

Literary Magazines in Cyprus During 2007

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RÉSUMÉ

Les premières revues littéraires sont parues à Chypre pendant les premières décennies du 20^e 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 reviews appeared in Cyprus during the first decades of the 20th 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).

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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 Chysanthi 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 Gaviel 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 unflinchingly 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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