



Iphigenia in Aulis

©2009 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

Places Discussed

Aulis (AW-lis). Greek seaport, on the west coast of Euboea; a centrally located spot where Greek forces assemble to prepare for their invasion of Ilium. The play opens in front of the tent of Agamemnon, commander of the Greek armies. While the scene never changes, it is important that the audience know that just out of sight thousands of warriors and sailors are waiting impatiently for the wind to pick up so the fleet can set sail for Troy.

While stage directions indicate the setting, there is no certain knowledge as to how that setting was created on the ancient Greek stage. The more commonly accepted theory is that vertical prisms (*periaktoi*) were mounted on pivots between columns and rotated to show painted scenes. However, it is the pressure applied to the central character by the unseen thousands of men that creates the action of the play. Greek playwrights shaped much of their settings by their words and dialogue rather than actual physical objects, and the same is true of this play, even though there is the spectacle of characters entering in a chariot.

Bibliography:

Conacher, D. J. *Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme, and Structure*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967. Excellent introduction to Euripides in general, with a particularly good discussion of *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Especially useful for providing mythological and literary background.

Foley, Helene P. "Marriage and Sacrifice in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*." *Arethusa* 15 (1982): 159-180. Concentrates on the similarities of marriage and sacrifice rituals, which are merged in this play. Discusses the implications of the play in terms of the politics of Panhellenism.

Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin. *Anxiety Veiled: Euripides and the Traffic in Women*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993. Discusses Iphigenia as a voluntary sacrifice, with particular attention to the gender implications of her action.

Smith, Wesley D. "Iphigenia in Love." In *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to Bernard M. W. Knox on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, edited by Glen W. Bowersock, Walter Burkert, and Michael C. J. Putnam. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1979. Argues that Iphigenia's acceptance of her fate is founded on a desire to protect Achilles. Also claims the extant ending to the play is corrupt.

Snell, Bruno. "From Tragedy to Philosophy: *Iphigenia in Aulis*." In *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*, edited by Erich Segal. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983. Places the play in historical context, with special emphasis on the concepts of knowing and doing. Claims the play is indicative of Euripides' tendency to begin plays with confusion and end them with heroism, the reverse of Sophocles' technique.

Copyright Notice

©2009 eNotes.com, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:
<http://www.enotes.com/iphigenia-aulis-salem>