and 37 enumerated parts, spanning one to two pages each. Within these, moment-episodes of the one-day visit are recorded which "unite sweet reminiscence with the silent rage of the occasion" (p. 39): to visit the place where you lived your youth, thirty years later, on a passport and one-day visa. The scenes of the natural environment as well as the changes brought about by man continuously recall the past, these consisting of either the happy moments of the first person narrator prior to the invasion, or the painful experiences of the invasion and captivity. The tug-of-war between the present and the past illustrates the traumatic personal experience of adult life which is stigmatized by the knowledge that its amputated youth has been unconditionally left behind, in a far off (under foreign occupation) yet familiar and much loved place. Balancing between the faithful description and literary transformation of his personal testimony, Charitonides simultaneously responds to the moral demand of depicting the unjust historical fate of his country. The illustrations incorporated into the book (mainly maps and pictures of Cyprus) bind it to a collective reality whilst at the same time Charitonides remarks upon the history of the land with subtle hints and accurate insinuations. Rarely raising the emotional temperature of his words and without sliding into melodramatic degeneration he allows sentiment to emerge from the dramatic nature of the narrated events.

I provide as an example of Charitonides' writing an excerpt from part 32 of the book (p. 72):

We don't near the mermaid Ammochostos. We look at her from afar amidst the colors of the aquarium.

Captive, isolated and with a wild eye she seeks a human.

She asks for Alexander.

What should we answer?

We walk away....

Taking recourse in myth and distancing the group of visitors from the actual ghost-town demonstrate the weakness of man before the unyielding

mechanisms of the history of the powerful. At the same time, whilst *Me diavativrio kai visa mias meras* reveals that literature does not distance itself as it remains close to the space and time of collective drama in order to remind us of its tiny victory against the powerful mechanisms of history: living memory, feelings and the souls of people are inalienable.

Perhaps the immediate emotion Charitonides' book evokes within a Greek reader can be attributed to the fact that it brings him/her face to face with the testimony of a man who narrates how he passed through the difficulties of his personal life-memory and history. In addition, to a Greek of my own generation who lived and lives history watching via live televised broadcast the murder of Solomou Solomou while sitting on his couch stunned, Charitonides' book reminds us that the consecutive parade of names given to the villages of Karpasia are the most irrefutable testimony that literature monumentalizes the beauty of language and life when it is created by materials of collective reality: "Vassiliatis, Airkotissa, Oktolithari, Aigialousa, Leonarisso, Koma tou Yialou" (p. 57).

Contemporary theorists of the history of Greek literature apparently leave for the future a question which, as time goes by, will continue to become all the more unanswerable: what is the rationale behind why Greek literature following 1974 and till today has referred so little, almost scarcely, to the Cypriot tragedy? Following a relative study I carried out within the field of Greek poetic production, the total number of single poems or collections of poetry making reference to Cyprus and the events of '74 comes to a one digit number. The national weight of the event of the Turkish invasion and occupation was and still is so great that it makes us aware that the question is not so much concerned with the subject matter of Greek post-authoritarian literature as with raising the issue of an ethical choice. Whether or not the position of avoiding or silencing the Cypriot tragedy conceals a feeling of guilt on behalf of the Greek literati towards Cypriot Hellenism regarding the events of '74 is an issue under investigation. At any rate, the poetry of Charalambides recurrently gave an affirmative response to the question of whether responsibilities existed both then and during the time period which followed and pointed out exactly to whom these belonged. I include as an example his short poem *'Peri kladou elias'* [Of olive branch], from his book *'Methistoria'*, a poem note-worthy for its accusatory rage and unfeigned bitterness:

Having in his quiver  
Legal prophecies  
With olive branch taken from

The deathbed of history,  
In the presence of the enemy at the gates  
Luxury, he said, of punishment redundant  
(As for remorse, not even a mention)

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- Take note; evil appears not of human hand  
So that unsanctified acts may be written off  
*This unsanctified act* must be written off  
In order for this unsanctified act to be written off  
The space in which it was enacted must not have existed

A false dog guards a false pen

Cyprus does not exist: it is being abolished  
as a space of tragic events<sup>4</sup>

If in the first part of the poem it appears that the society of compliant Greek politicians responsible for dealing with the Cypriot problem on the international political scene is being satirized, in the second part, Charalambides exercises the poetic license to judge and rule, even in loud tones and in basically literal language, on the guilty stance of the “abolishment” of Cyprus. With reference to the question at hand and in considering the Greek social and ideological climate of the post-authoritarian period from a standpoint awarded by the distance of time, we can now ascertain that this climate bred litterateurs, and particularly poets, who chose to write about issues more private and less painful than that of the Cypriot tragedy or, in order to reiterate the aforementioned thought along the lines of Charalambides’ poem, they chose to write-off the “unsanctified” and consequently determine that “Cyprus does not exist.”

On the other hand, Charitonides’ prose piece, a literary narrative which feeds off the unavoidable relationship-conflict of a contemporary Greek with the history-open wound of his country, Cyprus, offers an impartial standard against which the position of contemporary Greek literature towards the Cypriot tragedy on the one hand and towards history in general on the other may be measured. The relationship between contemporary Greek literature and history is a complex issue. Modern Greek literature, up until the 1970’s fed off the exaltations but mostly the disasters of history: the Asia Minor catastrophe, the Greek-Italian war, the civil war. Most worthy Greek writers of literature measured up against the imminent need of the individual-

writing subject to express, from their own limited perspective, historical experience, in other words, how history determined their life, their body, their soul and how it stigmatized their memory. During the years of the post-authoritarian period and until today, this position seems to be changing and a consequence of this change is the circumvention of the Cypriot tragedy. Further commentary on the issue of the relationship between contemporary Greek literature, especially prose with historical reality cannot help but occur here, within two, almost demagogical questions: a) Could perhaps the widespread trend of the last few decades which saw Greek prose move towards works of fiction with historical subjects more or less rooted in a long ago and essentially unrelated past, conceal an escape from the present and consequently a repulsion towards all that constitutes, on the level of synchrony, the (sought after) historical identity of the Hellenes? b) How successful in standing the test of time can literature be when it does not draw its subject matter on the one hand from the present and on the other from those burning moments in history, such as the ongoing Cypriot tragedy, which affect the present? Finally, I wonder if the attempt to answer the aforementioned questions results in the divisive as well as moral dilemma which concerns the readers of contemporary prose production: we either read the literature of the Cypriot Charitonides or we read the contemporary bestselling Hellenic prose meant for the self-indulgent ladies of the northern suburbs of Athens, lost somewhere within their unhistorical microcosm.

## NOTES

1. G.P. Savvides, “*Kypria hñaria zois*” [Cypriot vestiges of life] (Kyriakos Charalambides: “*To aggeio me ta sximata*” [The vessel with the shapes] Nicosia 1973, p. 96), *To Vima*, 26 August 1973. Republished: *Efimeron sperma* [Ephemeral Sperm] (1973-1978), Athens, Ermis 1978, pp. 166-172: 166.
2. I provide full publishing details: Kyriakos Charalambides, ‘*Kydonion milon*’ [Quince apple] Athens, Agra 2006 and George Charitonides, ‘*Me diavatirio kai visa mias meras*’ [On a passport and one-day visa] Athens, Kedros 2006.
3. Charalambides was born in 1940 in Achna of the Ammochostos district and was awarded the Greek state prize for poetry for his book ‘*Methistoria*’ after having received 3 Cypriot state prizes for poetry.
4. Kyriakos Charalambides, *Methistoria*, Athens, Agra 1995, p. 120. The poem upon its completion is dated: May 1993.

## **The Image of Nicos Nicolaides in the Correspondence of Thodosis Pierides to Stratis Tsirkas**

**Costas Nicolaides\***

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Nikos Nikolaïdis était le «Mentor» d'un groupe de jeunes écrivains qui vivaient en Égypte dans les années de l'entre deux guerres et lui demandaient conseil en matière d'écriture. De la riche correspondance de l'écrivain de prose Stratis Tsirkas et du poète Theodosios Pieridis sont choisis des extraits dans lesquels d'un côté est tracée la physionomie de Nikos Nikolaïdis et d'un autre côté on éclaire les relations d'apprentissage ou de distanciation entre le «maître» et ses correspondants.

### **ABSTRACT**

Nikos Nikolaïdis was the mentor of a group of young writers living in Egypt in the years between the two World Wars. A few excerpts selected from the many letters exchanged between the novelist Stratis Tsirkas and the poet Theodosios Pieridis trace a portrait of Nikos Nikolaïdis and shed light on the relationship or distance between mentor and trainees.

The central objective of the present paper is the illustration of the spiritual artistic and humane image of the great Cypriot prose writer Nicos Nicolaides (N.N.), as it emerges through the body of letters written by Thodosios Pierides (T.P.) to his dearest friend, the well-known author Stratis Tsirkas.

In this way yet another -entirely unknown- side to the image of our author as it has been formed to date is added, enriching the pre-existing one even further.

Indeed this viewpoint acquires greater significance if we take into account that it derives from an extremely sensitive artistic persona, a deeply contemplative man who from very early on injected and nourished his thought in Marxist theory whilst simultaneously dedicating his entire life to correspondingly revolutionary practice.

\* Philologist



As a parenthesis we may note here that the ideological perspective from which Pierides views his friend and teacher Nicolaides makes his judgment of certain issues harsh, perhaps sometimes excessive. On the other hand his intimate and lengthy relationship with Nicolaides, a lifetime relationship, lends to his writings the integrity of knowing the man well. Above all however, Thodosis Pierides' integrity is reinforced if we consider that all that he writes he writes 'from the heart,' addressed to his friend Tsirkas to whom he reveals without forestalling thoughts and feelings, taken directly from the haven of his soul. Whatever is said then, right or wrong, exaggerated or modest, entails an immediacy and authenticity which is entirely uncommon.

Unfortunately, we lack here the corresponding viewpoint of the receiver of the letters, Tsirkas, which would have enabled us the ability to compare but also to cross-check certain information. However, the 'roaming existence' of T. Pierides, the constant persecutions and moving about, his illnesses, the general disarray and disorganization of his life<sup>1</sup> did not allow him to keep track of and organize his "papers."

With reference to the relationship between T. Pierides – S. Tsirkas, which extended to their partners in life and in the struggle (Alexandra and Antigone respectively), it could be said that it shall be illustrated in its entirety and worth only when at some point the entire collection of letters from T.P to Tsirkas (some 132 dated and many non-dated)<sup>2</sup> are published.

The relationship of the elder, by roughly 25 years, N.Nicolaides with the younger T. Pierides and S. Tsirkas extends chronologically from the teenage years of the two almost same aged writers (second half of the decade 1920-1930), with the focal point being the sea sponge boat of Sakellaris Yiannakakis and the home of N.Nicolaides, till the death of the 'teacher' in February of 1956<sup>3</sup>. It is well-known that Nicolaides fostered a unique love towards Tsirkas, predicting perhaps his bright literary development. After all, he made him his general heir and co-executor of his will<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, in addition to the study of his work<sup>5</sup> Tsirkas took great pains to publish and promote the work of N. Nicolaides following his death.

As for the relationship between the three of them I note as added proof of intimacy the use of Nicolaides' Christian name in mutual conversations. I also add T. Pierides' frequent references and varied comments about Nicolaides which constitute the author as one of the central personas within the correspondence between the two friends who shared the same ideology and craft. (In total, Nicolaides is mentioned in 17 of the dated and 5 of the non-dated letters).

It is specified that the numbering of the letters follows the general sequence with which they were placed within the bulky file 'Thodosis Pierides' of the Tsirkas Archive by Theano Michaelidou, prior to its delivery to the Greek Literary and Historic Archive from Tsirkas' wife, Antigone who was kind enough to lend me the file for the purpose of photocopying the letters.

In order to limit the large expanse of research, certain excerpts are published and commented upon here, the majority of which are from the dated letters with only one from the non-dated included. It is to be noted that for the dated letters chronological order has been strictly adhered to.

Corrections have been made in cases of oversights or certain insignificant spelling errors. Overall, I have faithfully maintained the linguistic convictions of the writer which, to a certain extent, reflect both the period within which they were written and Psycharis' influence.

### **Sixth Non-Dated Letter.**

"...Lazy, perhaps once upon a time but also now? I know I like to be lazy but can I? I've worked like a dog yet you still call me lazy? Fine for Nicos. For him work means verse. But you?..."

This non-dated letter was placed after another dated 27.10.1933 in the Tsirkas file by Theano Michailidou. The common content of the two letters suggests that they were written at the same time.

The inclusion of Nicolaides' name within Tsirkas' criticism of T. Pierides for being lazy illustrates yet again the severity and demanding nature of the writer with respect to matters of work. For an artist who worked so hard to create his art, who had as a permanent motto in life "art requires extreme work", it was natural that he demand the same devotion from his younger fellow-craftsmen, especially of course from those he could see possessed unique abilities.

### **Letter 10: Illioupolis (Cairo) 8.11.1930.**

"...I send you <Protoporia>. I didn't like my poem in print. No Yiannis, whatever you say- it is not a good song.

I like your narrative – no comments...Know only that I am jealous of the joy you will receive – Nicos found it wonderful (with reservations as always

– with the reservations of a perfectionist critic who must find faults...).”

In the same issue of the Athenian magazine *Protoporia*<sup>6</sup> T.P.’s poem ‘*I protimerá tou Fthinoporou*’ [The first day of Autumn] and Stratis Tsirkas’ narrative ‘*Anoiksi*’ [Spring] were published (at the time Tsirkas signed with his real name Yiannis Hadjiantras).

T.P.’s distaste for this poem comes as a complete contrast to his future publishing and broader luck. For this reason, although he avoided including it in his own edition of his as yet unpublished poetry collections (an edition realized by his brother Yiorgos Pierides), it was included in the Anthology of Greek Lyrical Poets by Kleonas Paraschou and X. Lefoparides in 1931, as well as in the perhaps more important to date modern Greek anthology of Sokolis<sup>7</sup>.

In contrast, Tsirkas excludes his narrative ‘*Anoiksi*’ [Spring], which he does not republish either in his collection of short-stories or in the comprehensive volume ‘*Ta dioigimata*,’<sup>8</sup> [The short-stories] at the same time ignoring the positive reviews of T.P. and Nicos Nicolaides.

As concerns Nicolaides, the excerpt is of extreme interest firstly on account of the large degree of respect for the opinion of their teacher fostered by the then young litterateurs, as well as the great joy created by every one of his complimentary reviews (“I am jealous of the joy you will receive”) and also for the “detailed criticism” practiced by Nicolaides. The letter lacks Nicolaides’ opinion of the same poem by T.P. which he would have logically expressed to him verbally. It would have been strange for Nicolaides to have spoken to Pierides only of Tsirkas’ short story, totally ignoring Pierides’ poem which was found in the same issue of the same magazine. Could it be that his opinion was negative and that this had negatively affected the poet himself? Whatever we may postulate will remain at a hypothetical level.

## Letter 26: 8.9.1932?

“...Once you called me a saint. You were partially correct. (I love Rolland more than Proust- the no. 6 more than Nicos-). You were partially correct with respect to this: I cannot play with ideas. For me, an idea is a belief, not however like that of Christianity but a belief which enforces responsibilities...”

It is noted that the aforementioned are cited within the context of an attempt he made to remain faithful to the woman of his life, Alexandra<sup>9</sup>.

The strange reference to Nicolaides and the no.6 is thrown in with a reference to the French novelists Romain Rolland and Marcel Proust, a reference superbly honoring the Cypriot novelist, regardless of the fact that Pierides' preference on the particular topic seems to lean towards the 'sociable' Rolland.

A second aspect illustrated by the excerpt is the contrast between his own view and that of his friend and teacher Nicolaides with regards to how the critical issue of ideology should be dealt with. He declared that he doesn't play with his own ideas but that he applies these in practice, with discipline, fighting for these. Such a differentiation from the views of N.N. will also be illustrated in another letter.

#### **Letter 34: 9.9.1937**

"...Each time you utter 'You sound just like Nicolaides' you kill me. Each time I answer: You are right, you are right. My upbringing (Illioupolis, dignified family, then the ep...ic Puritanism of our first teacher) has left traces on me...."

It is unknown to us which of T.P.'s passages Tsirkas is playfully commenting on yet this type of teasing appears to have been repetitive. T. Pierides' particular repetition regarding 'sounding just like Nicolaides' and its acknowledgement confirms that there is truth behind the ridicule. The extent of it though, suggests that it is worthy of investigation. I note that in T.P.'s letters also there are certain words and phrases characteristic of Nicolaides now and then. I assume indeed that the two friends also used such expressions verbally between them. However, the novelist and poet Tsirkas also 'sounds like Nicolaides' respectively,<sup>10</sup> he himself both accepting and declaring such origins and dues towards his 'first teacher' during interviews. Here, finally is the only instance, as far as I know, in which T.P. refers to Nicolaides as his 'first teacher.'

#### **Letter 35: 15.9.1937.**

"..... Why, you wretch, didn't you send a book<sup>11</sup> to Nicos? Don't you know how much he likes to complain? And he is justified I must tell you. Because he knows that there is such a gulf between us that he is ready to interpret every random event as evidence that we are trying to renounce him. Send

him a book with a good dedication. He never ceases to be a *maitre*. And if I, the fanatical man, forget it sometimes, you shouldn't..."

Within this passage many interesting things are illustrated:

Firstly, despite the austere tone of the sender (he refers to the receiver of the letter as being a "wretch" and calls Nicolaides a whiner) a dominating tender tone is difficult to conceal.

The existence of a gulf between Pierides-Tsirakas on the one hand and Nicolaides on the other as referred to here, has much to do, I believe, with a distance between them with respect to ideological beliefs and more particularly their relationship to art. The two youths, fanatical and enthusiastic Marxists, laid their art at the service of ideology and in addition they had during that period become involved in intensely political activities<sup>12</sup>, situations which according to Nicolaides were detrimental to their creative (literary) work.

The above mentioned 'contestation' rather (not 'renunciation') of the teacher is nullified as both of them obviously accept him and recognize Nicolaides as a 'maitre' (teacher in the art of logos, craftsman), a highly honoring title, which other *Aigyptiotes* [residents of foreign origin in Egypt] of the trade also awarded him.

#### Letter 46: 4.9.1938

"Dearest Yiannis,

Here is my song. As you can see, despite Nicos' suggestions, always enamored with actualité. As for its form, regardless of my discussions with you and him, despite the hesitations which troubled me for a while, I went ahead more robustly with luminescence and clarity..."

Here T.P. refers to his poem '*I ballanta tis Marias*' [Maria's Ballad] which was published in a separate booklet in Cairo the following year (1939) to be reprinted in 1943 in Alexandria within the collection '*Tragoudia tis elpidas*' [Songs of hope]. This letter was written in the mountain village of Prodromos in Cyprus.

Unfortunately Nicolaides' wise objections to this poem<sup>13</sup> with respect to its actualité and form are ignored by Pierides, this resulting in its being very average. Generally, current political reality, wherever 'utilized' poetically by Pierides usually damages the aesthetic result greatly. The same occurs with

the other 'regimented' Cypriot poet, Tefkros Anthias as is often the case with many other poets (Ritsos etc.).

As for the traditional form of the poem as well as the 'readability' of its notions, which often reach the level of simplicity (probably the traits which he himself considered as 'luminescence and clarity') it appears that added to Nicolaides' objections to it are Tsirkas' relevant protestations.

It is strange however that T.P., who had produced modernistic poetry among the very first Greek poets (Takis Papatsonis, Anastasios Drivas, Theodoros Dorros)<sup>14</sup> and before the greats of modernism (Seferis, Elytis etc.), is lead in a few years into general retreat. Particularly in this poem, the chosen form suffers from platitudes, frequent hiatuses and an abuse of repetition whilst Pierides' usual performance in metrical poetry is exquisite.

#### Letter 48: 23.1.1939.

"I put everything aside in order to write you something which will bring you great happiness.

I will tell you this in brief because my time is limited.

Open up your ears and listen:

Nicos has just now left. Upon coming through the door, without waiting to catch his breath from our 96 damned steps, impatient and excited he said:

- I came specifically to speak to you about Yiannis' book.

- !

- What do you think of Yiannis' talent?

- !

- I think he possesses infinite talent. His book, from the first till the last line, is a masterpiece. In every sense. The tiniest word is the work of a great poet.

Moved, I remained silent. And then Nicos, with an enthusiasm I have rarely seen in him said the following:

- '*Dose mou to tragoudi!* (Give me the song) I have not yet read in all the poetry of the world such a poem. It is a great, great poem. One of the greatest poems in the world.

That's it.

It will all seem so great that perhaps you will hesitate to believe it.

And yet, I swear in the name of the revolution, in the name of poetry, I swear in the name of our immortal friendship, that that's what he said..”

That which is truly impressive about the above excerpt is the enthusiasm generated in T. Pierides by Nicolaides' outburst regarding Tsirkas' collection of poetry '*To lyrico mas taksidi*' [Our lyrical journey], an enthusiasm he is obviously eager for Pieridis to convey to Tsirkas. All of this serves as authentic verification as to the great respect the two of them felt towards the opinion of their 'teacher'. (A little further down T.P. will unreservedly exclaim: "Yianni, we will save Greek art. Do you understand?...")

Another facet which emerges here is Nicolaides' exaggerated admiration of Tsirkas' poems, a fact which propels him towards superlative reviews of these and especially of the poem 'Dose mou to tragoudi'<sup>15</sup> [Give me the song].

Finally, a third aspect which results is the tender mood of Nicolaides towards those younger than he which is revealed in his haste to rapidly convey the joy of his praise.

### Letter 70: 27.11.1950

“..However before I end lets speak a little of the literati.

Why does Nicos agitate you so? With Nicos, one must choose between two types of behavior. One either puts up with his childishness and petty wiles, or one utters the classic Cypriot expression: Assichtir! [Fuck it!] Or, one interchanges between the two according to the topic. Playing around with pseudo-theatricalities and fretting over the use of semi-colon is one thing. Uttering absurdities about great and dramatic things (and teaching those around them to do the same) is another.

As for that saying 'try your hardest as he has surpassed you,' that is such an (out of our world) utterance! We speak in the plural. We say 'we.' We write without signing when necessary. Because it all adds up. Nicos could not understand all this!

However if his praise leaves me indifferent (he so often falls amiss!) yours does me great service. Thank you..”

This letter must have been written in Paris whilst he was there for studies with his wife Alexandra. Tsirkas lived in Alexandria at the time but kept in contact with Nicolaides who lived permanently in Cairo.

It is the only letter within which the 'nervous and emotional' Pierides, as

he describes himself in the same letter, uses a harsh tongue against Nicolaides. Of course this radical outburst was apparently caused by Tsirkas' intense complaints about Nicolaides as contained in one of his previous letters. These complaints came at a time when Pierides was going through a difficult psychological period as is projected overall in the present letter.

In any case N.N. is here accused of 'childishness' and 'petty wiles,' theatricalities as well as "fretting over the use of a semi-colon". The final accusation is Pierides' personal account- in his quest for literary essence in alternative sources beyond form- the quest for Nicolaides' well-known practice of 'picking at' even the very last detail in the attempt to find perfection of literary discourse. A dose of exaggeration is probably concealed within the other criticisms also which have as the 'seed of truth' Nicolaides' self-indulgence.

In essence it is at this point that Nicolaides' self-indulgence comes into conflict with the camaraderie and feeling of duty towards the social collectivity which weighed upon the thought and character of the ideologists Tsirkas and Pierides who were constantly found within the constellation of 'we' (the beautiful phrasings in the third paragraph of the excerpt bring to mind the respective phrases of Makriyiannis).

Behind all of this however, conflicting political estimations regarding 'dramatic things' which are never named are concealed.

Nicolaides' final prompting of Tsirkas 'try your hardest because he has surpassed you'(inferring Pierides), however it is interpreted, cannot possibly be morally justified, T.P's answer – of which N.N. is unaware – is "well deserved" and to the point.

## Letter 82: May 1958.

"..Nicos' death – although we were expecting it – has brought upon me an unexpected anguish. Complex feeling. Not only grief for a much loved man who is lost – because this man lived his life, such as he chose, well rounded and complete. This anguish has something else within it: It contains our own adolescence and youth, our first steps in life and much of that which followed; it contains a part of our own lives – perhaps the best part, surely the most intoxicating – which for me, ended upon his death. If you were here, I would suggest that we take a bottle of wine and spend the evening with the "remember?" There are so many that we would need 7 nights and 7 bottles of wine!

Will we be given this one day?..."



N. Nicolaides dies on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1956. Tsirkas will bid a warm farewell to his friend and teacher at the funeral which takes place in Cairo the following day. For T. Pierides, the anguish of the great loss bursts with the words above and continues in a type of account of the relationship and his debts towards Nicolaides, indirectly attributing ‘perhaps the best, surely the most intoxicating’ part of their lives to his presence (puberty, youth, the first – literary – steps).

The extremely sensitive and highly condensed text can finally be considered as the parting speech of Thodosis Pierides towards Nicolaides, a speech which vindicates them both and the rapport existing between them.

## NOTES

1. The closest and most valid information regarding the life of Thodosis Pierides is found in the ‘*Viographika*’ [Biographies] published by his brother, the well-known prose writer Yiorgos Ph.. Pierides at the beginning of the first volume of the publication: T. Pierides, *Pioitika Apanta* [Collected Poems], edited by Y.F. Pierides, Vol. 1: *Ta ekdomena* [Published Works] Pyrsos, Nicosia, 1975, pp. 11-16.
2. A brief description of this relationship, providing more detail on certain important moments, can be found in the study K. Nicolaides, Thodosis Pierides and Stratis Tsirkas, ‘*treis serenates sto feggari*’ [three serenades to the moon] and their respective correspondence in ‘*Epetirida*’ *Pedagogikis Akadimias Kiprou* [Pedagogical Academy of Cyprus Journal], Vol. 31, Nicosia 1990, pp. 23-35.
3. More specifically with regards to the humane and literary relationship between N.N. and Tsirkas see K. Nicolaides, Nicos Nicolaides, Stratis Tsirkas, Yiorgos Fil. Pierides (*Epalliles poreies kai diaplokes*) [Successive paths and conflicts], Porfyra, issue 105, Kerkyra, Oct-December 2002, pp. 331-350.
4. See ‘*Katalipa apo to Archeio tou Nicou Nicolaide*’ [Remnants from the archives of Nicos Nicolaides], Research-Editor Lefteris Papaleontiou, Nicosia 2003, pp. 313-321.
5. His studies on N.N. are collected by Lefteris Papaleontiou in the volume: Stratis Tsirkas, ‘*O diigmatografos Nicos Nicolaides*’ [The story-teller Nicos Nicolaides], editor – addendum L. Papaleontiou, Nicosia 2003
6. Year 2. Issue 10, October. 1930

7. Alexandros Argyriou, '*I Elliniki Pioisi*' [Greek Poetry], Vol. *Neoteriki pioites tou Mesopolemou* [Neoteric poets of the interwar] Publisher, Sokolis, p. 118 (introduction) and 44-49. Argyriou also includes T.P's even more noteworthy poem '*Max*'.
8. See Stratis Tsirkas, '*Ta dioigimata*' (The short-stories), Kedros, Athens 1978.
9. He marries Alexandra 4 years later, in 1936.
10. For the literary dialogue between Tsirkas-N.Nicolaides see footnote 3.
11. Reference to the first book circulated by Tsirkas, the collection of poetry '*Fellahoi*' [Fellahs] Alexandria 1937, front cover by their common friend the artist Yiorgos Dimou (member of the group of the sea sponge boat). Tsirkas dedicated this book "To the poet T. Pierides/the unparalleled friend and fellow traveler."
12. Both are found at the head of the Communist Party cell in Egypt in 1936, whilst playing a leading role in the founding of the International Peace Bureau.
13. The seasonality is also emphasized by the dedication: "To the women of Greece who fell victim to the struggle against Metaxas." Indeed in the second version of the Ballad in 1943 the dedication differs: "To the women of Greece who fell fighting for freedom". In this way Women of the period (1940-41) and the Occupation are included.
14. See the relevant list of neoteric poets in Alexandros Argyriou (see footnote 7).
15. Nicolaides later converses with this poem through his own poem-in playful tone- '*To tragoudi tis hamozois*' [The song of a deprived life] see footnote 3, pp. 346-347.



## Six Letters on Andreas Kalvos from Mario Vitti to Antonis Indianos

Kyriakos Ioannou\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Les six lettres de Mario Vitti à Antonis Intianos (qui proviennent des Archives de ce dernier) constituent des témoignages importants et éloquents pour leur intérêt commun pour des aspects inconnus du personnage d'Andreas Kalvos. Elles couvrent la période pendant laquelle Kalvos a vécu en Angleterre, étudiée par Antonis Intianos aussi bien que par Mario Vitti.

### ABSTRACT

The six letters written by Mario Vitti to Antonis Indianos (1960-1962), and found in the latter's archives, bear witness to their common interest in Andreas Kalvos, who was not well known yet at the time. The letters cover the period during which Kalvos was settling in England.

The letters preserved in the archive of Antonis Indianos (1899-1968) shed light on, among other things, facets of the philological engagements of this important critic of the interwar.<sup>1</sup> Of particular interest are 5 letters and a postcard (of the years 1960 – 1962) sent by the Professor of Modern Greek Literature Mario Vitti (Rome) to the very A. Indianos (Nicosia)<sup>2</sup> himself. For the moment, it is unknown as to whether or not the corresponding letters of A. Indianos are preserved in the archives of Mario Vitti. Dominant in the letters of the latter is the common interest of the two scholars in Andreas Kalvos. Within this brief study an initial attempt is being made to present the contents of the aforementioned letters.

A. Indianos confesses to having begun his search as to the location of A. Kalvos' grave in 1924 (that is, upon completing his studies in London and Oxford)<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, this attempt came into fruition 13 years later, when he returned to Oxford for a year (September 1937-August 1938), in order to study Classical Archaeology on a scholarship from the Carnegie

\* Philologist, Ph.D. Candidate University of Cyprus

Foundation. The result of this study is his paper ‘Simvoli stin meleti tou A.Kalvou’ (*Nea Estia*, 1938) [Contribution to the study of A. Kalvos]. Within this study he claims to have discovered the tomb of the Greek poet in October of 1937, specifying that it is found at the cemetery of the Keddington region, on the outskirts of the village Louth in Lincolnshire. The essayist also gives a number of additionally interesting facts on the biography of the poet. His consecutive works on A. Kalvos appear a number of years later, during the period 1960-1961<sup>4</sup>.

A. Indianos’ interest in A. Kalvos is imprinted, also, in a number of letters (of the years 1937-1938 and 1959-1961) found in the archive of the former: In 27 letters from Glafkos Alithersi, George Valetta, George Zora, Timou Malanou, T. Frangoudi, P. Chari, Kosta Hadjipsalti and J.W. White to A. Indianos there is evidence of the critic’s attempt to gather information and archival material relevant to A. Kalvos’ stay in London in addition to there being complimentary comments regarding his Kalvian publications.

The research activities of M. Vitti concerning A. Kalvos begin in 1959, with his discovery of a large number of manuscripts written by the poet, “which had been salvaged on account of the Ferraioli’s (aristocratic Roman family) mania for collecting, and had been acquired by the Vatican library”; henceforth and with “exhilarated agitation” he methodically studies the work of the poet, as is confessed in his many publications<sup>5</sup>. Initially, M. Vitti announces that he found “manuscripts by Kalvos in Rome”<sup>6</sup>. Afterwards, he publishes his article “Merikoi filoi tou Kalvou sto Londino’ [A few of Kalvos’ friends in London]”<sup>7</sup> which brings him closer to the respective publications of A. Indianos. During the same year the book ‘A. Kalvos e I suoi scritti in italiano’ [A. Kalvos and his friends in Italian] is published in Italian. ‘*Ippia*’, ‘*Teramene*’, ‘*Le stagioni dell’abate Meli*’, ‘*Le Danaidi*’ e pagine sparse, Napoli, Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1960<sup>8</sup>.

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As mentioned earlier, the letters from M. Vitti to A. Indianos are mostly concerned with A. Kalvos and his work, certain additional topics such as Vitti’s preoccupation with *Eugena* and Neophytos Rodinos dealt with to a lesser extent.

M.Vitti is the first to make contact with A. Indianos: “by coincidence today [17.12.1960] I was given your address by Mr. Zora and I make the most of it by writing to you immediately” (No. 1)<sup>9</sup>. Without doubt, M. Vitti has the first Kalvian publication of A. Indianos in mind and is interested in

seeing whether the latter published additional works of the like: “Apart from the well-known and important article on Kalvos of 1938 do you have any more? Could you possibly send me a reprint of your most recent studies? I would be greatly indebted” (No. 1). Obviously M. Vitti was informed (perhaps by G. Zora) that certain “recent studies” of A. Indianos concerning A. Kalvos (‘Agnostes selides... “Mia italiki chrestomatheia..” [Unknown pages... “An Italian Guidebook...] were currently in circulation.

In his first letter M. Vitti refers to the discovery of A. Kalvos’ manuscripts in the Vatican Library of Rome (“of these [the Italian works of A. Kalvos] I mention nothing in my article, as it was in my own best interests to keep the secret: the discovery of the manuscripts in the Vatican has been costly to me and that experience has proved useful for me”). M. Vitti referred to these manuscripts in a letter to *Nea Estia* (1959): it is about “two handwritten codicils, written in Italian”. “In the one we have the manuscripts of the two Italian tragedies [‘Theramenes’ and ‘Danaides’].” “The second codicil has the hand-written translation [unpublished and unknown till then] from the Sicilian dialect into Italian, the work of art which Kalvos [under the pseudonym Didimo Chietico] created in 1814 as part of Giovanni Meli’s poetry collection, titled ‘Oι epoche’ [The seasons].” “In addition to these two codicils I found, non-catalogued, quite a large number of letters sent to Kalvos by various people: a priceless source of information which will illuminate unknown details regarding the life of Kalvos”. On the other hand, M. Vitti very recently labeled this publication as “infantile” as certain people could have exploited his findings: “An Athenian professor [he notes and implies G. Zoras], who had until then monopolized Kalvos, rushed unhesitatingly to issue statements within the very same magazine columns in his classically misleading manner: “I knew this previously. I should have expected it. That’s when Dimaras told me, in his caustic humor: ‘Serves you right!’”<sup>10</sup>. And so, in his article in *Nea Estia* (15<sup>th</sup> June, 1960), M. Vitti mentioned his new findings (letters addressed to A. Kalvos), without giving further details.

At the same time, M. Vitti sends A. Indianos his article on A. Kalvos (‘Some friends..’), an article which the receiver must have already been aware of, as it was of interest to him. Indeed, the name of the Cypriot scholar is mentioned here in two instances. The writer of the article puts forward his appreciation for A. Indianos’ first Kalvian publication (“an article of unique worth about Kalvos in England”), whilst at the same time expressing through announcements in the *Times* newspaper during those years, his sadness about the fact that regardless of the proclamations of scholars (such

as A. Indianos), “the study of these speeches [which were given by Kalvos at the Argyll Room of London] has not as yet been exhausted.”

M. Vitti repeatedly refers to his letters in his book *The Italian works of Kalvos*...He states that in the ‘Introduction’ of his book he is concerned “with the issue of Kalvos’ harmony in poetry”, supporting that this theory “is taken entirely from Alfieri” and “I rate the Italian texts, relating them with the Greek, putting them in chronological order etc.” (No. 4). Commenting on the reception of his book by the critics, he notes that in Greece it did not create a stir, whilst in Italy “it drew the interest of specialists and journalists” (No. 4). In addition, he tries to explain the reasons for this suppression: “on the one hand an ignorance of the Italian language, on the other, the fear of offending Mr. Zoras made them opt for silence” (No. 4).

The letter-writer makes sure of getting a copy of the book to A. Indianos, urging him repeatedly to write a critique of it: “If you know Italian well enough, and if you are able to write a critique” (No. 2). “If you feel that you are able to work on this 340 (!) page volume and write a few words in print” (No. 4). “Even if you were to write just one line somewhere it would be enough!” (No. 4) As far as I am aware, A. Indianos did not write a critique of this book, regardless of the fact that he knew the Italian language well.

Most references to A. Kalvos relate to information relevant to the biography of the poet. The letters addressed to A. Kalvos (those which M. Vitti is preparing for publication)<sup>11</sup>, in conjunction with the then recent research papers of A. Indianos (mainly the studies *Unknown pages*...), comprise topics for discussion between the letter-writer and the receiver<sup>12</sup>. The quotations below are quite eloquent:

“I have also prepared for publishing the letters received by Kalvos in London during his first stay. As for the English letters, of which there are many (mainly those of Ridout), I was assisted by the couple Edmund Keeley<sup>13</sup>. There is a possibility that these letters will be published in one volume as an appendix in the magazine ‘Ellinika’ [Greek] however I am not as yet sure whether the money will be found, which would mean that I’d have to look elsewhere. As for the English people, I did the best I could from afar. With the letters I possess however, you, or another scholar may later be able to find more information in varying archives in London. Mr. Zoras has informed me that you intend to go there. If the book has not been published by then, I would like to give you some information which may prove fruitful. You will not be obliged to me in any way if I were to prove useful to you. You would be at liberty to make

your announcement, and I, would later refer to it. It would be a blessing if, on your way to England, you were able to interrupt your trip for a while in Rome so that we could chat in person” (No. 1)<sup>14</sup>.

“Yesterday I also received your reprints. I paid particular attention to ‘*Unknown pages...*’. Finally we know the name of his first wife. In a wealth of letters- of those which I am preparing – I have information both indirect and in passing about Thomas, but her Christian name always eluded me! Carolina Naldi is the daughter of Giusseppe Naldi. I am under the impression that Thomas is an actor. She also knew the daughter of Charles Kemble (actor). The newlywed Kalvos chose to reside in Hammersmith. Since his separation from Foskolo, he had resided in Soho, 19 Lenad Sr. A letter sent to Kalvos just after the wedding is addressed 5 Brook Green Ter[r]ace-Hammersmith. In November of 1819 he resides at 16 Peter Hill – Doctor’s Commons. In December 1819 at 10 Sermon Lane- St Paul’s Yard (Doctor’s Commons). In January of 1820 he was still at the same address. It is the last that I have.

You must now, if you can, investigate these addresses in Hammersmith and Doctor’s Commons by mail. They are suburbs; it is in one of these where Thomas and her child died.

Of interest is that as soon as his wife died<sup>15</sup> Kalvos was already discussing marriage with Susan Ridout. I send you some of their correspondence so that you can observe their relationship first hand<sup>16</sup>. It is possible that Kalvos married Thomas when she was already pregnant. No sense can be made of it otherwise. This suspicion is confirmed to me by Maria Naldi, wife of Naldi, who writes approximately the following words to Kalvos: “kiss your wife for me, now that you may do so freely.”

I mention all of the above so that you are also aware of the other consideration, the time at which Kalvos’ wife died (prior to November of 1819).

I ask that you use these letters addressed to Kalvos only for the purposes of your research: as they are to be included in the volume I am preparing for the *Ellinika*, so they are not destined and they must not become public prior to the circulation of this volume. I send them to you in confidence” (No. 2).

In his reply, A. Indianos informs M.Vitti that he is preparing a critique of S.A. Sofroniou’s study on A. Kalvos<sup>17</sup>. As such, M. Vitti replies: “I await in



the meanwhile your article on the study of Mr. Sofroniou” (No. 3) and: “I thank you dearly for your letter dated 13. IV as well as for the *Kypriaka Chronika*” [Cyprus Chronicles] (No. 4). Here the letter-writer does not comment at all on this substantial critique<sup>18</sup>, restricting himself to an initial positive review of the magazine: “It is, in truth, a nice magazine” (No. 4).

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Aside from the references to A. Kalvos, M. Vitti gives information on various other studies and activities. On two occasions he reports that he is preparing an article on Neofytos Rodinos: “At the moment I am studying a populist Cypriot, Neofytos Rodinos, and I am preparing an article based on his manuscripts which are salvaged here [in Rome]. Others are found at the Kikkos Monastery. Yet more are found in Athens and at Ayion Oros” (No. 1). N. Rodinos (1570?-1669), a clergyman, a learned man and a writer, most probably became of interest to M. Vitti upon the latter’s discovery of the manuscripts of the former in the Library of Rome. It is here, in any case that the Cypriot writer studied (1607-1611). In his second letter he states that: “I have submitted my study on his manuscripts to the magazine *Kryptoferris*. I will send it to you”.<sup>19</sup> On his part, A. Indianos reveals information about N. Rodinos which is unknown to the letter-writer. “The information you note about Rodinos is precious and unknown to me. I must get a hold of the books of Phillipou and Peristianis”<sup>20</sup> (No. 6). Moreover, M. Vitti expresses the desire to study Cypriot grammatology. “With pleasure I shall also collaborate [with the *Cyprus Chronicles*], if I am able to find a subject which concerns Cyprus directly. It is a shame that I gave something similar to *Parnassos* which was published in last year’s final issue<sup>21</sup>. Both the magazine as well as various other Cypriot issues I have read of late have strengthened my desire to come and visit Cyprus” (No. 4). He would accept an invitation to visit the island with pleasure: in order “to give two lectures” and “study your libraries a little, whilst also writing one or two articles for my paper on Cyprus, which has been silenced here of late” (No. 6).

On the other hand, A. Indianos is interested in finding out whether there exists a manuscript by T.J. Chaubulegne in the Vatican Library and he asks M. Vitti to help him locate it. M. Vitti expresses an interest regardless of the difficulties which arise initially: “The results of the search for the manuscript of Chaubulegne are unfortunately, negative: the relevant librarian stated that nothing under his name has been admitted during our century. – Could he have perhaps have left it elsewhere? Perhaps you should ask for more precise information. Perhaps the manuscripts were found somewhere else, again in

Rome” (No. 5). Finally he locates the codicil and reports: “In this letter I spoke to you of a codicil of the Vatican [library] (cod. Vatic. gr. 2313) which carries the signature of T. J. Chaubulegne on the final page. It is entitled “Narration of the sacred icon of our Holy Lady Theotokos and the Virgin Mary. How these sacred icons were depicted and where each was given and where the icon of the Holy Theotokos, now on mount Kokkos [=Kykkos] was found and for which reason”. I have not found anything else by Chaubulegne” (No. 6).

M. Vitti also refers to the publication of the tragedy *Eugena* by Theodoros Montselez<sup>22</sup>. “I have also recently sent a reprint regarding *Eugena*, the tragedy I discovered and which has been of interest to me for the last year” (No. 6).

In closing this brief presentation it must be noted that in the letters of M. Vitti to A. Indianos, and more specifically in the quotations which follow, the former’s appreciation of the latter’s research regarding A. Kalvos is most apparent: “I ask that you excuse my indiscretion and accept the expression of the great respect I have for you” (No. 1). “I believe that our correspondence will prove useful to Kalvos. I am saddened that my book on his letters will come out before I am able to make use of your research” (No. 2). “In Geneva Mr. A. Vlachos spoke very highly of you to me” (No. 3). “I would like to know your plans from now so that I may be at your disposal” (No. 3). “Of late, I greatly neglect Kalvos and his correspondence. I don’t know whether it would be wiser to wait for your studies before submitting to the publisher. What do you think? What do you foresee?” (No. 3).

A future publication of the entire correspondence between A. Indianos and M. Vitti, including systematic annotation, could more adequately illuminate this valuable archival material.

## NOTES

1. See the work of L. Papaleontiou & K. Ioannou «Epistoles apo to arxeio tou Antoni K. Indianou» [Letters from the archive of Antony K. Indianos] in print, *Epetirida Kentrou Epistimonikon Erevnon*, Nicosia 2007 [Center for Scientific Research Journal].
2. Concerning 5 hand-written letters and a postcard: 17.12.1960 (henceforth No. 1), 30.1.1961 (henceforth No. 2), 10.4.1961 (henceforth No. 3), 8.5.1961 (henceforth No. 4), 18.5.1961 (henceforth No. 5) and 14.3.1962 (henceforth No. 6)

3. See A. Indianos 'Simvoli stin meleti tou A. Kalvou' [Contribution to the study of A. Kalvos] reprint by *Nea Estia*, Athens 1938, p. 5, note 19.
4. 'Agnostes selides apo tin zoi kai to ergo tou Andrea Kalvou' [Unknown pages from the life and works of Andreas Kalvos], Nicosia 1960 'Mia italiki chrestomatheia tou Antrea Kalvou' [An Italian Guidebook of Antreas Kalvos], Nicosia 1960, reprint by *Kypriaka Chronika* [Cyprus Chronicles] 2 (Dec. 1960) 64-68 'Andrea Kalvou: *Apanta*', [Andreas Kalvos: Complete Works], *Kypriaka Chronika* 4 (Feb. 1961) 175-177 "S.A. Sofroniou: *Andreas Kalvos*", *Kypriaka Chronika* 6 (Apr. 1961) 277-279 'I Kipros s'ena stixo mias odis tou Kalvou' [Cyprus in a verse of an Ode by Kalvos] *Kypriaka Chronika* 7 (May 1961) 303-304. Also, within his archive is found an unknown completed article with the title 'Andrea Kalvou: Mia diaitisia' [Andreas Kalvos: an umpirage], which refers to the intervention of Kalvos in a philological dispute between Fr. Nolan and Th. Falconer.
5. See M. Vitti, '*Grafeio me thea*' [An office with a view], Athens 2006, pp. 315-317, 320-321, 342-343.
6. *Nea Estia* 778 (1st Dec. 1959) 1636. Henceforth: 'Heiroygrafa tou Kalvou...' [Manuscripts by Kalvos].
7. *Nea Estia* 791 (15<sup>th</sup> June. 1960) 784-786. Henceforth: "Merikoi filoi..." [Some friends...].
8. Henceforth: '*Ta italika erga tou Kalvou*' [The Italian works of Kalvos].
9. The spelling of the letter-writer is maintained in the quotations.
10. M. Vitti, *Grafeio me thea* [Room with a view], as above, p. 316
11. "Piges yia ti viografia tou Kalvou (Epistoles 1813-1820)" [Sources on the biography of Kalvos (Letters 1813-1820)], *Ellinika* [Greek], Appendix 15, 1963.
12. For such issues see also L. Zafeiriou, *O vios kai to ergo tou Andrea Kalvou* [The life and work of Andreas Kalvos], Athens, Metaichmio, 2006.
13. "If the Italian of this poet has submerged me within Italian literature of the declining enlightenment and the post-Napoleonic period, his correspondence led me to the philhellenic homes of London. Here I had the company of Mary Keeley, who helped me with the comprehension of the English letters, as well as Mike [=Edmund], who searched London in vain to find a publisher for Kalvos' flirtations. During that period, the Keeleys resided next door to us, at the American Academy of Rome": *Room with a view* as above, p. 318.
14. As is clear in a consecutive letter, this meeting never eventuated.
15. According to L. Zafeiriou (as above p. 57), Thomas died in September (?) of 1819.
16. Three type-written letters (1919) from Susan Ridout to A. Kalvos are salvaged within A. Indianos' archive.

17. A. Indianos, "S.A. Sofroniou: *Andreas Kalvos*, Critical Study, Prologue R.J. Jenkins, Athens, 1960", *Kypriaka Chronika* [Cyprus Chronicles] 6 (April 1961) 277-279.
18. To be noted is that A. Indianos announces here two Kalvian studies of his, which are never published: the first relates to A. Kalvos' intervention in the dispute between Fr. Nolan and Th. Falconer, and the second to the collaboration developed between A. Kalvos and Fr. Nolan.
19. Mario Vitti, «Alcune osservazioni sulla bibliografia di Neofito Rodino», *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* XV, 1-2 (1961) 83-90.
20. The books of I. Peristiani and L. Phillipou are concerned with the history of Cyprus.
21. An obvious reference to his article "Stichoi tou Hiou Rafael Vernatsa yia tin Kypro (1751)" [Verses of Hugh Rafael Vernatza on Cyprus (1751)], *Parnassos* 2 (1960) 577-580.
22. See *Kretika Chronika* [Chronicles of Crete] 14 (Jan-Apr. 1960) 435-451.

## Appendix

Manuscript Letter of Mario Vitti to Antonis Indianos

ISTITUTO UNIVERSITARIO ORIENTALE

Ρώμη, 17 Δεκεμβρίου 1960  
1<sup>a</sup> via Guerrazzi

Αγαπώμετε κύριε Γιάννη,

Κατά σύμπτωση σήμερα έγραφα την διδασκαλία σας στο  
κύριο βιβλίο και έσυμφωνούσα να σας γράψω γρήγορα. Δεν  
ξέρω αν έχετε να διαβάσετε ένα άρθρο που μου έγραψε  
ως "Νέα εστία" την άνοιξη, και γι' αυτό σας το στέλνω.  
Αντί να συζητήσω πρόκειται να κυκλοφορήσω ο τόμος με  
τα γαλλικά έργα του Καίτη που αδιακρίτως στην Βαλ-  
κανία, βιβλιοθήκη και στην βιβλιοθήκη dell'Archipressario di  
Bologna (γιατί δεν λέω τίποτα ως άρθρο μου, γιατί με  
έσφιξε να κρατήσω το προσωπικό: η αδιακρίτως την χρεώ-  
ση μου Βαλκανός μου είχε στείλει άρθρα και μου  
φάνηκε χρήσιμη έκταση ή έμπνευση).

Έχω ετοιμάσει για έκδοση και τις εστίες που έδωκε  
ο Καίτης στο Λονδίνο, <sup>κατά</sup> την πρώτη διαμονή του. Για τα αγγλικά  
γράφω, που είναι πολλά (προσπαθώ να Ridout) με  
βοήθεια το Γίγνη Edmund Keeley. Υπάρχει κάποια παλαι-  
ότερη να παρουσιάσω αλλά τα γράφω στην ζωή,  
παρόμοια ως περιόδους "Εθελικά", δεν ξέρω όμως  
αν εν γένει βρεθούν τα γράμματα, όποιον θα γράψω να  
έστω με άλλο. - Για τα αγγλικά πρόκειται έκανα ότι  
παρόμοια σας παρακαλώ. Με τα γράμματα όμως που

διαδέξω, ἄρξομαι ἢ ἐστὶν ἢ ἄλλοι πρὸς αὐτὴν, ὅτι μπορεῖς  
 νὰ ἔρῃ πολλαὶ στοιχεῖα σὲ διαφόρα γένη τοῦ λουσίτου.  
 Ὁ κύριος Ζωρὴς μὲ πληροφορεῖται ὅτι σκοπεῖται νὰ πᾶν  
 ἐκεῖ. Ἦν ὡς τότε σὲν ἔχει ἔλθῃ τὸ λελθὸν, ὅτι ἐπιδου-  
 ποῖται νὰ εἰς εἰς ἄλλα γένη στοιχεῖα, πρὶν ἵσθαι φερόντων ἀν-  
 τικειμενικά. Δὲν ὁρᾷ ἰσορροπία μὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ πρῶτῳ  
 μὲν, ἂν εἰς φερόντων χροῖστος. Ὅτι μπορεῖται νὰ καὶ ἐν  
 τῶν διακοινησῶν, καὶ ἔτι, ἄρξομαι, ὅτι παρεστῶν σὲ  
 αὐτῶν. Ὅτι εἰς αὐτὸν ἔρῃ ἂν, περιμένοντας κατὰ τὴν  
 ἄγχιαν, παράστα καὶ δικόστα μὲ ὅτι τὸ πρῶτον ἐν Ρῶν  
 καὶ τὰ ποῖται ἀπὸ κοινά.

Ἐκτὸς τὸ πρῶτον εἰς καὶ σημαντικὸν ἄρξο τοῦ 1938, <sup>τὸν καὶ</sup> ἔχει  
 ἄλλα; ὅτι μπορεῖται νὰ πρὸς εἰδήσει ἀνὰ τὸν πρῶ-  
 πτον πρὸς τὸν, ὅτι εἰς ἔστιν ἀνὰ τὸν πρῶτον.

Ἀρξομαι τὴν γέννησιν μὲ τὴν ἀνὰ τὸν καὶ τὸν  
 τὸν Νόστον Ροδινὸ καὶ εἰς τὸν εἰς ἄρξο μὲ ἐν τὰ  
 ἀνὰ τὸν τὸν πρῶτον εἰς. Ἄλλα ἀνὰ τὸν τὸν  
 πρῶτον εἰς. καὶ ἄλλα τὸν Ἀθῆνα καὶ εἰς ἄρξο.

Σὲ ἀνὰ τὸν νὰ ἀνὰ τὸν τὸν ἀνὰ τὸν  
 καὶ νὰ ἀνὰ τὸν τὸν ἀνὰ τὸν τὸν ἀνὰ τὸν  
 πρῶτον εἰς νὰ εἰς.

Μαριό νὴν



# An Introduction to the Cypriot Literature for Children, with an Emphasis on Poetry for Children

George Papantonakis\*

## RÉSUMÉ

La littérature chypriote pour enfants a atteint sa phase de maturité pendant les dernières décennies. Un grand nombre d'écrivains créent des poèmes ou des récits pour enfants, dont certains connaissent un succès commercial en Grèce. Dans cet article les principales caractéristiques des procédés techniques et de la thématique de la littérature enfantine sont abordées en mettant l'accent sur la poésie.

## ABSTRACT

In Cyprus, children's literature reached a more mature stage during the last decades. A great many poems and stories for children are published, and some have been commercial successes in Greece. This article covers the main features, technical processes and themes of children's literature, with an emphasis on poems.

## Introduction

At first, we should wonder if *Cypriot literature for children* exists in reality as well as a term. The answer is yes, not because there are texts which are addressed to children and young people, but because, even though Cyprus has experienced adverse historical moments, the country was able to set the bases for growth. Secondly, the term is defined by the geographical and national name *Cypriot* which defines the borders of the space in which a literature which is addressed to children and young people is written and growing. It also determines the national identity of this literature, in relation to other national literatures, which are directed towards the age that is marked out by the second adjectival definition. Therefore, it reveals the national and the cultural identity of a literature which is developing within a geographical area which constitutes an independent state. This kind of

\* University of the Aegean



literature is also mentioned in magazine articles (Greece, *Inspectorate of literature for children*. Tribute to Cypriot children's literature, *Bookbird* 1989 and 2004), but also in stories of children's literature (Yiakos, Sakellariou), while international journals refer to it.<sup>1</sup> The existence of such an organization, *Cypriot Association of Books for Children and young People*, which is incorporated within the International Board on Books for Young People, the international convention of IBBY which took place in Cyprus in 1984, and its even late recognition by the Republic of Cyprus, it strengthens the belief that we could talk about literature for children and young people in Cyprus as well in reality and as a term. Finally, as its by-total, it is in harmony with the broader definition Cypriot literature or literature of Cyprus, which constitutes the essential subject matter of study in this volume. Therefore, as a definition, it states that the literature is produced by people coming from this specific geographical area and who are bearers of certain cultural values and of a certain history. It is written or published in or out of Cyprus, it refers to particular age groups and it is distinguished, independently of their aesthetic outcome, by certain characteristics. It is important to have a proficient author for the researchers of the local literature for children and young people, as well as internationally with publications in scientific magazines with international validity. The characteristics, which were implied above, are located mainly in its thematic and reflect the soul, the culture, the visions and the inner desires of a whole people, and their aim is to aesthetically foster and educate young readers. It is obvious that this literature transpires from the obsession with the traditions and cultural values of the people and of a deep historicity which derives from the years of fighting for its independence, even though the last past years have seen the writers strive towards an ecumenical dimension.

The delay, of which we talked about at the beginning of this study, occurs because of the general social and political situation which existed on the island in 1960. The British colonial regime did not facilitate the establishment of the conditions which would help the production of a literature for children and young people. This delay was justified by the general attitude which characterized many societies, among them the Cypriot society, as well as the Greek, which considered literature for children as inferior in comparison to the literature for adults. The experience of Kypros Chrysanthos (1989: 54) is quite revealing about the prejudice against those who were writing literature for children, and which made him use a false name, in order to publish texts for children. There is also the difficulty which characterizes the writing of texts for

children, combined with the extended illiteracy and the lack of a wide reading public at first, further delaying its growth.

## Periods

There are three periods in which Cypriot literature for children develops, seen from a grammatical point of view<sup>2</sup>. The first one starts in 1894 when the first text exclusively for children is published and it ends in 1960 with the declaration of the independent Republic of Cyprus. This is the *infantile period* and we can name it *period of colonialism*. During this long period of time Cyprus lives through dramatic situations which shatter the island: World War II, EOKA's war of liberation (1955-1959), Cyprus is declared an independent State. At this period, the bases are set for children's literature to develop, initially with Polyxeni Loiziada and later with Yannis Perdios, Tefktros Anthias, Michael Trokoudes, Nearhos Klerides, Kypros Chrysanthos and many more. At the same time, the first magazines for children are in circulation. *Child's Echo* (1903-1905), even for a short time, is published in Limassol. Then the *Little Cypriot* (1945-1959) follows in Nicosia, which represented a beginning for new writers who wrote for children, just like *Education of children* in Greece, *Children's Joy* (1953-1959), *My Magazine* (1954-1957) by the Office of Education, which was continued until December 1957 by the title *A Child's World*.<sup>3</sup> The writers are using the triptych *Country-Nature-Society* as a subject matter. At the beginning they have a wider educational and nationalistic character and their aim is to create a feeling of patriotism. Gradually, without abandoning the patriotic character, they turn to folk tradition (myths, fairy tales) and to social life as their subjects. Love for nature is a dominating characteristic as is also a tendency to make life seem more beautiful as in Greek children's literature.

The second period (1960-1974) begins and finishes with major significant events for the island: its independence from the British, the coup d'état by the Greek junta and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. We can name this period *Cypriot Children's Literature of Independence* or *Post-Colonial Cypriot Children's Literature*. The pronouncement of Cyprus as an independent nation is a definitive turn for the cultural movement in Cyprus. Because of the political situation between the Cypriot people and the Turkish minority which is given too many privileges, the production of literary texts presents a gradual deterioration and its growth becomes slower than one would expect. Children's radio shows and programs on television, which come into Cypriots' lives

(1973), play an important role in this period. Children's magazines are also being published, with *Children's Joy* (1959-1968) standing out and which was republished as *Children's Playground* (1968-until today)<sup>4</sup> by the Pan-Cypriot Association of Greek Teachers. At the same time there is a growth in theatre productions mostly for children (Tasos Koutsoulides, Panos Ioannides, Simos Simeonides, Kypros Tokas), poetry (Yannis Papadopoulos, Papastavros Papagathangelou, Evgenia Petronda and others), while the first anthologies of poetry for children and short stories are produced (A. Karagiorges-K. Chresantes, Chr. Kolios-K. Vasileiou). Texts of this period are lyrical and show a deep religiousness, which are distinguished by a frivolity and a lack of prudence that is needed in this kind of subject matters. This superficial 'touch' on the subject, though, exists because of the social and political situation in Cyprus; however it is a disadvantage for a literary text, when it takes this direction. We find a similar problem in Greek literature for children at least until the end of the fourth period (1974). Even though it had already started to recede, new subjects appeared inspired from the realities of urbanization, industrialization and the incoming of technology in Greece.

Despite its technical perfection, the children's literature of this period is entrapped, just as in Greece, in a superficial love of nature; it is consumed in hymns for nature and the presentation of natural organisms (animals, birds) or elements of the wider natural environment, (the sun and the moon), mainly in poetry which will continue in the years to come. This superficial dealing of nature is abandoned gradually after 1974, so Cypriot children's literature starts to find its way as it steps into adulthood more obviously, while thoughts and sensitivities about the natural environment and its problems are appearing.

The kinds of written language which are mostly growing are poetry, fairy tales, short stories and theatre. Twenty four books are published during the decade 1964-1974 (post-colonial period), from which 14 are poetry, 6 for theatre, 3 with short stories and one with fairy tales (Liverdos 1989: 36). Four anthologies are also published in the same year, one of poetry and three of short stories.

The last period (1974 until today) is marked by dramatic historical facts, the coup of the Greek dictatorship (15 July 1974), the Turkish invasion of Cyprus (20 July 1974) and the attempts for a solution on the Cyprus matter. The year 1974 as *terminus post quem* marks a new period not only for historical reasons, which without doubt have influenced the thematic of Cypriot literature for children, but also because the Cypriot literature for children starts really to

create a new character and to establish its identity. For that reason we could name this period *forming period*. In this year in Cyprus we see the establishment of the *Cypriot Association of Books for Children and young People* as a national branch of the *International Board on Books for Young People* (IBBY), a few years after the establishment of an equivalent branch in Greece (*Children's Book Greek Society*). The Cypriot Association of Books for Children and Young People, as in Greece, was aiming at the promotion of the books for children and young people, by having writing competitions of texts for children, organizing conventions<sup>5</sup> and by promoting books for children in general. Also in this period novels for children and young people appear (1977)<sup>6</sup>, which could not be found in previous periods.

Concerning the subjects of the texts that are published independently or are published in magazines of this period, the writers are repeating the subjects of the *post-colonial period*. They are using though in their texts new narrative techniques, while at the same time they are starting to write novels as well. However, what differentiates the literature for children of this period from the one of the previous period is that the writers are bringing their subjects up to date, as it happens in Greece also, and they manage to live up to their readers' expectations. The subject-matters are connected to the worries, the visions and the problems that the Cypriots are facing in relation to the historical and social reality, the invasion, the coup, the hope of gaining back of what is vested, (the peaceful co-existence of the two communities, Greek and Turkish<sup>7</sup>) with contemporary social matters, like disabled children. At the same time, the rich folklore heritage and tradition is used and developed. Historical facts are not any more just a journalistic or biographical narration. They get a literary text form, as their chronicle-writing character is gradually abandoned and it is embodied in the story as historical time. Human values and ideas, like equality, competitiveness, justice, peace and freedom, are put forward. In that way, Cypriot literature for children manages to shake off its local character and to gain ecumenical dimensions. Within the national we find the ecumenical. Science fiction as a genre makes its appearance, which, even as a weak presence, shows the worries of Cypriot writers about alternative worlds and their relations with the Earth. There is a tendency to deal more seriously with the natural environment, since there are no hymns for nature like the ones of the previous period which reveals the shallow way of dealing with this subject, replaced by the problematic relationship between people and nature. There is an increasing interest in writers for human relationships and other social

matters, such as adoption (Charalampous *The Other Sister*), divorces (Marathephthes *Storms in the Spring*), child labor (Epaminonda *The Wasp's nest and Other Stories*), and mental disability (Avraamidou *Letter to my only Brother*, Poulcheriou *How Close Is the Moon*). Nevertheless, there is a lack of texts or they are appearing very shyly, dealing with serious social matters<sup>8</sup> that are a concern to human society, such as urbanization, AIDS, drugs (Theodosiadou *The House of Silence*) and criminality. The lack of such texts can be seen not as a lack of sensitivity but rather because of the writers' absorption in important national matters which are straightly connected to the existence of the Cypriots as a nation and a country. The tutorial character is abandoned, realism appears and writers take on the child's point of view. The presentation of the child in previous periods and in Greek literature for children changes from the happy child which is always smiling and free from worries, to a more realistic social image and also introduces the subject of the child with special needs.

Literature for children becomes more acceptable. The state's interest is now greater as the Ministry of Education organizes competitions to promote it. It is taught at the Pedagogical Academy of Cyprus and in Primary schools, through *Anthologies*, in which the publishers are compelled to include texts by Cypriot writers. All the forms of written language are grown (poetry, prose, theatre). One of the most important magazines which is in circulation is *Aneme* (Spinning-wheel) (1989), which is published by the Cypriot Association of Books for children-young people, with original texts, studies, book reviews, book presentations and announcements of competitions to encourage writing books for children and young people, exactly as in the magazine *Journeys to places of literature for children and young people* which is published by the Greek Book for Children Society in Greece. Especially in the last few years there are a lot of texts for children published by local publishing houses. (Epiphaniou, Parga and others), while there are also private publications.

Literature for children and young people gains a larger artistic and aesthetic integrality, which is absent from the texts of previous periods. Great gaps, endless rhymes, lameness in poetic meter are elements which that are disappearing little by little. Prose is more mature now, as the writers encounter texts of international literature. However, even though there have been important developments, there is still a long way to go before speaking of a Cypriot literature for children and young people of high quality. Without doubt, during the last years, the writers have promoted

significantly the Cypriot literature for children mainly through the medium of the novel (short stories presents difficulties because of its strict rules). Many of them publish their work mainly in Athens (Avraamidou, Poulcheriou, Pylidou, Chatzichanna, Peonidou), creating in this way a wider reading public. At the same time, mostly poets that are traditionally writing for adults (mainstream literature) decide to write for children (C. Montis, P. Crinaios, X. Lysiotes, K. Chrysanthos<sup>9</sup> and many others).

### Cypriot Poetry for Children

Cypriot poetry for children in the last 30 years mostly, can present a large and continuous quality of improving work, at the age when poetry seems to be staggering and prose is marching ahead. The characteristic of the poetry of this period is its style, its ethos combined with its linguistic identity, and its subject matter preoccupation. All the poets that we looked at had verses where the human interest was rich, despite the lack of verse integrality. Children's experiences, children's secret desires, an obvious admiration for the child are all presented in the poets' verses - in order to stay in the children's hearts for ever - as is the kindness of a child's world and the anguish for the lost motherland with an apparent hope for re-establishing the social and political order.

The majority of these poems give out a breath of life, freshness and grace. Even though they are not always aesthetically complete, they imply that their writers are initiated into children's psychology and that they are trying to present an age which is sensitive and easily shaped, which is looking for its aesthetic criteria and its aesthetic destinations.

The basic characteristics of the Cypriot poetry for children are the pure Greek language, except in the few cases which Cypriot idioms are used, and a tendency to improve the aesthetic quality, in comparison with poetry of the two previous periods. It is important to point out that there are many women poets, whose qualities are sensitivity, tenderness, love and affection for children. Many of them have been awarded first prizes in competitions, such as: Filisa Chatzichanna (*Smiles. Poems for Children*, 1980), Toulia Koukouli (*I Draw Hope. Poems for little and big children*. 1<sup>st</sup> Prize Greek Intellectual Society Of Cyprus, 1997), Nitsa Thalassinou (*Tralala* Award for the anecdote literary text for children by the Ministry of Education of Cyprus, 1988), Myrianthi Panayiotou (*Flaps* 1<sup>st</sup> Poetry Prize by the Cypriot Association of Book for children-young people, 1992), Stavroula Periklou, *Rainbow*, 1988, Prize by the Cypriot Association of Book for children-young people).

In many cases Cypriot poets are not satisfied with just writing a poem which a child will enjoy reading. By going beyond the aesthetic pleasure, they reach the point of an educational character which is usually shown at the end of the poem, after the description of a situation, fact, behavior or state. This derives from the poet's intention to give advice, lecture, and teach according to the social and national demands. The poet aims for the creation of an awakened consciousness, so s/he would express the good and the virtuous, s/he fulfills the useful and the social accepted, to avoid the personal and social damage. This sense of teaching is gradually weakened, as the poetic production is maturing. We see in all poets the goodness which exists in a child's world and the agony for the lost motherland with obvious signs of hope for restoring the social, political and national order.

## Thematic

Concerning its thematic, the Cypriot poetry for children is characterized by a continuous and variable expansion. It is easy to detect the values in life and the value system. They present freedom, love for the nation, faith to man and to the natural values of life and they promote love for nature and for life in general. Poetry remains more traditional, while there is an absence of its expressionistic version. Its features are shown through its subject classification of the Cypriot poems for children, which can be put in the following categories:

1. *Historical poetry for children.* The historical dimension of the Cypriot poetry for children appears at the time of the English occupation / *colonial period* (1878-1960), it continues through the *post-colonial period* of the national independence (1960-1974) and it remains in the *period of formation* (1974 until today), with the desire for freedom spread out. The majority of the poems of the last period are referring to the Turkish invasion and its consequences, while many of them are also referring to the uprising on 1st April 1955 against the British. These poems either record the rousing of the Cypriots, placing children in the fight for independence or they refer to certain heroes, like Evagoras Pallikarides. When the shattered poets write about the Turkish invasion and occupation, poetry matures even more and the lyrical elements are more obvious, because the poets are also aiming at the creation of a national consciousness and memory. Titles and verses like "I never forget" are quite common and they aspire to the encouragement of the nation, with the

growth of historical memory. These poems talk about loosing national ground as geographical parts as well as parts of the nation and the national awareness. An important part is taken by Pendaktylos and Kyrenia, while the local designation which is shown in the geographical definition “my village”, obtains national dimensions. All the pain and the anguish, desperation and hope, the optimism of repatriation which follows the faith of the singer who says *again ours will be, again in time* is expressed here, since, as Henry James put it, “when somebody names a place in a novel it is like in a way it represents it” (Lutwack 1984: 29). Subjects such as refugees or of having to live or be taken by force away from one’s country are closely connected to the Turkish invasion. Even though, someone could place the poems which refer to the young Cypriots’ dislike of the young Turkish in a different category, we enclose them into historical poetry, because apart from the lesson that they give to the *Powerful* of the Earth, they also arrive at the conclusion that they share the anguish and the strong desire of these two societies to coexist peacefully and the acknowledgement of the fact that they are both victims of political pursuits. Therefore they have in them the historicity, which derives indirectly from the historical facts that are hinted in the poem. Hence we see, within the poetry for children, a large part of the recent historical problems in Cyprus and the promotion of the nation’s memory, according to the *educational history*. Moreover, throughout history and the Greek presence within the international community, this aim is always present. We come across it in the patriotic songs that the children sang in the “voues” (children’s groups in Sparta) of the militaristic Sparta. We see it while reading Homeric texts, which were praising the Greek virtue and braveness, of the children in ancient Athens. We discover that it survives and is active in the time of the Turkish occupation mainly in folk songs and their hopeful messages. We also see it in our time in the poetry of the resistance movement which appears during the Turkish Occupation and continues in the later years.

2. *Religious poetry for children*. The main characteristic here is that we do not see the usual religious mythology, because of the dangers that lie in a possible voluntary or not inclination from the already known version of the facts that they are referring to. The most usual form of it is the child’s “prayer” to God.
3. *Naturalist-“ecological” poetry*. In this category we enclose everything that has to do with nature, animals, plants and lifeless nature in general. Two



tendencies seem to permeate the poetic creation: the first one is the poet's intention to transmit the natural values and the value systems to the children whereas the second one gathers the poetic production in relation to the wealth of nature, nature's beauty (description of places or trees, animals, birds or insects), which is presented with glory as a great "thank you" to the dreamy beauty that nature gives to the eye or even to the acoustic means of the children, quite often very easily and with frivolity so that it does not help the child to develop her/his aesthetic values. The illustration-description comes either from the point of the poet or of the child her/himself. Little myths in verse are created by the poet, in order to communicate features or characteristic elements of behavior. Moreover, many times the poet produces more than one poem in order to complete with various versions the subject, like C. Montis with eight (8) poems dedicated to the almond tree. The poet often creates an entire mythology for this tree and its time of blooming and s/he presents corresponding aesthetic orientations. The same thing happens with the cicada. However, all the poems are created as the representation of an "acoustic phenomenon", without taking advantage of relative myths, like Tithonas' myth and connecting in this way Mythology-Poetry-Aesthetics, like D. Papaditsas in *Tithonas' delirium*.

Many poems are referring to the four seasons and to their basic characteristics and they look like adaptations of folk stories from the grandparents to their grandchildren. Many of the poems in which the child is presented have a lyricism that does not touch children because they are full of pretence and a feeling that the God like narrator who knows and determines everything. As well Greek poetry for children, initially nature is presented in an ideal way, without presenting the problems which occur and without taking into consideration ecological matters. Any kind of concern is mainly spotted in prose and it derives from the invasion of technology and urbanization into life.

4. *Family and school/social life*. Poems here are presented in two categories: the child within the family and the child at school. There are more poems about the mother than the father or the grandparents, people to whom children give back love. This preference for the mother (e.g. Montis writes enough poems about the mother, to whom he finds a relation to the divine) is because of the patriarchic character of the Cypriot family and society that needs the man to be concerned with everything outside the house and the woman assigned with all the housework and the bringing up of the

children. In these poems the role of the narrator is played by the child, who shows her/his love towards the mother, rarely to the father, and promises eternal love. The general asymmetry that differentiates literature for children from the general literature is more noticeable in these poems, because the adult narrator presents the feelings which an adult would like for a child to have for her/him. The number of these poems is fairly large. There are even poets who write more than one poem about the mother in a romantic and idealistic way. People are presented with angelic moods and completely pure emotions. Happy situations prevail and as a rule all the conflict relations within the family are avoided, so that the family is presented in an ideal setting, as in the wider Greek poetry for children. Frequently, the absence of the father figure is a result of his loss, because of the fights for freedom in Cyprus and the child's nostalgia and hurting for his loss is evident. For that reason the child avoids war games. War in that way is castigated and a peaceful way of life is presented to other nations.

The spectacular sub-category "The child at school", with a satisfactory number of poems, reveals the growth of subject-matters in Cypriot poetry for children. The aim of this unit is for the child to love school, which is presented as an ideal place. For that reason not one poet records any negative comments on school, not even in comedy verses that are showing anti-pedagogical situations. The child is always behaving, s/he is obedient and has a thirst for knowledge, perpetuating the equivalent social stereotype. While an ideal image of the situation, like the one of the family, is presented, the critical eye of the creator through the poetry for children is absent.

5. *Poetry with the subject matter of the abused child (or victim of war)*. These poems are referring to the child-victim of conspiracies by enemies, political, national or fanatical. Pantelis Michanikos has given us wonderful poems about the murdered child as a protesting voice against the enemies-murderers. The demand for peace gains tragic dimensions. However, it is not expressed with cries or yelling. On the contrary, it goes through the simple words of children who express such demands openly; they do not want war, because it deprives them of their parents.
6. *Inducing-educational poetry*. As the educational character initially was thought, because of the goals of literature for children, as a basic ingredient for a text for children, it is easy to see it almost in the whole literary production. Some times it appears as a fable moral, as we have already reported, in the last two verses of the poem. However, because it

has already been proved that it bears no practical importance, it is progressively discarded until it disappears completely.

7. It is important to underline that in the collections that we took under consideration and study we did not come across *afasica* poems; by this term we mean the poems known as limericks, first introduced by Edward Lear.

## Form

Concerning the form, the verses vary. In order to present the messages, especially national messages, the verse becomes longer, the syllables are increasing and the poem gains a form which is “stronger”, as if it is trying to impose its content with its size. Many poems need more work in order to attain, a more essential aesthetic result. Thus, the aesthetic of the verses is inferior, poetic language is harsh, rhythm is lost and the poem is not progressing aesthetically. In addition, there is no uniformity or symmetry of the verses even within the poem, while instability of the rhyme is noticed. In some point in time poems without rhyme are written. It appears that the poet gives priority to the message (signifier) than the words themselves (signified) because of the effect of modern beliefs. The inner rhythm which probably exists is not damaged, but it is difficult for the child to understand it and the aesthetic result is less accomplished. Since these poems are addressed to children in the last years of primary school, they are far from using simple verses or word games, as for example in *Smiling games* or *Word games* by Th. Chortiatis.<sup>10</sup> Quite often the poems have illustrations<sup>11</sup>, which are closely connected to their content as the illustrators are using the text as their source of inspiration. (F. Chatzichanna *Smiles*, A. Konstantinides *Dewsprins*, T. Mpati *Sunrays* and many others). In that way the poem’s language combined with the language of the picture transmits the message more easily. In addition the illustrations are used for the aesthetic development of the children. That is because it also has an educational character. The child, especially when the poems are written for children in young ages, is initiated in the world that surrounds her/him, is initiated therefore in life itself, for which s/he is preparing her/himself. Illustrations also make the child’s visual contact with the page more pleasant and the poem becomes easier to read and to be perceived as a means of aesthetic upbringing as well as a means of education. That is because it stimulates the child’s imagination to that s/he will recreate the world written and illustrated in the poem and to identify with that world.

## Conclusions

The long lasting historical problems of Cyprus contributed towards the delay of the use of a mature speech for children. Despite the fact that there are many important writers for children and young people (Papantoniou, Delta, Xenopoulos and others). The journey towards maturity began in 1974, and so a new age begins for the literature for children and young people within the wider Greek region (Greece, Cyprus). During this period the Cypriot writers for children and young people turn towards the universal subjects of freedom, independence, and justice.

After 1974, Cypriot literature for children shows a potential for growth in quantity (increase in writing and circulation of books for children and young people) as well as in quality. The writers themselves take the books for children more seriously, they pay more attention to its writing rules and they create full-body aesthetical texts in which the characters are presented more clearly, have a more complex plot, more complicated structure and avoid repeating themselves. Nevertheless, there is a demand for even stronger and more serious efforts, in order to avoid shallow aesthetics. In this way, literature for children will mature safer and sooner.

At the same time, the study of literature for children as well as literary criticism has started to take the above mentioned into account. (Marathephthes, Katsonis and others). There is also a demand for a more systematic study of the texts, with scientific criteria, despite the fact that announcements in conventions and in texts which are published in magazines in and out of Cyprus in the wider Greek region or even in self-sufficient studies attempt a more systematic approach on the kinds and the subjects and the filing of the texts according to gender. There is though a combined interpretation of these variations by using scientific methods (*Data analysis*), for example how many women writers are dealing with a certain kind and subject, whose subjects are more favored by men or women writers and poets and so forth. Those of course who have been involved in studying literature for children are referring to the period of its growth, to literary genres that are created in each period (everyone agrees on the fact that fairy tales are more developed) and in the quantity of the texts that are published in magazines or as self-sufficient books (mainly in the last period). However, they do not go further to an aesthetic assessment of the texts, and content themselves with general excommunications, with which they recognize a continuous upgrading in quantity. It is also noticed that there is confusion about the classification of the texts. Therefore, texts that are

clearly novels are filed by people who study literature for children in the short stories genre. For example, the novel by Filisa Chatzichanna *What happened to Mauricio* is classified by Kostas Katsonis as short story (Katsonis 2003: 32), while also the novel for children by the same writer *Didon, My Pavelakis and Me* is again classified as short story (Katsonis 2003: 26). Even though differentiations such as these are possible, because often the literary genres are not easy to distinguish, when the characteristics of one genre or kind are penetrating in another genre or kind (for example fairy tale novel), in such cases there is no reason for such an important separation. Therefore, those who are engaged upon the study of literature for children, which itself has its difficulties because of the age group to which is addressed to, should have stable and acceptable criteria. They should also dare to attempt publications in foreign journals specialized in literature for children (e.g. *Children's Literary Quarterly*, *Children's Literary*, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, *Horn Book*, *Bookbird*), in order to become widely known. Our research recorded two only short essays by Maria Pylidou in *Bookbird* journal (27.1 (1989): 6-8 and 42.1 (2004): 33-37), which gives important information about Cypriot writers and illustrators of children's books.

As a scholarly literary creation, it started at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century-beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The pioneers were people of education and those who had realized that children need to have their own literary books in order to help foster a right education. Thus, its primordial aim, as in all cases, was to educate. As it happened with literature for children in the wider Greek region, at the beginning literary production was influenced by European trends, because Cypriot writers consider Cypriot literature as an inseparable part and extension of Greek literature. The fact that, in comparison to Greek literature, its growth was delayed is because of various historical, social and other factors which we presented in the introduction of this essay. Also the fact that there were no publishing houses made the writers publish their texts in magazines and newspapers, a fact that makes the recording of literary production even harder and probably a complete image of the nursing period does not exist. This policy combined with the small reading public had as a result for the writers to remain unknown. Those who were living in Greece were publishing their texts more easily and were more widely known. Only in the last few years Cypriot writers for children and young people are publishing their texts in Cyprus, even though the most known now (Pylidou, Chatzichanna, Avraimidou) continue to publish their work in well known publishing houses in Athens.

The thematic is closely related to the Cypriot history or to subjects that were of concern for the Cypriot society and had a historic, social or folklore writing character or they are perceived within the wider cultural life in Cyprus. In the last twenty years Cypriot novelists turn to past historical periods, as they are trying to preserve the historical memory and to strengthen national feeling (Pyliotou *Silver smoking device*, Kalogirou-Pavlou *CY-1104* and others).

The end of the 20th century and the dawn of the 21st century give birth to a new generation of writers, who do not seem to have a great thematic and genre relation to the previous one. This generation seems to be untied from the older aesthetic forms and from the thematical inspiration and appears to be an innovative kind of literature for children and young people, based absolutely on the poetic imagination, on humor, changes and under the strict child's glance (Margaritis Kyriakos *The village of the sheets* (2001) Elena Pericleous' *The boy who was the star of the Earth* [2002] Maria Olympiou's *Dangerous Mission* (2005) Maria Pachiti's *Senarios of Life* (2006). Myrianthi Panayiotou's book *Little moon come down to play hide and seek* touches poetry deeply. She introduces a child's glance describing with humour changes and puns; a thematic which is very clear in the children's world. The new poet Eleni Artemiou-Fotiadou, a known scenario script writer for television, a playwright and prose writer moves in the same field.

Illustration was influenced by the rapid growth of technology and the internet, since some people rely on the computer in order to illustrate children's books. The illustrators of those books combine photography with art in a harmonic composition. In the last years illustrators have appeared, who use collage in order to illustrate children's books in a modern way - Helena Poulcheriou - or other techniques such as stencil technique, spray paint skillfully changes the color and they give a dreamlike result - Eleni Lambrou - or techniques that lead to a unique game of imagination - Theodora Pyliotou. Louiza Kaimaki, who took her illustration studies abroad, makes very interesting works and promises a continuous and successful upward trend. Like the writers and the poets, the illustrators are conscious of their cultural identity which is closely related to their cultural heritage, traditions and their history, whose elements they exploit. For that reason their inspiration derives from their eternal civilization, which provides them with a special beauty and power in books' illustrations and a sense of cultural eternity, irrespectively of the techniques they use.

## NOTES

1. The journal *Bookbird* 27.1 (1989): 6-8, which is the official instrument of expression of children's literature internationally citing IBBY's opinions, publishes a short text by Maria Pylidou regarding War, Peace and Co-existence in Cypriot Children's Books. The author refers to Cypriot children's literary books on the events of 1974, suggesting that the Cypriot writers "should not ignore these events as subjects when writing children's texts. The writer also underlines the fact that in Cyprus so few lectures, seminars and congresses are organized and that there is not a constructive criticism on children's literature. Although there is reference to "Cypriot children's books", the term *Cypriot children's literature* is not officially mentioned. The same journal publishes another short text by Maria Pylidou about Cypriot illustrators of children's books (42.1 (2004): 33-37). The article does not mention exactly the term *Cypriot children's literature*, as it happens in other cases of national children's literature, since the writer herself does not use the term, although inferred by the words "Cypriot children's books" (1989). However, the publishing of this text by an English journal, with a very strict editorial policy proves that this literature is accepted and therefore it also proves the use of the term as well. The reason that we do not see the term in the English written bibliography is that there have not been more than two essays or articles published about Cypriot children's literature, while non Cypriot researchers do not know it (possibly because of the language) in order to present it in one of their studies.
2. Mich. Marathephthes (1989: 14) divides Cypriot children's literature in two periods with two sub-periods each. We think that historical and intellectual factors enforce us to divide it into three sheer periods. Concerning the division into two sub-periods by Marathephthes, periods with time limit the year 1945, we think that the Second World War constitutes an important historical fact. However, it has not affected the development of the Cypriot children's/young people's literature. Apart from that, Marathephthes enlists it in the first sub-period and he does not think of it as a turning point, as it happens usually in other literatures, because of its effect on literary production. The publication of the journal called *The Little Cypriot* can not be taken as *terminus post quem*, despite its very important role, because its publication is not a 'landmark'. Before that, already, even for a short period of time, the journal for children entitled *Child echo* (1903-1905) circulated, a fact really important for a period division or as a fact that takes place in a particular period of the development of a literary phenomenon. The *Little Cypriot* journal was published right after World War II, while we do not have any other significant clues, literary or not, which allow us to consider there were facts taking place which force us to enlist the years to come within a different sub-period. Therefore we do not accept the year 1945 as *terminus post quem* of a new sub-period. On the contrary, the year 1960 as a

significant historical fact of the course of an independent now Republic of Cyprus points out the beginning of a new period, even if it does not last long, because we see a development in Cypriot children's literature. The period 1960-1974, which, according to Marathephthes, is the first sub-period of the first period (1960 until today) should be considered as a separate period, because the social and political conditions and the cultural happenings within these years differentiate it noticeably from the child literature that is being produced at the beginning of this period (1894-1960) as well as in the last, approximately, thirty years (1974-2006). This period consists of characteristics which semaphore a course towards the formation of its identity and it opens horizons for children's literature to reach its maturity. That is why we consider the year 1974 as *terminus post quem*. Therefore, the division of periods which Marathephthes suggests is not reliable for the division of the periods into sub-periods even though it has its logic. In conclusion, the time limits which we accept as constituting historically the periods of appearance and development, and which create periods of growth are 1894 - 1960, 1960 - 1974 and 1974 until today.

3. At this period there are also publications of mathematics journals, like *Studying Home* by the Gymnasium of Cyprus and the weekly children's newspaper *Studying* (1954) by Ant. Nikolaides (Marathephthes 1933: 18), while the radio with programs for children, as in Greece and the unforgettable "Children's time" with Antigoni Metaxa, strongly contributes to the further growth of children's literature in Cyprus. In the last period of the Cypriot children's literature many newspapers had special pages for children (*Eleftherotypia*, *Eleftheria tis Gnomis*, *Embros*), while in 1981 the newspaper for children, *Avgerinos*, is published. Six months after its circulation stopped (1984), the same publisher (Andreas Christodoulides) publishes a journal with the same name *Avgerinos*.
4. Until recently (2006) Maria Pyliotou was writing in this journal, working on a variety of subjects for each issue.
5. In 1984 the International convention of IBBY was organized in Nicosia, which contributed in the further spreading of the books for children.
6. After a research, which is still running, about the books for children and young people that were published and republished in Greece within the decade 1995-2005, we have recorded 170 books by Cypriot writers. Among them, 44 (25,88%) are novels, 18 (10,58%) are short stories, 53 (31,17%) are fairy tales (one of which is written in meter form -Kalimeres K. *Nino the penguin*, Nicosia 2002), 22 (12,94%) are poetry, 1 (0,58%) is a combination of poetry and prose (Chatzimatthaiou A., *Fairy tales and songs for children*, Nicosia 2004), 21 (12,35%) are stories (in a fairy tale form) and 11 (6,47%) are theatre (two written in meter). The results of this research is that fairy tales are leading the way as a traditional form of literature, but the novel is following, which is a newly presented kind in the second place with a significant gap from the other



kinds which were traditionally produced by Cypriot writers. This conclusion on one hand underlines this period (1974 and on) as a new time in the Cypriot literature for children and young people and on the other hand presents its rebirth and its effort to form a new identity and reach adulthood.

7. According to Maria Pyliotou (1989: 7) of the 25 writers who wrote 52 books between 1976-1987, only 11 refer to “the peaceful co-existence of Greek-cypriots and Turkish-cypriots which will bring a just solution to the Cyprus issue.”
8. Maria Pyriotou (1989: 7) remarks that “Subject such as running away from home, divorce, loneliness, insecurity, the need for emotional outlets, young people’s political engagement and their involvement in our national problem have not yet been touched upon by Cypriot writers however”. In the years that followed until this day, many of these subjects are examined in Cypriot children’s literary texts.
9. These poets publish the collections: C. Montis: *Poems for Little and Big Children* (1976), *Now that I read better* (1988), *Messages of Verse* (1991), *Let the verse take you by the hand* (1993). Crinaios Pavlos: *Angels’ notebooks* (1970), *Myrto’s Book* (1978). X. Lysiotes: *Seesawing* (1983). K. Chrysanthos: *The Yellow Chrysanthemum* (1951/1991), *Stories of the Flowers* (1954), *Story of the Birds* (1955), *True Stories* (1956) and others.
10. Th. Chortiatis a) *Smiling Games*. Athens: Kambanas, b) *Word Games*, Athens: Kedros, 1986.
11. Very often the poets themselves are the illustrators of their books (e.g. Pyliotou 2004: 33). The last decade we certainly have many interesting examples of illustrations in children’s books by people who have studied in Greece, in the U.S.A. and in Europe.

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## Literary Magazines in Cyprus During 2007

George K. Myaris\*

### RÉSUMÉ

Les premières revues littéraires sont parues à Chypre pendant les premières décennies du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle. Bien que par moments prévalait l'opinion qu'il était facile de maintenir dans l'île deux publications littéraires ou plus, aujourd'hui sont publiées cinq revues de la sorte; deux plus anciennes (1959 et après) et trois beaucoup plus récentes (1989 et après). Dans cet article sont présentées des données de base pour les identifier ainsi que quelques-unes de leurs caractéristiques, bien que leur physionomie sera complétée au moment où elles vont cesser d'être publiées.

### ABSTRACT

The first literary revues appeared in Cyprus during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even though many doubted that the island could sustain two literary publications or more, five literary reviews are published today: the first was launched in 1959, the second a bit later, and the other three since 1989. This article provides background information, characteristic features and other data, although their physiognomy will be complete only when they cease publication.

In circumstances in which literary and other magazines on the internet are increasing, and also debates about their future and of art, where the study of magazines and their contribution to the approach and investigation of the literary phenomenon is a topic of university courses, this text has more of an informative nature. Consequently, it does not exhaust the critical aspect of the subject of literary magazines in Cyprus in 2007, and their otherwise given effect on the development of literary life in Cyprus and Hellenism in general.

Cypriot literary publications can trace their roots in the traditions of *Avgi* (Lemesos 1924-1925) and of *Cypriot Letters* (Lefkosia 1934-1956). From recent magazines that have completed their journey, it is worth mentioning the *Cyprus Chronicles* (Lefkosia 1960-1972), the *Circle* (Larnaka 1980-1986), the *Point* (Lefkosia 1992-1998), and also: *Wagon* (Lemesos 1983-1989), *Within the Walls* (1985-1989) and *Criterion* (Lefkosia 1997-1998).

\* Philologist

In our days, the literary magazines still in circulation are *New Age*, *Intellectual Cyprus*, *Shore*, *Without*, *Ilantron*, *In Focus* and the idiosyncratic *Exaggelos* and *Tsoglani*. At the same time the philological magazines *Microphilological* (1997 and later) *Cyprus Today* (in English) are active and the youth culture publication *Psichadi* (Lemesos).

*New Age* (Nea Epohi), cultural magazine (since 1959; latest issue 292, Spring 2007). Among the magazines that with their presence have given the point of reference for literary pursuits in the Greek speaking production of Cyprus, is the long-lived *New Age*, that is evolving from a diverse interest magazine of the “left wing and democratic camp” to an exclusively literary-artistic publication, with the poet Achilleas Piliotis as the key director since 1971. It is entering a new phase with poetic and critic Thomas Symeou taking over the management (1989). Editorial Committee: N. Georgiades, D. Bebedeli, A. Panatos, Ch. Hadjipapas. It remains mainly oriented towards literary material, and mostly that of Greek Cypriot poets. High quality studies cover extensive issues of Cypriot letters from Leontios Machairas to the present day. After the change-over and the uninterrupted development of publications and of the literary periodical publication in Greece, the presentation of significant Greek writers gradually decreases, that was in ascendance during the dictatorship years. We observe however, an increase in studies and essays concerning issues of broader Modern Greek literature. Simultaneously it attempts intermittently to detect and inform on the developments and trends in Turkish Cypriot literature and painting, publishing the works of certain creators with special issues (pp. 216-217, 279, 280, 284, 292). Regarding the visual arts, in a colour supplement in each issue, artists from Cyprus, Greece and the rest of the world are presented successfully. The constant presentation of theatrical events and Cypriot and Greek book publications, allow the magazine to have a valid presence in the difficult area of Cyprus. The references and presentations of persons and works of European and international literature are deemed to be few.

*Intellectual Cyprus* (Pnevmatiki Kypros) (since 1960; last issue 415, Jan.-Apr. 2007). This intellectual magazine that was honoured in December 1980 by the Athens Academy for its contribution to the cultural issues of Cyprus and Greece, faced many circulation problems around 1996-1997 and from a monthly it has been converted to a biannual magazine. After the death of Kypros Chysanthis (1998), chief publisher has been Loulla Kyprou Chrysanthi and every four months, with small delays, “it is published by a

Committee of Philologists and Men of Letters” as it is stated in the latest issue. It continues to gather around it, men of letters and researchers of literature from Cyprus and Greece, on an inconsistent basis. In the book review columns there is growth in quantity, without something special to be said on the level of qualitative critique. However in the areas of aesthetics and literature there is an obsession with neo-lyricism and neo-symbolism and a weariness, distancing its distinctive features from the level that was reached through the brave and experimental efforts of its founder. A few pieces of information from the latest issues, despite some interesting isolated publications, may be able to constitute material for a dedication, something that was a tradition for *I.C.*, if we recall the topics of past issues with dedications (such as: World Poetry Day, Asia Minor disaster, G. Seferis, T. Papatsonis, C. Palamas, G. Vafopoulos, C. Tsatsos, and others). The coordination with groups from the Greek literary arena has weakened significantly. It continues to publish a few literary works and essays in cooperation with Greece. Currently it republishes the poetry of a few European poets, mainly Italian. It maintains informative columns on intellectual events in Cyprus and Greece. Its typographical look is austere, and without visual accompaniment, it harks back to a textual obsession of another era.

*Shore* (Akti), Literary and critique magazine (since 1989; latest issue 70, Spring 2007). A quarterly magazine directed by Nicos Orphanides (Lefkosia), the sole person remaining from the original publishing team after various restructurings, while the academic Photis Demetrakopoulos (Athens) participates in its editing. Almost since its beginning, *Shore* is oriented towards the fermentation that concerns the introduction of Greek tradition, into the perspective of Greek civilisation and the Christian spirit (dense-and at times incompatible with the literary material-are the analyses and views of clerics or thinkers in this area). It continues, despite the obvious decline of well-respected Greek contributors during the past few years, to play a major role in directing the union of modern Greek literature of the “periphery” of broader Hellenism, particularly of Cyprus, with that of the “centre”. It manages to present the literary creations of older and recognised authors, without overlooking some of the newer ones. Less space is dedicated to the translation of foreign writers. Indicatively, I will mention W.B. Yeats, C. S. Muros, St. Hermin, Eu. Ontale, A. Surminski, B. Malamud, W. Agha, B. Friel. There is an abundance of studies on the historical-philological problems of Greek literature in Greece and Cyprus. The magazine, while

gathering a number of noteworthy publications, does not manage to convert them into dedicatory material –this is especially apparent in the last few years. Some examples of dedications from the most recent issues: “Dedication to Alexandros Papadiamantis”, “Spanish poetry pages”, “Polytechneion Memories”, “Pages on Al. Papadiamantis and Nicos Gavriel Pentzikis”. Notable is the presence of visual artists from the Greek-wide region, which embellish the pages with colour and feeling. There are also regular columns and book reviews. It is worth noting the projection of Greek poetic creation with the anthologies that are published unfailingly in the sixteen-page supplement “Ellinomouseion”.

*Without* (Anev), Word, Art and Self-Examination (since June 2001; latest issue 24, Spring 2007). The quarterly magazine of intellectual fermentation is published by the writer Dina Katsouri and the Editorial Committee (Aristodemos Aristos, Vasilis Vasiliades, Antonis Georgiou, Christina Georgiou, Vakis Loizides, Panayiotis Nicolaidis, Eliza Pieri, Emilios Solomou, Anna Christodoulou). The *Without* Team seeks to vocalise “words without political harshness and ideological prejudice; critical words without flattery and hypocrisy” (issue 1). These agenda-type declarations are adhered to closely, granting a productive life to the letters and arts in Cyprus. It organises political interventions with other organisations. It publishes the anthology of new poets with artwork of new visual artists “*Without precedence*” (2005), and is preparing an anthology of short story writers. In my opinion, the efforts of this magazine are spread over two stages: the awkward compilation and presentation of material in the first issues (particularly up to number 4) and, consequently, the more mature arrangement, organised into unities, which is linked to the thematic supplementary issues. The lion’s share is held by literature; original, translated and analysed. The Cypriot presence seems to have priority here, while there are collaborations, especially with the circle from *Mandragoras* magazine. There are studies with aesthetic and philosophical content, interviews, small dedications, articles and notes on music, dance, the cinema, book and theatre reviews.

*Ilantron*, Literary Magazine (since November 2001; latest double issue 8-9, June 2007). Consciously avoiding turning into a programmatic text and remaining even in this “crucial matter an open case” (issue 1) the Editorial Committee (G. Georgis, St. Laoumtzi, C. Lymbouris, M. Pieris – L. Zafeirios retires, while M. Souliotis and M. Kappler join), publishes the

magazine that, despite the irregular publication periods and its volume, has a distinct quality and contribution to Cypriot letters. From the textual research itself, the attractive appearance and layout, and the discussions, I have formed the opinion that the whole undertaking is an aesthetic pursuit, and the magazine is not restricted to a simple showcase of texts. The review columns for culture, theatre (Nona Moleski), and books are amongst the most informative. However, I point out that because of the publication distance from events, it is able to operate in an interventional way less so than its contributors may wish and to influence with its intense commentary on negative phenomena that concern the cultural, literary, educational and the broader social reality. In the literary field itself, coexist the old and established writers of the Greek region (Greek and Cypriot without distinction) with acclaimed creators of a younger age and more recent presence in the world of letters. Of particular significance are the dedications to G. Seferis (issue 1), A. Sikelianos (issue 3), Nazim Hikmet (issue 5), Thedosis Nicolaou, Nasos Theophilou (issues 6-7) and Costas Montis (issue 8-9). It holds a decidedly cosmopolitan view of the world, and thus has a more substantial connection to European and international literature. There are several translations in each issue, especially of poetry.

*In Focus* (December 2003; latest issue: IV, March 1 2007). In its fourth year of circulation is the quarterly English-speaking literary, cultural, and arts magazine *In Focus*. The administration and circulation of the magazine is a responsibility of the Publishing House *Armida* for the account of the Cypriot Centre of Writers P.E.N. Editor-in-Chief of the magazine is the writer Panos Ioannides and on the Publishing Committee are Nayia Roussou, Klitos Ioannides, Mona Savvidou-Theodoulou, Costas Hadjigeorgiou and Iacovos Kythreotis. It has published 14 issues. The Publishing Committee insists on the European orientation of Cypriot civilisation, thus it salutes Cyprus' connection with the European Union (issue I, 1). Its foremost duty is the projection of the works of Cypriot writers, the Cypriot cultural tradition and the promotion of a solution to the national problem within the framework of the European Union principles. The magazine is mainly interested in topics that concern studies, research, essays, prose, poetry and art. Interviews with significant persons pleasantly embellish the pages of the magazine. Many republications of older writers are selected to project Cypriot and Greek literature abroad. There is a regular visual arts column.



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## Cypriot Writers Touch on their Poetics

*Theodossis Nikolaou (1930-2004)*: Before I start I would like to thank Professor Margaret Alexiou for her kind invitation for this colloquium, and for a moment to think of G.P. Savidis, first Professor of George Seferis's Chair and beloved friend. Let us pray for his memory to be everlasting.

It is not easy for me to talk about my own poetry. The danger is very close either to under or overestimate it. I might also occupy before hand my listeners or readers by leading them to see aspects which I myself think they are important, and so prevent them from having the freedom to judge and feel for themselves.

A poem should be open to several interpretations, on the condition of course that these interpretations do not surpass the limits determined by the imager, the rhythm, the assimilation of ideas, and all the other elements a poem consists of.

The birth of a poem  
is similar to the birth of a plant.  
Both of them start from a seed.

So my poems, my poetry is like a tree that plunges its roots in the national tradition, written or oral, of my country. At the same time its branches stress high into the sky reaching for light and moisture. They stretch towards the North and the South, the East and the West. Birds of different feather and colour come from the four points of the Universe. They rest in its branches, sing their own songs. The new voices harmonize with the other familiar voices that come from my native land, my tradition, and the tree becomes a singing tree. Now something happens: the intersection of the national with the universal, something which the poem could appeal the people of different nationality and different tradition.

So if you want me to tell you the influences on my poetry, obviously, I have to mention the Classics of Ancient Greek Literature, the poets of the Orthodox Church, as from the Modern poets I have to name the anonymous combosers of Folk-Songs, Solomos, Calvos, Papadiamantis, Kavafis, Seferis. From the non Greeks T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and who knows from how many others, that I have heard, or read in the past.

The themes of my poetry is the life that flows around me. The experiences, but every experience does not ends up in a poem. A poem is the result of several experiences of the past that come to surface in a moment.

Let me give you an example. Suppose I had a diary, in which different entries could read as follow:

Entry 1 (1965). The Winter gives its place to Spring. Wild beautiful flowers around. But that dry stone wall is marvellous. A lot of flowers come out through the joint of the stones that you think the very stones are in bloom. Miracle.

Entry 2 (1969). I was driving up to the mountains, at the place where are the seven turnings, like seven narrow but long steps. A black snake folded itself, unfolded and refolded falling from the highest turning. I was scared, but it was an admirable event.

Entry 3 (1972). The anemones were short-stem. But think of the wisdom of Nature. How it happened to grow under this thorny bush. The anemone wanted to fulfil its purpose, struggles to come to blossom. The stem becomes so thin, almost like a piece of thread in order to get through the gaps of thorns and come into the light of the day.

Then in 1974 my country experienced a coup d' état after which the Turkish invasion followed. Thousands of dead people. Missing people over a thousand, are they alive or dead? Half the population refugees. Something must be done. We must find a solution. So in a moment all this were bounded together, like a bunch of flowers.

I understand inspiration as the moment, the fertile moment which recalls to the surface forgotten or not experiences given with rhythm, a rhythm similar to that one you see on mountain range or the waves of the sea. What counts it's not what you say, really one says two things: EROS and DEATH, but how.

Concluding my short comment on my poetry I would say that what I try to do, as so others, is to remove the dust accumulated on the objects and beings around us, and restore the shiness that the objects had the day they were issued from the hands of the Creator. Every poem is a knock at the gate of Paradise.

(G.P. Savidis Memorial Colloquium  
Harvard University, November 15, 1997)

*Ivi Meleagrou:* I personally believe that when redefining history, the novelist makes use of his license to apply a *historical reality* which is new to people. The novelist is not a historian, therefore historical accuracy becomes secondary in the structure of his/ her work. In fact, the novelist is an explorer of human existence.

In my novel *Proteleftaia epochi* (Penultimate season) my initial concept about the utter guilt of the “outlaws” (those who carried out the coup to overthrow Archbishop Makarios) was gradually differentiated over the course of writing, as if another voice had pushed me toward their own experiences and views, making me *redefine* the historic event. This voice I was hearing must have been what Kundera defines as “the wisdom of the novel”; a wisdom above the self that all true novelists take heed of.

I’ve been writing since 1950. My patrimonial land, overwhelmed with historic adventures, determines the themes of my work. I delve into analysis and foreboding of future developments of the historic ‘advancing into being’ (in Greek *gignesthai*) that affect both the individual and the social whole, whilst at the same time work into the literary conversion of the historic *gignesthai* and its relation to the individual, expressed through positions, attitudes, internal and external differentiations.

In my most composite novels (*Anatoliki Mesogeios* – Eastern Mediterranean, 1969 and *Proteleftaia epochi* – Penultimate season, 1981) again, through the examination of individual cases, the Cyprus problem is analyzed in its complexity along with its repercussions upon the individual’s life. The complexity of the problem is due to the interests of the mighty and therefore the simple issue of the freedom of a small island is turned into a thorny problem that threatens the stability of the whole Eastern Mediterranean region and Greece. Indirectly but nonetheless equally dramatically erosion and eventually the blatant violation of the human rights of Greek Cypriots are presented. In fact, today, Greek Cypriots are threatened by total extinction from their land, where for three thousand years generations have been living and creating culture. The Turkish factor is being activated by foreign powers, aspiring to cause civil unrest between the island’s two communities in order to promote their own interests.

*Panos Ioannides:* In compliance with my initial planning, from which I would rarely deviate, I drew my topics from different historic periods of Cyprus, always making sure to shed light on the facet that the official History tended to quiet or self-complacently tidy up. Even in my purely “historic” works I did not attach myself to the commonly acknowledged, to dates, events, major personalities and critical hours, but to any element among the above that would illuminate my topic from the facet I was most interested in. In fact, such elements were viewed through a spectroscope that

would for the most part bring forth the human aspects in an effort to extract the bigger through the smaller.

A second parameter in my work has been my quixotic attempt to contradict Cyprus' literary establishment which back then, throughout the 1950s was subdued with very few exceptions that underline the rule, to barren romanticism and idealism, morbid helleno-centrism and to the greatly misunderstood by their adherents – and therefore dangerous – Greek-Christian ideals.

Furthermore, both in my prose pieces dealing with the Cyprus issue, and in a few others situated in the historic past of Cyprus, I have tried: a) to look into the big problems of our land and our people, that no matter how much they transform over each new historic period, their hard core remains basically unaltered and b) to intermingle today with yesterday, to interweave them diachronically in a perpetual advancing into being. What I recount might have taken place, may be taking place, is bound to take place sometime in the future.

Another feature of my work is the extensive use of harsh satire, poignant humor and sarcasm, often enough of self-sarcasm. But in fact, satire, sarcasm or comic grimaces are there to cover abundant tears for the post-revolutionary Cypriot bourgeois society; they are a covert lament over the sheer decline of values, over arrogance, materialism and void megalomania.

In some of my prose pieces I utilize features of European modernist prose, especially in relation to the novel. Quite often I attempt to reverse narrative conventions, to disrupt linear narration, to fragment coherence, time, syntax, sometimes even words themselves (i.e. in a chapter in *Apographi*–Census), to utilize the rhythm and harmony of poetic discourse (in the novella “I siopi irthe ti nyhta” – Silence came in the night) etc.

### *Kyriakos Charalambides*: “Elements of poetic DNA”

My relation with poetry dates back to when I first claimed consciousness of myself (from the age of nine or ten) and it has always been a relation of worship. Gradually, instinctual impulse and intuitive abundance that mobilized my poetic universe, granted their place to a deeper understanding of the world and history. Therefore, I could handle with more restraint (if not modesty) the language and other means of expression proffered to me by the poetic process. After all, poetry itself would train me

to discover ways in which I could nurse and serve it. Sometimes I wonder – as I have pointed out repeatedly – if truth is a biological condition. In fact, I have the impression that truth follows the body's physical development, transmuting with it. In other words, our relation to things is differentiated little by little, in the form of an organic evolution that expands as the spirit and the gaze mature. In this sense, my first topics sought to trace the world and conceive life's senses through the grid of an earthquake-stricken sensibility. Later on, my poetry received the stigmata of the contemporary Cypriot tragedy (Turkish invasion and occupation of a large part of the island) and this fact that caused everything to tumble, drove me to redefine poetry as essence and life. This is how I was graced with the understanding that in the end it is a miracle and a blessing for a people to keep their memory and all their cohesive elements focused on the condensed space of poetry. Starting from these, they may rediscover themselves *de novo* and consolidate their own conduct with decisive conditions of progress and History's deeper meaning. Further, they may vibrate existentially and grasp messages in their ontological dimension. Walking over a precipice and allowing a gap are necessary for these messages to bounce back in fresh combinations (new ways of poetic phrasing, new charge of words, new aesthetics).

Living in Cyprus, it is only natural that we are shaken from the tragic events befalling the island. On the other hand, I do not think it is honorable to take advantage of a wound. In contrast, art is supposed to add spirituality and a deeper quality to the passions of the people. Without the inclusion of tragedy in an ecumenical dimension of history, without that deep and abysmal property of existence, art is reduced to a descriptive trade of consumerist nature. Yet, its essence lies in this: it can cover a wider field than its historic context.

I owe to admit that History in itself does not interest me; and by History I mean idolatrous adhesion to a specific historic event. For me, deep down, perception of History means perception of the myth. The secret lies in turning history into myth. In short, history is useful as a basis for transcending facts and expanding them meta-historically. My poetry does not deal with History; it deals with its very refutation. However, in order for something to be refuted, it needs to preexist and this attests to the essential meaning of History as a material which is available for reversals.

At present, my evolutionary path leads me one step ahead, to something related with the reversal of myth itself. I've always looked at things from an

oblique angle – I’ve even handled language heretically attempting to re-integrate the whole intellectual treasure bequeathed to us throughout the centuries, not forsaking that my dependence on the genetic elements of our civilization are at the same time a debt. A debt to grasp the substance through the miscellaneous layering of history and myth, a debt to exist not only as a Greek of Cyprus but also as a citizen of the world, of which your homeland’s labyrinthine history makes part. It is precisely this apperception that allows me to release myself from my insular milieu and make way with my poetry toward redemptory escapes. It is my deepest conviction that poetry comprises a *science* and that each poem is an effort made by humans to raise their own truth as to the deeper mystery of art and life.

*Niki Marangou*: “What else are we?”

I was born in Limassol. My father came from Ammohostos and my mother from Kozani. This helped me maintain a broad picture of the Hellenic horizon, whilst growing up in its Eastern most point. I never questioned the fact that I belong to the broader Hellenic vicinity, the “great Panhellenium”. I never felt anything other than that. What would I feel anyway? My relation with the Greek language, ancient, Byzantine and modern, has always been a focal point in my life. That is why in 1980 I opened a bookstore in Nicosia, so that I may have every book I want; that is why I went back to the university looking for words to match my new toys.

I feel that we have been a fortunate generation that went through extreme situations. From my grandmother weaving on a loom to the gypsies with the dancing bears we’ve reached today’s computers. My themes could not but follow everything that had occurred in between. Cyprus, the Middle East, Greece and the whole world, now on hand for our generation, come complete with incentives for anyone keeping their eyes open to see them. I am fascinated by history, perhaps because I have been fortunate enough to grow up in a house with books, old books; to listen to all stories, to read. Today’s Cyprus with the concrete building blocks, offers no incentive for me. Maybe that is why I regress to earlier times – I am now writing a novel describing Athens in 1810. I’ve spent two wonderful years reading about that era. Even if I never manage to finish the book I will still gain a great deal - so wonderful and enriching has this experience been for me. I wrote about Cyprus in 1940, as well as about Alexandria around the same time; Vienna too. Cyprus is definitely a starting point but the whole world opens up before us, and when

the “Cypriot topic” is true, this concerns all of us, in Solomos’ words. It is the stimuli and memories of my childhood in Limassol and Ammohostos, mainly, but also in Kozani that empowered me to describe eras and people. Ever since I was a child I loved history and old buildings. I remember when they set up roadblocks in Nicosia in 1963 I would insist on riding my bike to the Turkish Sector, I would wander in the neighborhoods, I would read the inscriptions in tombstones, read Gunnis, spell the world around me. I would contemplate Pentadaktylos from the roof of Aghia Sophia. I am a curious human being and this has provided me with ample raw material for writing. In the summers I’ve always liked to walk at nights when people would sit outside leaving their doors open. I would register the interiors of houses, conversations, looks. Whilst studying hagiography I visited almost every church in Cyprus and learned a lot. I’ve traveled extensively in the Middle East for the most part, Turkey, Egypt – I have been nourished by these journeys. In Bursa I was in awe before the first Ottoman mosques, in Cairo I walked in the graveyards. All these have provided the raw material. I roamed around Greece, as Elytis once said, as if I perceived the space in view of some kind of heritage.

Whether literature written by Cypriots is Cypriot or Greek, this concerns philologists who need to make classifications. I am not at all interested in this question. The only important thing is whether what is being written is good literature or not, if it is true and spurts from within or if you are writing Kafka in Greek, especially in these difficult days when bookstore shelves are full of junk. To quote Samuel Johnson, «an ignorant age has many books».

*Myrto Azina - Chronides:* “What does literature means to me”

I always dream of the same situation: I invite guests, a lot of guests, but suddenly I realize there is not enough space in my house. I’m wondering in the rooms trying to open some connecting doors and find an acceptable solution.

The light, in my dream, turns violet and red and while opening an unknown door, new rooms appear in my house. Huge halls with columns and ornaments, covered with dust, but beautiful. I’m amazed from the clarity of their shapes

Then I open the close doors and let the guests in.

These closed, forgotten, rooms are my words, my literature, the way I communicate with the others, the way I sometimes, exclude the others from my secret world.



My literature is an act of the absolute freedom.

I can write the scenario I can direct and play the roles. I create, from nothing, persons, places, animals, and different universes.

My writing is my way of surviving among stethoscopes, injections, pain, children, casseroles, politics and role conflicts.

It's a gift I knew I resaved from the first day on, that I learned writing.

I'm a busy woman, as any woman in our century, and literature is also a struggle against the time. It keeps me moving and wet unchangeable.

Writing on paper-pads during the brake between two patient appointments, in the car while waiting for my daughter to finish her ballet lesson or while watching the football match between my husband and my son, is a way to resist the time rules and the routine.

Writing is my internal mirror, my truth and my eternal renaissance.

### *George Christodoulides:* The perspectives of poetry

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that in a river-less country, perhaps the only river flowing is that of poetry. It is into this river that I'd wanted to flow, maintaining the independence of a branch and the knowledge of a mountain that clouds, rain and snow – perpetual feeders of rivers – come from everywhere.

From the perspective of aesthetics, I believe in the denudation of words (not their demythologization) ridding them of the redundant weight and placing special emphasis on the poems' epilogue that needs to summarize, condense and eventually validate the preceding verses, at the same time opening a door to the next poem.

If I had to risk a general definition, I would say that poetry is the description of what instigated my feelings and not my feelings per se.

From the perspective of thematology, as a citizen of the world, I draw from its messages. When our expensive clothes are most likely to have been made by children in Asia, when they have been touched by maltreated little hands it would be irrational for me to miss the atrocious and inhuman backdrop of my prosperity, even if in the end this too is a form of hypocrisy. The unavoidable consciousness of my inability to change the world leads me automatically to poetry.

To the question how can anyone write about the experiences of others, I

reply that for this and perhaps only for this it is worthwhile being a poet; for when a fellow human being is silently going through their own untold tragedy to the utmost degree, so much so that death is the only way out, a poet will come forward to recount and assimilate it, yet going on living unredeemed.

For me, poetry is above all an act of solidarity. The idea of poet as the carrier of collective pain, “to whom there is nothing to give and from whom there’s nothing to take” is in fact wishful thinking for me. It helps me attempt to become what I know I will never become.

Other times, of course, I define myself in terms of the dashing flow of images gushing through the unsearchable advancing into being from within.

I am fascinated by existential questions without answers, the answers that were there but were never given, the questions that were never made, the irresolute gaze of people hovering over an abyss – and there’s so many of them today, walking amongst us especially in the form of economic immigrants – collective hypocrisy that is choking us, the unexpected encounter with a small miracle of creation. Man’s perpetual resistance to death, merely postponed through the futility of our daily routine, resistance to death through *eros*, cancelled a priori, destined to decline but so fascinating in its genesis and brief duration, the quiet observation of the insignificant that you seek to make significant; all these are incentives for a mental quest.

The Cypriot tragedy is not a minor parameter of my thinking; but I do believe that so many decades later, my least contribution would be to try and submit a literary version devoid of pompous and graphic elements, by displaying the tragedy of a *fait accompli*, through the harmonious interlinking of simple things and details that comprise it and in fact define its very essence.

The impact of small-countries poetry in the form of irrevocable insulation that appears insurmountable especially when surrounded by so much seawater that transition or escape to other places resembles more to self-delusion than to a possibility, cannot but be contained in my verses; just as the sun you cannot get away from, dry stone and the feeling that you are writing on a rock that is being carved throughout the centuries.

World poetry, the Greek poetic miracle, our ancestral achievements, all these are the foundations upon which I am trying to add my own little brick, lending my work a personal breath (that in the end will set one apart or not) with the humility of this knowledge: If I could add a couplet to the poem bequeathed to us through the ages – then I would be blessed.



## Cypriote Literature/Litterature Chypriote

*VASSILIS MICHAELIDES*

### The Nereid

In the country where I was raised  
and still kept on growing  
when I started to palpitate a bit  
then I wasn't frightened  
of the ghosts and didn't hide  
I ventured out for a walk.

At a river's crossing  
I perceived a lisson girl (a beauty)  
would this moment be curse!  
I was caught as a lamb in the trap  
poor wretch  
while in the pasture-land.

When she looked at me the place lit up  
my mind was dazzled  
and a luminous world appeared.  
When she smiled at me  
paradise appeared  
before me and I could not move.

At once I got in bewilderment  
the world I forgot  
and remained gaping silent.  
She told me, come, follow me  
and from the bottom of my heart I felt the pain  
and I followed her, poor fool.

Hills, plains and mountains  
together we traversed  
full of flowers and thorns.

The street was endless  
but we didn't get tired  
it was a joy for us.

She was trembling lest she might lose me  
and I was trembling lest I might lose her  
and at the idea to speak to her and lest she speak to me.  
I had thirst for her and was burning  
I was trembling at the idea to touch her  
lest we both turn into lightning.

Then we arrived to a mountain  
Straingt up to heaven  
Resembling a paradise  
There we wept  
Together and laughed  
in the mountain's pugent musk.

She told me if you are brave  
if you like this life  
from now on stay without me  
and she burst into laughter.  
Immediately I felt my heart  
nearly to crack.

She said and she vanished  
and disappeared  
as a passing wind.  
My heart cracked  
I lost my wits  
since then I remain ecstatic.

The troubles that were gnawing me  
haven't yet been revealed  
even to the birds when they are gazing  
Since then whenever I see the nereids  
I tremble  
and I turn down to avoid them.

### Le rêve de Romios

Durant le mois de Mai quand tout fleurit et les plaines embellissent  
et où tu ailles et d'où tu passes les fleurs exhalent une odeur suave,  
un Mardi à l'aube des bateaux apparurent  
venant de Dardanelles en assez grand nombre;  
ils avaient le vent du sud-ouest à la poupe  
et le vent du nord-est à leur proue  
et du bruit que faisaient les vents à travers leurs agrès,  
« Elli » rebondit de son rivage  
avec deux étoiles au-dessous de la ligne de ses sourcils  
et sur les vagues se tint debout et comme une fille d'amazone  
emit un grand cri qui secoua les montagnes:  
-Viens, mon plus beau, viens célèbre du monde,  
depuis lors, depuis lors mon rivage t'attends;  
que tes bateaux l'ornent de nouveau comme avant  
du temps des premières richesses.  
Dit et se coucha dans son tombeau aqueux  
et se recouvra jusqu'à la tête de vagues.  
Les bateaux arrivèrent déjà dans leur rivage  
et Dieu d'en haut les voyait et les protégeait  
et les vagues écumeuses couraient à leur côté.  
Soudain les gens de Constantinople se murent  
et jusqu'aux cieux leurs grands cris ont été entendus:  
Il arrive, il arrive, parce que les voilà, sont apparus les premiers soldats  
les rues brillent et resplendissent.  
Voici notre plus beau, le voici, guidé par son aigle  
bicéphale tout noir qui lui trace la route;  
battant souvent les vents avec ses grandes ailes  
et le tout Constantinople aux rues enneigées le voit.  
Le soleil avançait dans sa route et midi arriva  
et notre plus beau entra dans Constantinople avec ses troupes  
et son aigle noir s'assit sur le dôme de l'Eglise Sainte Sophie  
et un grand séisme secoua aussitôt la ville  
et les morts se levèrent,  
des tombeaux sont sortis.  
et se mêlèrent aux gens qui couraient avec lui.

Et un bey aussitôt apparut le premier devant lui,  
et après l'avoir salué avec sa grande courbette  
dit ces deux mots du fond de son cœur:  
-Sois le bien-venu, grand Roi Constantin  
avec ta belle jeunesse, avec tes nouvelles troupes.  
C'était moi qui te livrais bataille et à la Porte de Romanos  
tu t'es couché et t'es endormi et le sort de Constantinople changea;  
et le destin voulait que Dieu te réveille le temps venu,  
que l'Orient et l'Occident te voient de nouveau  
leur Roi comme antan,  
avec tes richesses d'antan, avec tes premières gloires.  
Que Dieu fasse que la paix règne pour toujours dans ton royaume.  
A-t-il dit et disparut.  
Dès lors les bateaux ont commencé à faire leur apparition  
et de toutes parts  
on a vu et entendu ses éclairs et tonnerres;  
et tu entendais aussi bien dedans que dehors la trompette grecque  
et partout à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur l'aigle battait de l'aile;  
et Constantinople a compris ainsi que le rivage et ses montagnes,  
grâce à la volonté de Dieu la ville est devenue comme avant;  
et les cloches sonnèrent et les églises ouvrirent leurs portes.  
des millions de nymphes s'amassèrent alors  
et s'unirent désirs, espoirs et destins tourmentés,  
les portes de l'Eglise Sainte Sophie s'ouvrirent  
Constantin y entra et commença à célébrer la messe.  
Et sur le dôme de Sainte Sophie firent leur apparition  
le Christ et la Madone;  
et un nuage d'encens en émana  
aperçu et senti par les gens qui s'y trouvaient et ceux au dehors  
et montit au-dessus recouvrant le tout Constantinople et s'arrêta  
puis continua dilué et disparut haut dans les cieux.

## *THODOSSIS PIÉRIDES*

### **Rue Beloyannis**

Quand le bateau ivre qui me mène de ça, de là,  
me fit débarquer dans ce port  
d'innombrables rosiers s'assemblèrent sur le quai  
pour me souhaiter la bienvenue au nom de la cité des roses.

Puis je partis dans les rues – mon élément de flâneur actif.

Ces quelques lettres sur fond bleu accrochées au mur  
faisaient une fenêtre qui s'ouvre du côté du soleil  
faisaient un sourire qui s'ouvre du côté de la vie  
faisaient une fontaine qui jaillit des profondeurs de la mort  
faisaient un œillet gigantesque  
que la cité des roses avait piqué dans sa chevelure  
un jour où elle était en larmes.

C'est à partir de ce moment-là  
que le poète errant  
a fait sienne la cité des roses.

### **Prague sous le Soleil**

Cette ville réconcilie l'éclat de la lumière  
et la tendresse des collines verdoyantes.

Elle réconcilie les flèches gothiques et des cheminées d'usines  
les châteaux princiers et l'écusson de la république socialiste.

Ses vieilles ruelles sont des tunnels creusés dans le roc de l'histoire  
pour déboucher dans le présent.

Et le présent est un port porteur de voyages vers l'avenir.



## Egalité

Un clocher gothique et un peuplier.

De loin je n'arrivais pas à en faire le partage.  
C'étaient deux petits détails aériens  
qui s'efforçaient de compléter le paysage.  
C'était aussi un but informe et neutre  
arbitrairement fixé à ma promenade.

(Car ce poète toujours pourchassé, toujours errant,  
veut – ô vanité – se fixer toujours des buts  
il veut que même sa flânerie soit active).

Me voici maintenant arrivé au but.  
Et les voilà qui abandonnent leur neutralité  
deviennent identiques à eux-mêmes  
en affirmant leur personnalité  
de clocher gothique et de peuplier.

## Identifié a la Vie

J'ai connu la grande poésie mise en vevre qu'on appelle le vin.  
J'ai connu le chant suprême qu'on nomme femme.

J'ai vu les bateaux arriver et partir  
habillés de leur rôle plus légère que plumage de cygne.

Je me suis multiplié dans les hommes, je me suis senti millions et millions.  
Arrive au seuil de la vieillesse et de la solitude  
j'ai senti comme miens tous les enfants des hommes  
y compris le petit négrillon qui vient de naître dans village d'Afrique.

Et je fus aussi feuille, goutte de pluie, rocher au bord de l'océan  
comme je fus grain de poussière sur la route  
ou grand vent sur les hauteurs hurlantes.

Je vis la Révolution me sourire  
comme si elle était ma soeur ou mon amante.

Elle me donna même, de temps en temps, une bonne fessée  
tellement j'étais entré dans son intimité  
tellement elle était ma mère et moi son enfant –  
son galopin d'enfant pris en faute.

J'ai vécu dans le passé mordu par les couleurs de l'enfantement  
j'ai vécu dans l'avenir scintillant des pierreries du bonheur  
J'ai vécu dans le présent  
et je fus arc tendu à chaque instant, à chaque bataille,  
ou coulée d'acier dans le haut-fourneau du monde bâtisseur.

Et j'ai chanté, chanté à perdre haleine.

Maintenant je peux partir.

Le mort ne peut plus m'avoir.

Puisque je me suis identifié à la vie.

Sélection: Yannis Ioannou

***COSTAS MONTIS***

**Instants (1958)**

Qui nous a la continuité sectionnée ?

Qui nous a les heures fragmentées ?

Qui nous a les instants scindés ?

Le ressort s'est brusquement cassé  
les aiguilles divaguent par l'avant et par l'arrière  
l'heure s'est démontée.

Nos poches naguère pleines  
d'amandes (les amandes, on est si paisible quand on les pèle  
en descendant  
lentement  
la montagne)  
sont maintenant pleines d'effroi.

Les temps sont passés où nous prenions le cœur par la main  
et allions à l'église le dimanche matin.  
Tout ça est maintenant entré dans un miroir,  
tout ça maintenant, des photos jaunies.

On nous a désaffecté les signes de ponctuation  
et nous galopons sans virgules, sans points, sans exclamations.

Leurré par la fenêtre ouverte  
l'oiseau entra.

Non. Ces rides creuses  
nous les avons reçues comme un fait accompli  
et les avons faites nôtres.  
Pour rien au monde ne laisserons  
de nouvelles espérances  
se tapir derrière ces digues  
maintenant que résolument le visage nous nous aspergeons.  
Ma prune perçut une esquisse de soleil dans la rue  
pendant que le camion me broyait la tête  
mon oreille saisit une voix d'enfant.

J'ai à dire à la mer.

Emmenez-moi le matin auprès d'elle, où elle est seule.

Quand donc ai-je possédé tout cela ?

Quand donc fus-je dépossédé de tout cela ?

(MICHALAKIS KARAOLIS<sup>1</sup>)

Hier encore l'Évangile a été sanctifié par un enfant  
de dix-huit ans

qui l'a gardé entre les mains

s'est accroché à lui

au dernier moment.

Comment t'es-tu dressée dessus la montagne obscure,

ô ma sœur, et m'as-tu parlé,

un enfant inconnu et sans nom dans les bras ?

Et ces yeux de non-recevoir,

et ce visage si fermé,

que me disais-tu que je ne comprenais pas,

ô ma sœur que voulais-tu de moi ?

J'ai mis un dimanche matin à ma boutonnière

et à mon revers une banlieue de Nicosie.

Notre regard ne devrait peut-être pas porter si droit, sans dévier

quand l'horizon, circulaire, lui barre la route.

Ah ! ce disque qui tourne

et moi qui dois y lire l'écrit !

Inversée en nous, l'orthographe

des bons vieux mots de nos livres de lecture.

Et il n'y a même plus de nouveaux mots

1. N.d.T : Michalakis Karaolis, né en 1933, a été un membre actif de l'EOKA (Organisation nationale des combattants chypriotes) bras armé de la lutte pour la libération du joug anglais (1955-1959). Arrêté et condamné à mort en 1956, il a été exécuté par pendaison après un procès sommaire.

en grosses lettres noires  
pour les écrire au tableau  
et les précieusement  
avec application  
nettes et bien liées  
recopier dans nos cahiers.

Le printemps ? Le printemps aussi nous débite les années.

Au-delà de toi, je choisis dans le néant,  
Nul pas au-delà de toi, Eersie.

Ce n'est pas grave si  
le petit oiseau gazouillant  
la gentille queue remuant  
s'envole du saule luxuriant.  
C'est grave s'il quitte  
le vieux platane et sec  
sur lequel il s'est posé inopinément.

(PENDAISONS à NICOSIE)  
Ce jour-là commença la nuit,  
l'aube vint porteuse de roses noires,  
et parmi les oiseaux, seules les chauves-souris s'éveillèrent.

Le poêle a ramené son tuyau  
les murs se sont mis à écraser les portes  
à biffer les fenêtres.

Rentrons enfin.  
Le temps a fraîchi  
et la voile blanche  
que nous observions au large  
a disparu.  
Rentrons.

### Complément aux Instants (1960)

Pourquoi tant de Monuments au Soldat Inconnu  
et pas un seul à l'Homme Inconnu ?  
Où est-ce qu'on déposera nos couronnes, nous ?

Je dis quand pourrai-je sortir  
dans les prés du soleil et les criques de l'amour,  
quand pourrai-je gagner le séjour des grands instants  
cueillir des asphodèles de souvenirs d'enfance,  
condenser lumière, cœur et sang de première main  
pour la balance que nous allons dresser dans le fort de la plaine?

Je dis quand pourrai-je sortir  
dans la rumeur de la ville  
enregistrer les vibrations inflexibles de la bonne graine

qui gît sous le poids de l'ordure  
et commenter les Quatre Évangiles ?

Je dis quand pourrai-je sortir  
reconstituer le voyage de retour,  
distiller les larmes des hommes  
afin de les négocier avec Dieu ?

Je dis, quand ?

Mensonge que les instants sont des instants.

Quel était cet instant  
qui instant n'était  
qui l'étalon du temps n'était ?

Pourquoi nous la donner blanche, la lumière  
et attendre de nous qu'elle soit analysée ?  
Pourquoi nous l'avoir donnée blanche  
pourquoi nous avoir par le blanc dupés ?

Rendez-moi ces jours  
où l'amour écrivait sa première voyelle  
et ouvrait les bras de son accent.

Lorsque je l'eus dit, je ne pus plus le dire,  
lorsque je l'eus écrit, je ne pus plus l'écrire,  
lorsque je le fus, je n'existai plus.

Je ne sais comment nous sommes arrivés sur cette tribune  
(c'est donc ça, une tribune?)  
Non, il est hors de question que nous parlions  
Excusez, on descend.

Traduction: *May Shehab*

**PANTELIS MICHANIKOS**

**Ode to a Murdered Boy**

*Stetson!*  
*you who were with me in the*  
*ships at Mylae!*  
*The corpse you planted last year in the garden,*  
*has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?*

T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

This lush verdant plain stretched out before me  
adorned with the yellow of the daisy  
the red of the poppy  
the smile of the violet  
this plain  
open beneath the warm  
bright rays of the sun  
this plain  
gently caresses our soul  
showing us the road of spring

on this plain  
that praises the Lord and the soul of man  
praises the body  
and murmurs the song of mankind  
on this plain  
lies  
dead  
a Turkish boy

a convulsed face  
caught in the midst of pain  
a bloated  
youthful mask  
carved out in eternity asking  
if the place was really too narrow



in the festival of spring  
asking  
if there are nations among the peoples of the daisy  
and of which nation is the green grass  
The sun warms the roots and the earth  
Love overflows like dew  
among the leaves and flowers of the soul of man  
in the open sincerity of the plain  
and a bloated terrible mask of a child  
who moves his lips  
under the bright light of the sun  
and speaks: "I thank you  
You brought me to this road and to this end. I thank  
you kin and strangers"

Earth, Lull him into a  
sweet sleep. For you

this year once more  
the poet's voice  
asks the oil traders  
and the colonizers of corpses  
asks Stetson:  
"that corpse you planted last year in your garden,  
has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?"

Translated by Stephanos Stephanides

*THEODOSIS NICOLAOU*

**Art Exhibition**

The visitors wander around the room  
They look at the images on the walls  
They comment and converse

"The craftsman must give flesh and blood to visions  
Death's horror is totally absent from the works  
What place do birds, trees, idyllic landscapes have  
When brute violence treads us down?"

But when at night the guard turns off the light  
And bolts the door  
The birds open their beaks  
And the empty room echoes with a wail  
As if they are all mourning Andrianopolis.  
And when the wind rises in the night  
It does not ignore this room. It blows  
And in the paintings shakes the leaves and trees  
A sigh is heard within four walls  
Just like the lament of Hecuba  
Who, with the other Trojan women, sought  
After their children in plundered Troy

It seems that meaning is in How not What.

Translated by Stephanos Stephanides

**Memory**

When we were children we were told to remain silent  
So that grownups could be heard  
Discussing serious issues.

We were told not to speak on the phone  
Because phone is not a child's toy;

It too is necessary for grownups  
And for very important things.

Several other things we were told  
That narrowed the world's immensity.  
Sobbing lowered heavy the eyelids  
While sleep dried on the cheek a stamp of tears.

Later we spoke on the phone when we learned about sound;  
That the sky is just another sea  
With waves breaking or fading too on hearing.  
We spoke when at the other end of the line  
There could be no wolf  
Nor bear, nor prince  
Nor Santa Claus with the fragrant stick  
And partridges in love with white pigeons  
Knitting their singing.

Now that we learned what grownups talk about  
Since now we are grownups too,  
We also now understand why the world cannot  
Rest for a single moment.  
And it's now indeed the time to cry  
If the springs of tears have not already emptied by then.

Translated by Stephanos Stavrides

### **Warm Day in Winter**

All colors are beautiful  
And all colors are pure.  
Seasons rotate exposing  
The earth's paintings  
Made of flowers.  
The black look of poppy  
Through its guards' red veils,

The sea of wheat  
Unfolding its yellow waves  
In the summer.  
And the other, the other great sea  
Of white and blue in blue  
Up to the copper scream  
Left by the leaf of the carob tree  
Refreshing the head of humans.  
The bow in the sky undertakes  
And classifies  
Those washed by the rain.

Yet, affection for white  
Does not derive from the Angels'  
White wings and white uniform.

We once sat by the river of Albion.  
There we neither cried, nor laughed  
We were not asked, nor did we answer.  
The water in the river flows  
But a grey stillness reaches the eye.  
One perceives motion only  
By the sails of passing ships  
Or when a body is carried away  
And you consider that this body  
Might be your own body.

And where there was nothing  
Other than a desert  
And you alone, naked in the desert,  
Where the four winds were blowing in fury,  
Carrying frost on their wings,  
Echoed  
Sweet, beloved, familiar  
A voice.  
"Your eyes still preserve the mud  
And you cannot see the rivers of mercy around you

You cannot see the rain of love.  
Take my clothes and hide your nudity.”  
Then from the sky  
Immense white dresses unfolded and expanded –  
The earth was covered with snow.  
The snow climbs on the trees  
Climbs up to your heart  
Which is warmed by the warmth of love.

Thousands of white butterflies  
Climb on the rusty branches of the almond tree.  
Thousands of flowers white like the snow  
Shoot on our rusty soul.  
Here in the state of death, life sparkles  
And the vision of an almond tree in bloom  
Calms the winter and your spirit.

Translated by Stephanos Stavrides

## *NICOS NICOLAIDES*

### **The Suckers**

The story is not very old, but in those days it was so rare for a troupe, along with a Singer-Dancer, an Acrobat (come phony Hercules) and a slapstick clown to travel to our island, that when it did it was considered an extraordinary event. The largest coffee shop was transformed into a show hall, where family showings were held, and if the Danceress\* - the pride of the company-knew how to hold her own, a lot of money was to be made.

One such 'troupe' – with the addition of a magician who swallowed flames and produced ribbons from paper- had given two daily showings for almost two months, when suddenly one afternoon, when the hall was almost packed and without known cause, an inconceivable and most importantly tawdry rumor began to spread from table to table until it was known to the entire show hall. The youths ignited like a match, speaking in hushed tones and reserved gestures on account of the 'families' sitting nearby- regardless of the fact that the same rumor was being discussed among them also. However, within the universe of the small provincial town's show hall, the family unit is the exceptional constellation.

Soon enough one family man stands and gestures to his wife and daughters to leave. It was not that he had heard something which upset him but his nerves were strung from the agitation of the others and his ability to guess the topic of their discussion. He had something to add as he too was one of the 'suckers,' but you see, he was a family man which meant that he couldn't.

The youths kept on ordering more drinks and extra meze...Their nervousness made them big spenders. The circle continued growing, some joined from outside and others who could no longer bear sitting alone, dragged their seats closer and together they gathered muttering the same phrase: "Hey brother, what's this?" All replied with a shake of the head, opening their mouths to express that: "Yes, brother, we too are also in shock about it."

Yet another family man stands and drags his family outside.

\* "Horeftra" in the original [correct form: Horeftria] meaning a female dancer possessing seductive qualities. The term Danceress [rare form of "female dancer"] has been chosen in order to retain something of the oddity of the original's term.

– The show, this once, will not be given..., he said in justification.

He too had stared for a long time, his eyes fixed on the stage curtain – a curtain made of cheap red calico – which had become heavy and unliftable tonight, imagining the dressing room of the Danceress. He too had once climbed up the ladder in the yard ‘with a small gift’ in hand only to walk back down duped.

– Young man..., one of the same...extra meze....

– Right away...

A third family man stands, with panicked movements, getting his family to rise. (He had also been suckered by the Danceress and for a long while, like a bad merchant who pours over his bills when his business fails, he had reflected on ‘just how badly he had miscalculated.’ Closing his eyes for a moment, making the darkness the mother of imagination, he saw himself inside the dressing room with the sweaty fleeces and undergarments hung all over and shook himself fearfully lest his wife be able, by shutting her eyes, to see him in there so degraded!)

The departure of the third family took with it all the rest.

– The show will not be given.

– But why did he beat her?...the poor thing..., said a small girl feigning innocence (cheeky thing, so small, yet knowing as much as the others).

Now that the show hall was empty of families, the voices changed tone and the conversation narrated the ‘incident’ candidly:

– ...He beat her and relished her....

– He beat and relished her...Well done to him!... A mother’s son...

They laughed maliciously, they laughed smugly, as though they were now completely avenged – as though they were tossing away all of the fooling and bitterness the Danceress had laden them with for so long. They boasted the achievements of the other man climbing alongside him to the seventh heaven of his triumph!

– Costas Chloros... a shoemaker from the upper neighborhood ..

– Who knows him?...

Nobody.

– A tough guy surely...

A tough guy. He did it well. Suckered once, suckered twice... He also paid for... the hope that she gave him (as, in truth, that woman knew how to

ignite passion and sell hope at a high price), but tonight he demanded the goods... Shaking her head from side to side she had said: "A song?! ...Here's a little song,..." and she started to sing softly... She would stop suddenly, in order to add to her performance, and then she'd continue as though she truly believed that was enough of a payback!... She spied him through the mirror. At times he'd half shut his eyes, then open them wide... and his cigarette: often it came close to going out, smoking up through his fingers whilst at other times, clasped tightly between his lips, it would near being spent in long intakes of breath. Watching her, he slowly lost awareness of her humanity, her weakness, feeling only the bestiality of her sex. "Come... my sweet, go to the town square," she said to him, "and I'll send you a kiss, secret from the families, but obvious to the youths, which will make them all burst... come my little one... go," and she smiled at him that unique smile, so feminine it blunts masculinity. He placed his hand upon her – perhaps he only wanted to touch her... perhaps to draw her to him – he himself could not even say what he wanted because his head started to fog and two dominant emotions awakened within him: He must not remain a sucker and he must not miss out on the pleasure he had prepaid for. She pulled back suddenly. "What is it?" she said with something evil, poisonous and proud in her voice. The young man rose and made to speak, but he just stood there smoking silently and smiling with a look of concentration. "Your behavior is inappropriate... you don't pounce upon a lady like that..." she said after a while fixing him with a wild stare while she started to laugh and sway her body. In a tone which perfectly contradicted her words she told him she was not the type of woman anyone could lay a hand on! A surge of impatience swept through the youth like a wave upon the beach. "That's called rape...", squealed the Danceress. "Rape is always a hideous thing...", the youth was able to think to himself but the Danceress made the mistake of adding: "I have an evil beast that protects me," and with a theatrical gesture she pointed to Hercules. A tasteless lithographic poster showing the phony Hercules took up one side of the dressing room. "Think it over." With that, the lion which slept within him woke: "Ah!... take a look at the scarecrow!..." he said scornfully, and the Danceress, having faced similarly unpleasant situations in the past and not wanting a repeat, felt she was done for and so threw herself into the corner as though to be protected by Hercules who stood ready to punch, kick, stomp, bite and even headbutt... "Do not resist as I will beat you..." he told her. "It suits you... you are the type of person who makes one want to beat you first... and then grab you..." and... wham, he delivered the first slap...



– But where is the lad now?!...

Each of them felt that if ‘they’ were to have “both beaten and relished her,” they’d have come back here to boast! “Ah! Why couldn’t it have been me?” each of them thought. “Why didn’t I think of it? It was so simple...”

Very simple indeed. Like the Egg of Columbus.

Just a minute the stage curtain – the one made of cheap red calico- began to jiggle, part a little and the head of the clown protruded. A whistle drew him back in and the red fabric merged as though it were liquid but moments later, whilst the entire room still laughed, his head appeared again, along with one arm which gestured his desire to speak.

– Back inside! Ooooh... oooh... back inside...yeeha...! The entire room seemed to shout.

But the clown- or we should say: the man who impersonated the clown every night- emerged.

He was not made up or dressed as the clown. He moved forward...and among the throng which stood he gestured: “He beat her and relished her...”

The room broke out in applause asking if he beat her good...

“He beat her... he beat her... he beat her..,” he said in a gloating manner.

“Did he also relish her?... ”

“He both beat and relished her,” he answered in an expressive pantomime.

Descending the small ladder, a longstanding sucker to the Danceress himself, he too joined the others.

-Young man... one of the same... and another...

Translated by Helen Stavrou

## *COSTAS MONTIS*

### A Dog Amid Two Villages

He is a big black dog, bony and unclean. His reddened eyes look around distrustfully. On one or two occasions he may have been fooled into believing that true friends exist but he won't be fooled again.

– No one, no one.

His tongue, hanging out, allows saliva to drip in threads to the ground. His breaths are shallow and hard. Without doubt he is hungry and very thirsty.

I don't know how, but today, the dog finds himself on the treeless road which joins villages N. and T. The scorching midday heat of August stings and ignites the white dust.

He walks with his head hung low without meeting the gaze of the passers – by trying to pull in his tongue a little so as to make them believe – in hope of avoiding a stoning- that he is neither hungry, nor thirsty and that he has something to do, that he is not a stray mutt.

– Gentlemen, a dog is passing: *comme il faut* with his master, with a name. He is passing by as he has a job to do down in the village.

A job? Where did he find a job? (– I have one). Where did he find the master? (– I have one).

Perhaps the only truth is that he is sure to have a name. It makes no difference that no one knows it anymore, that the streets have destroyed it. He may even meet an old acquaintance, who will call out to him, let's say Fox.

– Fox, Fox.

He will hesitate, of course, to believe that they are calling out to him, but in the end it will be proven that indeed they are.

In any case, it seems that he does not have a lot of faith in his own façade as he observes the passers-by from the corner of his eye and as soon as he picks up a suspicious move-a raised hand-he runs. He is then exposed for good but the stoning no longer reaches him.

However, this is not the case with everyone. There are some who can smell from a mile away that he is nothing but a mutt. However, he knows it too; he guesses that they are on to him. It is then that a game begins; they pretend they do not suspect him, looking away while he approaches, and he, as he is

forced to pass by them, plays dumb. They fool each other until the right moment comes for a hand to lift and throw the stone which is ready, and then the dog runs.

He runs just enough to distance himself. He does not have much strength to spare. He then slows his pace again and walks, head bent without looking at the passers-by.

– Gentlemen, a dog is passing by: *comme il faut*.

At some point he stops. One, two three tiny steps (steps taken as a reflex, steps which are made unconsciously and represent a will not a forced decision) then he stops. He stops as the houses of the village T. are visible. What is it exactly that he is going to do down in the village?

– You'd mentioned something about having a job to do?

– Lies.

– You'd mentioned something about a master?

– Lies. All lies. The name is a lie too.)

Yes, he has nothing to do down in the village. No-thing. He can't even go down to the village. His reddened gaze seeks something. So, must he go back? Even though the decision to return is a difficult one to make, it must be taken at some point. So he returns. He returns wondering how to deal with the passers-by he passed on his way. They now know that he is nothing but a stray mutt. And he knows them as well. They will all play with an open hand. The best for him to do would be to bravely hang his tail between his hind legs and try to escape the stoning by running.

– Yes, I'm a stray mutt. Do what you may and I will too.

And so it was. However, as he was running a stone hit him in the back. It hurt and he let out a yelp. Behind him he heard the sound of people laughing but his eyes did not redden, they could not redden more. Everything has its limits.

Of course, in spite of the fact that he has distanced himself considerably, this time he does not slow his pace. He runs to fool, to escape, not the passers-by but his own self.

To fool himself? The road will end soon. It already has. Here are the houses of village N., they've appeared.

He stops. These houses are not for him, they don't want him. He must go back again. Back? No. He is returning from 'back', there is no more 'back'. And there is no 'forward' either (How is it that there is suddenly no 'back' and no

‘forward’?) He looks at the houses again. The flaming sun beats down on him.

And so? And so nothing. No-thing. He fondles this ‘nothing.’ He fondles it for one, two, three minutes. Then he accepts it.

The passers-by approach but the dog no longer thinks about how to escape. In fact he takes no notice of them. He stands like black filth on the white road. Just like filth.

Translated by Helen Stavrou

**GEORGE Ph. PIERIDES**

**Dementia**

On the way to work yesterday I passed, as I did every morning, Thomas' kiosk to pick up the paper and ask my usual question:

"What news, Mr. Thomas?"

Thomas had his own way of looking at the daily news. An authentic man of the people, benevolent whilst at the same time crafty, he'd seen a lot in his sixty years of life, the last twenty of which he had spent laid back within this here uptown kiosk at the entrance to Nicosia along the road to Ammochostos. We neighbors and regular customers, called him stationmaster on account of the fact that by rule, the buses and taxis going to Ammochostos stopped in front of his kiosk to pick up any final passengers.

He also had his own unique way of commenting on the news. With a sense of realism and placidity, this almost unschooled man, was able to target the essence of what lay behind the exaggerated and contradictory newspaper headlines commenting on it with a type of humor which left nothing standing.

Recently however, Thomas' instinctive humor turned into a half-cry. It is the only remaining means through which he can comment, whilst staying true to himself, on the news which came like the onslaught of a tornado and swamped us, along with the bombings. The news which drowns us even now within the gulf of pain and uncertainty we are found, with the Turkish invader lurking a small distance from our neighborhood, behind the lines which divide our island in two.

Yesterday morning then, when I picked up the newspaper and asked the usual question, Thomas looked at me in a sorrowful manner, his gaze pointing me in the direction of a woman standing in front of the kiosk in the spot where passengers waiting to go to Ammochostos had once stood.

"Do you see her?" he says. "She's been standing there two hours."

I hadn't noticed her, as she was not standing to the side but almost in the middle of the road. She stood unnaturally rigid. Her face was not visible from where I stood, only her back. Her lanky frame, the way in which her grey hair was cut, the unkempt yet good quality suit she wore, the black leather bag she held, revealed that she was from a wealthy environment.

"She is waiting for a taxi to Ammochostos," continued Thomas.

I shivered.

“Ammochostos?!”

“Yes. At first, after waiting a long time to no avail, she came and asked me why the taxis were delayed. I thought she was joking, but as I noticed the look in her eyes I realized that she was delusional.

‘There are no longer any taxis to Ammochostos, my lady’, I say to her.

‘Of course there are,’ she says, ‘I’ve taken one from here many times. I need to get home, my dear man. How do you propose I go, on foot?...’

I tried to explain. Nothing. She stands there and waits, as you can see.”

At that moment a car coming at great speed became visible. The driver honked for her to step aside, but the woman did not move other than to raise her hand to signal him to stop. The driver, either because he didn’t realize or because he didn’t feel like taking her, avoided her with an abrupt turn and carried on his way.

Her hand stopped midway, and then she lowered it, revealing her impatience with a shrug of her shoulders before returning to her rigid stance.

“Perhaps she’s been hit by a car,” said Thomas.

“It would be wise,” I said, “for you to call the police for it appears that she is staying near here with friends or relatives and they will be looking for her about now.”

I left without turning to look at her face. I don’t know why I felt she would be hurt by my curiosity.

November 1974

Translated by Helen Stavrou

## Recensions/Book Reviews

### Recent Literary Publications

In recent years more and more literary books by Cypriot writers are being published in Athens, but most of these are still being printed in private publications in Cyprus. It is generally accepted that Cypriot publications struggle to reach Athenian bookshops. Even when they are sent to critics and researchers, they rarely attract interest (perhaps because of their themes or their language, but also since Cypriot writers are far from Athenian literary circles and networks), and even more rarely are they treated objectively, without a deprecating disposition or without friendly compliments.

Out of the literary books by Cypriots that have been published recently in Cyprus or Greece, in my opinion, two poetry collections and seven books with prose (short stories, short or extensive narratives) stand out, written by older or younger writers. This is not a common phenomenon; usually poetry collections abound, whereas production of prose is less frequent. At any rate, the view that is predominant recently, that Cypriot poetry is at a quantitative and qualitative advantage in relation to prose, does not seem to stand.

In poetry, I set apart the poetic collections *Quince apple* (2006) by Kyriacos Charalambides and *The afternoon affliction* (2007) by Lefkios Zafeiriou, both of them printed by Athenian publishing houses. The poetry of Kyr. Charalambides, multifaceted and demanding in its composition, is not at all easily accessible, however much care is taken by the poet to note at the end of the book the sources that apparently function as poetic foundations or to clarify realistic elements. Once more the poet, building on the Kavafean and Seferean historicism, interweaves episodes of (Ancient Greek) myth and the spins of history, with the eternal passions and sufferings of men and with the contemporary political adventures of Cyprus. Persons and events from myth and history, high profile and anonymous creators, places and customs are forged in the firing-kiln of art, to conceive the “quince apple”, the rare fruit with the bitter taste that is an apple of discord and at the same time has erotic overtones. The poet combines the individual with the collective, the national with the ecumenical; he tries to go back to the beginning of things and to light them up from incredible viewpoints. It certainly requires great effort on the part of the informed reader to penetrate through the surface of the words and to enter into their deeper layers, or to comprehend and

appreciate the fashioned rhetorical methods, the ironic connotations, the verbal games and in general the heavy armour of his poetry.

The poetry of Lefkios Zafeiriou is certainly more frugal in its rhetoric and more accessible. After many years of poetic silence, L. Zafeiriou has gathered in a single volume his recent poems, which are roughly divided into two unities: in the first section are found poems in which portraits of famous poets and artists are sketched; Byron, Rimbaud, Van Gogh, Mazileskos, Solomos, Kalvos, Karyotakis. In the faces of these “damned” or exiled and isolated creators, that have attracted the attention of the young poet, one can identify elements of the sensitive soul of the latter, who pays tribute to his literary predecessors. The second section comprises mainly poems that are connected to the political situation in Cyprus and specifically the poet’s experiences as an educator in Rizokarpasso High School, in the occupied area of Cyprus. In these texts are outlined sensitive images from the wounded body of Cyprus, from abandoned monuments and exhausted people, who have clung on in the marchlands of Karpasia. Since the homeland remains “crippled in bandages”, such notable political poetry cannot fail to be written.

Three earlier writers, Christakis Georgiou, Panos Ioannides and Yiannis Katsouris, who were once part of the magazine team *Cypriot Chronicles* (Lefkosia, 1960-1972), published prose during 2006, in Cyprus. All three of them initially dealt with short story writing, and later on wrote more extensive narratives, novels and fiction, without neglecting the short story. Christakis Georgiou collected older and recent short stories in a volume entitled *Rescue operation*. The two youthful narratives that precede transport us to different times, ones of pure idealism and erotic awakenings. The other five narratives that are certainly more mature, and derive their subject matter from crimes and misdemeanours that took place in contemporary Cyprus: murders, rape, smuggling, illegal erotic affairs and convicts flood these texts, like his previous prose (e.g., the short story *Hours*, 1950). Using his intimate narrative techniques (dragging narrative, flashbacks, persistent introspection of marginal characters and stereotypical expressions), Chr. Georgiou spotlights with realistic power, mainly negative views of life in contemporary Cyprus: rape, crimes of passion and illegal affairs that lead to murder and suicides, prisoners and drug addicts that are self-analysed and bring to the surface their turbulent souls, affairs and conflicts between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, violent acts of drunk soldiers at the British bases in Dhekelia, night life in touristic Agia Napa etc. These short stories will remain, I believe, an interesting and persuasive literary testimony of our time.



Several years after the publication of his last novel, Panos Ioannides circulated the extensive and distinctive narrative (“like a novel”) entitled *The Devas* which means the guardian angels of animals. In this well-written narrative, the author narrates with humour and imagination stories about animals and animal lovers. He does not hide the fact that he draws from biographical material, and actually from his familial environment. The prose writer manages to persuade and move the reader, demonstrating that animals have souls, feel pain and have feelings like people. The goat called Ariadne, the female hedgehog called Bouli, the two swallows, the cats called Phanoula, Tess and Biafra, the dogs named Toby and Rex, play the lead in touching or comical stories next to the children of the family, that are transformed into “devas”, and with their behaviour influence even adults who do not like animals. In certain parts of the text appear some interesting elements from Cypriot human-geography. Finally, this noteworthy narrative is an ode to animal-loving and will potentially win over more animal lovers.

Yiannis Katsouris also exploits effectively the potential of satire, humour and parody in his two short stories that make up the volume *The porno-shepherds and The honest stick*. The two extended short stories are interconnected. From a certain viewpoint they could be considered a tribute to two significant literary predecessors; the poet Vassilis Michaelides and the storyteller Alexandros Papadiamantis. The difference being that the young prose writer is conversing subversively with the wonderful poem “Anerada” by V. Michaelides and with the rural world of A. Papadiamantis. Yiannis Katsouris manages to set up two spirited and hilarious short stories, with a flowing and lively narrative. Literary tradition is only the pretext to pull the strings of history and to face with a subversive attitude, superstitions and sanctimonies of a constrained traditional world, the eternal political conflict between the Right and the Left and other everyday themes in Cyprus around 1940.

The remaining four books of prose, by George Charitonides, Niki Marangou, Chrystalla Koulermou and Antonis Georgiou, are directly or indirectly connected, more or less, with the political problem in Cyprus, which remains divided since 1974, when Turkish troops occupied the northern part of the island. The prickly short story *With a passport and a one day visa* (Athens 2006) by G. Charitonides has earned very positive reviews in both Greece and Cyprus. The experiential material has again here, as in his first narrative, the dominant part: in 37 numbered narratives—miniatures the writer crystallises the emotions that he felt (nostalgia, denial, disappointment, resentment, anger) while passing through the roadblock

“with a passport and a one day visa” to visit the motherland, the town of Lapithos, the broader region of Kyrenia and from there to Ammochostos and the Mesaoria and Karpasia areas. The short story is a constant to and fro between the past and present, between life in Lapithos pre-1974, the fertile paradise of childhood and the teenage years, and the painful reality imposed by the military force of Attila’s hordes. Without big words and sentimentalities, the narration of G. Charitonides in this frugal and concise prickly narrative of around eighty pages, is effective. The writer manages to convey the emotion and the heartbreak, memorialising with the unadorned art of words familiar evils, the open and inflamed wound of Cyprus.

The novel by Chrystalla Koulermou *The inheritors of the winds* (Larnaka 2006) takes place in pre-war Ammochostos, in the years around 1970, depicting carefree images of daily life from the viewpoint of the future drama. Simultaneously, the political topics of the time are highlighted: the disappointment from the Zurich and London Conventions, the revival of the “enosis” (union with Greece) demand of the Greek-Cypriots and the strengthening of partition policy among the Turkish-Cypriots, the demonstrations by the schoolchildren that are divided into supporters of Makarios and of Grivas, the extremist actions of EOKA B’, etc. It is not difficult for one to ascertain that the place, the characters and the events have a historical origin; and that the prose writer prefers to stick close to her experiential material, without exaggerating or distorting it dramatically by story making. At the centre of the narrative is Ammochostos, the birthplace, the city by the sea that has charmed and moved our own people and strangers. This well-written narrative is read with great interest, and at its best moments, with emotion.

In the most recent publication entitled *Nicossienses* (Lefkosia 2007), are found a short story by Niki Marangou about Lefkosia, written in Greek and translated into English and Turkish, and the black and white photographs of Arunas Balténas, with snapshots from traditional and neglected neighbourhoods in the divided Lefkosia within-the-walls. Niki Marangou has the narrative gift. She sketches with sparing strokes the place and its people, she lays down memories and experiences from her childhood and teenage years, she outlines the carefree daily life in the once united Lefkosia, that now remains wounded, divided by the green line, with roadblocks, guard-houses, dead end streets and deserted quarters. The monumental church of Saint Sophia and the imam’s voice, the other old churches and the Frankish, Turkish and other monuments, the tall palm trees, the colourful

festival of the street markets and the shops, the mixing of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots – such snapshots make up the narrative, animated with the sensitivity and the pictorial dexterity of the prose writer.

Antonis Georgiou has made a respectable first showing in prose with the collection of short stories entitled *Sweet bloody life* (Athens 2006). A basic characteristic of A. Georgiou's narrative art is the constant self-analysis. Mainly women but men also, are constantly self-analysed and resort to uncontrollable monologues to externalise their torment, since they need to tell their story. Of course this gift for narrative ease and dexterity should be looked after and controlled, so it does not lead to mannerisms and easy solutions. In several instances the individual stories of the narrative characters are linked to the Cypriot political framework, to the collective problems and suffering of Cyprus (anti-British struggle, inter-community conflict, coup d'état and the Turkish invasion with their consequences). The writer does not hesitate to daringly present estranged and broken down interpersonal relationships, secret desires, sexual fantasies and illegal love affairs. One of the best short stories in the volume is "The humble house of Michael Chr. Kkasialos", in which the traditional painter summarises in a dream his life, his visual works and the end of his life, in August 1974, ten days after being brutally beaten by the Attila's soldiers.

It can be seen from these brief presentations, I believe, that not only poets but also prose writers flourish in Cyprus.

**Lefteris Papaleontiou**

## Yiannis Katsouris, *Theatre in Cyprus*, Nicosia 2005

Yiannis Katsouris is a prominent literary figure whose activity covers almost all forms of literary discourse. He first appeared on the Cypriot literary scene as a short story writer in 1966 when he published his first volume of short stories under the title *Three Hours*. This was followed by two more volumes: *Point of Stability* (1973) and *Give Us this Day* (1979). The last two volumes won him the State Prize for Prose. Apart from short stories his prose work includes two novels, *Stylianou Anabasis* (1990) and *My Most Innocent Uncle Michael* (2001), and two volumes containing two novellas each, *Jim Lontos and Paraschos Boras* (1997) and the *Pimps* (2007). He has written several other short stories and narrations which over the years have seen publication in literary journals but not in a volume yet.

Katsouris, however, has not restricted his literary interests to fiction alone. He has also published criticism and literary studies on a number of Cypriot writers and the theatre. His lively interest in the theatre has remained steady and continuous throughout his literary career. Apart from historical studies on the theatre he has written one-act plays for the radio and a highly successful series of scripts entitled *Bread and Spectacle* for television which eloquently depict the story of the theatre in Cyprus. This interest culminated in the publication of a history of Cypriot theatre under the title *Theatre in Cyprus*. It is an extensive work published in 2005 in two volumes. The first volume (371 pp) covers the period between 1860 and 1939 and the second (383 pp) the period between 1939 and 1959.

The history of Cypriot theatre is a field of study that does not seem to have received much attention from the Cypriot cultural community. If we go back to the not so distant past we shall see that apart from Katsouris some others wrote essays and short studies on specific aspects of the topic, but the first systematic attempt at a comprehensive study of the history of Cypriot theatre was made by M.P. Moustieris who in 1988 published a book bearing the title *A Chronological History of the Cypriot Theatre from Antiquity to 1986*.

Katsouris' work covers a much shorter period. As it has already been noted above the two volumes together cover the period between 1860 and 1959, which is the period of British colonial rule in Cyprus. What impresses the reader about this work, from the outset, is its comprehensiveness and the vast amount of research that has gone into achieving it. Katsouris uses the same method of work, with some variations, in both volumes of his history.

For Katsouris one of the functions of history is to provide a record of past events. And this is what he does here. In both volumes he divides his material into units and in each of them he records, in chronological order, all the performances that took place in the urban centres and the suburban and village communities in this one-hundred-year period as well as the companies or groups that staged them, the actors, directors, set designers etc. that took part in them each in his/her own capacity. What transpires from this account is that the story of theatrical activity in Cyprus during those years had two aspects to it: The amateur and the professional. We have the local theatre which up until 1939 was to a great extent an affair of amateurism. It was after 1939 that the first professional groups began forming. The professional performances were provided by the Greek companies which, if we except the periods of the two world wars, visited Cyprus uninterruptedly. In his account he does not fail to include the performances of the children's and school theatre as well as the ones given by Turkish, English, French, Italian and Armenian amateur and professional groups. He also includes details concerning the repertoire which consisted of foreign, Greek and Greek Cypriot plays, the critics and criticism, the audience, the stage spaces, advertisement and promotion, the problems that attended the theatre in its course of development, and the debate on the establishment of a drama school, which came to the foreground from time to time. The details about these matters come at the end of every unit together with commentary and conclusions that give the reader the possibility of viewing the course the theatre was following in perspective.

In this commentary, which is brief but very pertinent, lies another function of history that of explanation of causes and effects which Katsouris seems to endorse. For him the theatre is not an artistic activity that functions outside the socio-political context. So in his brief historical references and commentary he places the theatre within this context which gives him the tools to explain why the theatre in Cyprus took the course of development described in his two volumes. For instance the Greek companies, whose presence on the Cypriot stage was, as noted above, continuous, were almost always well-received not only because there was a need for theatrical entertainment but also because they served the irredentist aspirations of a people under colonial rule. This is true, although for these companies, and Katsouris points this out, the reason was mainly financial. However their frequent presence on the island led to concrete artistic results as regards the local theatre: It helped it upgrade its standards and make the gradual transition from its amateur state to a professional one. The Greek companies, through their performances also

contributed towards audience building. The Left Wing, which was now organising itself on a systematic basis, established, through the workers' syndicates, societies in the towns and in the countryside, which among their other activities included the theatre that came to be known as the "workers' theatre". In their repertoire they took care to choose "serious plays" as they called them, (this was a demand that came from other quarters as well) which meant plays that dealt with social problems. Obviously the Left Wing perceived the potential of the theatre as an educational agent and sought through it to shape the ideological consciousness of its members. As a counter-reaction to this move the Right Wing adopted the same course with its societies and associations. The end result of this was the building of an audience with new tastes and aesthetic criteria and the formation of two professional groups towards the end of World War II that played a catalytic role in the future development of the theatre.

Of course one wishes Katsouris were more analytical and elucidating as regards the historical and socio-political context within which the Cypriot theatre developed as well as some other issues such as for example playwriting and the reasons why it has not developed at the same rate as the stage performance but as he himself rightly acknowledges in his epilogue (Volume II p. 334) his work could not be the last word on the topic; it allows ample room for the future researcher. This objective and critical attitude that he adopts in his treatment of the material he has collected together with the admirable control that he exercises over it add to the effectiveness of the work.

With regard to effectiveness I feel that here I should mention two other elements that add to it: the visual material and the Index with which Katsouris equips his two volumes. The visual material (photographs, extracts from reviews, programmes of performances, advertisements etc.) help the reader achieve a better understanding of the period under consideration while the Index, which is divided into four sections (A. Plays, B. Playwrights, translators, scholars, critics, C. Actors (professional-amateur), D. Companies, amateur groups, schools) enhances the usefulness of the work as a reference book.

In conclusion, I think that with *Theatre in Cyprus* Katsouris has accomplished an outstanding piece of work. He has attempted a journey into the past of Cypriot theatre, explored its multiple aspects with admirable studiousness and thoroughness and has given us a panoramic view of its course of development with clarity and credibility.

Costas Hadjigeorgiou

**Lefteris Papaleontiou: *Aspects of the poetry of Costas Montis*,  
Athens, Sokolis, 2006, 213 pages**

Recently Professor Lefteris Papaleontiou of the University of Cyprus has given us a 215 page book, that literally speaking but modestly, is entitled *Aspects of the poetry of Costas Montis* (Athens 2006, Sokolis Publications).

Specifically it contains older published works by him, adapted to the needs of the volume, but also newly published texts, which make up a manual, that, without exaggeration, one could propose as an introduction to the poetry and prose of the very well known, great Cypriot poet whose reputation has reached beyond the Greek borders, Europe.

As much as this plush volume cannot be distinguished by its strict continuation – a logical consequence since it is comprised of isolated, sporadically written pieces and articles – it can be discerned for its consistency. The basic aim of the author is thus served, that is to introduce the uninitiated reader into the literary works of C. Montis, his poetry under the broad artistic definition and additionally, to hint at the knowledgeable reader of his works about layers and situations that are not well-known.

Firstly, we consider the contribution of such compass-books as significant, since they constitute preliminary readings and introductory challenges with literary men and their works, at times when reading it is challenging, since with their interpretive style they open the reader's horizons and aid him into being initiated quickly. This contribution is multiplied if one takes into account the volume of Montis' work, his peripheral coverage (especially for readers of the Greek area) and the necessity of knowing his parameters and themes, that require historical knowledge, which covers long time periods and a variety of crucial events.

To these must be added the isolated position of Cypriot literature, the ignorance of its stylistic and textual relations with the broader Modern Greek one to which it belongs, the need to understand the use of the specific linguistic method and many others.

In addition to these topics, there are others, agonistic, national, patriotic, even contemporary ones, that concern attitudes and behaviours which are ignored by the modern reader, and consequently make the texts of a poet with the range of Montis, challenging. The worst of all is that a very significant piece of work (and one of the top men of literature of Cypriot Hellenism) is not as widely-read as it deserves.

It should be noted that the above do not concern only foreigners or Greeks. They refer also to fellow countrymen of the poet, that to a great extent are ignorant of a deeply Greek, national and greatly human poetry with an existential breadth that transcends historical facts and touches upon the ecumenical demand of recovering the severely offended humanity of our time.

Lefteris Papaleontiou's book, however, fills in these gaps. It covers them in a diverse and gradual way; diverse, in as much as it examines and enlightens several sides of a man of letters that belongs mainly to poetry, but in order to be understood, his journey must be studied as it develops historically; gradual, since the texts that make up the book have a gradational difficulty. There are texts of general interest, which are introductory, or in any case, central texts, as well as specialised texts that are probably addressed to the initiated reader. These latter texts, even if the general subject matter is under control, contribute to the detection of subtle layers of Montis' work that once discovered, grant another dimension and depth, to his entire work; they show its peculiarity and tragedy.

That is why we have talked about a manual, which introduces the poetry and prose of the Cypriot creator. Furthermore, it is an analysis of his poetry, since particularly with the smaller studies in this volume, we observe his developmental progress, his transfer from style to style, his mannerism "moments", which comprise the seeds of his whole poetry, the literary existence of Montis.

Specifically, the first study is a useful introductory text, deliberately of course placed at the start, since it outlines the general biographical and literary material to get to know the poet's life in broad terms, which is indissolubly tied with his work. His complexity is documented and it is explained how he found his way to poetry, through prose and light theatre. Additionally, about the individual parts that we have mentioned before, the stylistic and the descriptive, there is reference here about Monti's preference, the short-versed poem, thus allusive, as well as his ironical intention; the parenthetic-interruptive use, the sources for his texts and his preference for specific poets, such as Cavafis or Karyotakis. The reader is predisposed about the method of theme development and the core element of his themes, his figural choices and the small figures, the effect of historical events that unfolded in Cyprus on his poetry. Moreover, there is material to aid in understanding his prose and references to specific works that are considered significant for his extensive poetry. Finally, this study highlights the linguistic organ that Montis exploits, whose understanding leads to a serious



issue of Cypriot production that is related both with the particularity of Cypriot and its idioms, and its relation to Greek literary production.

We could say that in this section Papaleontiou concentrates and summarises everything that has been said about Montis' literature, so later on he can deal on with its separate philological, lingual or stylistic aspects.

In the second section, therefore, he grapples with a basic ingredient of Montis' poetry, irony, a subject that the writer of the volume has dealt with elsewhere. The emphasis which he gives, we think should be evaluated in general. Not only in Montis' work but in Cypriot literary production in general, particularly after 1974, from which stems a bitter or philosophical or melancholic irony, a consequence of the events and proliferating in other well-known poets, such as Kyr. Charalambides. I shall not refer to the detailed subcategories that are detected in Montis' poetry, but I will emphasize two characteristic forms, the elliptical construction and the counterpoint-juxtaposition of conceptual pairs. It is a fact that works of this kind lead to an in-depth study and interpretation of Montis, while they provide an understanding of the space in which he moves.

The third work of the book concerns the self-referencing of the poet. It holds great interest since beyond the self-critical, self-interpretive and self-historical material, essential in understanding his work, topics are proposed by Montis himself, which are developed and distributed by Papaleontiou, about the relation of poetry and life, veritas and plusquam veritas (truth and hyper-truth). The self-psychographic tone that the writer discovers leads to an idiomorphic self-analysis. They are reading keys that are coded and become easy to use by the reader, thus unlocking Montis' poems. Finally, this piece of work leads to the search for the sources of the Cypriot poet and the quality of his textual material, an issue again that touches upon the sum of Cypriot literary production and the discovering of basic characteristics and preferences.

A similar interpretive value is given to the study entitled "The poet Costas Montis and History". Its undermining and unreliability are issues of his poetry. Again the reader is guided to preceding examples, like the Cavafian one, discovering the roots of the Cypriot region. Again he is driven to observe the peculiar relation of literature and history especially under the specific conditions of the island, a fact that has led many men of letters to view (and see) history with suspicion, or with contempt.

Two studies that follow refer to specific works, to *Letters to Mother* on the one hand, and to the novel *Afentis Battistas etc.*, on the other. They are delicate infiltrations into these texts of Montis, but also exercises on a

specific field, for those who were examined on the first works. For practical applications the text is

comparative-objective, where *Closed doors* “discourse” contrapuntally with *Bitter lemons* by L. Durrell and *Bronze age* by R. Roufos. It is the distinct view from the inside. The viewpoint of the sufferer. This text will also be considered an application of those theoretical thoughts which he has documented in a previous study, about the relation of literature and history. Even so, the appeal is extended, since it concerns the whole personality of Montis, a regulator to a great extent of the literary affairs of Cyprus.

The two last studies examine two other aspects of Montis, a) his preoccupation with the short story (the whole environment brings to mind the great Cypriot prose writer Nicos Nicolaides) and b) his service in the theatre, with the pretext of the magazine ‘*To Theatro*’ (Theatre), which he published in Cyprus during 1944-1945.

In closing, we will recapitulate that this volume does indeed constitute an introduction to Montis’ work, which theoretically and practically initiates the reader to his poetry and prose, which provokes comparisons to the Greek area, which offers material for the recognition of the characteristics of Cypriot literature from 1950 till today, which leaves its Greek character evident and the creation of an idiosyncratic quality, a consequence of the historical events of greater Hellenism, events that the national core is participating in, that is why it is called upon to acknowledge them. Since the failure of systematic integration of Cypriot literary production into Greek literature shows an inexcusable ignorance and most importantly, a missed opportunity for a dynamic revitalization.

Theodosios Pylarinos

## Chronologies

### Grèce: 16 Mars - 30 Septembre 2007

- 18 mars*: Le Congrès du *Synaspismos* approuve la coopération électorale avec d'autres forces de la gauche radicale sous l'appellation de *Syriza* (Coalition de la gauche radicale).
- 20 mars*: Hommage au Palais de la Musique à Constantin Caramanlis pour le centième anniversaire de sa naissance.
- 26 mars*: Le ministre français de la Culture, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres remet, à Athènes, à Mikis Théodorakis les insignes de Commandeur de l'ordre de la Légion d'honneur.
- 26 avril*: Démission du ministre de l'Emploi Savvas Tsitouridis, remplacé par le député Vassilis Magginas.
- 3 mai*: La Cour d'appel spéciale a confirmé la culpabilité d'Alexandre Giotopoulos, chef de l'organisation terroriste du *17 novembre* et de ses principaux exécutants, condamnés en 2003 à la prison à vie. Le *17 novembre* a revendiqué l'assassinat de 23 personnes grecques et étrangères ainsi qu' une dizaine d'attentats à la roquette anti-char et à la bombe.
- 5 juin*: L'UE décide de faire sortir la Grèce de la procédure en déficit excessif.
- 20 juin*: Selon Eurobaromètre 61% des Grecs sont favorables à la Constitution européenne.
- 27 juin*: L'oecuménisme du Patriarcat de Constantinople est basé sur les conventions internationales, les Saintes règles de l'orthodoxie, l'histoire et la tradition ecclésiastique souligne le porte-parole du gouvernement grec en réaction à la décision de la Cour de cassation turque, niant l'*oecuménisme* du Patriarcat.
- 30 juillet*: Rencontre à Paris du Premier ministre Costas Caramanlis avec le président Nicolas Sarkozy. Celui-ci propose l'aide de la France pour combattre les incendies, qui, en juin et juillet, ont causé en Grèce la mort d'une quinzaine de personnes.

*25 août:* Peu après l'annonce de la dissolution de la Chambre des députés de gigantesques incendies ravagent le Péloponnèse, l'île d'Eubée et la région d'Athènes. Pendant une dizaine de jours ces incendies, dont certains sont d'origine criminelle, vont causer la mort d'au moins 65 personnes et la destruction de 200 000 hectares. Plusieurs pays européens dont la France et Chypre ont répondu à la demande de la Grèce, qui demandait l'envoi de pompiers pour lutter contre les incendies. Le gouvernement grec a estimé à 4 milliards d'euros le coût des incendies.

*1<sup>er</sup> septembre:* José Manuel Barroso, le président de la Commission européenne, en visite en Grèce déclare qu'il est temps de renforcer les capacités de réaction collective de l'UE face aux sinistres du type de ceux que vient de subir ce pays. Danuta Hübner, commissaire chargée de la politique régionale déclare que l'UE pourrait débloquer 200 millions d'euros pour venir en aide aux sinistrés grecs.

*16 septembre:* élections législatives anticipées. Victoire de la *Nouvelle Démocratie* qui avec 41,84% des voix obtient une courte majorité avec 152 sièges sur 300. Le principal parti de l'opposition, le *Pasok (Mouvement socialiste panhellénique)*, est en recul avec 38,10% des voix et 102 sièges. Sont en progrès le *Parti communiste (KKE)* (8,15% et 22 sièges) le *Syriza (Coalition de la Gauche radicale)* (5,04% et 14 sièges). Le parti de la droite extrême *Laos (Rassemblement populaire orthodoxe)* fait pour la première fois son entrée au Parlement en obtenant 10 députés et 3,79% des voix. Les *Ecologistes* n'ayant pas franchi la barre des 3%, qui était indispensable pour avoir des députés, demeurent en dehors du Parlement ne recueillant que 1,05% des voix.

Georges Papandréou président du Pasok annonce qu'il va demander un nouveau mandat de confiance à son parti. Evanghélos Vénizélos, député de Thessalonique et ancien ministre déclare sa candidature à la présidence du Pasok.

*18 septembre:* Prestation de serment du nouveau gouvernement:

Premier ministre:	Costas Caramanlis
Ministre de l'Intérieur, de l'administration publique et de la décentralisation:	Procopis Pavlopoulos
Secrétaires d'Etat:	Athanassios Nakos
	Christos Zoïs
	Panayiotis Hinofotis

Ministre de l'Economie et des finances: Secrétaires d'Etat:	Georges Alogoskoufis Antonis Bézas Ioannis Papathanassiou Nicos Légas
Ministre des Affaires étrangères: Secrétaires d'Etat:	Dora Bakoyannis Ioannis Valinakis Pétros Doukas Théodore Kassimis
Ministre de la Défense: Secrétaires d'Etat:	Evangelhélou Meïmarakis Constantin Tasoulas Ioannis Plakiotakis
Ministre du Développement: Secrétaires d'Etat:	Christos Folias Georges Vlachos Stavros Kalafatis
Ministre de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement du territoire et des travaux Publics: Secrétaires d'Etat:	Georges Souflias Stavros Kaloyiannis Thémistocle Xanthopoulos
Ministre de l'Education et des cultes: Secrétaires d'Etat:	Euripide Stylianidis Spyros Taliadouros Andréas Lykourantzou
Ministre de l'Emploi et de la protection sociale: Secrétaire d'Etat:	Vassilis Magginas Sophie Kalantzakou
Ministre de la Santé et de la solidarité sociale: Secrétaires d'Etat:	Dimitri Avramopoulos Georges Papageorgiou Georges Constantopoulos
Ministre du Développement agricole et des aliments: Secrétaire d'Etat:	Alexandre Kondos Constantin Kiltidis

Ministre de la Justice:	Sotiris Hadzigakis
Ministre de la Culture:	Michel Liapis
Secrétaire d'Etat aux Sports:	Ioannis Ioannidis
Ministre du Tourisme:	Aris Spiliotopoulos
Ministre des Transports et des communications:	Constantin Hadzidakis
Ministre de la Marine marchande et de la politique insulaire:	Georges Voulgarakis
Secrétaire d'Etat:	Panos Kamménos
Ministre de la Macédoine et de la Thrace:	Margaritis Tzimas
Ministre d'Etat chargé des questions de le presse et Porte parole du Gouvernement:	Théodore Roussopoulos

*25 septembre:* Serjan Kerim, ancien ministre des Affaires Étrangères de la FYROM, qui assume la présidence tournante de l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU, utilise dans un discours à plusieurs reprises l'expression *République de Macédoine* provoquant ainsi une vive réaction de la Grèce.

*30 septembre:* Costas Caramanlis obtient de la Chambre des députés un vote de confiance par 152 voix contre 148 après avoir exposé son programme de gouvernement.

## **Chypre: 16 Mars - 30 Septembre 2007**

*29 mars:* Selon le journal Kibris les restes de 24 Chypriotes grecs disparus ont été retrouvés près de Kyrénia. Au total on a retrouvé les restes de 110 Chypriotes grecs et de 50 Chypriotes turcs.

*18-20 avril:* Visite officielle à Chypre du président de la République slovaque, Ivan Gasparovic.

*11 mai:* Décès de Nicos Simeonidès, ministre de la Défense, qui est remplacé par Christodoulos Pashiardis, Porte-parole du gouvernement.

*15 mai:* Le président Papadopoulos annonce, après avoir reçu le soutien du parti socialiste EDEK, qu'il était intéressé à exercer un second mandat à la tête de la République de Chypre.

*13 juin:* Le ministre des affaires étrangères Georges Lillikas a menacé l'exercice du droit de veto par Chypre sur le chapitre «contrôle financier», un des 3 chapitres de négociation entre la Turquie et l'UE devant s'ouvrir le 26 juin. Finalement ce chapitre sera ouvert avec celui intitulé «statistiques», la France s'étant opposée à l'examen du 3<sup>ème</sup> chapitre «politique économique et monétaire».

*8 juillet:* Congrès extraordinaire du parti communiste AKEL qui désigne son secrétaire général Dimitri Christofias comme candidat à l'élection présidentielle de février 2008.

*10 juillet:* Les ministres des finances de l'UE donnent leur accord définitif à l'entrée de Chypre dans la zone euro le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2008 (1 euro= 0,585274 livre chypriote).

*11 juillet:* Démission de Georges Lillikas, ministre des Affaires Étrangères et de 3 autres ministres de l'AKEL, Harris Thrassou, Harris Charalambous et Néoclis Silikiotis. Avec le départ de ces ministres est rompue l'alliance tripartite de gouvernement AKEL-DIKO-EDEK.

*16 juillet:* Prestation de serment des quatre nouveaux ministres, Erato Kozakou-Markoulli (affaires étrangères), Maria Malachtou - Pamballi (Communications), Costas Kadis (Santé) et Christos Patsalidès (Intérieur).

- 23 juillet:* Le président Papadopoulos annonce sa décision d'être candidat à sa propre succession aux élections de février 2008 et en appelle au soutien des électeurs de l'AKEL.
- 29-30 juillet:* Visite à Chypre de Karolos Papoulias, président de la République hellénique, venu assister aux cérémonies du 30<sup>ème</sup> anniversaire de la mort de Mgr Makarios.
- 10 août:* Les menaces d'Ankara au sujet de l'exploitation de champs pétroliers par Chypre au large de ses côtes pourraient bloquer l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'UE met en garde le gouvernement chypriote.
- 5 septembre:* Rencontre dans la zone tampon de Nicosie du président Papadopoulos et du chef de la communauté chypriote turque Mehmet Ali Talat pour tenter de faire progresser la mise en œuvre de l'accord –cadre conclu lors de leur dernière rencontre du 8 juillet 2006.
- 18 septembre:* Le président de la Turquie, Abdullah Gül, élu le 28 août, a réservé sa première visite à l'étranger à Chypre Nord. Le chef de l'Etat turc déclare durant son séjour en zone occupée de Chypre: «La réalité sur l'île est qu'il y a deux Etats, deux démocraties, deux langues et deux religions». Protestation du gouvernement chypriote contre cette visite qualifiée d'illégale.
- 19 septembre:* Selon un sondage pour le compte de l'Université de Chypre obtiendraient aux élections présidentielles de février 2008:  
Tassos Papadopoulos 32,74%, Ioannis Kassoulidis 28,62% et Dimitri Christofias 29,39%.
- 27 septembre:* Un rapport de la Commission européenne reconnaît que l'aide financière à la communauté chypriote turque de 259 millions d'euros, allouée en février 2006, risque de ne pas être totalement dépensée pour des raisons d'ordre juridique, politique et technique. Seulement 14,5 millions d'euros de contrats ont été effectivement passés. Le fait que 78% des terrains privés du nord de Chypre appartiennent à des Chypriotes grecs, qui doivent donner leur accord à nombre de projets d'infrastructure, complique l'octroi effectif de cette aide.



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