

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03814-0 - The Authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'

Mark Griffith

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

CAMBRIDGE CLASSICAL STUDIES

General editors: M.I.Finley, E.J.Kenney, G.E.L.Owen

THE AUTHENTICITY OF *PROMETHEUS BOUND*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03814-0 - The Authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'

Mark Griffith

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# The authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'

MARK GRIFFITH

Assistant Professor of the Classics

Harvard University

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge

London : New York : Melbourne

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-03814-0 - The Authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'  
Mark Griffith  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521210997](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521210997)

© Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge 1977

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1977  
This digitally printed version 2007

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Griffith, Mark.

The authenticity of Prometheus bound.

(Cambridge classical studies)

Bibliography: p.

1. Aeschylus. Prometheus vinctus. I. Title.  
II. Series.  
PA3825.P8G68 882'.01 76-14031

ISBN 978-0-521-21099-7 hardback  
ISBN 978-0-521-03814-0 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03814-0 - The Authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'

Mark Griffith

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

To my parents, Guy and Marjorie Griffith

## CONTENTS

List of tables	<i>page</i>	x
Preface		xi
1 THE PROBLEM		1
2 EXTERNAL EVIDENCE		8
Authenticity		8
The date		9
The trilogy		13
The myth		16
Summary		17
3 THE LYRIC METRES		19
Analyses		19
Iambic		60
Dochmiac		63
Dactylic		65
Aeolic		65
Trochaic		66
Dactylo-epitrite		66
Conclusions		67
4 THE RECITATIVE ANAPAESTS		68
Metron frequency		68
Overlap		70
Length of periods		71
Paroemiacs		72
Summary		74
5 THE IAMBIC TRIMETERS		76
Resolutions		76
Verseweight		79
<i>Positio debilis</i>		80
Prosody		81
Caesura		83

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03814-0 - The Authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'

Mark Griffith

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	<i>viii</i>
Porson's Law	86
Final monosyllables	87
Three-word trimeters	91
Word division	92
Enjambement	96
Interlinear hiatus	100
Summary	101
6 STRUCTURE AND DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE	103
The prologue	103
Prometheus' soliloquy	108
The parodos	110
Actors' anapaests	111
The Okeanos-scene	115
Prometheus' silence	116
The arrival of a new character	118
Io's monody	119
Address formulae	120
The chorus	123
Stichomythia	136
7 STAGING	143
8 VOCABULARY	147
Types of words	148
<i>Eigenwörter</i>	157
Individual words	172
9 STYLE AND SYNTAX	190
Details of syntax and phraseology	190
Repetition	201
γνώματ	202
Wordplay	203
The internal formal arrangement of speeches	207
Sentence length	214
Sophistic influence	217
Other influences	221
10 ALTERNATIVES TO AESCHYLEAN AUTHORSHIP	225
The tradition	226
<i>Prom.</i> and the other Prometheus-plays	245

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03814-0 - The Authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'

Mark Griffith

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Prom.</i> as monodrama	249
Who wrote <i>Prom.</i> ?	252
APPENDIXES	
A Metrical symbols and abbreviations	255
B <i>Prom.</i> 165f = 184f and the clausular ithyphallic	257
C <i>Prom.</i> 571ff and the aristophanean	261
D <i>Prom.</i> 580 = 599	264
E <i>Prom.</i> 691	266
F Compound adjectives	268
G The vocabulary studies of Niedzballa and Peretti	269
H <i>Eigenwörter</i>	272
J Repeated <i>Eigenwörter</i>	284
K Repeated <i>Eigenwörter</i> (from Peretti)	287
L Word distribution	288
Notes	293
Bibliography	366
Subject index	380
Index of Greek words discussed	392
Index of passages cited	394

## TABLES

1 Purely iambic stanzas	61
2 Anapaestic metra	69
3 Clausular paroemiacs	73
4 Rhetorical pauses within the trimeter	99
5 Proportion of choral lyric	123
6 External form of choral lyric	127
7 <i>Eigenwörter</i>	164
8 Repeated <i>Eigenwörter</i>	166
9 Particles	177
10 Rhetorical 'signpost' formulae	210
11 Sentence-length distribution	215
12 Sentence length	216
13 Noun distribution	289
14 Frequency of nouns	289



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03814-0 - The Authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'

Mark Griffith

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

From time to time, people have tried to show that the works of Shakespeare were written by somebody else. Few have believed them, or even taken them seriously. So too, a book which revives the argument that Aeschylus may not have composed *Prometheus Bound* is liable to be greeted by students of Greek tragedy, and by the world at large, with misgivings bordering on derision, and a young scholar who challenges prevailing opinion on a popular subject may be suspected of wantonly and perversely trying to make a stir. I should therefore say a word about the way this book developed.

When Professor D.L. Page suggested to me that I write my doctoral thesis on this topic, I had few doubts about the play's authenticity, and expected that my task would be simply to lay those last few doubts to rest. I found, however, over the next three years, that the evidence which I was assembling showed *Prom.* consistently behaving quite differently from the six undisputed plays of Aeschylus, and I was driven to believe that another hand was probably at work. This is still my belief; but I should stress that the discovery tomorrow of a scrap of papyrus, confirming Aeschylus as author, would in no way astonish me. We know too little to be certain about anything: I am concerned here merely with argument from probability.

In collecting and assessing the evidence, I tried to remain as objective and impartial as possible, and to suppress the natural tendency to look for unexpected and sensational results. In my dissertation (presented to the University of Cambridge in the summer of 1973), I limited my conclusions to a page and a half of equivocation; here I have committed myself a little more strongly in the last chapter to the view that the play is spurious, but I hope that my presentation of the evidence in the earlier chapters has not been distorted by this. I trust that those who come to read this book will likewise suspend their disbelief for an hour or two, and that those who do disbelieve will at least find some of the discussion of

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03814-0 - The Authenticity of 'Prometheus Bound'

Mark Griffith

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xii

tragic style interesting in its own right.

Many sections of the book will be rather heavy going for the non-specialist, as they depend on technical and detailed analysis of the practice of the three major tragedians. I have generally tried to summarize the main points at the end of each section in a more digestible form. (It so happens, for example, that some of the most striking arguments against Aeschylean authorship are to be found in the lyric metres, an area in which most undergraduates are rather at sea. For them, and for other more casual readers, it may be helpful in chapter 2 to read only the summaries (on pp. 32-3, 37, 39, 46-7, 49, 53, 55-6, and 60), and then the broader treatment on pp.60-7.) But in the last resort, of course, it is on the details, and the laborious collection of parallels, that the case for or against authenticity must rest, and I make no further apology for producing such an unreadable book. If it helps others to make up their minds, or merely provides them with information which they can use more effectively for themselves, it will have served its purpose.

I am grateful to many scholars and friends for their criticisms and help, in particular to Professor W.S. Allen, Mr H. Griffith, Professor A. Henrichs, Professor H. Lloyd-Jones, Professor A.N. Michelini, and Mr T.C.W. Stinton. I am especially indebted to Dr R.D. Dawe, whose encouragement and opinions, on matters large and small, have at every stage been generous and salutary; and, above all, to Professor Page, who has unstintingly placed at my disposal the full range of his learning, judgement, and patience, since I first began work on this subject. I should also like to thank the Master and Fellows of Peterhouse, where I was a Research Fellow during 1972-3; the Department of the Classics at Harvard University, which met the cost of preparing the final typescript; the Faculty of Classics in the University of Cambridge, which is underwriting the publication of a book destined surely to find few readers; and the staff of the Cambridge University Press, whose attention to the details of production has been both friendly and scrupulous. Finally, to my wife, Cheryl, I offer my apologies for the time spent on this book, and my gratitude for her unfailing encouragement and support: ταύτηι γέγηθα κάπιλῆθουαι κακῶν.

Cambridge, Mass.  
1976

M.G.