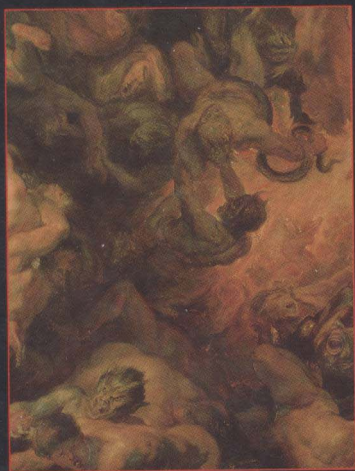


THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



MILTON

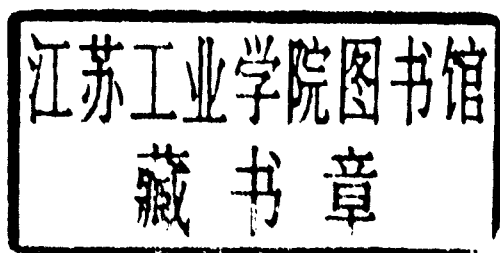
Edited by Dennis Danielson

SECOND EDITION

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO MILTON

second edition

EDITED BY
DENNIS DANIELSON



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RU, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 1989, second edition 1999

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in Sabon 10/13 pt. [CE]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloging in publication data

The Cambridge companion to Milton / edited by Dennis Danielson. – 2nd ed.
p. cm. – (Cambridge companions to culture)

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 65226 X (hb)

I. Milton, John, 1608–1674 – Criticism and interpretation.

I. Danielson, Dennis Richard, 1949– II. Series.

PR3588.C27 1999

821'.4–dc21 99-10915 CIP

ISBN 0 521 65226 X hardback

ISBN 0 521 65543 9 paperback

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PREFACE

This book, as its title suggests, is intended to provide friendly and helpful company for any student of Milton; and this second edition aims to build on the apparent success of the first in performing that mission. In the late 1980s Cambridge University Press began by asking me to plan a book – and a team of contributors – which would introduce readers of Milton to both the scope of his work and the range of current approaches to it. In response I put forward a list of chapters that I hoped might most nearly accomplish this task, and then recruited a range of outstanding academics whose contributions made the *Cambridge Companion to Milton* a reality. At that time, ours was only the third volume – preceded by Chaucer and Shakespeare – in what has since become a prominent series of (at this writing) thirty-odd Cambridge Companions to literature. Then in the late 1990s, after roughly a decade in print, with continued lively interest in the book from students and other academics, this *Companion* seemed ripe for revision; and the present volume is the fruit of our collective response.

Seven of the eighteen essays that follow – those by Dobranski, Brown, Burrow, Dzelzainis, Hall, von Maltzahn, and Siemens – I had the pleasure of commissioning for this second edition, and five more have been revised in varying degrees from what they were. All eighteen chapters embody critical thought, serious study, and a process of understanding, and all encourage more of the same in both our and Milton's readers. Moreover, I have invited each author to speak in his or her own voice, and without condescension. The resulting eighteen original essays are thus by eighteen conspicuously different human beings, who would (and do) disagree with each other about innumerable issues, but who are here united by their desire to say in an informative, responsible, sometimes argumentative way something important about a subject they love.

Although readers may consult the contents list and pick chapters to read according to their specific needs or interests, I have tried to arrange the book so that it has some rough logical or chronological continuity. Stephen

Dobranski's fresh chapter on Milton's 'social life' is followed by Cedric Brown's historically (and likewise socially) informative chapter on Milton's Ludlow Masque, sometimes known as 'Comus'. Martin Evans's stimulating essay on *Lycidas* is similarly of biographical as well as literary interest. The theme of historically embedded biography is pursued further in Colin Burrow's perceptive chapter on the 1645 *Poems of Mr John Milton*. The focus of the two following pieces is Milton's prose: Martin Dzelzainis providing a lively primer on Milton's politics, and Thomas Corns tracing the development of Milton's prose style. After these introductions to Milton's prose and early poetic career comes Ron Hall's chapter examining Milton's sonnets as history and as poetry; followed by three further essays, by Barbara Lewalski, John Leonard, and myself, on the forms and purposes of Milton's great heroic poem: the genres, language, and theodicy of *Paradise Lost*. Two of the most perennially controversial topics related to *Paradise Lost* – Milton's Satan and Milton's treatment of the sexes – are introduced in lively essays by John Carey and Diane McColley respectively. The chapter by the late Georgia Christopher provides valuable insight into the relationship between Milton's work and the spirit and hermeneutics of the Reformation. Mary Ann Radzinowicz and Joan Bennett lead us next into readings of the other two 'great poems', *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, exploring Milton's rich, complex relationship (respectively) to the Bible and to the timeless issue of human freedom. Our historical perspectives on Milton are then lengthened and deepened by Nicholas von Maltzahn's discussion of the reception and subsequent 'institution' of Milton, and by William Kerrigan's essay on the place of Milton in intellectual history. Each of these seventeen chapters is accompanied by a reading list. Finally comes Ray Siemens's veritable tool kit of helps – including Internet resources – for all who wish to pursue their Miltonic studies beyond Milton and this *Companion*. The same bibliography's availability on the Internet, we hope, will doubly enhance its utility.

Assembling this book has taught me afresh both to recognize and to enjoy the social, economic, historical, and spiritual complexity of an artifact that appears, deceptively, as a single material object between two covers. Its eighteen contributors do not constitute the full *Companion* team, although my gratitude to and respect for each of them is immense. In addition I would like to thank those valued colleagues either whose essays were not carried over into this second edition or who agreed to contribute to it and then, through a combination of circumstances, were not included. I am also grateful for the enormous amount of advice (written and oral) I received from many scholars from around the world during this edition's gestation. They are too many to name, but I do want to offer special thanks

PREFACE

to John Leonard, who is himself a true Milton companion. Finally, I am deeply thankful to Josie Dixon, senior editor at Cambridge University Press, who with great humanity and professionalism has shepherded me and this edition from its inception.

If I were the sole author of this book I could here conclude, as authors often inaccurately do, by claiming responsibility for all its errors and shortcomings. But I am only its editor; and however much blame I do genuinely and undoubtedly deserve, responsibility for this *Companion's* failures as well as successes – like the pleasure of reading Milton – is happily something I may share with others.

DENNIS DANIELSON

JOHN MILTON: SIGNIFICANT DATES

- 1608 Milton born in Cheapside, London (9 December)
- 1620 Enters St Paul's School, London
- 1625 Admitted to Christ's College, Cambridge
King Charles I crowned
- 1628 First poem printed (probably *De Idea Platonica*)
- 1629 Takes BA degree (January)
- 1632 Takes MA degree, *cum laude* (July)
'An Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet W. Shakespeare'
published in Shakespeare's Second Folio
Takes up residence with family in Hammersmith
- 1634 *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* performed
(29 September)
- 1635 Takes up residence with family at Horton
- 1637 His mother dies (April)
A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle published
- 1638 *Lycidas* published in *Justa Edouardo King*
Travels to France and Italy
Charles Diodati dies
- 1639 Returns to England (July)
- 1640 *Epitaphium Damonis* published
Moves to his own house in Aldersgate and begins teaching two
students, John and Edward Phillips
- 1641 *Of Reformation Touching Church-Discipline in England* (May)
published
Of Prelatical Episcopacy (June or July) published
Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence (July) published
- 1642 *The Reason of Church-Government Urg'd against Prelaty* (January
or February) published
An Apology Against a Pamphlet Called A Modest Confutation
(April) published

- Marries Mary Powell, who returns home to her family about one month later
The Civil War begins
- 1643 *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (August) published
- 1644 Revised second edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (February) published
Of Education (June) published
The Judgement of Martin Bucer (August) published
Areopagitica (November) published
- 1645 *Tetrachordon* and *Colasterion* (March) published
Poems of Mr. John Milton, both English and Latin, Compos'd at Several Times registered (published January 1646)
Marry Powell Milton returns to her husband
- 1646 Daughter Anne born (July)
- 1647 His father dies (March)
- 1648 Daughter Mary born (October)
- 1649 King Charles I executed (January)
The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (February) published
Appointed Secretary for Foreign Languages (March)
Articles of Peace (May) published
Eikonoklastes (October) published
- 1651 *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (February) published
Son John born (March)
- 1652 Becomes completely blind
Daughter Deborah born (May)
Mary Powell Milton dies (May)
Son John dies (June)
- 1653 Oliver Cromwell established as Lord Protector (December)
- 1654 *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio Secunda* (May) published
- 1655 *Pro Se Defensio* (August) published
- 1656 Marries second wife, Katherine Woodcock (November)
- 1657 Daughter Katherine born (October)
- 1658 Katherine Woodcock Milton dies (February)
Daughter Katherine dies (March)
Oliver Cromwell dies; his son Richard installed as successor (September)
Revised second edition of *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (October) published
- 1659 *A Treatise of Civil Power* (February) published
Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings (August) published

- Letter to a Friend Concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth* (October) written (first published in 1698)
Proposalls of Certaine Expedients (November) written (first published in 1938)
- 1660 *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (February) published (the revised second edition appeared in April)
The Present Means . . . of a Free Commonwealth (March) written (first published 1698)
Brief Notes upon a Late Sermon (April) published
Charles II returns and monarchy restored in England (May)
Milton briefly imprisoned and fined
- 1663 Marries third wife, Elizabeth Minshull (February)
- 1667 *Paradise Lost. A Poem in Ten Books* (October) published
- 1669 *Accedence Commenc't Grammar* (June) published
- 1670 *The History of Britain* (November) published
- 1671 *Paradise Regain'd . . . Samson Agonistes* published
- 1672 *Artis Logicae* published
- 1673 *Of True Religion, Hæresie, Schism, and Toleration* published
Poems, &c. upon Several Occasions with *Of Education* published
- 1674 *Paradise Lost. A Poem in Twelve Books* (second edition) published
Milton's translation of *A Declaration or Letters Patent* (July) published
Epistolarum Familiarium published
Milton dies at age 65 (8 or 9 November); and is buried on 12 November in St Giles Church in Cripplegate
- 1676 *Literae Pseudo-Senatus Anglicani* (Letters of State) published
- 1681 *Character of the Long Parliament* published
- 1682 *A Brief History of Moscovia* published
- 1694 *Letters of State* (English translation) published, including Milton's sonnets to Cromwell, Fairfax, Vane, and Cyriack Skinner
- 1823 Manuscript of *De doctrina Christiana* discovered (published 1825)
- 1874 Milton's Commonplace Book discovered (published 1876)

NOTE ON THE TEXT AND LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

References to works quoted or mentioned are given in the text, usually in an abbreviated form that cites the author's name, the date (where necessary), and the page. Fuller details of works thus cited may be found in the reading list that follows each chapter but the last. All biblical quotations, except as otherwise indicated, are from the Authorized (King James) Version.

- Poems* *The Poems of John Milton*, ed. John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London, 1968). All quotations of Milton's poetry are from this edition.
- YP *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols., ed. Don M. Wolfe *et al.* (New Haven, 1953-82)
- CM *The Works of John Milton*, 18 vols., ed. Frank Allen Patterson *et al.* (New York, 1931-8)
- CD *Christian Doctrine* (original Latin title: *De doctrina christiana*)
- PL *Paradise Lost*
- PR *Paradise Regained*
- SA *Samson Agonistes*

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I

STEPHEN B. DOBRANSKI

Milton's social life

That eight biographies of John Milton were written within sixty years of his death in 1674 not only demonstrates the popularity of his works during the first half of the eighteenth century, but also suggests the enduring strength of Milton's personality. Because most of these accounts were published with editions of Milton's works, readers became accustomed to interpreting his writings biographically. Milton still had his detractors – William Winstanley in his 1687 dictionary of English poets, for example, dismissed Milton as 'a notorious Traytor' who had 'most impiously and villanously bely'd that blessed Martyr, King *Charles* the First' (195) – but such attacks only encouraged readers to approach Milton's works as a function of his identity. As Samuel Johnson complained in his *Lives of the English Poets*, the 'blaze' of Milton's reputation was preventing people from examining his poetry objectively (1: 163, 165).

Much of the information in Milton's early biographies came from Milton himself, a useful but not entirely reliable source. Whereas we know relatively little about other contemporary writers, Milton includes provocative autobiographical digressions in some of his poems and pamphlets, as if inviting readers to organize his works according to his sense of them. He describes his aspirations and experiences in *The Reason of Church-Government* (1642), *An Apology Against a Pamphlet* (1642), and *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio Secunda* (1654), and continues to construct a narrative of his poetic progress in other publications such as his collected *Poems* (1645, 1673) and *Paradise Lost* (1667, 1674). If scholars in discussing his works have overemphasized Milton's agency, the blame lies at least in part with Milton: his strong authorial voice has virtually drowned out the social conditions of his writing and publishing.

In its most recent and extreme form, this image of Milton as an independent author has mutated into the caricature of an isolated pedant. We imagine an aloof and avid scholar, cut off from seventeenth-century culture and holding conversation exclusively with Homer, Virgil, and God.

Rumours about Milton's domestic life also conjure the dubious but compelling image of a brilliant blind man bullying his frightened daughters for the sake of his art. And how can modern readers not feel daunted by Milton? Introducing a selection of his works, the editors of *The Norton Anthology* coolly observe that 'in his time' he 'likely' 'read just about everything of importance written in English, Latin, Greek, and Italian', adding parenthetically that 'of course, he had the Bible by heart' (1: 1434).

To remedy the misapprehension of Milton's autonomy, we need to approach him as a working writer and acknowledge the various social sites of his authorship. As epic poet and political pamphleteer; defender of divorce and supporter of regicide; teacher, businessman, and government employee – Milton was necessarily influenced by his changing historical circumstances. Reading beyond the persona of the independent poet that Milton implies in many of his texts, we discover a complex, sometimes inconsistent writer, predisposed to socializing and dependent on his friends and acquaintances as part of the creative process.

From an entry in Milton's handwriting in his family's Bible we learn that he was born on Friday, 9 December 1608, at 6.30 am; he was baptized eleven days later in the parish church of All Hallows, Bread Street. Milton's boyhood home in the heart of London afforded the young poet little opportunity for quiet and seclusion. Growing up amid merchants and drinking houses and not far from London's busiest business district in Old Cheap, Milton must have become accustomed at an early age to the noise and activity of the city. The family's six-storey tenement was in a building, the White Bear, occupied by at least seven other residents. Milton's family consisted of his parents, older sister Anne, and younger brother Christopher; his father, the elder John Milton, was a Scrivener (a trade involving money-lending and deed-writing) and may also have invited his apprentices to live with the family, as was common practice. In addition to servants, nurses, and tutors, the home saw the visits of various composers seeking the elder Milton's company: the poet's father had become well known as a musician, and the White Bear may have been the scene of musical performances for select audiences. Although we know considerably less about Sara Milton, the poet's mother, she too was active in the surrounding parish. In one of the few references that Milton makes about her in print, he notes her reputation throughout the neighbourhood for her acts of charity.

That Milton's parents arranged for a formal portrait of him to be painted at age ten suggests, as William Riley Parker has observed, both the family's pride and prosperity (8). The painter, commonly thought to be Cornelius

Janssen, has captured a serious-looking boy, not completely comfortable in his genteel doublet and starched collar. Milton's close-cropped haircut was probably given him by Thomas Young, his first preceptor. Again Milton's parents were indulging in behaviour more typical of the gentry than the middle class: before beginning formal schooling, Milton was taught at home, first by his father, then by the Scottish minister Young. Although Young may have occupied this position for only a few years, he later played an important role in the antiprelatical controversy of the 1640s and probably influenced Milton's early Presbyterian sympathies.

According to Milton's widow, it was around age ten that the author composed his first poetry, now lost. The earliest surviving works by Milton that we can confidently identify are his English translations of Psalms 114 and 136, which he wrote at age fifteen, perhaps as an assignment during his last year at St Paul's School. The language of these poems reflects Milton's early interest in Ovid and Propertius; the fact that he chose to translate songs from the Old Testament suggests his religious conviction and his father's musical influence. Although few records exist about Milton's time at St Paul's, we know that he learned to read and write Latin fluently, and eventually studied Greek and Hebrew. There he befriended the under-usher, Alexander Gil, Jr, with whom he would continue to exchange poetry and correspondence after graduating. Also at St Paul's, Milton formed a special friendship with one of his schoolmates, Charles Diodati. From their surviving correspondence (Diodati's written in Greek, Milton's in Latin) we sense that this relationship was important for both young men; Milton wrote at least four of his early verses to or about Diodati.

Finishing at St Paul's in 1624, Milton began attending Christ's College, Cambridge, where he would ultimately earn his BA in 1629 and graduate *cum laude* with his MA three years later. At Cambridge, Milton claimed to have received 'more then ordinary favour and respect . . . above any of my equals' (YP 1: 884). Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, also reports that the author 'was lov'd and admir'd by the whole University, particularly by the Fellows and most Ingenious Persons of his House'. When Milton left Cambridge, Phillips claims, it caused 'no small trouble' to his 'Fellow-Collegiates, who in general regretted his Absence' (Darbishire, 54, 55). Even if we suspect Milton and Phillips of overstating Milton's reputation, his peers liked him well enough to invite him to speak at various university functions. The sly allusions and coarse puns in Milton's surviving Latin orations imply that he had a good rapport with members of the college. Thus, as the biographer Christopher Hill suggests, Milton's university nickname 'the Lady of Christ's' need not have been pejorative (35). In his vacation exercise, Milton seems to appreciate such humour as he playfully