PRESS RELEASE
October 15, 2026

18th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ANCIENT GREEK DRAMA

The Tragedy of Democracy:
Ancient myths, contemporary political ruptures and the resonances of ancient drama in the 21st century

November 7 – 8, 2026 | A.G. Leventis Gallery, Nicosia, Cyprus

The Department of Contemporary Culture of the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus and the Cyprus Centre of the International Theatre Institute (CCOITI) co-organise the "18th International Symposium on Ancient Greek Drama", which will take place on 7 and 8 November 2026 at the A. G. Leventis Gallery in Nicosia. The Symposium will be officially opened by the Deputy Minister of Culture, Mrs Clea Hadjistephanou Papaellina.

The 18th edition of the "International Symposium on Ancient Greek Drama", with the theme **"The Tragedy of Democracy: ancient myths, contemporary political ruptures and the resonances of ancient drama in the 21st century"**, focuses on the intricate relationship between tragedy and democracy, examining the political thought expressed in ancient tragedy and its contemporary readings and reinterpretations in light of the social and political challenges from the late 20th century to the 21st century.

Ancient tragedy emerged within the institutional and ideological framework of Athenian democracy and, drawing upon the mythical past, articulated crucial questions about power, justice, collective responsibility, and the roles of the individual and the citizen. The Symposium explores how ancient myths and tragic structures are transformed into contemporary political discourse and artistic practice, in relation to identity crisis, social rupture, political polarisation, and war. At its centre lies democracy, not as a fixed institutional construct but as an ever-changing and often contentious field of tension and reflection, with ancient drama continuing to function as a tool for artistic reflection and political dialogue in the present.

The organisers aim to present a broad spectrum of theoretical perspectives, ranging from dramaturgical analysis, political theory, theatre semiotics, philosophy, sociology, performance studies, and theatre criticism, to reception theory, intertextuality, and cultural translation. Equally significant is the contribution of directors, dramaturgs, and actors, who share insights, experiences, and conclusions drawn from contemporary stage approaches with strong political or social resonance.

Fifteen contributors from the academic and theatrical fields, from Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Poland and the United Kingdom, are participating in this year's two-day Symposium.

During the first day of the Symposium, **Saturday, 7 November (10:00 – 13:15 and 16:30 – 19:00)**, ten presenters from the academic and theatrical fields will present their approaches in three sessions: "Democracy and Otherness: From the Ancient Stage to Contemporary Reception", "Transformations of Myth and the Tragic in Times of Crisis" and "Ancient Drama on the Contemporary Stage: Directing, Bodies and Voices".

- **Piero Totaro** (Italy), *Full Professor of Ancient Greek Language and Literature and History of Greek Theatre, University of Bari "Aldo Moro"; and Director, International Centre for Research and Studies on Carnival, Mask and Satire (CMS)*
- **Thea Selliaas Thorsen** (Norway), *Professor of Classics, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim*

- **Eleni Papazoglou** (Greece), *Professor of History, Theory and Reception of Ancient Theatre, School of Drama, Faculty of Fine Arts, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh)*
- **Nikolaus Müller-Schöll** (Germany), *Professor of Theatre Studies at Goethe University Frankfurt (Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt/Main)*
- **Pavlína Šípová** (Czech Republic), *Former Assistant Professor, Institute of Greek and Latin Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague; researcher in Greek theatre, literature and translation; and International Relations and European Union Department of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic*
- **Małgorzata Budzowska** (Poland), *Associate Professor in the Department of Drama and Theatre, University of Lodz in Poland; and Research Associate in the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD), University of Oxford*
- **Dio Kangelari** (Greece), *Theatre Studies scholar; Director of Studies, Drama School of the National Theatre of Greece*
- **Giovanna Di Martino** (United Kingdom), *Researcher at Oxford's Computational Humanities Lab, Research Associate at the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) of the University of Oxford, and Freelance Dramaturg*
- **Eleni Anastasiou** (Cyprus), *PhD in Theatre Studies, Theatre Director*
- **Ivica Buljan** (Croatia), *Theatre director and Artistic Director of the World Theatre Festival, Zagreb*

On **Sunday, 8 November**, from **10:00 to 13:30**, a **Roundtable Discussion** will take place on the theme "The Tragedy of Democracy on Stage: contemporary interpretations of ancient drama". Five invited speakers will share their thoughts and experiences from their involvement in contemporary stage interpretations of ancient Greek tragedy, exploring its relationship with democracy and the questions it raises in the present day. The participants are **Io Voulgaraki**, *Theatre Director, Deputy Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Greece*; **Erie Kyrgia**, *Theatre Studies scholar, Dramaturg, Translator*; **Varnavas Kyriazis**, *Theatre Director, Actor*; **Lea Maleni**, *Actress, Theatre Director*; and **Neoklis Neokleous**, *Actor, Theatre Director*. The discussion will be moderated by **Christos Georgiou**, *Theatrologist, Director of the CCOITI*.

The "International Symposium on Ancient Greek Drama" began in 1990 as an activity of the then Committee of Cultural Identity and Development of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) and has since been organised, regularly every other year, by the Department of Contemporary Culture of the Deputy Ministry of Culture and the Cyprus Centre of the International Theatre Institute (CCOITI). Bringing together distinguished figures from the academic and theatrical communities, the Symposium promotes dialogue between the study of ancient drama and its practice on stage. Its proceedings are published and serve as a resource for research and study.

18th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ANCIENT GREEK DRAMA
Saturday, 7 November and Sunday, 8 November 2026
"Constantine Leventis" Auditorium, A. G. Leventis Gallery, Nicosia
Info: 7000 2414

▪ The Symposium sessions are open to the public, with free admission.
Simultaneous interpretation will be provided from Greek into English and from English into Greek.

Διοργάνωση | Organised by:
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