

Dixit, et vultū serēno ad āram prōcessit, et vītā cum sanguine fūdit. Ubi Graeci, misericordiae et amōris plēni, virginem fortem vīdērunt, ex omnibus mīlitibus nēmo ferē lacrimas retinuit, sed omnēs gemitum profundum dedērunt.

Graeci igitur, simul āc Diānae nūmen virginis sanguine plācāvērunt, vēla candida vento secundo dedērunt, et ad Asiae ōram nāvīgāvērunt. Ibi multos annos Trōiam vī et armis frustrā oppugnābant. Tandem, Deōrum Immortālium auxilio, urbem incendērunt et praedam ingentem domum reportāvērunt. Helenam quoque Menelāus Spartam ad rēgiam redūxit.

Nōne nōbilem praeclāramque virginem Īphigeneiam putātis? Īphigeneiam memoriā semper tenēte, nam prō patriā libenter ē vītā excessit. Nōne alii multi prō patriā ē vītā excessērunt? Multi et Graeci et Rōmāni et Britanni vītā prō patriā libenter dēdidērunt.

**amor, -ōris, m.**—love.

**auxilium, -i, n.**—help.

**dēdo, 3, dēdidi, dēditum**—I give up.

**ferē**—about, almost.

**fundo, 3, fūdi, fūsum**—I pour.

**gemitus, -ūs, m.**—groan.

**ingens, -gentis**—huge.

**nēmo, -inis, c.**—no one.

**puto, 1**—I think.

**Sparta, -ae, f.**—Sparta, a town in Greece.

You know that *et... et...* is “both... and...” I would suggest for *et... et... et...* “both... and... as well as...”.

*Memoria tenere* is literally “to hold in memory” i.e. “to remember”. *Dixit* is “said” but also “spoke.”

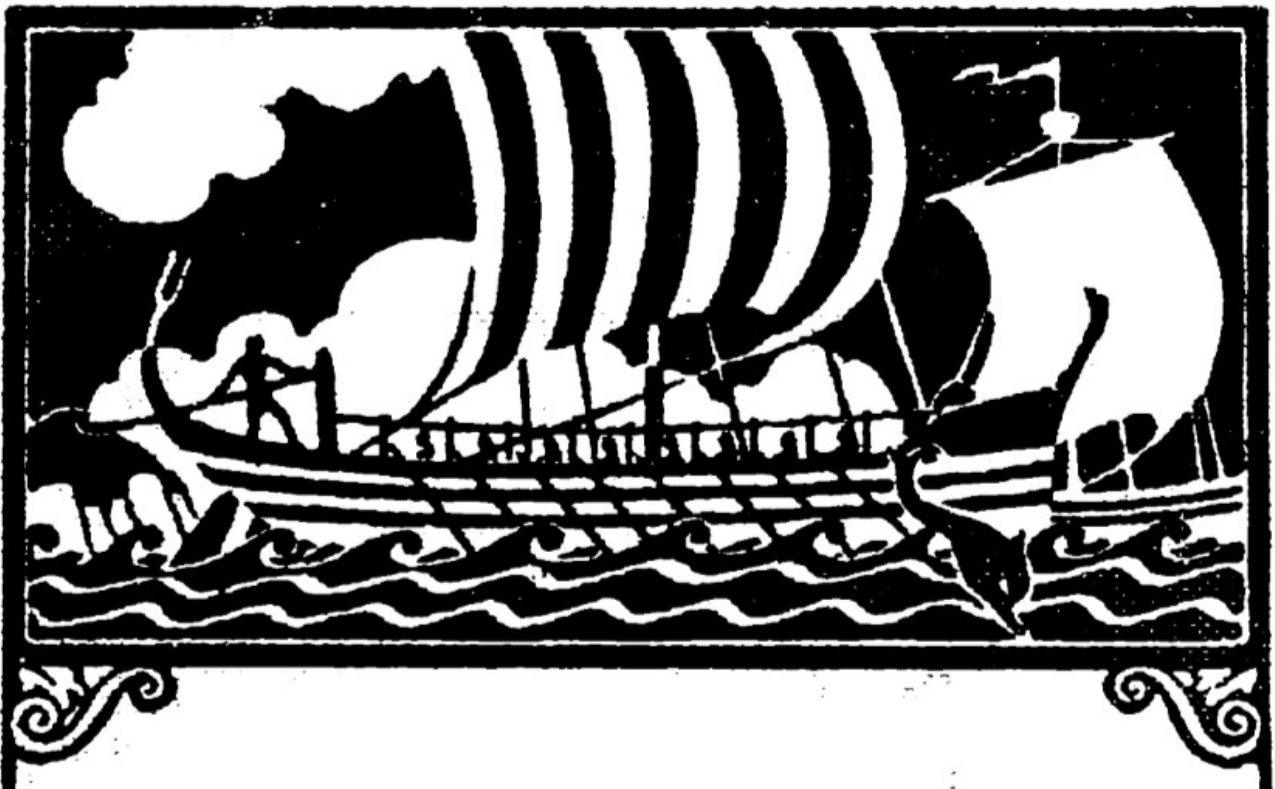
Watch out for the imperative!

Translate and compare with my attempt on the next page.

She spoke and advanced to the altar with a calm expression. When the Greeks, full of pity and love, saw the brave maiden, almost no one of all the soldiers held back [their] tears but all gave a deep groan.

The Greeks therefore as soon as they appeased the will of Diana with the blood of the maiden, gave the white sail to the following wind and sailed to the shore of Asia. There for many years they fought the Trojans with force and arms in vain. At last with the help of the immortal gods, they burned the city and brought back home great spoil. Menelaus also brought back Helen to the Spartan palace.

Do you not think the maiden Iphigenia noble and famous? Always remember Iphigenia for she died willingly for her country. Did not many others die for their country? Many both Greeks and Romans as well as Britons freely gave their lives for their country.



I hope you find this account of human sacrifice as appalling as I do! Shorn of the false trappings of honour it paints a grim and realistic picture of pagan religion. In fact in most versions of this story Iphigenia is replaced at the last moment by a doe sent by Diana and spends the rest of her life as a priestess. However, in at least one version of the story she is sent to the area now called the Crimea where she has the job of sacrificing any foreigners who arrive in the area in Diana's temple!

It is worth comparing the story with the account of Isaac and Abraham in Genesis 22 where God tests Abraham but does not allow him to sacrifice his son. Later God makes it very clear through his prophet Jeremiah that he hates the very idea of child sacrifice:

*et aedificaverunt excelsa* ("high places") *Baali ad comburendos filios suos igni in holocaustum Baali quae non praecepi* (*praecipere* "to command") *nec locutus sum* (deponent verb – on the syllabus) *nec ascenderunt* ("come up" "arise") *in cor* ("heart") *meum* Jeremiah 19:5 Vulgate (I think you can translate this but look it up if you are not sure.)

There is an account in the Bible which is superficially so like that of Iphigenia that one wonders if the Greeks were dimly remembering an older story. In the book of Judges Jephthah vows to sacrifice whatever come to greet him when he returns from the battle if God will grant him victory over the Ammonites. His daughter is the one who comes out. Although it is not totally clear from the text, it certainly looks as if Jephthah carried out his vow. The book of Judges is full of horrific deeds narrated in a matter of fact way. We are generally left to infer, from the grossly evil nature of the acts committed, what God's attitude to them must have been – it is obvious and does not need spelling out. It was that dark time in Israel's history when law and order were non-existent and *...unusquisque quod sibi rectum videbatur, hoc faciebat* “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Although Jephthah was one of the heroes of the faith mentioned later in the Letter to the Hebrews, he was by no means free of the horrible taint of his time. His vow itself was rash and terrible – surely he was not expecting an *animal* to come out to meet him! His sacrifice of his daughter falls into the same category as the miserable catalogue of evil that precedes it in the rest of the book and was surely condemned by the God who declared of such sacrifices “*...nec ascenderunt in cor meum*”.

What of the comments of the author at the end of the Latin story? Can we really equate the pagan sacrifice of a child to placate the gods before war to the death of soldiers in defence of their country? The book of Latin stories from which these exercises are taken was published in the USA in 1941. The author, Maud Reed, was classical mistress at Lincoln Christ's Hospital Girls' High School in England. America did not enter World War 2 until the end of that year although Roosevelt was already implementing a policy of making the USA the “arsenal of democracy”. I have a feeling the times made the author point out to her American public that *Multi et Graeci et Romani et Britanni vitam pro patria libenter dediderunt*. No doubt she was thinking too of a famous line of Horace: *Dulce et Decorum est pro patria mori*. However, there is a difference between a life lost in defending the weak against aggression and what happened to Iphigenia whose life was sacrificed to cruel, capricious and evil gods. The God of the Bible made it clear that such sacrifices never even came into his mind.

