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AESCHYLUS
PROMETHEUS
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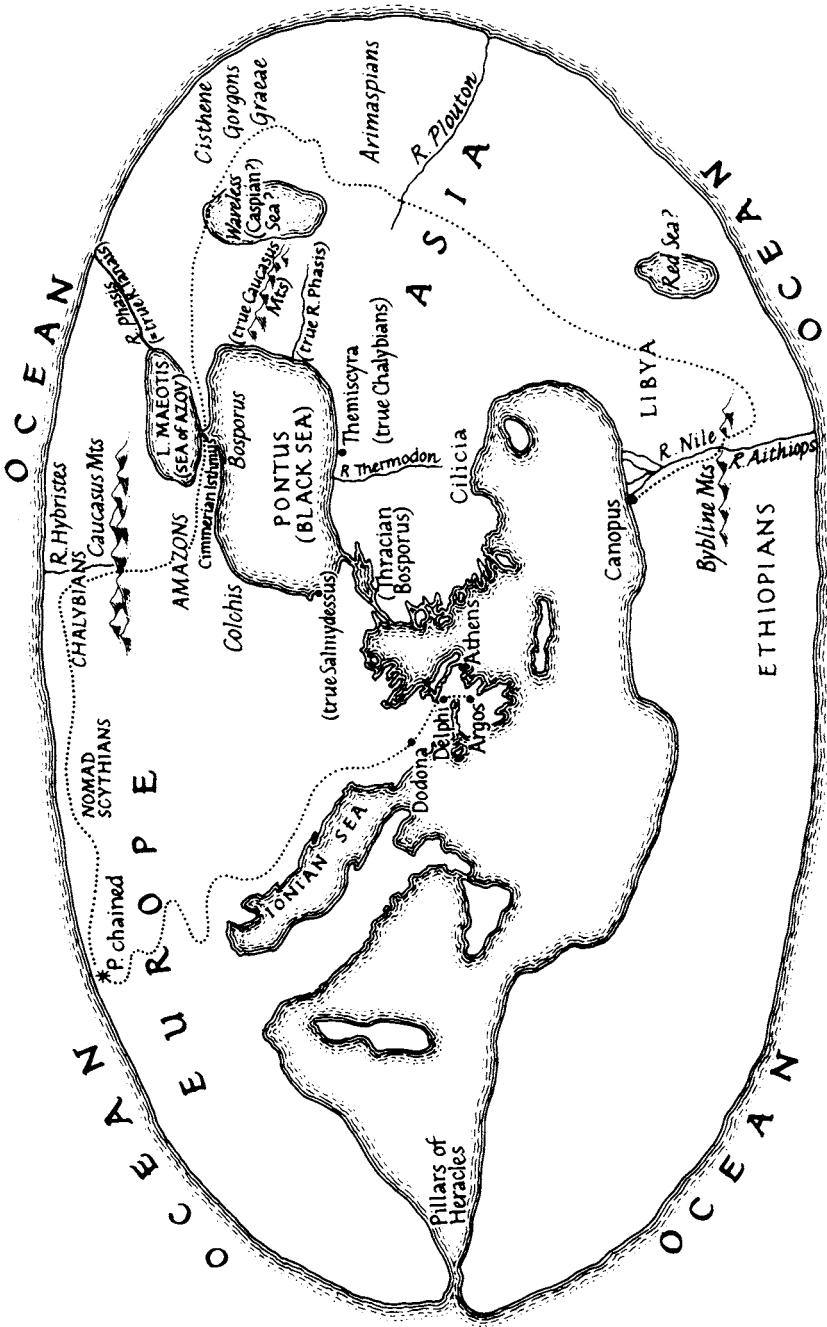
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[More information](#)

CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
<i>Map</i>	vi
<i>Preface</i>	vii
Introduction	1
1 <i>The myth</i>	1
2 <i>The plot</i>	4
3 <i>The characters</i>	6
4 <i>Structure and dramatic technique</i>	12
5 <i>Style and metre</i>	21
6 <i>The production</i>	30
7 <i>Authenticity and date</i>	31
8 <i>The text</i>	35
List of manuscripts	38
PROMETHEUS BOUND	39
Commentary	79
Appendix: <i>The trilogy</i>	281
Bibliography	306
Index	311



The wanderings of Io.

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0521270111 - Aeschylus Prometheus Bound - Edited by Mark Griffith

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

PREFACE

The aim of the series in which this edition appears is 'to provide students with the guidance that they need for the interpretation of the book as a work of literature'. I have therefore tried to provide help both in translating and understanding the Greek, phrase by phrase and line by line, and also in appreciating the poetical, rhetorical, and dramatic meaning and effects of the play as it unfolds. This meaning, and those effects, will not be precisely the same for any two spectators or readers. Most obviously, a modern English-speaking student will understand and respond differently from a fifth-century Athenian. But I have tried to bear both audiences in mind, in the belief that they share enough common ground in their experience of drama, and of archaic and classical Greek literature, for this play to speak to them both, and in the hope that students will do their best to see through Greek eyes and listen with Greek ears.

Prometheus Bound is one of the more accessible Greek tragedies. Its language is not too difficult, its text not too corrupt; its dramatic conflict is arresting and powerful. It is therefore often read by relatively inexperienced students, and I have taken care in the commentary to supply a fair amount of grammatical, syntactical, lexical, and metrical help for them. (For the same reason I usually refer to Smyth, Goodwin, and LSJ, rather than to Kühner or Schwyzer; and in the Appendix I give English translations of Latin quotations, since not all Hellenists nowadays read Latin.) I hope that more fluent readers of Greek will not find this tiresome.

In preparing my text and apparatus, I have relied entirely on the reports of Dawe and Page (and of Herington for the scholia). I have not collated any manuscripts for myself. But I am responsible for what is printed. In the commentary, like every editor of a major classical author, I have depended heavily on my predecessors. I owe most to Elmsley, Wecklein, Sikes and Willson, and Groeneboom; my brother Hugh's undergraduate notes on the play (written some fifteen years ago, and based partly on the lectures of Mr T. C. W. Stinton) were also helpful. I gladly acknowledge too my debt to, and admiration for, Fraenkel's *Agamemnon*, Jebb's Sophocles, Barrett's *Hippolytus*, and West's Hesiod: without them, my task would have been harder, several of my notes longer, and my understanding much less complete.

Cambridge University Press

0521270111 - Aeschylus Prometheus Bound - Edited by Mark Griffith

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

viii

PREFACE

I am grateful to many students and colleagues for their suggestions and criticisms; in particular, to Albert Henrichs, Donald J. Mastronarde, Marcia Morrisey, Charles E. Murgia, Robert Renehan, and Thomas G. Rosenmeyer; also to Elizabeth Ditmars and Seth Schein for help with proofreading. And, like all other contributors to this series, I have benefited greatly from the vigilance, encouragement, and good taste of the General Editors, Mrs P. E. Easterling and Professor E. J. Kenney. I am also grateful to them and to the Press for allowing me a little more space than is usual for this series, in order to include a full Appendix on the trilogy.

Five years ago, in the opening chapter of a study of the authenticity of *Prometheus Bound*, I apologized for the dry and rather philistine nature of my work: 'This emphasis on objective criteria inevitably involves closing the eyes to much that is beautiful and important in the play; we end up treating it as a problem rather than a drama.' In the present edition, I hope that I have done something to redress the balance. I have certainly enjoyed dealing with the play as a tragic drama – whoever wrote it; and if I can help open a few more eyes to the peculiar beauty and riches of this remarkable play, I shall be more than content.

October 1982

M. G.