

Read Iphigenia in Tauris: A Drama in Verse Read Online

Details:

Author: *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Format: *110 pages*

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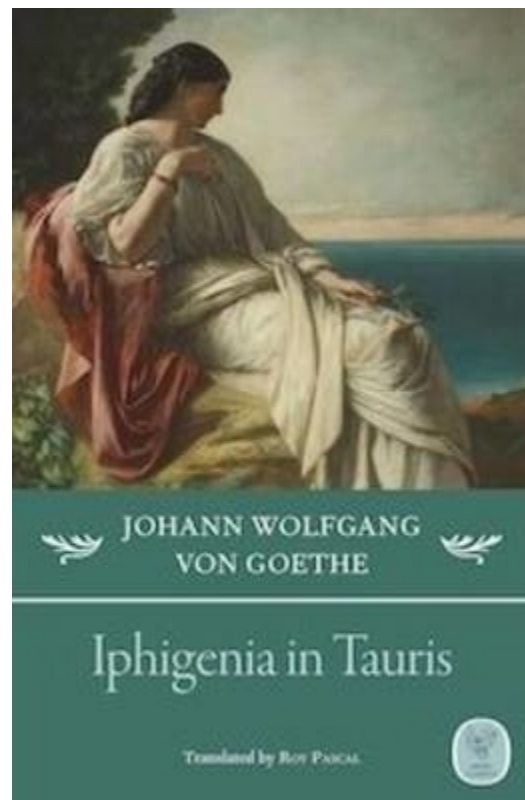
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Plot:

This drama in blank verse, first published in 1787, the first important work of Goethe's Classical period, stands the Iphigenia-Orestes story as treated by Aeschylus, Euripides and Racine on its head. In Goethe's drama Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, leader of the Greek forces in the Trojan War, in exile as a priestess in the barbaric land of the Tauri (Crimea), breaks the Tantalid family curse. By her own unaided human efforts she saves the life of her brother Orestes who has murdered their mother because she murdered their father; at the same time she enables him to expiate his crime. The female identity of the central character is all-important. It is uniquely her voice, against all the other voices which are male, that brings resolution - not by preaching values but by the visceral force of belief in the rightness of the language of the heart. This translation by Roy Pascal, made in 1954 and broadcast in two separate BBC radio productions, is published for the first time.

Martin Swales writes in his Introduction: 'Goethe's Iphigenia is one of the most perfect poetic dramas that the moral culture of Western Europe has produced - Few works can have such purchase on our contemporary concerns. The endless bloodletting of the play's prehistory, the desperate cycle of outrage

followed by acts of retribution that fuel the flames; the play's understanding of the notion of sacrifice that conjoins the sacred and the violent into a poisonous brew - all these preoccupations speak with incomparable urgency to us today ...Roy Pascal's translation is a matchless example of German poetry rendered into English by a master.'

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About Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

ROY PASCAL (1904 - 80) was Professor of German at the University of Birmingham, 1939 - 69 and the author of a number of standard books on German literature and culture.

Table of contents

Introduction by Martin Swales; translation of Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris; end-notes

Review quote

'This translation is a matchless example of German poetry rendered into English by a master. Now sixty years old, and published for the first time, it is remarkable for its immediacy and urgency - It could have been written today.'
Martin Swales, Professor Emeritus of German, University of London