

A Tribute to Cypriot Literature

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It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that a large part of modern Cypriot literature¹ 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 16th century Renaissance poems. Still, from a first mapping out of the known material it appears that this production is much richer.² Contemporary research is more interested in writers of the last centenary, spanning from Vassilis Michaelides and Dimitris Lipertis to Yiorgos Ph. Pierides and Costas Montis. Nonetheless, even the 20th 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.³ 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

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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”?⁴ 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”,⁵ that are occasionally proposed more convincing and functional? Or is Yiorgos Kehayoglou right to consider as minor or unimportant “the issue of scientificness 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”?⁶

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 20th 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”.⁷ 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 Cypriocentric ideologies and was deemed dismissible (i.e. by Nikos Kranidiotis and Andreas Pastellas).⁸ 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. Yiorgos Lysiotis deems that during recent years Cypriot literature has been dealt with more seriously in Greece, beginning with Yiorgos P. Savvides and Yiorgos Kehayioglou. 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 16th 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 9th 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 19th 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 Hellenic 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, Yiorgos Papantonakis looks into children's literature with an emphasis on poetry for children; and Yiorgos 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 translators⁹ 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 Kehayoglou's announcement, currently in print, "The polysystem of early Cypriot literature (12th 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", *Porfyros* 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 (*Peirasmos* 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 19th 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 Hellenic, 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).