Kunapipi is a biannual arts magazine with special but not exclusive emphasis on the new literatures written in English. It aims to fulfil the requirements T.S. Eliot believed a journal should have: to introduce the work of new or little known writers of talent, to provide critical evaluation of the work of living authors, both famous and unknown, and to be truly international. It publishes creative material and criticism. Articles and reviews on related historical and sociological topics plus film will also be included as well as graphics and photographs.

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Kunapipi refers to the Australian Aboriginal myth of the Rainbow Serpent which is the symbol of both creativity and regeneration. The journal’s emblem is to be found on an Aboriginal shield from the Roper River area of the Northern Territory of Australia.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editorial, <em>Anne Collett</em></th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### ARTICLES

*Diana Wood Conroy*, ‘Stone Writing in Ancient Paphos: Theatre, Basilica and House’  
8

*Stephanos Stephanides*, ‘An Island in Translation’  
42

*Marios Vasiliou*, ‘Cypriot English Literature: A Stranger at the Feast Locally and Globally’  
83

*Irini Savvides*, ‘Cypriot Women Poets Cross the Line’  
106

*Gabriel Koureas*, ‘Nicosia/Istanbul: Ruins, Memory and Photography’  
171

*Christine Pagnoulle*, ‘Past into Future: Cyprus’ Undivided Literature —  
Aydin Mehmet Ali and Stephanos Stephanides’  
202

*Stavros Stavrou Karayanni*, ‘Towards an Epistemology of Longing: Gender Disruptions and Resistance in Cyprus Narratives of Displacement’  
230

*Antonis Danos*, ‘The Little Land Fish: Experiencing Place, Homeland, and Identity in an Exhibition of Contemporary Cypriot Art’  
247

### PROSE

*Diana Wood Conroy*, ‘Towards Aphrodite’  
27

*Andriana Ierodiaconou*, ‘Truth’  
34

*Irini Savvides*, ‘Stolen Sweets — 1964’  
74

*Miranda Hoplaros*, ‘Extracts from *Mrs Bones*’  
94

*Nora Nadjarian*, ‘Sparrow’  
125

*Stephanos Stephanides*, ‘Winds Come From Somewhere’  
126

*Gür Genç*, ‘Last Meeting with Taner Baybars’  
142

*Ruth Keshishian*, ‘A Biography of a Bookshop’  
162

*Aydin Mehmet Ali*, ‘Forbidden Zone…’  
188

*Miranda Hoplaros*, ‘Ja Ja’, ‘The Great Trek’  
244, 245

### POETRY

30, 31, 32

‘I Worshipped Too Many Gods’  
33
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niki Marangou, ‘Πανηγύρι στο Μένοικο’, ‘Festival at Menoiko’, 54, 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Αγίοι Σαράντα Κιρκλάρ Τεκκέ’, ‘Forty Martyrs Kirklar Tekke’, 56, 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Στην Αγία Αικατερίνη’, ‘Saint Catherine’, 58, 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Οι τριανταφυλλιές’, ‘Roses’, 60, 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Γράμμα στον Διονύση’, ‘Letter to Dionysis’, 62, 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Δεν της πήρα λουλούδια’, ‘I Did Not Take Her Flowers’, 64, 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ανάμεσα Αγίας Ζώνης και Σαριπόλου’, ‘Between Ayia Zoni and Saripolos Street’, 66, 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Επιστρέφοντας’, ‘Returning’, 68, 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Οδικός χάρτης’, ‘Street Map of Nicosia’, 70, 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Οι γυναίκες στο Βουκουρέστι’, ‘Women in Bucharest’ 72, 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alev Adil, ‘Nicosia Girl’, ‘Noir Logic’, 100, 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Οκταί Ριφάτ’, ‘You Can’t Get Lost in the Walled City’, 102, 103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Temporary Theme’, ‘Complicit Cartographies’ 104, 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘War Cemetery Omaha Beach’, ‘Let’s Hold Hands’ 148, 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Μια Σειρά Ι–VIII’ 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ars Poetica: Sacred or Daemonic’, ‘Requiem for Trikomo’, 221, 223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTERVIEW**

Gür Genç, ‘Taner Baybars’a Sorular’ 150

**ABSTRACTS** 275

**NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS** 279

**NOTES ON EDITORIAL ADVISORS** 283
EDITORIAL

‘I worshipped too many gods, but /After long winters in the North I know now/ Sun, you are the most real!’ writes Cypriot poet, Gür Genc (‘I Worshipped Too Many Gods’ 33). As an Australian who spent almost ten years in the dark, damp, cold of English winters, I understand what he means — my skin, my eyes, my very bones, my soul understands what he means. Here in Cyprus the stones on the beach are white white; the sea is the clearest aqua I have ever seen. This is my first glimpse of the Mediterranean and I discover it to be very different to the dark blue of ocean and yellow sands of the South Pacific. But I feel at home in the dry air and the hot sun and the bright light. I float pink oleander out to Aphrodite’s rock. I walk into the ruins of an ancient theatre and through the cool dark of tombs. The museum is filled with broken statues, fragments of stonework, pots of all sizes, colours and shapes, delicate gold earrings, ancient coins, patterned peacocks and dolphins. There are so many saints, golden and earthen. A church is wound about with string. I see ancient mosaic tile floors that I could have sworn were textile — how is this effect of softness and depth achieved? It is a mystery to me. They are the luxury of a rich man’s carpet in a hot land. This is a wondrous world.

I made my first trip to Cyprus in June 2010 for the 15th triennial conference of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Languages Studies, hosted by the University of Nicosia. It was here that I attended a panel on ‘Cypriot Writing in English’ and heard readings of work by Aydin Mehmet Ali, Miranda Hoplaros, Nora Nadjian and Andriana Ierodiaconou. I also listened to poetry read by Niki Marangou, Stephanos Stephanides and Gür Genc. I heard young scholars speak about the history of Cyprus and Cypriot literature. A new world opened to me. I had never read any work by contemporary Cypriot writers and in that I am sure I was not alone among my colleagues who attended the conference. This issue of Kunapipi was born out of my delight in the discovery of a rich and various literary and cultural world that has grown out of a long history of cultural layering and mixing. The history of Cyprus is dark and violent, a history in which many have suffered and continue to suffer; but it has also given birth to beauty — phoenix-like from the ashes — again and again. As Gür Genc remarks, ‘For such a small island so much poetry’: he might despair of a Cyprus riven by difference, a Cyprus in which the heat of battle has melted even the stones, a Cyprus that cries out for ‘trees/or water!’ not more words (‘Not Poetry … Water’ 30); but he keeps writing poetry. Art is the fire that burns and the water that soothes. Art is the first and the last resort. Like Niki Marangou and the Byzantine Emperor, ‘I await the usual miracle’ (‘Returning’ 69).

I wish here to thank Stephanos Stephanides without whose help this issue would not have happened, and I hope that you enjoy this collection of creative and scholarly work as much I enjoyed bringing it to fruition.

Anne Collett