JOHN MILTON

COMPLETE SHORTER POEMS

EDITED BY

STELLA P. REVARD

GENERAL SERIES EDITOR

BARBARA K. LEWALSKI

LATIN POEMS

TRANSLATED BY

LAWRENCE REVARD

WILEY-BLACKWELL

A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication
JOHN MILTON

COMPLETE SHORTER POEMS
Praise for this edition

A splendid student edition.

The editors have chosen to produce an original spelling edition and to indicate specific moments of publication within Milton’s lifetime. This allows them to provide strong historical context as well as specific linguistic guidance for the modern reader.

The reading experience is remarkably fresh and uncluttered. Priority goes to the poetry and the decision to return to original spelling proves no hindrance but rather seems to deepen the reader’s engagement with the texts. This is an edition which is easy to handle and to use. It avoids cumbersome editorial headnotes to each poem and chooses instead to provide richly detailed yet widely focussed initial essays: these tie comments on individual poems to the two major moments of publication of Milton’s shorter poetry within his lifetime, 1645 and 1673. Within this edition, Milton’s poems themselves are cleanly set out on the page, with discrete assistance on hand to clarify any unusual vocabulary; the editorial footnotes are exemplary in clarity and depth of reference. Revard also manages to bring the non-English works to life for the student reader making brave use of parallel texts, and setting out the translations as verse.

Revard is a classical scholar, a generous teacher, and a subtle close reader; this outstanding edition is deeply rooted in her many years of attention and loving care towards Milton’s poetry.

Margaret Kean, St Hilda’s College, University of Oxford
JOHN MILTON

COMPLETE SHORTER POEMS

EDITED BY

STELLA P. REVARDD

GENERAL SERIES EDITOR

BARBARA K. LEWALSKI

LATIN POEMS

TRANSLATED BY

LAWRENCE REVARDD
Figure 1  Engraved portrait of Milton by William Marshall¹ (from the frontispiece of Poems, English and Latin, 1645)

¹ William Marshall was one of the most famous and prolific of book illustrators, his work including the portrait of Donne for the second edition of Donne’s Poems and the frontispiece of Charles I praying for Eikon Basilike. While the portrait in Milton’s Poems is said to portray Milton at age 21, it actually makes him look much older. The royalist Marshall may have intentionally distorted Milton’s features, as Richard Johnson argues, in order to present him as a crabbled controversialist rather than as a young pastoral poet. For translation of the epigram see Poems added to Sylvarum Liber in 1673, pp. 342–4.
Contents

Note on This Edition xii
Acknowledgments xii
List of Illustrations xiii
Chronology xiv
Textual Introduction xxi

Introduction to the 1645 Volume: Poems of Mr. John Milton 1

ENGLISH AND ITALIAN POEMS 11

The Stationer to the Reader 15
On the morning of CHRIST'S Nativity 16
A Paraphrase on Psalm 114 28
Psalm 136 29
The Passion 32
On Time 35
Upon the Circumcision 36
At a solemn Musick 38
An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester 40
On May morning 43
On Shakespear 44
On the University Carrier 45
Another on the same 46
L’Allegro 48
Il Penseroso 53
SONNETS 59
I O Nightingale 59
Il Donna leggiadra 60
III Qual in colle aspro 61
Contents

Canzone
IV Diodati, e te’l dirò
V Per certo i bei vostr’occhi
VI Giovane piano
VII How soon hath Time
VIII Captain or Colonel, or Knight in Arms
IX Lady that in the prime of earliest youth
X Daughter to that good Earl
Arcades
Lycidas
A Mask of the Same Author. Title page
To the Right Honourable, John Lord Vicount BRACLY
The Copy of a Letter Writt’n By Sir HENRY WOOTTON
The Persons
A MASK Presented At LUDLOW-Castle, 1634

Introduction to the Poemata, 1645

THE POEMATA, 1645

Translator’s Note: The Latin Poems

Testimonia

Haec quae sequuntur de Authore testimonia
Joannes Baptista Mansus ad Joannem Miltonium
Ad Joannem Miltonem Epigramma Joannis Salsilli
Ad Joannem Miltonum (Selvaggi)
Al Signor Gio. Miltoni (Antonio Francini)
JOANNI MILTONI LONDINIENSI (Carolus Datus)

ELEGIARUM LIBER PRIMUS

Elegia prima ad Carolum Diodatum
Elegia secunda. In obitum Praeconis Academici Cantabrigiensis
Elegia tertia. In obitum Presulis Wintoniensis
Elegia quarta. Ad Thomam Junium
Elegia quinta. In adventum veris
Elegia sexta. Ad Carolum Diodatum
Elegia septima.
Haec ego mente [Retraction]
In prodicionem Bombardicam
In candem
In candem
In candem
Contents

In inventorem Bombardæ 198
Ad Leonoram Romæ cantentem 199
Ad eandem 200
Ad eandem 201

SYLVARUM LIBER 203

In obitum Procancellarii medici 204
In quintum Novembris 210
In obitum Præsulis Eliensis 224
Naturam non pati senium 230
De Idea Platonica 236
Ad Patrem 240
Psalm 114 248
Philosophus ad regem 250
Ad Salsillum 252
Mansus 256
EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS 266

Introduction to Poems, &c. UPON Several Occasions, 1673 284

ENGLISH POEMS ADDED IN 1673 289

On the Death of a fair Infant dying of a Cough 293
SONNETS 297
XI A Book was writ of late call’d Tetrachordon 297
XII On the same 299
XIII To Mr. H. Lawes, on his Aires 300
XIV [On ye religious memory of M‘ Catharine Thomason] 301
XV (18) On the late Massacher in Piemont 302
XVI (19) When I consider how my light is spent 304
XVII (20) Lawrence of virtuous Father 305
XVIII (21) Cyriack, whose Grandsire 306
XIX (23) Methought I saw 307

The Fifth Ode of Horace. Lib. I 308
Ad PYRRHAM. Ode V 309
At a Vacation Exercise in the Colledge 310
On the new forcers of Conscience under the Long PARLIAMENT 314
PSALMS 316
I 316
II 316
III 317
IV 318
Contents

LATIN AND GREEK POEMS ADDED IN 1673 339
Poem added to Elegiarum Liber in 1673 340
Apologus de Rustico & Hero 340

POEMS ADDED TO SYLVARUM LIBER IN 1673 342
In Effigiei Ejus Sculptorem 342
Ad Joannem Rousium 344

Introduction to the Uncollected Poems 354

SONNETS PUBLISHED IN 1694 357
To my Lord FAIRFAX 358
To Oliver Cromwell 360
To Sir HENRY VANE 362
To Mr. CYRIAC SKINNER Upon his Blindness 366

UNPUBLISHED LATIN POEMS 369
Carmina Elegiaca 370
Verses in Lesser Asclepiads (Ignauus Satrapam) 372

Introduction to Poems Published in 1671 373
Introduction to Paradise Regained 375

PARADISE REGAINED 381
Book 1 385
Book 2 401
Contents

Book 3 416
Book 4 431

Introduction to Samson Agonistes 451

SAMSON AGONISTES 457

Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which is call’d Tragedy. 461
THE ARGUMENT 462
The Persons 463
SAMSON AGONISTES 464

APPENDIX 513

Bridgewater Maske 515
Manuscript of songs by Henry Lawes from A Mask 539
Trinity Manuscript: a page from A Mask 543

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 545

TEXTUAL NOTES 555

Textual Notes to English and Italian Poems, 1645 557
Textual Notes to Poemata, 1645 565
Textual Notes to English Poems Added in 1673 569
Textual Notes to Sonnets Published in 1694 572
Textual Notes to Unpublished Poems 574
Textual Notes to Paradise Regained 575
Textual Notes to Samson Agonistes 577
Note on This Edition

This is one of three volumes presenting the complete poetry and major prose of John Milton in original language and in readily accessible paperbacks. *Paradise Lost* is edited by Barbara K. Lewalski; the major prose by David Loewenstein.

Acknowledgments

The staffs of the British Library in London, the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and the University Library of Cambridge have made available to me copies of the editions of Milton’s *Poems, English and Latin*, printed in 1645 and 1673, of *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, as well as *Justa Edowardo King Naufrago*, Henry Lawes’ 1637 printing of *A Mask*, and the 1640 printing of *Epitaphium Damonis*. I am grateful for the opportunity to consult the Trinity Manuscript of Milton’s poems at the Wren Library of Trinity College in Cambridge. I am grateful to the Bodleian Library for permission to reproduce the title pages of the 1645 and 1673 editions of *Milton’s Poems, English and Latin* as well as the title page of the 1671 edition of *Samson Agonistes*. I am grateful to the British Library for permission to reproduce the frontispiece of the 1645 edition of *Poems, English and Latin*, the title page of the 1671 edition of *Paradise Regained*, and Henry Lawes’ manuscript of the songs from *A Mask*. I am grateful to the library of Trinity College, Cambridge for permission to reproduce a page of Milton’s autograph copy of *A Mask* from the Trinity Manuscript of Milton’s poems. The copy text for 1645 is BL Ashley 1179, for 1673 BL 684 d. 34, and for *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* BL 684 d. 33. Our thanks to Dr. John Was for reviewing the translations of the Latin poems, to Professor George Pepe of Washington University, St. Louis for advice on Latin translation, and to Professor Franco Fido and Dr. Annelise Brody for reviewing the Italian translations. Emma Bennett, the literature editor at Wiley-Blackwell, Louise Butler, Tom Bates and Hannah Morrell have been very helpful in overseeing the progress of this edition. We also appreciate the care of the copyeditor, Juanita Bullough. I am immensely grateful to Barbara Lewalski, the editor of the companion volume of *Paradise Lost* and the general editor of the series, who has provided invaluable assistance and counsel. She reviewed the entire edition and has offered meticulous comments and suggestions. David Loewenstein, the editor of the companion volume on Milton’s prose, has offered advice on bibliography.
List of Illustrations


5 Title page to Paradise Regained, 1671. © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved, Shelfmark Ashley 1184.


7 Manuscript of songs by Henry Lawes from A Mask Presented at Ludlow-Castle. © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved, Shelfmark Add 11518.

8 Page from the Trinity Manuscript illustrating Milton's autograph corrections of A Mask. Reproduced by permission of Trinity College Library, Cambridge, Shelfmark R.3.4., f.23.
## Milton’s Life

- **Dec. 9,** born in Bread Street, Cheapside London, to John and Sarah Milton.

- Educated by private tutors, including the Presbyterian cleric, Thomas Young.

- Brother Christopher born.

- Portrait at age 10 painted by Cornelius Janssen.

- Begins to attend St. Paul’s School; friendship with Charles Diodati begins. (?)

- First known poems, paraphrases of Psalms 114 and 136.

- Admitted to Christ’s College, Cambridge (Feb. 12).


## Historical and Literary Events

- **1608**
  - King James ("Authorized") Bible.

- **1611**
  - Death of Shakespeare.
  - Ben Jonson’s *Works* published.

- **1614–20**
  - Beginning of the Thirty Years War.

- **1615**
  - Donne appointed Dean of St. Paul’s.

- **1616**
  - Shakespeare’s First Folio published.

- **1620**
  - Outbreak of plague.

- **1621**
  - William Laud made Bishop of London.

- **1623**
  - Death of James I; accession of Charles I.

- **1623–4**
  - Outbreak of plague.
Milton's Life

Sends *Elegia Quarta* to Thomas Young in Hamburg. 1627

Takes BA degree (March). 1629

Writes *Elegia Quinta* (spring). 1630

Writes "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (Dec.).

Writes *Elegia Sexta* to Diodati.

Writes "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"(?). 1631

"On Shakespeare" published in the Second Folio of Shakespeare's plays. 1632

Admitted to MA degree (July 3). 1633

 Writes *Arcades*, entertainment for the Countess of Derby(?). Writes sonnet "How soon hath Time" (Dec.).

Starts to live with his family at Hammersmith.

Writes "On Time," "At a Solemn Music"(?).

A *Maske* (*Comus*) performed at Ludlow with music by Henry Lawes (Sept. 29). 1634

Moves with his family to Horton, Buckinghamshire. Begins notes on his reading in *Commonplace Book*. 1635

Publication of *A Maske*. 1636

Mother dies (April 3). 1637

 Writes "Lycidas."

"Lycidas" published in collection of elegies for Edward King. 1638

Begins Continental tour (May 1638); meets Grotius, Galileo, Cardinal Barberini, Manso; visits Academies in Florence and Rome; visits Vatican Library; visits Naples, Venice, and Geneva. 1638–9


Historical and Literary Events

1627

Charles I dissolves Parliament.

1629

Birth of Prince Charles, the future Charles II.

1630

Donne’s *Poems* and Herbert’s *The Temple* published.

1631

Laud made Archbishop of Canterbury.

1632

Galileo’s *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* published in Italian.

1633

Carew’s masque, *Coelum Britannicum*.

1634


1636

1637

1638

1639
Milton’s Life

Learns of Charles Diodati’s death.  
1639  
Returns to England (July).  
Takes lodgings in Fleet Street.  
Begins teaching nephews Edward and John Phillips and a few others.

Writes *Epitaphium Daemonis*  
1640  
(epitaph for Charles Diodati).  
Begins work on *Accidence Commenc’t Grammar, Art of Logic, Christian Doctrine* (?).

Publishes anti-episcopal tracts: *Of Reformation; Of Prelatical Episcopacy; Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defense.*  
1641  
Publishes *The Reason of Church-government and An Apology [for] Smectymnuus*

Marries Mary Powell (May?), who returns (Aug.?) to her royalist family near Oxford.  
1642  
Writes sonnet, “Captain or Colonel” when royalist attack on London expected.

Publishes *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (Aug.).

Publishes second edition of *Doctrine and Discipline; Of Education* (June);  
1644  
*The Judgement of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce* (Aug.); *Areopagita* (Nov.).

Publishes *Tetrachordon* and *Colasterion* on the divorce question.  
1645  
Mary Powell returns. Moves to a large house in the Barbican.

Historical and Literary Events

First Bishops’ War with Scotland.  
1639  
Long Parliament convened (Nov. 3); impeachment of Laud.  
1640  
George Thomason, London bookseller, begins his collection of tracts and books.  
1641  
Ben Jonson’s *Works* (second folio).

Impeachment and execution of Strafford (May)  
1641  
Root and Branch Bill abolishing bishops.  
1642  
Irish rebellion breaks out (Oct.).  
1642  
Civil War begins (Aug. 22).  
1642  
Royalists win Battle of Edgehill.  
1642  
Closing of theaters.

Royalists defeated at Battle of Marston Moor (July 2).  
1643  
Westminster Assembly of Divines to reform Church.  
1643  
Solemn League and Covenant subscribed.  
1643  
Louis XIV becomes king of France.  
1643  
Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici.*

Execution of Laud.  
1645  
New Model Army wins decisive victory at Naseby (June).  
1645  
Edmund Waller, *Poems.*
Chronology

Milton’s Life

Poems of Mr. John Milton published (Jan., dated 1645).

Writes sonnet to Lawes.

Writes sonnet on the death of Catherine Thomason, wife of George Thomason, bookseller and collector of contemporary pamphlets to whose collection Milton contributed.

Daughter Anne born (July 29).

Father dies; moves to High Holborn.

Begins writing History of Britain(?).

Composes “Ad Joannem Rousium” (Jan.) and sends it to Rouse with a replacement copy of the 1645 Poems.

Daughter Mary born (Oct. 26).

Writes sonnet to Lord General Fairfax.

Translates Psalms 80–88.

Publishes Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (Feb.).

Appointed Secretary for Foreign Tongues to the Council of State (March 15).

Publishes Observations on Irish documents; Eikonoklastes (“The Idol Smasher”) (Oct.).

Given lodgings in Scotland Yard

Historical and Literary Events

1646

First Civil War ends.

Crashaw, Steps to the Temple.

1647

Second Civil War.

Pride’s Purge (Dec.) expels many Presbyterians from Parliament, leaving c.150 members of the House of Commons (the Rump).

Peace of Westphalia, ending Thirty Years War.

Robert Herrick, Hesperides.

1648

Trial of Charles I, executed Jan. 30.

Eikon Basilike (“The Royal Image”) published in many editions.

A republic without King or House of Lords proclaimed (Feb.).

Salmasius, Defensio Regia.

Richard Lovelace, Lucasta.

1649

1650

Marvell, Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland.

Vaughan, Silex Scintillans (Part 1).

1651

Hobbes, Leviathan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Historical and Literary Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1654</td>
<td>Milton translates Psalms 1–8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1659</td>
<td>Milton’s daughter Katherine is born (Oct. 10). Milton appoints his assistant in Secretariat for Foreign Languages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Milton’s Life

Publishes *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (Feb.); 2nd edition (April); *Brief Notes upon a Late Sermon* (April). In hiding (May); his books burned (Aug.); imprisoned (Oct.?); released (Dec.).

At work on *Paradise Lost, Christian Doctrine* (?)

Marries Elizabeth Minshull (Feb.). Moves to Bunhill Fields.

Quaker Thomas Ellwood finds house for Milton at Chalfont St. Giles to escape plague.

*Paradise Lost* published.

Publishes *Accidence Commenc’t Grammar*.

Publishes *History of Britain*, with William Faithorne’s engraved portrait.

Publishes *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.

Publishes *Art of Logic*.


## Historical and Literary Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1661</td>
<td>Regicides imprisoned, ten executed. Repression of dissenters. Louis XIV assumes control of kingship after death of Mazarin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1665</td>
<td>Bubonic plague kills 70,000 in London. Second Dutch War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1670</td>
<td>Test Act passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Historical and Literary Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1678</td>
<td>Dryden’s rhymed drama <em>The State of Innocence</em>, registered (published 1677).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>Bunyan, <em>Pilgrim’s Progress</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1688</td>
<td>Death of Charles II; accession of James II. Deposition of James II (Glorious Revolution).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Textual Introduction

The text of Poems of Mr. John Milton, Both English and Latin, is based on the 1645 edition printed by Humphrey Moseley (copy text. BL Ashley 1179). I have used the 1645 edition both for the language and for the accidentals (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, italics). On a few occasions, where warranted by obvious mistakes or probable printers’ oversights, I have supplied superior readings from the other sources that have textual authority: the 1673 version of Poems &c. upon Several Occasions and the Trinity Manuscript, or in the case of Lycidas, A Mask, and Epitaphium Damonis, earlier printings.

The text for poems added after 1645 is based on the 1673 version of Poems &c. upon Several Occasions. By Mr. John Milton: Both English and Latin (copy text, BL 684 d. 34). For the sonnets to Fairfax, Cromwell, Vane, and Skinner, first printed in Letters of State (1694), I have supplied both the versions in Letters of State (copy text, BL 599 b. 15) as well as the versions in the Trinity Manuscript.

The 1645 edition of Poems is an attractive octavo, with ornamental borders at the tops of pages and elsewhere as well as decorated capitals at the beginning of the preface and testimonia. Humphrey Moseley contributed a short preface: The Stationer to the Reader. There is a separate title page for A Mask of the same Author Presented at Ludlow-Castle, 1634, followed by a letter by Henry Lawes to John Lord Viscount Brackley and one by Henry Wotton to Milton, thanking Milton for a copy of A Mask and advising him on his forthcoming journey to Italy. The second volume of the 1645 Poems, the Poemata, has its own title page, followed by a brief prefatory note in Latin by Milton and a group of testimonia in verse and prose addressed to Milton by Italian friends and acquaintances. Page numbers appear in parenthesis at the top of pages.

The 1673 octavo of Poems, &c. Upon Several Occasions is an attractive though more modest volume than 1645; it also has ornamental borders and a few decorated capitals. Page numbers appear as in 1645 (in parenthesis) at the top of the page. There is an errata page after the tables of contents. Both Moseley’s preface and the
prefatory material to A Mask, including a list of its dramatis personae, are dropped from the 1673 edition of Poems. The Poemata retains its separate title page and both Milton’s Latin note and the testimonia. Added to the 1673 volume is a small Tractate of Education to Mr. Hartlib. Two title pages exist of the 1673 edition that list the different locations at which the book was available. The book was printed by Thomas Dring either at the White Lion next Chancery Lane or alternately at the Blew Anchor next Mitre Court over against Fetter Lane in Fleetstreet.

The texts of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes are based on the 1671 version of Paradise Regain’d. A Poem. In IV Books. To which is added Samson Agonistes (copy text. BL 684. d. 33). The book is a simple octavo with large capitals beginning each book of Paradise Regained and the beginning of Samson Agonistes and ornamental borders at the top of the page beginning Samson Agonistes. Both poems have page and line numbers. The line numbers are sometimes incorrect. The title page reads Paradise Regain’d. A Poem. In IV Books. To which is added Samson Agonistes. Milton is identified as author and John Starkey at the Mitre in Fleetstreet as publisher. Paradise Regained appears without introductory material. Samson Agonistes has its own title page, also listing author and publisher, an extended preface by Milton (“Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which is call’d Tragedy”), together with The Argument and The Persons (a list of dramatis personae). An errata page is supplied for both poems. A page of Omissa is added at the end of the text of Samson Agonistes.

I have examined copies of the 1645 and 1673 Poems and copies of the 1671 Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes at the British Library, the Bodleian Library, and the Newberry Library, Chicago.

Punctuation and orthography in the copy texts have been followed in most cases. When a reading is used from other sources, such as the Trinity Manuscript or the 1673 edition of Poems, for example, or when I have supplied an emendation, these are noted in the textual apparatus. The textual notes record these differences in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization that seem significant, but not all variants are noted. Printing irregularities and obvious typesetting errors are silently corrected; for notation of these, readers should consult Fletcher’s edition of Poems (1645 and 1673) and Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes. Line numbers have been added.

Our goal in these editions is to provide useful marginal glosses and footnotes without overwhelming the poetic text with a burdensome apparatus and without dictating interpretation of particular passages. Unfamiliar words are glossed in the margins; biblical citations are supplied. Biblical and classical echoes are identified as well as unfamiliar names and places, but necessarily not every possible allusion has been noted. Paraphrases are provided for passages with syntactical complexities.
Introduction to the 1645 Volume:
Poems of Mr. John Milton

In 1645, Milton published most but not all of the poems he had composed by that date. The publisher Humphrey Moseley had begun to bring out volumes of lyric poetry by royalist poets such as Edmund Waller, and it was likely, as he claims in the introduction to the volume, that he approached Milton and encouraged him to publish his verse. Moseley also arranged for the engraved portrait of Milton by William Marshall (see Figure 1), beneath which Milton, who considered the engraving unflattering, placed a witty Greek epigram ridiculing it in a language that probably neither Marshall nor Moseley understood. Unlike most contemporary poets, Milton neither wrote a preface, solicited commendatory poems, nor acknowledged a patron. He organized his volume more or less chronologically, thus displaying his poetic development, but also carefully grouped together poems of similar themes and genres. With the Latin tag from Virgil’s Eclogues on the title page (“Baccare frontem / Cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro” – “Bind my forehead with foxglove, lest evil tongues harm the future bard”), he promises future poems on even greater themes.

In the Latin ode sent with a replacement copy of the volume to John Rouse, librarian of the Bodleian Library at Oxford, Milton describes the 1645 volume as a “twin book, rejoicing in a single cover, but with a double title page.” The first section of the volume presents his vernacular poems (mostly in English, but also including a mini-sonnet sequence in Italian), and concludes with A MASK Presented At LUDLOW-Castle. The second section of the volume, entitled Poemata, contains his Latin poems, with a few in Greek. The Poemata is prefaced by a series of tributes from friends and fellow poets he met while traveling in Italy in 1638–9. Some of his own Latin poems are tributes to Italian friends, but others are Juvenilia, college poems dated (sometimes inaccurately) to emphasize the poet’s precocity. Because Milton so carefully designed the 1645 volume to present himself as a learned and wide-ranging poet who reinvents many of the genres he employs, we present the book, as Milton envisioned it, as an entity. Facing translations of the Italian, Latin, and Greek poems are added for the convenience of the reader.
English and Italian Poems

The first volume of the 1645 Poems is a miscellany made up mostly of poems composed between the late 1620s and the early 1640s. They are metrically experimental and incorporate a variety of genres, though odes of several types predominate. Milton introduces himself to the reader with the ode “On the morning of CHRIST’S Nativity,” composed at Christmastide shortly after his twenty-first birthday and universally regarded by critics as his coming-of-age poem. In a Latin verse letter to his close friend Charles Diodati (“Elegia sexta”) he terms this poem his gift “for Christ’s birth” written at daybreak on Christmas morning. It is an occasional poem of a well-established poetic type in which the poet imagines himself welcoming the Christ Child, as the shepherds of the Nativity had, and dismissing the pagan gods, now dislodged from worship by the arrival of the true god. Both Mantuan and Torquato Tasso had written Nativity odes that dismiss the pagan gods, but the length of Milton’s passage may register Puritan anxieties about what many saw as contemporary forms of idolatry in the English Church. The ode also alludes to Virgil’s Fourth Eclogue, which celebrates the return of the Golden Age with the birth (probably) of the Roman Consul Pollio’s son, but which was generally thought by Christians to prophesy the coming of the true Messiah, who alone could restore the Golden Age. As the proem to the ode indicates, Milton presents Christ’s birth as a cosmic event wherein the Son of God puts aside the glorious form of divinity to inhabit a “darksom House of mortal Clay.” As a poet Milton joins his voice with the heavenly choir of angels to celebrate the entry of Christ into the natural order and to proclaim an event that is comparable only to the Creation and the Last Judgment.

In the four-stanza proem of the ode Milton adapts rhyme royal but employs in the hymn proper an elegant stanzaic pattern with lines of varying length and an intricate, interlaced rhyme scheme with a concluding alexandrine. A Spenserian presence can be detected throughout the 1645 Poems, particularly in the Nativity Ode and in the Ludlow Mask. Milton personifies Nature as an attendant goddess and invokes Peace, Truth, Justice, and Mercy as allegorical presences to return to earth in preparation for the Second Coming. He accompanies allusion to the music of the spheres with musical effects and anticipates the Last Judgment and the dismissal of the pagan gods with dissonance. Alluding to the silencing of the oracles at the birth of Christ, Milton describes Apollo, the god of prophecy, as the first pagan deity to flee from his shrine. Typhon, a monster often identified with Satan, is the last to be dislodged by Christ, who is characterized as an infant Hercules controlling the damned crew. Not until the last stanza does Milton return to the scene at the stable where the Virgin lays her babe to rest. This early poem already displays qualities that remain constants in Milton’s poetry: allusiveness, revisionism, mixing of genres, cosmic scope, and prophetic voice.

Milton may have envisioned the Nativity ode as the first of a sequence of religious odes on liturgical events. After two Psalm paraphrases identified in a headnote as
written “at age fifteen” he presents an incomplete and unsuccessful ode, “The Passion,” using the stanzaic verse form of the Nativity proem; an endnote explains that he left it unfinished because he found the subject “above the yeers he had.” In the ode “Upon the Circumcision” he invokes the power of music to mourn rather than to rejoice. Two other odes – “On Time” and “At a solemn Musick” – also treat religious themes. The first is structured as an invocation, with Time apostrophized at the beginning and the end. In the latter Milton invokes the Sirens, Voice and Verse, as personifications of sacred vocal music and poetry. The ode is set in antiphonal form with the second part responding to the first. Like the Nativity ode, these brief odes have apocalyptic overtones and depict present time in relation to eternal time. The epitaph/ode on the death of the Marchioness of Winchester that follows employs, as do the other odes, metaphysical themes. It may have been composed for inclusion in a Cambridge commemorative volume that never materialized. As a lament for the death of a young mother in childbirth, it exploits the paradoxes of birth and death, flowering and untimely plucking. With its conventional opening it reads like an inscription on a monument and resembles the epigrammatical epitaphs of Ben Jonson. Like “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso,” its octosyllabic and heptasyllabic couplets have complex shifts between iambic and trochaic rhythms.

The epitaph “On Shakespear,” dated 1630, was Milton’s first published poem, appearing initially in the second folio edition of Shakespeare’s plays (1632). Composed in iambic pentameter couplets, the poem reworks the conventional epitaph into a tribute that not only makes the poet’s works his best monument, but also turns his readers to “Marble” in “wonder and astonishment,” impressing his “Delphick lines” on their hearts. The two epitaphs on Hobson are of a different sort. Composed on the occasion of the death of the carrier Hobson who transported students and mail between London and Cambridge, they appeared in Cambridge collections and miscellanies of wit. Though irreverent and filled with puns and paradoxes, they resemble in some ways the Latin funera (included in the *Poemata*) that Milton wrote for Cambridge dignitaries, as they allow the poet to exercise his pungent wit with one conceit after another that allude to Hobson’s occupation.

The graceful, urbane, fanciful twin odes, “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso,” are organized as hymnic addresses to classical deities – the Grace Euphrosyne (Mirth) and a muse-like Melancholy. After a ten-line introduction in which the wrong kind of melancholy and joy are dismissed, Milton introduces the patron goddesses as daughters of appropriate parents – Mirth of Venus and Bacchus (or alternately Zephyr and Aurora); Melancholy of Saturn and Vesta. Both goddesses are patrons of poetry, and the title characters – the cheerful and the pensive man – request from them not only pleasures appropriate to each, but also the kind of inspiration specifically due the poet. Each poem is cast chiefly in octosyllabic couplets, but from that verse form Milton elicits completely different tonal effects and tempi: a lilting, dancing quality in the first, and a sober stateliness in the second. *L’Allegro* embodies pleasure, free
from blame and care, but also jest and jollity; *Il Penseroso*, solitary contemplation. The title character of the first ode hears the lark, the second the nightingale. The landscapes through which each wanders are rural, but Allegro mixes with plowmen, shepherds and shepherdesses, and the countryfolk of a pastoral England as they work or as they enjoy their sunny holidays. Penseroso wanders alone through a solitary landscape with “twilight groves” and “shadows brown,” observing only the moon and the constellations of the nocturnal sky. Towered cities and the busy hum of men please Allegro, as well as jousts, masques, and pageants; Penseroso seeks the quiet of studious cloisters and peaceful hermitages. The literary tastes of these opposing personae are also opposite. Allegro enjoys Jonson’s “learned Sock” and Shakespeare’s “native Wood–notes wilde,” but Penseroso admires Plato and Hermes Trismegistus, romances like Chaucer’s unfinished *Squire’s Tale*, and the Greek tragedies about Thebes and Troy. Orpheus, the supreme poet, is invoked by both Allegro and Penseroso, perhaps as the epitome of their own poetic aspirations. Although some sections of *Il Penseroso* are slightly longer, structurally, the two poems are parallel. However, *Il Penseroso* concludes with a ten-line coda that praises the old age that will bring knowledge and “somthing like Prophetic strain.” Each ode ends with an appeal to the patron goddess to grant those pleasures in her provenance and to accept Allegro or Penseroso as her devotee.

Sonnets in Italian and English form an important group in the 1645 volume, to which Milton adds in the second edition of 1673. The sonnets include Milton’s most personal poetry – the Italian sonnets his only amatory verse and his only verse in that language. All follow the Petrarchan rhyme scheme with the conventional division into octave and sestet. Milton had purchased a copy of Giovanni Della Casa’s *Rime e Prose* (1563) in 1629, and his annotations indicate his close study of the text. In *An Apology for Smectymnuus*, Milton records his admiration for Dante and Petrarch and their poems of devotion to Beatrice and Laura. The opening of his first English sonnet, a wistful love poem to the Nightingale, may even echo the first line of one of Bembo’s sonnets. This opening sonnet is followed by the mini-sequence in Italian – five sonnets and a canzone – in which Milton addresses a dark Italian lady and confides his love for her to the confidant of the Latin elegies, Charles Diodati. The style and even the verbal echoes recall the tradition of the Italian sonnet in which a lover addresses a distant beauty.

The four sonnets that follow are diverse, two recording Milton’s devotion to the vocation of poetry, the other two expressing his admiration for two women. Sonnet 7 explores the spiritual crisis occasioned by the end of his twenty-third year and his approaching twenty-fourth birthday. Although he regrets that he has not yet attained the accomplishment that should attend maturity as a poet, Milton determines to leave to God the taskmaster the fulfillment of the lot God has ordained for him. Sonnet 8 fuses personal experience with a contemporary political event – a threatened attack on London in 1642. It combines an anxiety that the Civil War will disrupt, as indeed it would, the vocation of poetry, with a conviction that poetry (as two classical
Introduction

allusions illustrate) has a power to transcend politics. Milton alludes both to Alexander’s sparing the house of the poet Pindar at the siege of Thebes and to the Spartans’ sparing the Athenian walls upon hearing the recitation of Euripides’ chorus from *Electra*. The other two sonnets contrast with the Italian sonnets in expressing not love but friendship for two exemplary women. Sonnet 9 is to an unknown young lady whose piety Milton illustrates by biblical allusion: like Mary and Ruth she has chosen the better part and, like the virgins awaiting the bridegroom Christ, she has kept the lamp of her devotion ever lit. Sonnet 10 is both a tribute to Milton’s neighbor Margaret Ley, who embodies her father’s noble virtues, and a recollection of her father, who died not long after Charles I’s breaking of the English Parliament in 1629. Milton compares Ley to Isocrates, who reportedly chose to starve to death after Philip of Macedon’s “dishonest” victory at Charonaea rather than witness the end of Athenian democracy.

*Arcades*, presented at Harefield (probably in 1632), to celebrate its matriarch Alice, the dowager Countess of Derby, is a poetic entertainment with music. It compliments an aristocratic lady, who was a relative by marriage to the Egertons, the family for whom Milton would two years later compose the Ludlow Mask. The Countess does not take part in the entertainment, however, but is the figure before whom it is presented. She sits in majesty while the Genius of the Wood and the chorus (which included several of her grandchildren) commend her virtues and compare her to the classical goddesses Latona and Cybele. As in the Ludlow Mask the principal speaker is a daemon, an intermediary between heaven and earth, who celebrates the fertility of the wood in his charge and mediates between the music of the spheres and earthly music. The role was probably performed by Henry Lawes, the music tutor of the Egerton children, who also probably commissioned Milton to compose both *Arcades* and the Ludlow Mask.

*Lycidas*, placed last of the English lyrical poems, is the most ambitious ode of the first book. Commonly referred to as a funeral elegy, *Lycidas* was designated in 1645 by Milton as a monody, an ode for a single voice. The poem had previously been published in a slightly different version in 1638, as the final poem in a memorial volume – of Latin, Greek, and English poems – by friends and associates of Edward King at Cambridge University, *Justa Edovardo King naufrago*. King had been a fellow student with Milton at Christ’s College, Cambridge, a minor poet and an ordained minister, who was drowned in the Irish Sea off Chester while on his way to visit relatives in Ireland. In the headnote added in 1645, Milton refers to King as a learned friend whom he bewails, but also notes that the poem “by occasion fortels the ruine of our corrupted Clergy then in their height.” Even as it laments the good pastor struck down in his prime, it excoriates the bad pastors left in his place. Although occasioned by the death of King, *Lycidas* transcends the poetry of personal grief. King and Milton were not close friends, so the sense of personal loss that characterizes *Epitaphium Damonis*, Milton’s lament for Charles Diodati, is missing from *Lycidas*. In its place Milton expresses anxiety about early death, questions his own calling
The poem’s achievement is partly due to its experimental form, part pastoral eclogue, part ode or monody. With its elaborate opening figure – the image of the shattered garland – its complex mythic allusions, its digressions, and its abrupt shifts in theme and direction, it owes something to Pindaric ode, a form Milton was proposing at the time to imitate. Like Pindaric ode, *Lycidas* is a poem whose principal aim – to lament the death of Edward King – combines with other aims – to defend the vocation of poetry, to indict the bad pastors, who are also bad poets (lines 124–5), and generally to explore the meaning of life and death. It also borrows many devices from Theocritean idyll and Virgilian pastoral – invocation of the muses, a mini-refrain, a procession of mourners, and a closing pastoral frame. As in Theocritus’ first idyll and Virgil’s Eclogue 10, a shepherd-swain who is the principal speaker mourns a fellow poet, regretfully recalling the “Rural ditties” once enjoyed by the community of fellow shepherds. Although the pastoral mode was out of fashion for funeral poems when Milton wrote *Lycidas* (his is the only pastoral in the Cambridge memorial volume), Milton may deliberately be harking back to the earlier tradition, wherein Latin pastorals mourn the Elizabethan poet Sir Philip Sidney both as Daphnis and Lycidas. Also, the classical tradition of the shepherd-poet relates intimately to the Christian tradition of the shepherd-pastor/minister (Christ as Good Shepherd), the biblical tradition of the shepherd-prophet, and the biblical denunciation of bad shepherds.

Classical and Christian appear side by side in *Lycidas*, with appeals to the muses and classical deities and mythic references interlaced with Christian allusions. In the central long section of the poem the speaker moves from his lament for Lycidas to pose questions about the poet’s untimely demise and about poetic vocation itself. Querying why the deities of nature as well as the Muse should abandon the poet, the swain alludes to the Muse’s son, the archetypal poet Orpheus, torn apart by the Bacchantes, and complains that sudden and perhaps savage death await those devoted to poetry. To refute the swain’s complaints of the Muse’s thanklessness, Milton introduces the god Phoebus Apollo, who reassures him of the ultimate reward for the poet – from the all-judging eyes of Jove. Other mythic figures appear on the scene and attempt to exonerate nature; Triton, Aeolus, and the sea nympha assert that the sea and winds were calm and that the cause of the shipwreck was in the world of men – the “fatall and perfidious Bark / Built in th’eclipse and rigg’d with curses dark.” The river god Camus, the personification of Cambridge University, comes to lament the loss of his dearest pledge, together with St. Peter, who delivers a stinging denunciation of the bad shepherds, promising ultimate justice in the form of a two-handed engine at the door that “stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.”

The consolatory movement begins with the recalling of the pastoral figures Alpheus and Arethuse, and the framing of a floral tribute for Lycidas – “Flourets of a thousand hues” to strew his “Laureate Herse.” But that consolation is illusory, for Lycidas’ dead body is absent, hurled about in the seas, where he perhaps visits “the