

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-65543-9 — The Cambridge Companion to Milton
Edited by Dennis Danielson
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The Cambridge Companion to Milton provides an accessible and helpful guide for any student of Milton, whether undergraduate or graduate, introducing readers to the scope of Milton's work, the richness of its historical relations, and the range of current approaches to it. This second edition contains several new and revised essays, reflecting increasing emphasis on Milton's politics, the social conditions of his authorship and the climate in which his works were published and received, a fresh sense of the importance of his early poems and *Samson Agonistes*, and the changes wrought by gender studies on the criticism of the previous decade. By contrast with other introductions to Milton, this *Companion* gathers an international team of scholars, whose informative, stimulating, and often argumentative essays will provoke thought and discussion in and out of the classroom. The *Companion's* reading lists and extended bibliography offer readers the necessary tools for further informed exploration of Milton studies.

Dennis Danielson is Professor of English at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. He has taught and lectured in Germany, China, and South Africa. His publications include *Milton's Good God* (1982) and articles in a wide range of scholarly journals in literary studies, religious studies, and intellectual history.

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frontispiece William Faithorne's engraved portrait of Milton for the frontispiece of
The History of Britain (1670)

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
MILTON
second edition

EDITED BY
DENNIS DANIELSON



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CONTRIBUTORS

JOAN S. BENNETT, University of Delaware
CEDRIC BROWN, University of Reading
COLIN BURROW, Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge
JOHN CAREY, Merton College, Oxford
GEORGIA CHRISTOPHER, late of Emory University, Atlanta
THOMAS N. CORNS, University of Wales, Bangor
DENNIS DANIELSON, University of British Columbia
STEPHEN B. DOBRANSKI, Georgia State University
MARTIN DZELZAINIS, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College,
University of London
J. MARTIN EVANS, Stanford University
R. F. HALL, Rhodes University
WILLIAM KERRIGAN, University of Massachusetts
JOHN LEONARD, University of Western Ontario
BARBARA KIEFER LEWALSKI, Harvard University
DIANE K. MCCOLLEY, Rutgers University, Camden, New Jersey
MARY ANN RADZINOWICZ, (emerita) Cornell University
R. G. SIEMENS, University of Alberta
NICHOLAS VON MALTZAHN, University of Ottawa

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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

PREFACE

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

JOHN MILTON: SIGNIFICANT DATES

- 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

JOHN MILTON: SIGNIFICANT DATES

- 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 1698)
- 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*