

Reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in the Baltic States

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Abstract. This paper analyzes the translations of *Antigone* by Sophocles and later authors and the performances based on them in the theaters of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It investigates the necessity to translate the Antigone dramas by Sophocles, Jean Anouilh and Janusz Głowacki into national languages and stage them in theaters. The article analyzes how these works are related to the history of the Baltic countries. This paper is divided into three subparts that match the historical periods from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The most important performances of *Antigone* in the Baltic countries are analyzed, highlighting the individual style of each director and their attention to the form and expression of the performances. The main themes revealed by the artists of the Baltic countries are conscious self-sacrifice for one's neighbor and individual resistance to conformity and tyranny.

Keywords: *Antigone*, Sophocles, Anouilh, Głowacki, drama, theater, performance.

Sofoklio *Antigonės* recepcija Baltijos šalyse

Santrauka. Straipsnyje analizuojami Sofoklio *Antigonės* ir vėlesnių autorių kūrinių apie *Antigonę* vertimai, pastatymai Estijos, Latvijos ir Lietuvos teatruose. Tyrinėjama, kodėl vienu ar kitu metu atsirado poreikis versti į nacionalines kalbas Sofoklio, Anouilho, Głowackio dramas apie *Antigonę* ir jas statyti teatruose, kaip šie kūriniai yra susiję su istoriniais Baltijos šalių įvykiais. Straipsnis yra suskirstytas į tris poskyrius pagal istorinius laikotarpius, pradedant nuo devyniolikto amžiaus pabaigos iki dvidešimt pirmo amžiaus pradžios. Apžvelgiami visi svarbiausi spektakliai apie *Antigonę* Baltijos šalyse, išryškinant kiekvieno režisieriaus individualų stilių, jo dėmesį spektaklio formai ir idėjai. Pagrindinės temos, kurias atskleidžia Baltijos šalių menininkai, yra sąmoningas pasiaukojimas už artimą, individo pasipriešinimas konformizmui ir tironijai.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: *Antigonė*, Sofoklis, Anouilhas, Głowackis, drama, teatras, spektaklis.

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Sophocles' *Antigone* has been translated more than fifty times into the English language in the last century, and many adaptations all over the world. In a monograph dedicated to analyzing the Antigone phenomenon, Steve E. Wilmer and Audronė Žukauskaitė ask, why *Antigone*? What unresolved questions lie in the play, and why does the character Antigone still capture our imagination?" (Wilmer, Žukauskaitė 2010, 1). This question is difficult to answer unambiguously. According to Naglis Kardelis, Sophocles' *Antigone* is associated with "distinctive civilizational features that mark the history of Western consciousness – how much we associate the West with individuality and individual consciousness that ignores crowd pressure, and with which we measure the rank of personality, with personal initiative and commitment, with a desire for freedom and a desire to decide freely" (Kardelis 2010, 225). The character Antigone gained interest in the Baltic States in the late 19th century, becoming popular in the twentieth and the first decades of the twenty-first century. The aim of this article is to analyze when and why Sophocles' *Antigone* and receptions of this drama were translated and produced in the theaters of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; what aspect of Antigone may have interested directors and producers; Jean Anouilh, Janusz Głowacki and other writers; how these dramas were interpreted, and what reviews they received from theater critics in the Baltic States. The reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in the Baltic States is analyzed and compared for the first time in this article¹. The article is broken down into subparts: 1. The period of resistance to Russian oppression and the First Independence, 2. The period of Soviet occupation, and 3. The period of the Second Independence.

1. Reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in Estonia

In the first part of the paper the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in Estonia will be studied. The section has three subchapters, the first of which discusses the period under the Russian empire, the second is dedicated to the first period of independence and the third part focuses on the period of regained independence.

1.1. Resistance to Russian oppression and the First Independence

We cannot speak of the Estonian reception of the Greek tragedy in the nineteenth century, when Estonia was still under the rule of the Russian empire. Except for Jaan Bergmann's *Üleüldine ajalugu* [General history] (1879), in which three famous tragedians are briefly discussed in a section dedicated to antiquity, the ancient drama was not discussed in textbooks and manuals of this period. Critics even expressed the idea that the Estonian theater is not yet ready for a world classic and would be better off confining their efforts to depicting simple family scenes (Liiv? 1888, June 23², cf. also Gielen, Lotman 2021, 214).

¹ We thank everyone who has helped us with this project. We are extremely grateful to Audronė Kučinskienė for encouraging us to take on this research. We would like to thank translators and theatre directors, who we consulted for the study, first of all, Anne Lill, Lembit Peterson and Tanel Saar. Our special thanks go to the anonymous reviewers for their useful comments and suggestions that helped us to improve our article.

² The paper is anonymous, but the author is probably the famous Estonian poet Juhan Liiv, who then worked as an editor at this newspaper.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that there were no full-text Estonian translations of Greek tragedies at the time; however, a translated excerpt from *Antigone* (349–352) deserves to be mentioned. It was published in the daily newspaper *Postimees* in 1897 as a motto for a longer series of articles discussing domestic animals, and although the translator is anonymous, one may presume that this too was authored by Jaan Bergmann, who was the main translator of ancient texts at the time, and even more, a contributor to *Postimees* exactly in this period. This paragraph belongs to one of the most central odes of the tragedy, praising the greatness and abilities of humans, and at the same time cautioning about them; yet in the context of the newspaper, the meaning of the text is reduced to the capability of humans in taming wild animals.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the translation of ancient tragedies into Estonian finally began. The first full text to be translated into Estonian was *Prometheus Bound*, translated by Jaan Jõgever in 1908; the choice of this tragedy, with the clear subtext of resisting oppression, can be explained by the political circumstances, as Estonia was still not an independent country. During the following turbulent period, translations of ancient texts were on the decrease, but when Estonia became an independent republic, it picked up again and included the translation of dramas. The next complete text that made it into the Estonian language was Sophocles' *Antigone*, translated by Marie Under in 1928. While the translation is based on Sophocles' text, Under, who was not entirely competent in ancient Greek, relied on the German version instead of the original. Although the manuscript contains no information about the German translation she used, the textual comparison indicates that Under's version is considerably closer to August Böckh's 1843 parallel publication in Greek and German than to Hölderlin's famous version, i.e., if she used the original edition, Under would have used the Greek text alongside the German reading. Under's translation is thus far the only complete translation of Sophocles' *Antigone*, even if with the use of the German intermediary.

The first Estonian productions of Greek tragedies only came to pass in the 1920s. In 1928, Sophocles' *Antigone*, based on Under's translation, was brought to the stage by Paul Sepp in the Estonian Drama Studio Theater. The introductory brochure published by the Estonian Drama Studio Theater emphasized that in terms of the audience size and the shape of the theater, its production marked the first time an Estonian production of an ancient Greek author came close to the era when this drama was staged for the first time. However, certain differences were brought out as well: while Greek actors performed in masks that amplified their voices and costumes that made them larger in shape, the actors of the Drama Studio Theater did not use amplifiers or masks. Unlike the chorus of the Ancient Greek tragedies, which had a few dozen members, the Drama Studio Theater version had a thousand-member chorus. Additionally, the Drama Studio Theater used light effects "of which the Greek theater could not even dream" (Anonymous 1928, 28).

In addition to introducing the content, the brochure also discussed what connected the twentieth-century person to Antigone, the daughter of the unfortunate king Oedipus, and concluded that although Antigone's actions were not as telling to the present-day audience as to the original spectators when particularly great attention was devoted to tending to

the dead, the forefront of Antigone's tragedy still concerns the value of a human being, and therefore Antigone abandons the passive role of her contemporaries and violates the old, petrified laws. Antigone's self-denial must thus be seen as a contemporary endeavor toward human value. On the other hand, in his more thorough discussion, published in *Postimees*, the classicist Pärtel Bauman (later Haliste) warned against interpreting ancient Greek tragedy in a contemporary framing, which is "a sin that has often been committed especially in the case of Antigone" (Bauman 1928, 5). According to Bauman, one should not see in Antigone's utterances and actions a true expression of femininity or Christian motives, but these should be analyzed in the context of their own time: Antigone is driven only by the sacred duty to bury her brother (Bauman 1928, 5). Reception of the production among the theater critics was positive: they highlighted the power of the voice of Eduard Türk, who played Creon, and Liina Reiman's immersion in the role of Antigone.

In the 1920s, an increasing amount of pedagogical literature began to be published, which contained both overviews and translated fragments. Excerpts from Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King* were translated by classical philologist Ervin Roos to illustrate his article, published in 1935, dedicated to the life and works of Sophocles. Apart from these, there are no known tragedies of Sophocles' texts during this period.

1.2. The period of Soviet occupation in Estonia

During this period, the Estonian theaters did not have much interest in original Greek tragedies and if they were staged at all, they were based on interpretations and adaptations. One of these adaptations (and perhaps the most important) was Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, on which Estonian theaters mostly based their versions.

The well-known Estonian stage director and actor Mikk Mikiver brought Anouilh's version to the stage at the Noorsooteater in 1967, with the recently graduated young actor Iivi Lepik in the lead role. The Estonian translation by Oskar Kuningas was likely commissioned by the theater for this very production. The translation abandons the French subtexts in Anouilh's original and thus allows for the action to be taken out of the narrower political context of the original and expands into a more general opposition between individual choices and the totalitarian order. What makes the translation more suited for the stage is its performability and audience-friendliness, which is achieved by the sporadic use of domesticating devices, including functional equivalents and explanatory translation strategies.

Perhaps Anouilh's play was a less risky choice during the Soviet regime than Sophocles' *Antigone*, which centers on religious questions. In Mikiver's version, the opposition between the divine and human law was no longer as explicit, although several references are made to the unburied Polynices's miserable afterlife. Creon seems to lack any faith in the power of burial customs whatsoever, and for Antigone, the situation of her dead brother also does not appear to be the main reason to overstep Creon's laws; rather, her character symbolizes the resistance of the individual in a situation in which listening to one's conscience is more important than life. Since Anouilh's version was written in the conditions of the German occupation with a clear political subtext, its primary opposition

lies in acquiescing to or resisting the laws of power. In Soviet conditions, this allowed for simultaneous interpretations of resistance to the Germans and allusions to the local totalitarian power. In these terms, it is understandable why in Soviet times the play was produced with great success on multiple occasions. Luule Epner has thus claimed about Mikiver's production:

On the Estonian stage, the unconditional "no" of the heroine was magnified to the unjust state of living, it was denial as an ideological gesture with no need of justification. A conflict becomes delineated in clear contours, the participants of which are the repressive power vs the resistor, the rebel vs the adapted mass. The conflict is irreconcilable and resolves tragically. The irrepressible Antigone became a symbol of nonconformism for the young generation of the 1960s. (Epner 1996)³

In addition to Mikiver's production, Anouilh's *Antigone* has been brought to the stage in Estonian theaters two more times: first in the Viljandi Ugala Drama Theater in 1982, and again in 1998 in an independent Estonia in the studio theater Theatrum. In both cases, the director was Lembit Peterson, who cast young actors for the play. Whereas Soviet occupation forms a clear subtext in Mikiver's production, Lembit Peterson's conception adds a more profound dimension and searches for deeper oppositions structuring the play. Lembit Peterson himself has noted⁴ that in both of his productions, the primary theme was the irreconcilable and unsolvable conflict between conscience and the social need for compromise, which at certain times acutely arises. In Peterson's concept, the opposition between human and divine laws, the earthly and heavenly kingdoms was also significant, something which often completely disappears in interpretations of Anouilh. And finally, it falls back to the duty of following one's conscience, which leads to forsaking the instinct of self-preservation, and thus, a tragic conclusion is inevitable. Antigone's and Creon's comprehensions of life are regarded as irreconcilably different.

One must also mention an original play that was performed in a completely different cultural situation, but an Estonian-language play inspired by *Antigone*, which was brought to the audience by the Estonian National Theater in Toronto for the Third North American Estonian Days in 1964. The work was titled *Jumalate mõistatus* [The mystery of gods] and authored by the Estonian emigrant writer Asta Willmann. Willmann related to *Antigone* foremost as a refugee and focused on this aspect in her tragedy, transporting it into the present day; as she has commented: "My work is an allegorized analysis of the psychic problems of the refugee. It does not copy the ancient Greek world, but it is my subjective immersion and interpretation." (Vaher 2017, 134) Although almost no one was aware of this on the other side of the Iron Curtain, it was an important event for the Estonian diaspora and was considered to be a major success (Ojamaa 2019, 130). This work has never been staged in Estonia.

Another version of *Antigone* that remained out of reach for the Estonian audience for a long time was a radio drama by Karl Ristikivi, who fled Estonia during the Second World

³ Available at: <https://www.kirmus.ee/nypli/luule-epner/> Accessed: 8 August, 2022.

⁴ Lembit Peterson to Maria-Kristiina Lotman in personal communication (23 January, 2022).

War, written in Swedish under his alias Kent Jansson. The play is titled *Löhhkemata Pomm* [The unexploded bomb] and was completed sometime during the second half of the 1940s. There is no record of it ever being staged (for more about the script and authorship, see Kronberg 2012, 59–61). The tragedy alludes to *Antigone* in its subtitle (“Antigone always dies in vain”), and its structure also replicates that of the Greek tragedy: the spoken sections alternate with the lyrical ones, although they are not performed by a homogenous chorus in unison, but by three different voices. The action of the work begins on the day of triumph when the war has ended and the enemy fled the city. The main character is Anita, who admits that she is hiding her brother, who had fought on the wrong side. Anita’s beloved, the war hero Gregor, sends soldiers to search through the house and arrest the brother. Anita stands for humanity, forgiveness, and freedom, and Gregor for the values of patriotic duty, justice, and security. A tragic conflict thus evolves in their opposition, which ends with Anita detonating a suicide bomb and all characters perishing.

1.3. The Second Independence in Estonia

In 1998, Anouilh’s *Antigone* was restaged in the new alternative theater Theatrum. It was met with critical success, with attempts to reconceptualize the text in the conditions of the already-free Estonia, in search of something that would speak to the audience in these new social conditions. For example, Ülo Tonts found in his review of Theatrum’s *Antigone* that the choice of Antigone remains the same as it was half a century ago: she is still a prototype of a free human who does not allow herself to be manipulated, nor to have her choices dictated by external terms; at the same time, he observes Antigone’s choices in a consumer society, where puppets solve their problems at the shopping mall and market (Tonts 1998). For Mihkel Mutt, one of the main oppositions of the play is the conflict of generations (Mutt 1998).

In 2003, Mati Unt staged his compilation *Brother Antigone, Mother Oedipus* in the Vanemuine Theater. This constituted a tragedy in three acts, the first of which originated from Euripides’ *Bacchae*, the second from Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*, and the third from a total of three ancient tragedies: *The Phoenicians* by Euripides, *Oedipus in Colonus* by Sophocles, and *Antigone* by Sophocles. In addition, Unt made use of Aeschylus’ tragedy *Seven Against Thebes* and Aristophanes’ comedy *The Frogs* (Unt 2006, 95).

Since Unt bases his work primarily on ancient tragedies and discards the adaptations that have become popular in Estonia (including Anouilh’s *Antigone*), he newly highlights the themes that were important in the Greek tragedy: the relationship between man and the gods and the questions of predestination and free will. To match the Greek originals, whose plots follow a fairly different course, the author made certain adjustments, omitting contradictions and restructuring the plotlines. In the foreground, the connective thread is formed by the rulers of the city of Thebes: everyone is completely different, but all share the same faith that man has the power to determine his or her destiny by opposing the will of the gods. The story begins with the tragedy of Pentheus’ generation, the consequence of the rebuffing of the cult of Dionysus. The first act of the play is dedicated to showing how the conflict between the human and the divine central in Sophocles’ *Antigone* goes

back multiple generations in this family. In the next act, the question of human will and its powerlessness before destiny takes precedence. In the third act, the main character becomes Creon and the decisions of his governance inevitably result in a great tragedy.

In 2010, Iranian producer Homayun Ghanizadeh brought his version of *Antigone* to the stage in the R.A.A.A.M. theater. While he transported the events into the present day, Ghanizadeh retained the central conflict: his Antigone resists the ruling power and stays true to her principles. Interestingly, the producers experimented with stage costumes inspired by antiquity, combined with props belonging to the present day, such as a shower and an electric stove. The puppet-like movements of the actors possibly allude to their characters' complete dependence on fate. The use of an olfactory code, which is rather rare in Estonian productions of ancient dramas, deserves a separate mention (for more about the production, see Balbat 2010).

Glowacki's *Antigone in New York*, inspired by Sophocles' *Antigone*, has reached theater stages in Estonia on two occasions. Here, too, the central problem is an unburied body, but instead of the royal family, the characters are homeless people in New York. The play was translated into Estonian by Hendrik Lindepuu and was produced in 1995 by Peeter Raudsepp in Ugala Teater, and in 2018 by Peeter Tammearu in Kuressaare's Linnateater. In both 1995 and 2018, critics did not perceive a particular connection with Sophocles' myth of Antigone (on the other hand, compare the opinion of Kaarina Rein that the opposition between unwritten and written law is also central in this play; Tarkmeel 2019). Whereas Valle-Sten Maiste (Maiste 1995) still saw a universal human dimension in this play, then Madli Pesti was rather critical of it, claiming that this choice is inappropriate in Estonian circumstances and does not create any parallels with our current reality (Pesti 2018, 25).

In 2007, *Antigone* was staged as a musical dance production by the choreographer, dancer, and stage director Mai Murdmaa. The musical design was based on Sándor Kallós's ballet *Antigone*, while the libretto was reworked from Anouilh's play by Murdmaa herself. The nucleus of Mai Murdmaa's production was predestination: both parties of the conflict act based on their internal convictions, and due to their unwillingness to compromise, they do not have any choice (compare also Einasto 2007, March 30); thus, the tragic ending is also predestined.

Production in the alternative VAT Theater *Oedipus. Antigone*, staged by Tanel Saar in 2021, partly originates from Anouilh's text, but dramatist Mihkel Seeder recomposed it into a verbal-dance-musical production (the theater itself classifies the genre of the work as a melodic tragedy), into which Oedipus's story was intertwined, using in one segment Ain Kaalep and Ülo Torpats' translation of Sophocles⁵. The *Antigone* of the VAT Theater centers the conflict on the conflict between state law and individual aspirations rather than the opposition between human rule and divine laws. The director focuses on a trait in Antigone's character as someone who is born to love and sacrifice her own life for this love. The conflict develops at the moment when Creon turns Antigone's deceased brother into an instrument of power and thus, he is a hostage of his own decision: should he retreat

⁵ Tanel Saar to Maria-Kristiina Lotman in personal communication (28 January, 2022).

from it, he would lose his trustworthiness and would no longer be able to provide order and peace in the state⁶.

2. Reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in Latvia

The reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in Latvia is discussed in a chronological order, starting from the First Independence to modern times. The period is covered in three subchapters: the First Independence, Soviet occupation, and the Second Independence. The subchapter on Soviet occupation is divided into two parts – Latvia and exile.

2.1. Latvia's first independence

Sophocles' *Antigone* was first fully translated into Latvian in 1920 by Augusts Ģiezens. It is the first translation of the ancient drama from ancient Greek into Latvian. This publication of *Antigone* (Sofokls 1920a) is almost simultaneous with the release of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, translated by Jānis Grīns (Sofokls 1920b); however, this version is translated via an intermediary language.

The translation of *Antigone* was originally published in serial parts in the periodical *Brīvā Zeme* [Free Land]. It was first published as a book in 1920 in the Gulbis publishing house, followed by two more editions in 1932 (Sofokls 1932) and 1941 (Sofokls 1941).

In his review of the 1932 second edition of *Antigone*, classical philologist Kārlis Straubergs notes that this second edition eliminated the shortcomings of the first, but also points out that, “The language doesn't yet provide a substitute for Sophocles' artistic gifts, but it summons a rhythmical pleasure in the short chorus lines and fast-paced dialogues; in longer monologues, the syntax and lexis are more monotonous” (Straubergs 1932, 1002).

Pēteris Ķiķauka, a pioneer of Greek language and literature studies in Latvia, does not mention Ģiezens' rendition of *Antigone* in any of his articles on Greek theater. In his voluminous research on the *History of Greek Literature*, Ķiķauka cites many other translations by Ģiezens, such as those of Homer's epics, and offers his translations of the short passages from *Antigone* (Ķiķauka 1944).

During the period of Latvia's first independence, Ģiezens' translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* was not staged by any professional theater. An item in periodical archives reveals that in 1919, the Latvian National Theater was “already negotiating the translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* from Greek. If the theater can manage the preparations, the performance of *Antigone* can be expected in the spring” (Bārda, Zeltmatis 1919, 3). However, these plans never came to fruition. In 1922, the Latvian National Theater witnessed only the production of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, directed by Fricis Rode and translated by Grīns.

Theater director Kristaps Linde staged Ģiezens' translation of *Antigone* with the students of the Zeltmatis' drama studio at the Palladium Theater in 1927. Judging by the reviews, Linde had made an effort to use ancient theater techniques and means of expres-

⁶ Tanel Saar to Maria-Kristiina Lotman in personal communication (28 January, 2022).

sion. The reviews were not favorable. The more neutral reviews underline the ideological significance of the play's content and the young actors' potential. In the culture review of the newspaper *Sociāldemokrāts*, journalist and writer Jānis Grots praises the work of the director and actors of the production, voicing criticism of the play's material: "And yet *Antigone* doesn't warm us, doesn't excite us, and sometimes even bores us. It proves that we are people of a different era, no longer satisfied with the distant past, regardless of the occasional artistic delight it might possess" (Grots 1927, 14). Theater critic Jānis Kārklīš of *Jaunākās Ziņas* gave the harshest review, writing: "With all due respect to the elocutionary efforts of Linde and his students, the modern audience takes on impressions from the performing arts through vision rather than sound. They no longer go to the theater to listen to intelligent, long-winded speeches and conversations, but to watch live, concentrated action in drama or comedy" (Kārklīš 1927, 7).

In her collection of essays *Prometeja gaismā. Esejas 1939–1942* [In the Light of Prometheus. Essays 1939–1942], Latvian essayist and thinker Zenta Mauriņa takes the message of Sophocles' *Antigone* out of the reins of theater and literary history, revealing it in a philosophical light. Mauriņa points to the contemporary nature of the character of Antigone, reminding the reader that reading as little as a page a day of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* or Sophocles' *Antigone* is useful in order to keep hold of one's values (Mauriņa 1943, 37). For Mauriņa, Antigone reveals a woman's mental strength, which rises above her biological instinct and the women who attempt greatness only by defending their nest (Ibid., 31).

In the introduction to the essay *Pārdomas par Antigoni* [Reflections on Antigone], Mauriņa writes: "If we consider Prometheus to be the perfect man, it is natural to seek out his opposite – the perfect woman. That would be Sophocles' *Antigone*" (Ibid., 29). She concludes the essay, by saying: "Prometheus, the perfect man, brought people the light of consciousness; Antigone, the perfect woman, brought people the light of spirited love" (Ibid., 39).

2.2.1. The period of Soviet occupation in Latvia

After World War II, the Iron Curtain also divided the Latvian cultural space – it developed simultaneously in the Latvian SSR and in exile. Contact between the two sides was limited, but they maintained an interest in each other throughout the entirety of the occupation of Latvia. Given the international success of Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, it is only natural that the play entered both sides of the Latvian cultural space at almost the same time. However, interpretations of Anouilh's work in the Latvian SSR and the Latvian exile theater were created very differently.

In the Latvian SSR, Anouilh's *Antigone* was translated into Latvian by Milda Grīnfelde in 1967. Since Grīnfelde was a victim of political repression and had served a sentence in Siberia, the reviews of the play bore no mention of its translator, and the translation was never published.

Anouilh's *Antigone* was first staged in Latvia in 1968 by an amateur company at the A. Alunāns People's Theater in Jelgava (Alekse 1968, 4). The director of the production

was Benita Folkmane, a graduate of the Theater Department of the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian State Conservatory. In Latvia's professional theater, on the other hand, Anouilh's *Antigone* was first staged by director Viktors Zvaigzne with Helga Dancberga in the starring role. It premiered at the Liepāja Theater on 4 January 1969. The music for the show was written by the promising young composer Imants Kalniņš. The reviews were glowing; theater critic Edmunds Zabis wrote:

In the midst of the childish awkwardness of Antigone's character, the actress has managed to sense that which is the most important – the inability to live at odds with your heart and reason. This is why everything about Antigone was convincing – her fateful decision to go to her death, her pain, her outrage. Helga Dancberga's performance embodied lyricism, dramatism, and even showmanship. And at the heart of it lies the human conviction of a great maturity regarding what in life and in man holds value, and what constitutes ignorance, cowardice, and spiritual inertia (Zabis 1970, 26).

At the end of Liepāja's theatrical season, the portrayal of Antigone won Dancberga an award in the young actors' competition – the chance to travel abroad (Rasa 1969, 3). Anda Burtneiece recognizes the production as an example of intellectual theater in Latvia, in which Antigone spends most of the performance sitting down, affording a rare gesture only on occasion (Burtneiece 1970, 102).

Anouilh's *Antigone* continued making its way through Latvian amateur theaters. It was staged with much success by directors Aina Matīsa and Arnolds Liniņš in the drama studio of the Republican House of Culture for Workers of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Institutions, commonly known as the Teachers' House. The production won first prize in the republican drama collective pageant in 1969 (Mētra 1969, 3). The directors paired up again in 1973, turning the play into a training performance for the students of the Dailes Theater fifth ensemble company (Saulīte 1975, 8). Later, the play continued to be interpreted by amateur theaters throughout Latvia, with varying degrees of success.

Soviet reviews of *Antigone* often provide a plot summary demonstrating an effort to explain the play's message according to Soviet ideology. For example, Zabis writes:

Anouilh's works are not about some kind of timeless, unswerving world order, they are about totalitarian tendencies in modern bourgeois societal structures and hidden or blatant despotism. This is a very important thing that, if disregarded, can lead to attributing Anouilh with notions about humanity and the world that he does not even possess. Anouilh's works embody a strict framework and nature of the despotic bourgeois regime. Nor is there any doubt about the French playwright's attitude to an order with no room for man or humanity: he is a fierce enemy of such regimes (Zabis 1969, 26).

Sophocles' *Antigone* was never staged in the theaters of the Latvian SSR.

2.2.2. Exile

Shortly before the translation of Anouilh's *Antigone* appeared in Latvian SSR, the play was also translated by exiled Latvians in Australia. The first translation was done for the 3rd Australian Latvian Youth Festival in 1964 and was staged by the Adelaide Youth Theatre

troupe. The play was translated by Ilze Puķīte and directed by Māra Freidenfelde. In the article on preparations for the Youth Festival, it is said that the staging of *Antigone* was left to the young people, with the additional involvement of essayist Ēriks Dēliņš from Melbourne and teacher Margita Biezaite for editing the translation (Kukura 1964, 11).

The audience received the production favorably, yet the reviews were not short of critical remarks: “The idea of dressing the actors in costumes of an individual or undefinable era did not pay off because the overall view of the ensemble ended up a distraction. [...] Watching the Adelaide youth production was pleasant, though it was not enough to stir excitement” (Iljin 1964, 11).

Following the staging attempt by the Australian Latvian youth, the play was also addressed by the professional theater in exile. In a review for the newspaper *Austrālijas Latvietis* in 1967, French theater guest performances, with Anouilh’s *Antigone* among them, Dēliņš expresses hope that the interest in the play shown by Latvian theater professionals might result in a production (Dēliņš 1967, 12). Dēliņš, a graduate of the Riga French Lycée and an advisor for the translation of the youth festival production, took it upon himself to translate the play again. Unfortunately, attempts to acquire this translation for the present research were uneventful.

Dēliņš’ translation was staged by the Sydney Latvian Theater in 1972, and the production was well-received. At the 12th Adelaide Theater Festival, the production earned six prizes and was performed five times (Zariņš 1990, 38). It was covered in exile by newspapers both in the US and Europe. The reviews echo the remarks made by exile theater critic Nina Luce. For Luce, the performance as a whole can be seen as satisfactory; however, she also mentions some drawbacks such as the character split into the tragic and the mundane, leading Antigone, Creon, and the choir to speak through recital while the rest of the characters use everyday language (Šmugajs 1972, 14).

Dēliņš’ translation was staged a second time by the Brisbane Latvian Theater in 1976, directed by Maiga Rube. The production’s musical arrangement showcases Imants Kalniņš’ Symphony No. 4 (1973). The premiere had a full house and was received favorably.

In her reviews of the Adelaide production of *Antigone* and articles on Anouilh, theater critic Luce points to the play’s similarities with *Vara* (1944) [Power], a play by the prolific exiled Latvian playwright Mārtiņš Zīverts on King Mindaugas, ruler of 13th-century Lithuania. In an article commemorating Zīverts’ 75th birthday, Luce expands on the comparison between Anouilh’s *Antigone* and Zīverts’ *Vara*, concluding that the parallels in the two plays demonstrate the artists’ ability to perceive the present in a similar vein (Luce 1978, 4). Both pieces are created at almost the same time and under the same political circumstances (during the period of Nazi occupation), and both address the clash of power and individuals through the prism of ancient characters.

2.3. The period of Latvia’s second independence

Following the restoration of Latvia’s independence, both Sophocles’ and Anouilh’s versions of *Antigone* have been brought to the professional stage. The first to be staged was Anouilh’s *Antigone* at the Daugavpils Theater in 1993. It was the opening play of the

season, performed by actors of the newest Russian theater troupe and directed by Genādijs Braņņiks. The actors performed in contemporary costumes and were accompanied by modern music (Kilevica 1993, 3).

In 1995, Sophocles' *Antigone* was staged at the Dailes Theater. Director Kārlis Auškāps' three-act production *Oidips un Antigone* brings to life the so-called Theban Cycle: *Oedipus the King* (transl. by Henriks Novackis), *Oedipus at Colonus* (transl. by Ināra Ķemere and Imants Ziedonis), and *Antigone* (transl. by Ģiezens). Reviews of the production were poor. For most critics, the director's intention to merge Sophocles' Theban Cycle into one performance, assigning one act per era, proved a failure. There were also plenty of remarks regarding the cast and character interpretations. The performance did not stay in the repertoire for long. Translator and writer Valdis Bisenieks' assessment is succinctly emotional: "I'll have that AUŠKĀPS beaten with a shitty STICK, I say to my wife as the audience applauds and the curtain falls on the Sophocles' tragedy trio. [...] No words! This sort of cynical MOCKERY calls for nothing but a swift punch to the face!" (Bisenieks 1995, 10).

Sophocles' *Antigone* was revisited in 2013 by another director of the Dailes Theater, Mihails Gruzdovs. This production, too, makes use of Ģiezens' 1920 translation – a shortened version. The director himself dubs this small-stage production a one-act ritual (Labrīt, Latvija! 2013)⁷. The play takes place in 2033 after yet another local war, with the interpretation and visual design built on Hitler's dictatorship. The show's set and costume designer Leonards Laganovskis explains that the set design is based on Hitler's place of residence, the Eagle's Nest (Kušķe 2013)⁸. For the choral sections, the director made use of the video recordings of the Riga Orthodox male choir performing Sophocles' texts (composer Aleksejs Peguševs).

Juris Žagars, the actor who played Creon, admitted that it was not easy for the actors to fulfill the director's vision because the director called for things that the actors had never done, and occasionally even felt were strange or unacceptable. The production was accompanied by constant quarreling between the actors and the director (Ibid.).

In her review, Sydney Latvian Theater actress and critic Anita Apele praised the performance of the male actors while directing criticism towards the interpretations of the female roles, pointing out that Ilze Ķuzule–Skrastiņa, who played Antigone, showed difficulty reciting the text (Apele 2013)⁹. Theater critic Henrieta Verhaustinska, on the other hand, emphasized that it was Ķuzule–Skrastiņa who best managed to fulfill the goals of the ancient theater's melo-declamation as envisioned by the director (Verhaustinska 2013)¹⁰.

⁷ Available at: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/kultura/teatris-un-deja/dailes-teatri-sofokla-tragedijas-antigone-pirmizrade.a56721/> Accessed: 3 August, 2022.

⁸ Available at: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/kultura/teatris-un-deja/izrade-antigone-runas-par-musdienu-globalam-problemam.a56541/> Accessed: 3 August, 2022.

⁹ Available at: <https://www.laikraksts.com/raksti/3538> Accessed: 3 August, 2022.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.dailesteatris.lv/lv/izrades/2012/antigone#publication-1576> Accessed: 3 August, 2022.

The most recent production in the professional theater has been that of Anouilh's *Antigone* as directed by Elmārs Seņkovs in 2015 in the Actors' Hall of the Latvian National Theater, with Maija Doveika in the leading role. The stage design consisted of a windowless white room with a podium, hardly any props, and actors dressed in contemporary costumes. The roles of the nanny and the choir were portrayed by a single actress – Marija Bērziņa. In the choral parts, she performed via recital, highlighting expressions with a nasal sound.

In the 2014/2015 season, Seņkovs' play won the most notable award of the Latvian theater, the Spēlmaņu nakts [Players' Night] Grand Prix, as well as awards for the play of the year and the short-form play of the year. The reviews from Latvian theater critics have been enthusiastic. Other critics, such as exile actress Apele, have been critical of Seņkovs' direction (Apele 2015)¹¹. Christina Matviyenko, the Russian curator of the Electro Teatr Stanislavski, too, has pointed to a lack of novelty in the interpretation of the play: "I enjoyed *Antigone*. But let me be honest – although the play is rather well formed and follows an idea, it also features developed, nuanced, yet morally outdated theater language that in no way renews the play or casts it in a different light. It's a good production, but I don't understand why it's been put on right now, and what the director means to say with it" (Lazdiņa, Šuksta 2016)¹².

3. Reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in Lithuania

In this part the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in Lithuania is discussed in chronological order, starting from resistance to the Russian oppression and the First Independence in Lithuania to modern times.

3.1. Resistance to Russian oppression and the First Independence in Lithuania

The student movement *Aušrininkai* first began to embody the idea of Lithuanian theater outside of Lithuania when Lithuanian theater was still unimaginable under Russian imperial repression. After leaving Lithuania at the end of the nineteenth century, Jonas Šliūpas and Vincas Kudirka began translating foreign plays, in which the drama of rebellious individuals is evident (Martišiūtė 2006, 107). The ban on the Lithuanian press was in force until 1904, but Sophocles' *Antigone* was first translated into Lithuanian in 1902. This translation in prose was made by the lawyer Vaclovas Biržiška, who signed under the pseudonym of Jurgis Šaulys (Sofoklis 1903). Sophocles' *Antigone* became the first Greek tragedy to be translated into Lithuanian. At the time, translators chose political, ideological dramas. *Antigone* was offered to the repertoire of Lithuanian theater, but was rejected. The first Lithuanian theater performance took place in 1889 in the United States, in Plymouth. However, due to lack of rehearsal and professionalism, the idea of a higher theater was more associated with the visual expression of the show and the abundance of participants (Martišiūtė 2006, 108–109). For Lithuanian intellectuals, classical tragedies

¹¹ Available at: <https://www.laikraksts.com/raksti/5460> Accessed: 3 August, 2022.

¹² Available at: <https://www.kroders.lv/recenzijas/850> Accessed: 3 August, 2022.

were a symbol in the fight against Russian oppression. Although Sophocles' *Antigone* was well-placed to inspire courage and determination in the struggle for freedom, at the time it was not well received by the critics. Readers of the magazine *Varpas* (No. 6 and 7) were informed in 1902 that Sophocles' *Antigone* was translated into Lithuanian. However, the author of the article wonders why Petras Vileišis did not spare money for publishing, and Biržiška took the time to translate what Lithuanians did not yet need. According to the critic of *Varpas*, "Today, no Lithuanians will think of staging that tragedy because it is not suitable for us" (Martišiūtė 2006, 66). The *Varpas* critic wrote that a Lithuanian villager who has paid money for Sophocles and has not understood anything will not want to buy Lithuanian books for a long time. Sophocles' *Antigone* was therefore not staged before the first independence of Lithuania. At the time, Lithuanian theater was not yet mature, and the audience was not educated enough to positively accept and understand the ideas of a more refined theater.

After Lithuania first regained independence in 1918, more and better translations of *Antigone* emerged. It can be said that professional Lithuanian theater was also born almost together with the Lithuanian state in 1920 (Aleknonis 2009, 56). Jurgis Talmantas published the second translation of *Antigone* in *Chrestomathy of Universal Literature*. Talmantas did not translate Sophocles' *Antigone* in full, but worked on excerpts from the text (Sofoklis 1930, 69–84). Later, two people worked on the complete translation of Sophocles' *Antigone*: Antanas Rukša, a specialist in classical philology, translated Sophocles' *Antigone* into prose, and the poet Antanas Venclova reworked it into the iambic meter. The joint work of these translators was published in the collection of Sophocles' *Tragedies* in 1939 (Sofoklis 1939, 205–281). There were three tragedies in the collection: *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*. In the same year, director Borisas Dauguvietis staged Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (1939) in The State Theater in the temporary capital Kaunas. The scenography of the performance was created by Liudas Truikys. The image was fully in line with the audience's perception of the Greek style and Greek theater at the time. Antigone wore a white tunic, looking like an antique sculpture. As critics point out, the classics were not close to the heart of the director Dauguvietis (Aleksaitė 2002, 31). Dauguvietis directed numerous plays from 1937–1940, while facing the upsurge of fascism and desiring to leave the theater. Fascist ideas were on the rise in Europe. Perhaps this is why Dauguvietis chose to stage Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus at Colonus*, which concerns the blind hero led by Antigone to a new place, accepting his destiny without resistance.

3.2. The period of Soviet occupation in Lithuania

The second Soviet occupation of Lithuania, starting in 1945, marked the beginning of a new wave in the country's cultural and artistic life. According to Irena Aleksaitė, "It was during the period of 1945–1957 that Lithuanian theater experienced the strongest pressure of forced Soviet ideology, harsh dictatorship, strict political censorship and repression of artistic people" (Aleksaitė 2009, 97). Around this time, almost no works by contemporary foreign playwrights were produced. It was only after Stalin's death in 1953 that plays of

Western European playwrights were translated and included in the repertoires of Lithuanian theaters (Aleksaitė 2009, 101).

Anouilh, inspired by Sophocles, created *Antigone*, which premiered in 1944 in Nazi-occupied Paris. Director Jonas Jurašas had intended to stage Anouilh's *Antigone* at the Kaunas Drama Theater in 1972 to remind Lithuanians of the Soviet occupation and the first deportations to Siberia that began 30 years ago. However, the Soviet government banned the play due to allusions to the unburied Forest Brothers, Lithuanian partisans who waged a guerrilla warfare in Lithuania against the Soviet Union in 1944–1953. In the same year, Romas Kalanta committed self-immolation in protest against the Soviet government, and the director Jurašas was forced to emigrate to the US after making political statements against the Soviet regime (Sluckaitė 1994, 35). The reception of *Antigone* was felt in the drama of Algirdas Landsbergis, a poet of the Lithuanian diaspora in the US, who created *Penki stulpai turgaus aikštėje* [Five pillars in the market square] (1966), which was later staged by the Kaunas State Drama Theater (1989), as well as in Janina Degutytė's poem *Antigone* (1966). The works of these authors reflect the theme of unburied partisans and resistance to Soviet terror.

The first production of Anouilh's *Antigone* in Lithuania appeared only in 1978. Director Irena Bučienė staged *Antigone* in the Lithuanian State Drama Theater on November 25th. The drama was translated from the French by Antanas Gudelis. According to Aleksaitė, the director was interested in the problem of men in the broadest sense of the word, their moral values, relations and position in society, opportunities to realize their ideas, resistance to lies and violence, and the topic of human dignity (Aleksaitė 2006, 57). These moral attitudes of Bučienė are met by Anouilh's *Antigone*. This work was far from the standards of the Soviet approach to philosophical topics. Aleksaitė wrote: "Between Creon and Antigone, there is a fierce and sharp intersection of opposite moral attitudes. Creon's political conformism and Antigone's open truth, Creon's cunning maneuvering to maintain the royal "dignity" of power, and Antigone's resistance to lies, hypocrisy, deception" (Aleksaitė 2006, 68–69). The success of the performance was determined by the strong temperament, deep voice and good looks of the young actress Eglė Gabrėnaitė, who played Antigone.

The director tried to bring the drama as close as possible to the twentieth-century audience's life problems, avoiding the restoration of the ancient epoch. Minimalism and the intersection of the ancient and modern epochs were felt in Virginija Idzelytė's scenography and Gražina Rameikaitė's costumes. In the white interior there stood several modern chairs, several antique busts, and a broken column. Antigone and Ismene wore white chitons, while Creon, Haemon, and the soldiers wore modern silhouettes.

The director, Jonas Vaitkus, staged Anouilh's *Antigone* at the Kaunas Drama Theater in 1986. The premiere took place on January 2nd. Later, Vaitkus renewed this performance, introducing new actors at the Vilnius Academic Drama Theater (1989). Vaitkus' *Antigone* was performed by the first ten students of Vaitkus who had recently graduated from the Lithuanian State Conservatory¹³. The debut performance of the young actors seemed to

¹³ Since 2004 it has been renamed the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.

extend the principles of study work. The scenography was minimalistic. A dark, narrow, high platform was installed, on which black chairs for each character were arranged in a straight line in the foyer of the Kaunas Theater. According to Gediminas Butkus, the actors were dressed in dark, modest clothes. At the start of the play, they sat down, closed their eyes, and began to speak the text of Anouilh's *Antigone*. When the author's words were over, the actors opened their eyes, stood up, and left (Butkus 1989, 4–5). For the theater critic, this performance, although simple in its form, provoked the rise of catharsis. Youthful maximalism, longing for spirituality, and the struggle against blunt pragmatism and conformism were present in the acting. It was partly reminiscent of a radio performance; its stillness did not spoil it but helped to highlight the purity of Antigone's ideas and the mastery of young artists.

Ingeborga Dapkūnaitė played Antigone at the Kaunas Drama Theater, and Diana Anevičiūtė in Vilnius. The actors on the Vilnius stage had already changed. As they matured, they made the experiences of their characters more vivid as well. Vaitkus' *Antigone* was considered by professionals to be an avant-garde performance and is deeply remembered in its form due to the incredibly high energy radiated during the performance (Šabasevičienė 2007, 94–95).

During the Soviet period, Sophocles' *Antigone* also received attention. A poetic translation of excerpts from Sophocles' *Antigone*, translated by Antanas Venclova, appeared in the collection *From Ancient and Renaissance Literature* (Sofoklis 1958, 127–176). All seven tragedies of Sophocles were translated by the classicist Antanas Dambrauskas. His translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* was published in different books in 1974 and 1984. This translation entered various chrestomathies and became a seminal text for theatrical productions. During the Soviet years, Sophocles' *Antigone* did not receive the attention of professional theater artists.

3.3. The Second Independence in Lithuania

According to Rasa Vasinauskaitė, “In the 1990s, Lithuanian theater went through several changes, starting with the fall of theater as an institution. Following this, the 90s were a time in which it was not theaters or consistent troupes that stood out, but rather individual directors, small groups or particular productions and projects” (Vasinauskaitė 2009, 159–160).

Głowacki's *Antigone in New York* was staged by Stanislovas Rubinovas at the Kaunas Youth Chamber Theater on June 12, 1997¹⁴. The play was translated by Kęstutis Navakas, and the music was composed by Giedrius Kuprevičius. *Antigone in New York* is a modern twist on the tragedy (premiered in Washington, DC in 1993). It is a painful, ironic, and sarcastic story about three homeless people in Tompkins Park, New York, who cherish the illusion of a different life (Vasinauskaitė 1997, 7). A Russian Jew, Sasha (Aleksandras

¹⁴ Głowacki's *Antigone in New York* was also staged at the *Taškas* Theater in Klaipėda by director Darius Rabašauskas on the 30th of May, 2019. This was a diploma performance of the fourth-year acting students of the Klaipėda Faculty of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater.

Rubinovas), would like to return to St. Petersburg to see his mother and to paint, Anita (Kristina Kazakevičiūtė) from Puerto Rico would like to have her own family and a spice shop, and Flea (Liubomiras Laucevičius) from Poland to be treated for alcoholism. Anita asks Sasha and Flea to bring her lover Paulie's body from the other end of the city. She does not care that the person brought in is someone other than Paulie. It is important for her that the person is buried where he lived, next to his "family".

Głowacki argues in the play that man is powerless against circumstances and destiny. All three characters came to New York in search of a better life, but were unable to fight fate. The actors highlight the inner state of three doomed homeless people: their despair, pain, and exhaustion. The director alleviates and suppresses the tragedy of Głowacki's play. Rubinovas' *Antigone in New York* left a deep impression on the theater critics. According to Vasinauskaitė, it was "one of the few performances that one wants to watch several times" (Vasinauskaitė 1997, 7).

A year later, in 1998, students of Vilnius University, led by director Rimantas Venckus, staged Sophocles' *Antigone* at the Vilnius University Theater *Minimum* for the first time. The actress Birutė Mar (Marcinkevičiūtė) created the dance performance *Antigone and the Birds* in 1998. She presented the project *Antigone* by Sophocles at the Lithuanian National Drama Theater in 1999. After adding improvements, Mar staged the mono-performance *Antigone* at the same theater on May 2, 2003. Mar plays all the roles herself. According to critics, one of the most original and successful solutions of this production is the contrast between the video choir (giant talking faces) and the fragile, tiny actress, creating an atmosphere of a warm, lively, intimate performance (Vasinauskaitė 1999). According to Mar, she wanted to escape the traditional theater with Sophocles' *Antigone*. The actress was inspired by the beauty of the ancient tragedy and the mystery of poetry¹⁵. Mar played *Antigone* in the small hall of the National Drama Theater, at the State Small Theater of Vilnius, as well as in many Lithuanian schools, and various international festivals.

The actress appears on stage with a unique costume created by Jolanta Rimkutė. Mar's white-painted face, sad eyes, and black scarf all create a mask of tragedy. The eloquent black dress, reminiscent of the ancient Greek chiton, helps the actress transform into various characters. This eloquent prop turns into men's cloaks, women's scarves, or just a young girl's dress. The performance has been shown in Lithuania for more than twenty years, so it can be said that the actress has discovered a suitable approach to the classical play, and her bright individuality also reflects Antigone's clear desire to resist moral conformity.

Director Gintaras Varnas staged *The Oedipus Myth* at the Lithuanian National Drama Theater in 2016. Varnas' performance consisted of three parts, the first based on Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus the King*, the second on Euripides' *The Phoenician Women* and Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, and the third on Sophocles' *Antigone*¹⁶. The idea to combine ancient tragedies in such a way came from the German playwright John von Düffel

¹⁵ Birutė Mar about *Antigone*. <https://www.birutemar.lt/antigone-pagal-sofokli/>

¹⁶ Sophocles' *Antigone* was staged by Tomas Riklius, a student of Classical Philology at Vilnius University, during the Olympics of Ancient Culture and Latin. The premiere took place at Vilnius university in 2012.

(2014). Varnas deconstructed this drama into *The Oedipus Myth*, baroquely transforming and filling the frame of Düffel's drama with parts of ancient tragedies¹⁷.

The scenery for this production, reminiscent of the stone walls of Mycenaean culture, coffins, and the abundance of deaths and suffering of the characters, raised some critical questions: "Are we breathing apocalyptic air, invoking purification and forgiveness? Have we been so softened, corrupted, felt so free and unpunished that the time has come for the wrath of the gods?" (Vasinauskaitė 2016). The amalgamation of several classical dramas into one plot, combined with the complete abandonment of the domestic and political motives in Varnas' performance, emphasized the pathos of tragedy.

Sophocles' *Antigone*, the third part of the saga, highlighted the topic of sacrifice. Antigone (Jovita Jankelaitytė) revealed herself to be gentle and courageous, and Creon (Arūnas Sakalauskas) became the brightest character in the trilogy. The audience was fascinated by the video projections of Rimas Sakalauskas, in which drawings of ancient vases and hope symbolizing butterflies came to life. Varnas believes that young people are idealists, and only self-sacrificing people like Antigone and Menoecus deserve exaltation and faith in the future of mankind.

Director Ieva Stundžytė staged *Antigone (not a myth)* in 2010 in the theater *Atviras ratas* [Open circle]. She used only one idea related to the myth of Antigone¹⁸. The director wondered what Oedipus' children might have felt upon finding out that he was both their father and brother. Stundžytė was interested in the psychological and sexual relationships of the Oedipus family members, and her *Antigone (not a myth)* was created on the principle of the dialogue. The actors played Antigone, Ismene, Polynices, Eteocles, neighbors, and servants by smoothly switching roles to understand the main characters. Everyone wore black classic clothes. The actors played on a quadrangular playground, surrounded by a rope, like a boxing ring. The music was performed live by the composer Vytautas Leistrumas. The performance left the theater critics with the impression of vibrant and captivating acting (Kapočiūtė 2011)¹⁹.

In the same year, director Jurašas staged the play *Antigone in the Siberian* based on Anouilh's *Antigone* and Aušra Sluckaitė's dramaturgy at the Kaunas State Drama Theater in 2010. The director connected Greek mythology and Anouilh's *Antigone* to Lithuanian cultural history, by inserting into the staging Birutė Pūkelevičiūtė's poem *Rauda* [Lament] and excerpts from the diaries of *Mission Siberia*. As a consequence of the complex dramaturgy, two Antigones appeared in the performance. The first Antigone (Eglė Mikulionytė), like the one in Sophocles' and Anouilh's plays, resolves the conflict with Creon (Liubomiras Laucevičius), the second – Lithuanian Antigone (Jūratė Onaitytė) resolves the conflict with the Colonel (Gintaras Adomaitis).

¹⁷ The text of Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King* was translated by Dambrasukas, Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* – Ričardas Mironas, Euripides' *The Phoenician Women* and Düffel's drama – Mindaugas Strockis.

¹⁸ Director Aleksandr Špilevoj created the performance *ANTI* in the Panevėžys drama theater *Menas* [Art] in 2021. This performance, like director Ieva Stundžytė's *Antigone (not a myth)*, is a free interpretation of Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*, called *storytelling*. It features four young actors who change roles, interact with the audience and re-create the tragedy of *Antigone*. This work of the director is his attempt to actualize Antiquity for teenagers.

¹⁹ Available at: <https://www.menufaktura.lt/?m=1025&s=60625> Accessed: 10 July, 2022.

Jurašas was interested in Lithuanian youth expeditions to Siberia. Young people traveled to Siberia for thousands of kilometers to visit Lithuanian exile sites and concentration camps, look for traces of their ancestors, and take care of their graves. In the same year that the premiere took place, Lithuania drew attention to the painful 70th anniversary of the Soviet occupation and the first deportations to Siberia. Thus, the play's choir consists of participants of *Mission Siberia*. A deep connection with their dead relatives allowed Lithuanians to resist violence, fight for the dead, and to defend their principles during the Soviet era.

Antigone, based on Anouilh's play, was staged in Lithuania in 2019, with the Latvian director Māra Ķimele and the actors of the Klaipėda Drama Theater at its helm. The director created a political satire about the dictator Creon and two Antigones who dared to oppose him. The main idea of the play is the revelation of tyrannical power and extreme evil, and its cardinal condemnation. The ancient column from Bučienė's performance *Antigone* (1978) is demonstratively demolished there, showing the characters' resistance to traditional values. The Lithuanian Bučienė and Latvian Ķimelē studied at the Moscow Theater Institute (1965–1969) with the Russian director Anatoly Efros. According to Julijus Lozoraitis, the production presents a bold and masterful political satire, talented acting, effective use of the possibilities of the Small Stage of the Klaipėda Drama Theater, and a dialogue between Baltic directors (Lozoraitis 2019, November 22).

Conclusions

Sophocles' *Antigone* (441 BC) was one of the first ancient Greek dramas to be translated into the national languages of the Baltic countries. The first performances of Sophocles' plays in national languages in the Baltic countries were distinguished by the large number of actors. The costumes and scenography imitated the elements of ancient Greek culture and theater. The translation and performances of *Antigone* were related to the intellectuals' desire to educate the public and to present ancient works and Western European classics in national languages. The choice of Sophocles' *Antigone* was also partly related to the desire to ensure the independence of the countries.

During the Soviet period, Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944) became very popular in the Baltic States and was interpreted differently by Baltic directors. In Latvia, under the influence of Soviet ideology, there was an attempt to interpret *Antigone* as a threat coming from the West. In Lithuania and Estonia, it was perceived as resistance to the Soviet terror coming from the East, so much so that in Lithuania it was even banned from being staged in theaters. During the Soviet period, Anouilh's *Antigone* was mostly interpreted abstractly by directors from all the Baltic countries – as a human struggle for the right to choose personal freedom, obey one's conscience, and make sacrifices for higher goals. Anouilh's *Antigone* was especially popular among young people. In Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, *Antigone* was performed by students or recently graduated actors. *Antigone* by Sophocles and Anouilh inspired Baltic artists to write original works that expressed resistance to the Soviet occupation.

During the period of the Second Independence, not only Sophocles' and Anouilh's *Antigone* but also Głowacki's *Antigone in New York* (1993) and the Theban Trilogy plays were staged in the Baltic countries, the third part of which was Sophocles' *Antigone*. In the period of the Second Independence, more complex structures and more diverse forms of performances appeared in the Baltic countries. There was no longer an attempt to visually recreate ancient decorations and costumes, and ancient details were used only as quotations in the performances. This freedom allowed directors to choose works and modernize performances about *Antigone*, combining three or more ancient dramas into one work, or performing Sophocles' *Antigone* as a dance or mono-performance, in which all the roles are played by one actor. *Antigone* is again associated with resistance to the terror coming from the East, with the Siberian exiles, and with the threat of the coming war, as well as with the beginning of Independence, when people sought better social and economic conditions in the West and faced the challenges of adaptation and survival. New interpretations appear; the directors become interested in the psychological and sexual relationships of the Oedipus family members and seek answers to philosophical questions, such as, how much personal will a person has, or what is the relationship between man and God. One of the most common themes in plays about *Antigone* remains individuality, consciousness, free will, disregard for the pressures of the crowd, and responsibility for moral choices.

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