
Iphigenia among the Taurians

Euripides Euripides

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Author: Euripides Euripides

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IPHIGENIA,

From a wall-painting at Pompeii.

COLLEGE SERIES OF GREEK AUTHORS
EDITED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
JOHN WILLIAMS WHITE AND THOMAS D. SEYMOUR.

EURIPIDES

IPHIGENIA

AMONG THE

TAURIANS

EDITED BY

ISAAC FLAGG

ἔρπει κατάντης συμφορὰ πρὸς τάγαθά

BOSTON, U.S.A., AND LONDON
PUBLISHED BY GINN & COMPANY

1891

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C. H. Seymour

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

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TO
MY FRIEND
AND FORMER COLLEAGUE
Tracy Beck
YALE UNIVERSITY

SYNOPSIS OF THE INTRODUCTION.

Age and Celebrity of the Play.

Iphigenia Taurica and *Iphigenia Aulidensis* — The Tauric situation a hit of Euripides — Dramatized by other playwrights, Greek and Roman — Depicted upon gems, amphorae, sarcophagi, etc. — The most faultless Euripidean tragedy.

The Legend and its Growth.

Argument of the play of Euripides — Growth of the legend partly literary, partly popular — Its form in Homer — In lyric poetry — Pindar — In tragedy — Local myths in the Attic drama — Euripides modifies the tradition of Orestes' sojourn at Athens — Attic cults the nucleus of the play — Halae and Brauron — The dramatic representation brought home to the spectator — A mythological tangle.

Plot and Scenic Adjustment.

The plot not simple, but complicated — *ἀναγνώρισις* and *περιπέτεια* — Suspense — Irony — Both effects present early in the play — Intensified as the action proceeds — The spectator at an advantage as regards all the *dramatis personae* — Method of the *ἀναγνώρισις* — *δέσις* and *λύσις* — Irony of equivocal — Stage requirements — Distribution of the parts — Entrances and exits.

Artistic Structure.

Critical theories won by induction from Greek models — Instructiveness of Euripides' irregularities — Euripidean prologue — *deus ex machina* — A double interference — Three motives for the celestial intervention — Apollo's oracles not fulfilled through human deceit — Sympathy for the chorus as persons — Gratification of local sentiment — Epic element — The *ῥῆσις ἀγγελικὴ* — Conspicuous in Euripides — Messenger for both *δέσις* and *λύσις* — First narration — Artistic advantage of the narrative form — Second narration — Ancient spectators not 'closet critics' — Function of the chorus in tragedy — Attenuated in Euripides — Chorus of captives — Pertinence of the several choral performances — The *parodos* — The *stasima* — Second *commos*, etc.

Metres and Technique.

Abruptness of the learner's step from epos to drama — Greek drama a musical performance — The accompanying music has been lost — Wholesome curbs to poetic genius — Iambic trimeter — Relaxed severity of its form — After about 420 B.C. — Trochaic tetrameter — Revived by Euripides — Ethos of the trochaic rhythm — *ἀντιλαβαί* — *στιχομυθία* — Enlarged in scope by Euripides — The anapaestic system — *ἔπη* and *μέλη* — Distinguished by the dialect — Free anapaests — *Parodos* — Prelude to the dirge — Prosodiac and paroemiac verses — *Commos* (*θρήνος*) — Logaedic strophes — Variety and flexibility of the logaedic rhythm — First *stasimon*, metrical scheme — Second *stasimon*, metrical scheme — Third *stasimon*, metrical scheme — Dochmiacs — The characteristic tragic measure — Second *commos*, metrical scheme — Scene of recognition (*μέλος ἀπὸ σκηνῆς*), metrical scheme.

INTRODUCTION.

AGE AND CELEBRITY OF THE PLAY.

EURIPIDES' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* is certainly one of the poet's later works, although the year of its representation is unknown. A quotation in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes¹ shows that it preceded the *Iphigenia at Aulis*, which was first brought out after the author's death by his son, the younger Euripides. The earlier play is thus the dramatization of a passage in the legendary history subsequent to that which forms the theme of the later play. This order of composition might be inferred from the treatment of the subject in the two dramas severally considered. To make the heroine resign herself as a voluntary sacrifice for Hellas, as is done in the scene at Aulis, was an afterthought of Euripides. Had this idea been already presented to the public, the poet would hardly have reverted to the traditional conception of the event, which is preserved in the Tauric play—where the daughter of Agamemnon, ministering in a savage land to the goddess who has spirited her away out of the hands of her slayers, deploras, with grave reproach upon her father's name, the cruel destiny that reared her as a victim to the sacrificial knife.

*Iphigenia
Taurica and
Iphigenia
Aulidensis.*

¹ *Euripides.*

1232 Πέλοψ δὲ Ταρτάλειος εἰς Πύσαν μολῶν
βοᾷσιν Ἴπποισι

Aeschylus.

ληκόθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

The *Frogs* was represented 405 B.C., the year after the death of Euripides, but the quotation implies an acquaintance with the tragedy on the part of the Athenian public, and shows that it must have been brought out during the life of the poet. Some conjectures that have been made as to the year of representation are mentioned in foot-note 31.