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Cyprus: Antipodeans and the hidden weaves of antiquity

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Cyprus is an island of ancient hybrid cultures in the eastern Mediterranean: polyglot, insular, luminously beautiful, but also edgily divided against itself in bitter politics that is symbolised through the religious divisions between Orthodox Christianity and Islam. Andros is the largest island in the Cyclades, characterised by silent immensities and hills sculptured with schist walls and paths from another time. In 1967 and 1973, I attended a University of Sydney study season in Andros, under Alexander Cambitoglou, making archaeological drawings and weaving at night. Since 1995, I have participated in the excavation of the theatre in Paphos, in western Cyprus, directed by Richard Green and Craig Barker and have observed the gradual uncovering of the orchestra, stage building, and entrances of the Greco-Roman theatre.

This essay uncovers my own experience within the larger story of how Australians have come to be in Cyprus, and, later, in Andros, digging up their pasts. Is there a reverse colonialism in this movement to excavate another country’s past? Beginning with James Stewart in 1937, I trace the movement of Australian archaeology on these two islands.

Delving into the worlds of classical antiquity is, I argue, related to the historical European confrontation with the large scope of Indigenous antiquity. Through working with the Tiwi on Bathurst Island off northern Australia, I sense that there is a kind of Aboriginality in searching the classical past.

**Keywords:** archaeology; art; Aboriginal studies; islands

**Introduction**

Weavers are collaborative people, forming lifelong associations to confer, exhibit, and travel. Archaeologists, too, work together, and both teams that I have joined from the University of Sydney have longstanding relationships with two Mediterranean islands: the Geometric site of Zagora on the Cycladic island of Andros in Greece and the Greco-Roman theatre in Paphos, Cyprus. I have worked in both teams as an illustrator and an archaeologist of fresco and textiles.

On an island, one is always close to that edge between sea and land, a liminal space between solid and fluid entities. This essay tracks the intertwined approaches of “objective” archaeology and a personal geopoetics of islands. My time on islands both in the Mediterranean and in the Arafura Sea (off Northern Australia) brought together archaeological scholarship with the craft of weaving. On a day that was called “catastrophic” by the fire authorities on the east coast of New South Wales—14 January 2013—I began a tapestry in 46-degree heat. Weaving a tapestry is like writing. The thread, beaten down between the vertical warp threads, gradually accumulates in a mosaic

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of colour, a narrative line that continues over hundreds of hours at the loom until the pattern comes to an end. The process measures time in small increments of woven fabric. Mimicking an archaeological stratigraphy, the chronological beginnings are at the base of the tapestry, and the recent layers are at the top. Tapestry weaving as a marginal practice in contemporary visual arts could be described as an island of peculiar character in contrast to the certainties of the artistic mainland. Similarly, remote islands in the Mediterranean form microcosms of innovative culture within the larger whole.

Mediterranean islands have played a formative role in archaeology beginning with Sir Arthur Evans’s exploration of Crete in 1921, the extraordinary finds from Cyprus documented by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition from the 1930s, and the great emergence of Bronze Age Cycladic culture documented by Colin Renfrew in 1972. Currently, Australian archaeologists are actively contributing to this long trajectory of discovery and exchange.

The background to Australian archaeologists in the Mediterranean: Cyprus

The island of Cyprus is one of the larger islands in the Mediterranean (others include Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and Crete) and is a country in its own right. Its geographical position as a crossing point has always attracted settlers from both east and west. Populated first in the Paleolithic around the ninth millennium BC by people from the east, the island has experienced waves of incoming people—Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Lusignan French, Venetians, Ottoman Turks, and finally the British in 1874. “The socio-political history of Cyprus over the last 50 years is a maze” commented Catia Galatariotou.1 Cyprus became a Republic in 1960 but was divided by tensions between Cypriot Greeks and Turks, a situation that mirrored hostile relationships between the mother countries of Greece and Turkey. In 1974, Turkey invaded northern Cyprus, and longstanding populations moved between north and south, with great suffering. After decades of negotiation along the United Nations Green Line, there is no resolution to the division of the island. Polyglot and hybrid, Cyprus is also beautiful and singular both in its languages and complex heritage. As a British colony with a familiar government and bureaucracy, it attracted a dynamic Australian archaeologist in the 1930s. James R. Stewart (1913–62), came to the University of Sydney in 1947 with the repressed energy of a released prisoner of war—an energy that would in time drive him to become the inaugural professor of Near Eastern archaeology in Australia and honorary curator of the Nicholson Museum.2 Before the war in 1937–38, he had dug Early Bronze Age tombs in Cyprus at Vounous, near the village of Bellapais, which was later central to Lawrence Durrell’s 1957 memoir Bitter Lemons.3 Stewart, with his second wife and archaeologist Eve, resumed digging in Cyprus at Kafkallia near Vasilia and at Ayia Paraskevi near Nicosia in 1955, making significant finds. Stewart “was enthralled by the island and its landscapes” with a distinctive archaeology separated from the mainland by its “weird potforms”.4 Political tensions on the island and administrative difficulties in Australia imposed a break in fieldwork until 1961, immediately following Cyprus’s Independence and new republican constitution, when Stewart’s team excavated the Bronze Age cemetery of Lapatsa and tombs from Paleolona, both near Karmi. Judith Powell’s 2013 biography of Stewart, entitled Love’s Obsession, unravels some of the complexities of his life.5 The Cyprus Department of Antiquities permitted 70 packing cases of finds to be shipped to Australia. Stewart had salvaged material from looted ancient cemeteries and much of this came to the Nicholson. His major contribution to Cypriot studies was the
1962 classification of the Early Bronze Age material in Volume 4 of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition publication. Material from his collections was presented to museums and galleries around Australia and New Zealand and contributed very significantly to the Cypriot collection in the Nicholson Museum.6

Stewart’s early death in 1962 left a legacy of deep Australian involvement in Cyprus. Australian students and colleagues who worked at Karmi, such as Robert Merrillees, Mary Ann Meagher, and Betty Cameron, all of whom I would later come to know, carried on his work.7 Archaeologists establish dynasties of connected personalities in excavation teams that may extend over decades and across hemispheres. A student of James Stewart, Australian Basil Hennessy, directed an excavation at Stephania in Cyprus in 1951 before he joined the University of Sydney’s Department of Archaeology as a lecturer in 1954. Despite Hennessy’s desire to return to Cyprus, for a variety of reasons, he never engaged in fieldwork there again, but he rose to be a revered professor of Near Eastern archaeology, retiring in 1990.8 More recently, David Frankel and Jennifer M. Webb from La Trobe University have excavated, surveyed, and researched Bronze Age areas in Cyprus at Marki, Deneia, Politiko, and Psematismenos since 1990, uncovering settlement sites and cemeteries. Jennifer Webb and colleagues have researched and published Stewart’s material from the protean Bronze Age phase of Cypriot culture.9

Excavating on islands: the personal dimension

Australians have continued to have a presence in Cypriot archaeology. Eve Stewart gave a large bequest that allowed the purchase of an elegant house in Nicosia in memory of her husband, which became the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI) in 1978. CAARI’s library and living quarters have helped to create a strong research community in Cyprus that continues to have Australian representation to this day.

My involvement in Cyprus began with a phone call in 1995 from my former teacher, Richard Green, then Arthur and Renee George Professor of Classical Archaeology at Sydney, inviting me to the excavation of the Greco-Roman theatre at Fabrika Hill in Paphos in western Cyprus. Because of his expertise in theatre imagery, Demos Christou (director of antiquities in Cyprus) had invited Richard Green to undertake the long-term study of the site. The theatre had been built about 300 BC and was in use until c. 400 AD when it fell into ruins and became a quarry. From 1996 until the present, I have continued to be part of the large student and collegiate teams that have gathered nearly every year to uncover the theatre. In that span of time, hundreds of Australians have participated at Paphos, which has “proved to be a training excavation for a generation of archaeology students”, some of them of Cypriot or Greek origin through diasporic parents.10 The experience of digging transforms the minds and bodies of the excavators and has brought an intimate knowledge of Cyprus back into the Antipodes.11

Excavating on islands has a subjective element. Perhaps because of the isolation from regular contact with the mainland, we turn inwards and to each other in an often blissful oblivion of the wider world. “On islands we feel alternately landed and adrift, magnified and reduced, fulfilled and voided, at home and in exile”, wrote David Lowenthal.12 Coming back annually to Cyprus means that Paphos becomes another home, and the people of the town become neighbours. We watch each other grow older. The task of excavation is to focus completely on the interlocking actions of digging, drawing, interpreting, and photographing, with occasional visits to other sites and museums. According to Mark Patton, the fascination of islands is the isolation and relative security
of island life, giving an opportunity to escape from “reality” as defined by other people and to reinvent it for oneself. Time on the dig is an island in the ocean of the year, a time of concentrated attention within the framework of the site. One immerses oneself in the feeling of another time, excavating glimpses of stories as well as things. For the village people of Paphos, the ruins of the theatre on Fabrika Hill beside the ancient terebinth tree—where people gathered after a severe earthquake in the 1950s—are embedded in their own life stories. People travel, Michel de Certeau observed, to explore “the deserted places of memory”, to repopulate the imagination with legends that have disappeared from their own localities. The archaic technique of tapestry allowed me to reinvent the vanished textiles of antiquity, appropriating the ancient image into an Australian context.

Daily observations in a notebook traced the progress of excavation:

27 September

At dawn on site with the team I started to document the painted stones (excavated in 1996) to see how they had weathered. The traces of colour are becoming fainter, but the curving fillets and blobby red flowers from the vaulted ceiling are clearly visible. (I had made small tapestries of the red flower poised on a green stem in 1998 while it was still vivid, giving the image back to fabric, an image that once existed as a textile pattern.) Are they similar in scope to the painted canopy found in the Hellenistic tomb? Kerrie is finding traces of painted plaster of Hellenistic date at the top entrance to the cavea, near the aqueduct.

29 September

After a hot day’s work we went to the harbour and swam way out in the silken sea. Sitting on the rocks afterwards I tried to draw the rippling flicker of patterns, the goddess net of gold that can’t be pinned down—you just see the shimmer of a net but it never stays still enough to be sure. The net is a Paleolithic pattern, sign of the Mother in ancient Europe. My friends rest prone and exhausted after picking and shovelling compressed earth in the burning sun.

I walk back along the route traversed constantly over many years—past the Turkish fountain built into the wall near the new mosque, past the dusty ground where Athina’s son walks his dog. I glimpsed Athina and her grandson eating together by a small light outside, heads close. I passed Prodromos with his large vulnerable face and bulbous eyes, his kind wife sitting in the dark beside him, wishing me goodnight. They have cooked fish for us often over the years. Just sitting in the cool, with no direct light. The family boat building seems to have stopped. These people are the heart of the place, steady, hardworking, attending to patterns of village and family, not travelling. The mud brick rectangular houses are nearly all gone, leaving blanks along the road, as the black clothed women who lived in them vanish. One-room dwellings; they owned a few hens, a little stove, a bed, icons on the wall, table and chairs, with the ecclesia for consolation.
Andros

The northernmost island of the Greek Cyclades archipelago, the island of Andros, forms a chain from Euboea in the north to Tinos and Mykonos to the south and is comparable to Naxos or Lesbos in size: 40 km long and approximately 16 km wide. The Cyclades islands “circle” the sacred island of Delos. In the last 100 years, the agricultural population of Andros has declined, and the characteristic steep terraces are crumbling and abandoned. The schist walls of triangular stones still appear as necklaces across the hills. The well-watered valleys below the bare mountains once produced figs and citrus, olive oil, silk, and wine in abundance.

To go back to the 1960s, Alexander Cambitoglou, a Greek originally from Thessaloniki, became the professor of classical archaeology at the University of Sydney after James Stewart’s death, initiating another excavation of an island site that had been previously inaccessible. This remarkable man with degrees from Greece, Germany, and England made a formidable impression on me when I was his teenage student, with his fluent languages and international hauteur. I catalogued artefacts in the Nicholson Museum under his scrupulous care, finding that art and archaeology became fused. Alexander Cambitoglou came to know the exposed headland site of Zagora on Andros in
1967 when, in Cambitoglou’s words, the archaeologist Nicholas Zapheiropoulos “yielded the rights of further research on the Geometric town to me and my colleagues”. Zagora was extraordinary in being a “pure” Geometric settlement site, abandoned in the seventh century BC. The research was carried out over four digging seasons and four study seasons from 1967 to 1977, in what Marie Bashir (governor of NSW and chancellor of the University of Sydney) referred to as a “visionary effort” in her keynote address at the opening of a conference in Athens. In Zagora, the first crucial architectural signs of the Greek polis, or city-state, were identified in this Australian archaeological expedition, with courtyard houses and a temple. These carefully documented discoveries are now cited by international scholars. The name “Zagora” is a Slavic word according to Alexander Cambitoglou, which means “beyond the mountain”. No one knows what the original people called their city.

For such a small city on an exposed headland, the Aegean must have seemed oceanic. In addition, the geography of the Cyclades, a fragmentary mosaic of mountainous islands with little water and lack of soil, made the rise of a single state unlikely and led to idiosyncratic and insular cultures. Colin Refrew, in his investigation into Cycladic prehistory, noted the vulnerability of such isolated settlements, pointing out that “civilization is itself an island in a sea of uncultured nature” in which people insulated themselves from the “primeval environment of nature alone” by spinning “a web of culture so complex and dense that most activities relate to this artificial environment rather than directly to the fundamentally natural one”. The restrictions, however, resulted in resourcefulness and inventiveness; the Andriots became pioneers in shipbuilding because communications and trade were essential. The Australian excavation at Zagora was supported substantially by Basil and Elise Goulandris, an Andriot ship-owning family. I wrote a journal while I worked every day for three months in 1973, drawing finds:

Menites, 3 June

Waking up to the milky light, the sound of birds and running water all around Mrs Strati’s house where the women sleep, four of us in the big saloni. I can look out over a terrace to olives frothing below and the bare high hills beyond above the moist valley where Menites sits. Last night we swam at dusk in the crystal water of the bay near Chora looking up at the pinky-brown terraced mountains. Walked above the village through endless walled donkey tracks, criss-crossed with stones in many different patterns, interrupted by wonderful gates. It was very old and mysterious in the heat and dryness, like walking into the past.

5 June

I looked at the many clay loom weights and spindle whorls from Zagora spread out on the tables and thought it would be good to learn spinning. I love the carved peacocks on the village fountain—like Coptic peacocks, and Mrs Strati’s assemblage of flowers in pots and amphorae on the terrace. The blue painted fountain always runs and is the source for all the irrigation channels that zig-zag down the hill.

14 June

Wake in the hot white light—the sea is white fire. An early morning walk high up in the windy hills—I met a man carrying a tin of milk, friendly and kindly. It came to me while drawing pottery fragments today that I should start weaving. I found thread in a shop in Chora, muted natural colours of ochre, rust, indigo and cream. The “everything” (Pantapoleion) shop had steel nails to hold the warp on an unwanted rectangular wooden frame in the storeroom.
5 August

All day, a free day, driving with Ray. Sometimes it seems as if the island is all in the past with the present just an afterword. The island will soon be a ghost of what it was. In some of the high villages the houses have lost their white lustre, are back to the brown stone, empty of people. Only the white painted houses are lived in, and are very few and far between, making the villages ghostly places to walk in. In Episkopeia there was an old man alone in his vast family house, the family all dead, or emigrated. He told us his vine was sick, his well dried up. He wanted us to stay longer—he brought out pears and quinces and a knife, but Ray wanted to get back so we left him sitting in that barren silence on the huge empty terrace. What a heart-rending old age—he said “I’m no good now I’m old. I’m alone—drink some water with me.”

14 August

The geometric style is an austere aesthetic, but it suits the starkness of the site, the toughness of living on that exposed headland. I did “borrow” a whorl from the tables and insert a modern spindle in it. The clay whorl made a tight hard thread, appropriate to Zagora. Their textiles no longer exist—there’s a glimpse perhaps in the reiterated geometric patterns of the pottery that I draw all day.

As the full moon rose behind the pink hills I went to see Marousio to thank her for her kindness in teaching me to spin. I can now spin erratically on the olive wood spindle and its whorl that she gave me, using the hairy white wool of the local sheep. Her small house was in chaos but even though there is nothing in her house—some chairs, a table, a bed, a lamp and small gas stove—he gave me a doily.

Since 2012, the compelling site of Zagora has become the renewed focus of investigation and excavation, led by Margaret Miller, the next Arthur and Renee George Professor of Classical Archaeology at Sydney and the first woman to head the department. Consumed with a wonderful excitement at the potential of the site, a group of Australians visited Zagora in early 2012, walking down the stony path like pilgrims to the stark headland.

Figure 3. Australians return to the site of Zagora, Andros, in May 2012, with Professor Alexander Cambitoglou and Dr Stavros Paspalas in the foreground. Photo: Diana Wood Conroy.
Bathurst and Melville islands, Northern Australia

The year after I was in Andros, in 1974, I went to Bathurst Island, north-west of Darwin in the Arafura Sea, as a coordinator of a silk-screen workshop, Tiwi Designs. Together with Melville Island, from which it is separated only by the turbulent Apsley Strait, the two islands are as big as Cyprus, with a fraction of the population. Bathurst and Melville islands had a kind of isolation undreamt of in the closely related island groups, such as the Cyclades of the Mediterranean. This Australian environment never had permanent buildings or even small settlements until the early twentieth century, as it was the domain of a resilient and inventive group of hunter-gatherers, the Tiwi. Their “web of culture”—Renfrew’s term—was entirely bound to the teeming forests of mangroves, eucalypts, and palms that covered the islands, which were never subject to agriculture.

Juxtaposing the islands of the Mediterranean with the Tiwi Islands off northern Australia is an unusual and perhaps telling conjunction of geographies in a personal “geopoetics”. A Yolngu friend pointed out, when I commented on the disparity, “they are both surrounded by sea and linked together by the flowing oceans”. Like Cyprus, Bathurst and Melville islands are poised between contrasting cultures, South-East Asia and Australia, with early visits by Macassans from Indonesia. Perhaps because of what Stephanos Stephanides has called “the selective condensation of islands”, where island cultures become idiosyncratic through the concentration and limitation of resources, the Tiwi Islands, like Cyprus, have a mythic, distinctive force. Whereas the myth of Aphrodite heralds the coming of fertile love born from the sea, the Tiwi myth of Purukupali explains and justifies the necessity of death. Unlike the spectacular treasures of ancient Cyprus, the ruins and traces of ancient Tiwi culture are not located in cities or material culture but exist in the continuing language and ceremonial arts that are tied to a
shifting but indissoluble connection to country. This perception of another way of understanding sites as country, invisible in the material evidence, is what I eventually brought back to Cyprus after 10 months with the Tiwi people. Again, I kept a journal.

27 February

A small crowd of people with shopping waited for the ferry to get back to the little settlement of Paru across the strait on Melville Island. There’s always a different boatman, sometimes Harry Lawlor, Aloysius, or Felix. Today it was Matthias Ulunguru whose camp was above the cliffs at the head of the strait. His dreamy face was bordered by sideburns.

We stepped out of the boat onto a bush road bordered with heavy mango trees, lined with occasional huts made of corrugated iron sheets nailed onto poles. Paddy Cooper met us, softly speaking, and walked us past the tangle of flowering gums echo[ing] with the cries of brilliant green parrots. He made coo–ee calls ahead to warn others “we’re coming”. Paddy’s voice is like water, full of little rills of laughter and mixed sounds of English and Tiwi.

Jeanie Kerinauia was sitting on the swept ground outside her house, with dogs splayed out on either side, sewing the bark baskets with a wallaby bone needle and reed thread.

26 March

The iridescent afternoon propelled the boat to the other side, the strait absolutely still, polished, under a sky full of pale blue clouds. Tiny Buchanan Island floated on the white sea, just a line of dark in the glare. A bird was bobbing about at the edge of the water; a huge eagle flying slowly east. At Paru I sat down beside Alice Jworlkala as she twined fibre for string. The grassy edge of the swept ground rustled with green ants and a trail of them ventured across the dirt, walking over Alice’s outstretched leg and off into the bush to gather leaves for their nests as if she had a prior agreement with them. I realised her different relationship to the creatures around; how I recoiled instinctively from insects on my flesh.

26 May

We walked along the strait to the airstrip before sunset listening to the distant rhythm of beating hands and wailing voices from Paru. Smoke from the campfires was drifting above the mangroves, water an unblemished blue, lapping on pinkish pebbles.

I set up a warp for a bush tapestry.

**Archaeology and colonisation**

The journal entries from Bathurst Island describe people whose worldview, embedded in myth and country, could be a parallel to that of the people of Zagora. Nothing of Paru would survive millennia to form an archaeological record except some rusty stains of iron sheets or tools in the soil and impressions of postholes for house supports. All organic materials, wood or fibre, would decay. White contact, however, could be implied from those traces.

Archaeological research, like anthropology is contact research, pointed out Claire Lyons and John Papadoupoulos: “Few human communities have remained untouched by outsiders, in antiquity as in the present.” Archaeology from its beginnings is enmeshed in colonialism in the subject of its investigations and its methods of practice, as the term “Near Eastern Archaeology”, reflecting a European centre of operations, suggests. The discipline itself began in late eighteenth-century Europe at a time of imperial conquest and trade across the world. As part of a former colony of Britain, it would seem that
Australians might develop a special understanding of Cyprus under the long government of Rome, which first colonised Cyprus in 46 BC, early in the life of the Paphos theatre. From the view of villagers in Paphos, the desire of Australians to excavate the ancient layers of Mediterranean islands is curious. Why come from so far away at so much expense with such arduous travel? The main official reason for excavation is scholarly, in the pursuit of knowledge about the material culture of the past: that “foreign country” anyway as David Lowenthal has pointed out, quoting L.P. Hartley. Returning to Europe, coming back from the denigrated “colonies”, formerly at the periphery of known worlds, brings a new energy to that old European centre that had expelled its outcasts and misfits. Australia inherited the laws and language of Britain with distant origins in the classical past. An innate position of colonisation was the right to “civilise”, to overcome the “barbarians”, which led to melancholy clearances of Indigenous peoples in establishing Australia. Later, the zeal for progress led to the 1970s project at Bathurst Island to support Indigenous art-making as a way of survival. Embarking on an excavation in ancient Europe, and on an island, fills the team members with a similar zeal, even a “mad hope of finding the temple of Aphrodite”, as Richard Green once said. We hope for revelation, for glittering insights in a different but not entirely unfamiliar land, as if an undreamt utopia might be unveiled, that could mitigate that inchoate sense of violent origins in Australia.28

I wondered about the reason that we were there at the time of the first season of excavation in 1996:

Walking and wondering along the dark road from the village shops to the theatre for the first time that evening (a walk made innumerable times in succeeding years)—I asked Richard, even though he was still jetlagged—“Why bring Australians to excavate a Hellenistic theatre?” He responded “It’s good training for classical archaeologists to dig, and we can’t do this kind of work at home. The Ptolemaic Alexandrian theatre is very significant in the history of theatre and Paphos obviously had close connections to her sister city of Alexandria, founded at about the same time in 320 BC.” The road was very dark and rough under our feet with a smell of dust, and ultramarine clouds pricked with stars were just visible moving across the sky.

He went on “Not many theatres of this early Hellenistic period are known, and the place of the theatre within the town of Paphos itself is of great significance. We don’t know the exact shape of the seats and their angle to the orchestra—the theatre is not the typical Hellenistic horseshoe, but a semi-circle.”

The strong Australian excavation teams in both Cyprus and Andros work cheerfully with great physical labour like some new form of sport. The prize is to win back the past, to uncover treasures from provincial ancient sites as if they might redeem our own history. Knowledge painfully instilled by Aboriginal people into white consciousness emphasises that country is an entity with agency, not a passive object for exploitation and submission. This is the insight for Australians to take back to Mediterranean island sites, as the earth is pierced and disturbed in excavation. The venerable dust of those shapeless spoil heaps beside the site are full of the vestiges of people going back to the beginnings of human presence. I learnt from the Tiwi that country is enmeshed and veiled in the invisible myths that gave people meaning. Places have a presence, and in Aboriginal terms, the viewing experience goes both ways. Not only do I observe, but also I am observed by the country; I look, but I am also looked at by the land and all that it holds.
Conclusion
In classical times, “texere”, Latin for “to weave” (from which comes “text”) was commonly used in the sense of “composing a written work”. A poem could be a “fabric” of crisscrossing elements; a song could be “woven”; a logical discourse in Plato could be made up of “interlacing” verbs and nouns.31

Every morning I weave, crisscrossing the teeming process of memory through the act of manipulating warp and weft into the mosaic of pattern. Exploring shapes with the interlocking threads is like unlocking a theorem, both physically through the touch of the fingers and mentally in being aware of the template of thinking, which may become writing. The activity is part of a long chain of flickering fingers going back to the beginning of early island societies.

Notes
11. The experience of excavating for sustained periods on Cyprus has also changed the artists I have taken from the faculty of Creative Arts at Wollongong University and led to a series of exhibitions that have brought together art and archaeology through the investigation of the structural poetics of the discipline, in drawing, touch, and digital photography. See Diana Wood Conroy, “Australian Artists and Archaeologists in the Sweet Land of Cyprus,” in Barker, Aphrodite’s Island, 64–65; and Diana Wood Conroy, The Fabric of the Ancient Theatre (Nicosia: Moufflon Publishing, 2007).
15. Two tapestries by Diana Wood Conroy, A flower for Aphrodite and Among the bones, music, both 20cm x 20cm (1998/2012) are in the University of Sydney’s Nicholson Museum exhibit Aphrodite’s Island: Australian Archaeologists in Cyprus, 2012–13.


22. Geopoetics proposes that earth is at the centre of experience and that the domains of knowledge can be enhanced by poetics drawn from ways of being, such as oral expression, writing, visual arts, and music. Kenneth White, “Inaugural Address,” to International Institute of Geopoetics, Scotland, April 28, 1989, accessed March, 5 2013, http://www.geopoetics.org.uk/welcome/what-is-geopoetics.


