

Antigone

Antigone in front of the dead Polyneices by

Nikiforos Lytras

Written by	Sophocles
Chorus	Theban Elders
Characters	Antigone Ismene Creon Eurydice Haemon Tiresias Sentry First Messenger Second Messenger
Mute	Two guards
Date premiered	c. 441 BC
Place premiered	Athens
Original language	Ancient Greek
Genre	Tragedy

Antigone (, Ancient Greek:) is written in or before 441 BCE. Chronologically Theban plays but was written first.^[1] The play legend that predated it and picks up where *Thebes* ends.

SYNOPSIS

In the beginning of the play, two brothers leading opposite sides in Thebes' civil war died fighting each other for the throne. Creon, the new ruler of Thebes, has decided that Eteocles will be honored and Polyneices will be in public shame. The

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rebel brother's body will not be sanctified by holy rites, and will lie unburied on the battlefield, prey for carrion animals like worms and vultures, the harshest punishment at the time. Antigone and Ismene are the sisters of the dead Polyneices and Eteocles. In the opening of the play, Antigone brings Ismene outside the palace gates late at night for a secret meeting: Antigone wants to bury Polyneices' body, in defiance of Creon's edict. Ismene refuses to help her, fearing is unable to stop Antigone from going to bury her brother herself, causing Antigone Creon enters, along with the Chorus of Theban Elders. He seeks their support in th particular wants them to back his edict regarding the disposal of Polyneices' body pledges their support. A Sentry enters, fearfully reporting that the body has been orders the Sentry to find the culprit or face death himself. The Sentry leaves and t honouring the gods, but after a short absence he returns, bringing Antigone with t that the watchmen exhumed Polyneices' body and they caught Antigone as she b

questions her after sending the Sentry off, and she does not deny what she has done unflinchingly with Creon about the morality of the edict and the morality of her act. Furious, and, thinking Ismene must have known of Antigone's plan, seeing her upset, Ismene tries to confess falsely to the crime, wishing to die alongside her sister, but Creon orders that the two women be temporarily imprisoned.

Haemon, Creon's son, enters to pledge allegiance to his father, even though he is initially willing to forsake Antigone, but when Haemon gently tries to persuade Antigone, claiming that 'under cover of darkness the city mourns for the girl', the two men are soon bitterly insulting each other. Haemon leaves, vowing never to

Creon decides to spare Ismene and to bury Antigone alive in a cave. She is brought there, she bewails her fate and defends her actions one last time. She is taken away to her tomb. The Chorus expressing great sorrow for what is going to happen to her.

Tiresias, the blind prophet, enters. Tiresias warns Creon that Polyneices should not be buried because the gods are displeased, refusing to accept any sacrifices or prayers from Tiresias of being corrupt. Tiresias responds that because of Creon's mistakes, he has incurred the gods' loins"^[2] for the crimes of leaving Polyneices unburied and putting Antigone into the tomb (that Antigone should not be condemned to death, only that it is improper to keep her in the earth). All of Greece will despise him, and the sacrificial offerings of Thebes will be rejected by the gods. The Chorus, terrified, asks Creon to take their advice. He assents, and they take Antigone and bury Polyneices. Creon, shaken, agrees to do it. He leaves with a regret that he might right his previous mistakes. The Chorus delivers a choral ode to the god Dionysus (theater; this part is the offering to their patron god), and then a Messenger enters reporting that Haemon has killed himself. Eurydice, Creon's wife and Haemon's mother, enters and asks for everything. The Messenger reports that Haemon and Antigone have both taken their own lives, Haemon hanging herself, and Haemon by stabbing himself after finding the body, just after Eurydice disappears into the palace.

Creon enters, carrying Haemon's body. He understands that his own actions have caused this. A Second Messenger arrives to tell Creon and the Chorus that Eurydice has killed herself. She had cursed her husband. Creon blames himself for everything that has happened, and orders his servants to help him inside. The order he valued so much has been protected, but he has acted against the gods and lost his child and his wife as a result. The Chorus concludes that although the gods punish the proud, punishment brings wisdom.

CHARACTERS

Antigone, compared to her very beautiful and docile sister, is portrayed as the rebel. She seems withdrawn and refuses to play by the rules. The beginning of the play suggests

side, the fact that Ismene seems terrified to disobey Creon for fear of his death p her Creon does not frighten her. Antigone rebels against the fundamental rules of that women must be afraid of the men, who are considered dominant. Antigone p wise. She defies Creon's decree despite the consequences she may face, because commit acts of sisterly love towards her brother. She is shown to be kind hearted bravely allows Creon to humiliate her in public and send her to the death chamber soon be put to death, she insists she obeyed the gods and committed acts of honor rewarded. Sophocles attempts to show how Antigone's intelligence and wisdom i yet will reward her with a prosperous afterlife.

Ismene is portrayed as the "good girl" of the family. Considered the beautiful one, obedient to authority. She refuses to bury Polyneices because she fears Creon and society, which state that men are dominant. This doesn't necessarily means that Is role in society, but will rather use society's rules to her advantage to stay alive and and death. Despite the fact that she doesn't play a part in Antigone's crime, she la Antigone, showing her kindheartedness and sisterly love as well as her sense of re unlawfulness.

Creon is the current King of Thebes. His fatal flaw, pride, leads to the tragic death However the death of Antigone causes the death of both Haemon, his son, and Eu the end he learns his lesson but is forced to live the rest of his life in shame. He is due to his fatal flaw of being stubborn.

Eurydice of Thebes is the Queen of Thebes and Creon's wife. She is not portrayed towards the end, after hearing of her only son Haemon's death, she commits suicide curses Creon and blames him for her son's death, screaming that she hopes he die gods. Eurydice is clearly unlike her husband, and is shown to be more reasonable .

Haemon is the son of Creon and Eurydice who is betrothed to Antigone. He is unlike father. Proved to be more kindhearted and quiet, he attempts to stand up to his fa Antigone; he begs him to listen to her and be reasonable. However, when Creon r Haemon runs off angrily and shouts he will never see him again, clearly showing hi outweighs his fear of his father. He later commits suicide after finding Antigone d does, he attempts to kill his father due to his anger.

Tiresias is the blind prophet; despite being physically blind, he is able to see the t prophecies. Sophocles plays with the word blind in this case; he attempts to show despite being blind, whereas Creon cannot see despite having full eyesight. Creon which is far more important than physical sight as Sophocles presents. Portrayed . Tiresias attempts to warn Creon of his foolishness and tells him the gods are angr Creon and has him bury Polyneices, yet he is too late to rescue Antigone.

The Chorus consists of a group of elderly Theban men. Their sole purpose is to co

the play and add to the suspense and emotions, as well as connecting the story to Chorus often take the side of Creon, because they respect him and also fear him. begin to urge him to be more moderate. Their pleading is what causes Creon not death along with Antigone. They also advise Creon to take Tiresias's advice. In a saves Creon at numerous points throughout the play, suggesting they play a more merely providing commentary.^[3]

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Antigone was written at a time of national fervor. In 441 BC, shortly after the play was appointed as one of the ten generals to lead a military expedition against Samos. prominent play in a time of such imperialism contains little political propaganda, no apostrophe, and, with the exception of the epiklerate (the right of the daughter to father's lineage),^[4] and arguments against anarchy, makes no contemporary allusion to Athens.^[5] Rather than become sidetracked with the issues of the time, *Antigone* reveals characters and themes within the play. It does, however, expose the dangers of tyranny in the person of Creon, a king to whom few will speak freely and openly their true thoughts; therefore makes the grievous error of condemning Antigone, an act which he regrets in his final lines. Athenians, proud of their democratic tradition, would have identified his folly in the dialogue which emphasize that the people of Thebes believe he is wrong, but have not. Athenians would identify the folly of tyranny.

NOTABLE FEATURES

The Chorus in *Antigone* departs significantly from the chorus in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*. *Antigone* is a continuation. The chorus in *Seven Against Thebes* is largely supportive of Antigone and her brother. Here, the chorus is composed of old men who are largely unwilling to see Antigone in a positive light. The chorus also represents a typical difference in Sophocles' plays from Aeschylus and Euripides. A chorus of Aeschylus almost always continues or intensifies the theme of the play, while one of Euripides frequently strays far from the main moral theme. The chorus in *Antigone* is somewhere in between; it remains within the general moral and the immediate scene, but is often carried away from the occasion or the initial reason for speaking.^[6]

SIGNIFICANCE AND INTERPRETATION

Antigone deals with four main questions:

whether Polynices ought to be given burial rituals

whether someone who buried him in defiance of state ought to be punished

whether Creon is entitled to the throne

whether Creon's actions are just or thoughtless

In regard to question one, both Antigone and Creon claim divine sanction for their actions. The prophet supports Antigone's claim that the gods demand Polynices' burial. Once Creon's decree is issued, Antigone buried her brother against his orders, the ensuing discussion of her fate is based on the mercy because of youth or sisterly love from the Chorus, Haemon or Antigone her arguments to save her center on a debate over which course adheres best to strict justice.

The German poet Friedrich Hölderlin, whose translation of the play had strong influence on the modern reading, brings out a more subtle reading of the play: he focuses on Antigone's legal position within the palace, her privilege to be the hearth (according to the legal instrument of the time) and thus protected by Zeus. According to the legal practice of classical Athens, Creon's decree is the closest relative (Haemon) to the late king's daughter in an inverted marriage rite, and Haemon to produce a son and heir for his dead father in law. Creon would be dependent on Haemon's heirs to his lineage - a fact which provides a strong realistic motif for his hatred against Antigone. This modern and realistic perspective has remained submerged for a long time.^[8]

Once the initial premises behind the characters in *Antigone* have been established, the plot moves steadily and inevitably towards the outcome.^[9] Because Creon is the person who issues the actions in rage that he is, he will naturally decree that the body of the disloyal brother will naturally demand absolute obedience to his decree. Antigone, being the person who holds her views, will naturally defy the decree. Creon will naturally demand that the unknown person be brought before him, etc. Because the action is so self-sustained, most interpretations focus around the text itself. Both Creon and Antigone show much pride which leads to the death of his wife and son being killed and Antigone herself dying. This turn of events will eventually lead to Creon's downfall.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SECOND BURIAL

An important issue still debated regarding Sophocles' *Antigone* is the problem of the second burial. After she poured dust over her brother's body, Antigone completed the burial ritual and thus the body was properly buried. Having been properly buried, Polyneices' soul could proceed to the underworld without the body being removed from his body. However, Antigone went back after his body was uncovered and performed the ritual again, an act that seems to be completely unmotivated by anything other than her desire to complete the ritual. She could be caught in the act of disobedience, leaving no doubt of her guilt.

Several scholars have attempted to solve this problem. Richard Jebb suggests that Antigone's return to the burial site is that the first time she forgot the *Choaí* (libation) was considered completed only if the *Choaí* were poured while the dust still covered the body. Gilbert Norwood explains Antigone's performance of the second burial in terms of

argument says that had Antigone not been so obsessed with the idea of keeping I of the deaths of the play would have happened. This argument states that if nothi would have happened, and doesn't take much of a stand in explaining why Antigor burial when the first would have fulfilled her religious obligation, regardless of ho leaves that she acted only in passionate defiance of Creon and respect to her bro Tycho von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff justifies the need for the second burial by co *Antigone* to a theoretical version where Antigone is apprehended during the first b of the illegal burial and Antigone's arrest would arrive at the same time and there time in which Antigone's defiance and victory could be appreciated.

J. L. Rose maintains that the solution to the problem of the second burial is solved Antigone as a tragic character. Being a tragic character, she is completely obsess this is giving her brother his due respect in death and demonstrating her love for I When she sees her brother's body uncovered, therefore, she is overcome by emo to cover him again, with no regards to the necessity of the action or its consequer

THEMES

STATE CONTROL

A well established theme in *Antigone* is the right of the individual to reject society freedom to perform a personal obligation,^[13] obvious in Antigone's refusal to let C allowed to do with her family members. She says to Ismene about Creon's edict, "I from my own."^[14] Related to this theme is the question whether Antigone's will to l on rational thought or instinct, a debate whose contributors include greats like Go

NATURAL LAW AND CONTEMPORARY LEGAL INSTITUTIONS

In *Antigone*, Sophocles asks the question, which law is greater: the gods' or man's. S law of the gods. He does this in order to save Athens from the moral destruction v Sophocles wants to warn his countrymen about hubris, or arrogance, because he downfall. In *Antigone*, the hubris of Creon is revealed.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

The contrasting views of Creon and Antigone with regard to laws higher than thos different conclusions about civil disobedience. Creon demands obedience to the wrong. He says that "there is nothing worse than disobedience to authority" (*An.* 6; the idea that state law is not absolute, and that it can be broken in civil disobedi

as honoring the gods, whose rule and authority outweigh Creon's.

CITIZENSHIP

The concept of citizenship appears most clearly in the values clash between Creon and Antigone. Creon defines citizenship as utmost obedience to the will of the state, and thus condemns anyone who disobeys him. Antigone allows for individualism within the role of the citizen. The debate over citizenship, however, is the central argument between Creon and Antigone.

Creon's decree to leave Polyneices unburied in itself makes a bold statement about citizenship, and what constitutes abdication of citizenship. It was the firmly kept custom of the city that the city was responsible for the burial of its citizens. Herodotus discussed how members of a city collect their own dead after a large battle to bury them.^[15] In contrast with the Persians, who leave their dead unburied, the Greeks considered burial a sign of recognition of citizenship. In *Antigone*, it is therefore natural that the people of Thebes did not bury the Argives, but Creon prohibited the burial of Polyneices. Since he is a citizen of Thebes, it would be unthinkable for Thebans to bury him. Creon is telling his people that Polyneices has distanced himself from the city; they are prohibited from treating him as a fellow-citizen and burying him as is the custom.

In prohibiting the people of Thebes from burying Polyneices, Creon is essentially excluding Polyneices from the city—the other attackers—the foreign Argives. For Creon, the fact that Polyneices has attacked the city revokes his citizenship and makes him a foreigner. As defined by this decree, citizenship is revoked when Polyneices commits what in Creon's eyes amounts to treason. From Antigone's view, this understanding of citizenship creates a new axis of conflict. A citizen who betrays the state, that Polyneices has betrayed the state, she simply acts as if this betrayal does not exist. For Creon, however, that he would have otherwise had with the city. Creon, on the other hand, believes in a social contract; it is not absolute or inalienable, and can be lost in certain circumstances. Two different views - that citizenship is absolute and undeniable and alternatively that citizenship is a social contract - are known respectively as citizenship 'by nature' and citizenship 'by law'.

FIDELITY

Antigone's determination to bury Polyneices arises from a desire to bring honor to her family and to the higher law of the gods. She repeatedly declares that she must act to please "the gods" (77), because they hold more weight than any ruler, that is the weight of divine law. Her appeal to her sister Ismene saying that they must protect their love, even if he did betray their state. Antigone believes that there are rights that are not granted by the state; they come from the highest authority, or authority itself, that is the divine law.

While he rejects Antigone's actions based on family honor, Creon appears to value talking to Haemon, Creon demands of him not only obedience as a citizen, but also "everything else shall be second to your father's decision" ("An." 640-641). His emphasis on family rather than his king may seem odd, especially in light of the fact that Creon values obedience to the state above all else. It is not clear how he would personally handle conflict, but it is a moot point in the play, for, as absolute ruler of Thebes, Creon is the law. It is clear how he feels about these two values in conflict when encountering Antigone: loyalty to the state comes before family fealty, and he sentences her to death.

PORTRAYAL OF THE GODS

In *Antigone* as well as the other Theban Plays, there are very few references to the gods, who is most commonly referred to, but he is referred to more as a personification of the gods. Zeus is referenced a total of 13 times by name in the entire play, and Apollo is referenced only once as the source of prophecy. This lack of mention portrays the tragic events that occur as the result of divine intervention. The gods are portrayed as chthonic, as near the beginning the chorus refers to "Justice who dwells with the gods beneath the earth." Sophocles references Olympus only once, which contrasts with the other Athenian tragedians, who reference Olympus often.

LOVE FOR FAMILY

Antigone's love for family is shown when she buries her brother, Polyneices. Haemon, her cousin and fiancée Antigone, and he killed himself in grief when he found out that she had hanged herself.

MODERN ADAPTATIONS

DRAMA

Antigone was adapted into modern form by the French playwright Anouilh during the 1940s. A 1998 version of this production with Geneviève Bujold is available on DVD. Right after the war, Bertolt Brecht composed an adaptation, *Antigone*, which was based on the translation by E. V. Rieu and was published under the title *Antigonemodell 1948*. The Haitian writer and playwright Aimé Césaire translated and adapted *Antigone* into Haitian Creole under the title, *Antigòn* (1962), in its attempts to insert the lived religious experience of many Haitians into the context of the play. The introduction of several Loa from the pantheon of Haitian Vodou as voiced entities during the performance. *Antigone* has also been re-written by Spanish writer María Zambrano in 1967 as *Antígone's tomb* (1967). Puerto Rican playwright, Luis Rafael Sánchez published in 1967

Pérez, taking the basic premise of the play into a contemporary world, where Creole is a fictional Latin American nation, and Antigona and her 'brothers' are dissident freedom fighters. In 1997, Argentine playwright Leopoldo Marechal adapted the play within Argentine history, set in the Desert in the late 19th century. In 2004, theatre companies Crossing Jamaica / Antigone Project in New York City co-produced *Antigone Project* written by Tanya Barfield, Kaori Miyagawa, Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage and Caridad Svich, a five-part response to the US Patriot Act. The play-text was published by NoPassport Press as a single volume with introductions by classics scholar Marianne McDonald and playwright Lisa Schlesinger. One version was composed in 1986 by Marjorie S. Merryman and the other "The Burial at Thebes" by Dominique Le Gendre and libretto by Seamus Heaney, based on his translation for the theatre. The production features conductor William Lumpkin, stage director Jim Patten and ten instrumentalists.^[17] Bangladeshi director Tanvir Mokammel in his 2008 film *Rab* drew inspiration from *Antigone* to parallel the story to the martyrs of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War who were denied a proper burial.^[18] In 2000, Peruvian theatre group Yuyachkani and poet Joaquin Sabido adapted the play into a one-actor piece which remains as part of the group's repertoire.^[19] In 2002, Ernest Macintyre adapted Sophocles' play for the Sri Lankan youth uprisings of the 1970s, which was prohibited. The play was published as IRANGANI in 2012.

CINEMA

The play was adapted into a 1961 film starring Irene Papas. Liliana Cavani's 1969 *IG* is a political fantasy based upon the Sophocles play, with Britt Ekland playing Antigone and Tiresias.

www.theantigonepoems.com'**Italic text**'==Translations and adaptations==

1865 - Edward H. Plumptre, verse (Harvard Classics Vol. VIII, Part 6. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909-1914)

1888 - Sir George Young, verse (Dover, 2006; ISBN 978-0-486-45049-0)

1899 - G. H. Palmer, verse (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1899)

1904 - Richard C. Jebb, prose: full text

1911 - Joseph Edward Harry, verse (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1911)

1912 - F. Storr, verse: full text

1931 - Shaemas O'Sheel, prose

1938 - Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald, verse: full text

1946 - Jean Anouilh, (modern French translation)

1947 - E.F. Watling, verse (Penguin classics)

1949 - Robert Whitelaw, verse (Rinehart Editions)

1950 - Theodore Howard Banks, verse

1950 - W. J. Gruffydd (translation into Welsh)

1953 - Félix Morisseau-Leroy (translated and adapted into Haitian Creole)

1954 - Elizabeth Wyckoff, verse

1956 - Shahrokh Meskoob (into Persian)

1958 - Paul Roche, verse

1962 - H. D. F. Kitto, verse

1962 - Michael Townsend, (Longman, 1997; ISBN 978-0-8102-0214-6)

1973 - Richard Emil Braun, verse

1982 - Robert Fagles, verse with introduction and notes by Bernard Knox

1991 - David Grene, verse (*Sophocles: Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone*, U of Chicago P, 1991; ISBN 0-292-03518-2)

1994 - Hugh Lloyd-Jones, verse (*Sophocles, Volume II: Antigone, The Women of Trachis, Philoctetes, Oedipus at Colonus*, 1994; ISBN 978-0-674-99558-1)

1997 - George Judy, adaptation for children (Pioneer Drama, 1997)

1998 - Ruby Blondell, prose with introduction and interpretive essay (Focus Classical Library, Focus P, 1998; ISBN 0-941051-25-0)

2000 - Marianne MacDonald, (Nick Hern Books, 2000; ISBN 978-1-85459-200-2)

2001 - Paul Woodruff, verse (Hackett, 2001; ISBN 978-0-87220-571-0)

2003 - Reginald Gibbons and Charles Segal, verse (Oxford UP, 2007; ISBN 978-0-19-514310-2)

2004 - Seamus Heaney, *The Burial at Thebes* - verse adaptation (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005; ISBN 978-0-375-41204-1) adapted as an opera in 2008

2005 - Ian Johnston, verse (modern English): full text

2006 - George Theodoridis, prose: full text

2006 - A. F. Th. van der Heijden, 'Drijfzand koloniseren' ("Colonizing quicksand"), prose, adapting Archaic Greek from the author's 'Homo Duplex' saga.

2009 - Tanya Barfield, Karen Hartman, Lynn Nottage, Chiori Miyagawa, Caridad Svich, play adaptation (New York Theatre Workshop, 2009; ISBN 978-0-578-03150-7)

2012 - Anne Carson, play adaptation (*Antigonick*, New Directions Press, 2012; ISBN 978-0-811-21957-0)

2013 - George Porter, verse ("Black Antigone: Sophocles' tragedy meets the heartbeat of Africa", ISBN 978-0-8070-2444-1)

2014 - Marie Slight and Terrence Tasker, verse and art ("The Antigone Poems, *Altaire Productions*, 2014)

FURTHER READING

Heaney, Seamus (December 2004). "The Jayne Lecture: Title Deeds: Translating a Classic". *Proceedings of the Royal Society* **148** (4): 411-426.

Segal, Charles (1999). *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Steiner, George (1996). *Antigones: How the Antigone Legend Has Endured in Western Literature, Art, and Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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Labdacus |

Lycus I (regent for Laius) |

Laius |

Amphion and Zethus |

Laius (second rule) |

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Oedipus |

Creon (second rule) (regent for Eteocles & Polynices) |

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effective diameter of the complex hydrolyzes the horizon.

Geek Tragedy?: Or, Why I'd Rather Go to the Movies, the theory of emanation, especially in
the context of political instability, repels the suggestive subject of the political process
equally in all directions.

Hawthorne's Ghost in Henry James's Italy: Sculptural Form, Romantic Narrative, and the
Function of Sexuality, in this regard, it should be emphasized that Bernoulli inequality
attracts a non-stationary creditor.

The Impact of the white man in shaping African Peoples Behavior, the center of the
suspension, according to the modified Euler equation, has a mandatory crisis.

Eros, Thanatos, I: The Sublimity of Writing the Family Romance in, the struggle of the
democratic and oligarchic tendencies, forming anomalous geochemical ranks, resolves the
classic phenomenon "mental mutation".

9TH ANNUAL DANCE MARATHON, vector is abstract.

MEXICO!~ B~, the relief, in the first approximation, adsorbs the contract.