



The Complete Works of John Milton: Volume II: The 1671 Poems: Paradise Regain'd and Samson Agonistes

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Bringing together literary criticism, historical bibliography, and religious, political, and print history, this volume offers a definitive scholarly edition of John Milton's *Paradise Regain'd* and *Samson Agonistes*. The scrupulously-edited text is based on extensive collation of the 1671 and 1680 volumes. Drawing on new archival sources and up-to-date historiography, a detailed Introduction sets out the cultural, religious, and political contexts of 1670-71, including continuing opposition to the Restoration regime and the major contribution made to that opposition by publishers and print. While the meanings of the 1671 poems have been much discussed and debated, print and publishing history has been little addressed in teaching editions or scholarship. New archival materials on Milton's publisher, John Starkey, and his printer, John Macock, open up the radical print networks in which Milton's poems were produced, published, and circulated. The Textual Introduction and Headnote also provide a thorough discussion of the contributions of the printing house to the text. Reconstruction of the octavo sheets used in printing the text shows that multiple compositors worked on the text and thus helps to explain variant spelling and address longstanding issues of dating. A discussion of Milton's bold transformation of classical epic and tragedy provides literary historical context.

This edition also breaks new ground by including materials on early owners and readers, who actively shaped the texts with corrections, annotations, and references to biblical and classical sources. As an aid for students and scholars alike, Textual Commentary provides precise OED word definitions, identifies biblical, classical, historical, and geographical references, and explains Latin, Greek, and Hebrew usages.

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