

## PREFACE

This volume grew out of a lively and engaging session titled "The Discovery of a New Milton Epic: *Paradise Lost* 1667," organized on the occasion of the International Milton Congress, hosted by Duquesne University, March 11–13, 2004. The purpose of the session was to stress the importance of a long-overlooked document in Milton studies, that is, the first edition of *Paradise Lost*. Obviously, the title of the session was ironic. After all, how is it possible to speak of the discovery of a new Milton epic if the edition in question has been known all along? The answer is that an awareness of the *existence* of a work is not sufficient to qualify as evidence that it is really *known*. In this case, the lack of attention has been so much in evidence that the term "discovery" (rather than, say, "rediscovery") appeared to be entirely appropriate. Despite all the critical and scholarly effort bestowed upon the second edition of Milton's "diffuse epic," little effort has been exerted in bringing the first edition to the fore. The present collection is offered, in part, in an attempt to rectify this *lacuna*. One might suggest that the purpose of this collection is archeological: it seeks to unearth what has long been buried. In keeping with this enterprise, the editors of this collection have also produced an edition of *Paradise Lost* 1667, one that can be used with confidence as the basis of future scholarly endeavors. Both undertakings—the collection and the edition—represent a "first" for Milton studies.

The purpose of these projects is not to "supplant" the second edition of *Paradise Lost* 1674 and its heirs. Quite the contrary is true. The collection and the edition are offered as a means of reasserting not only the significance of the 1667 edition as a poem with its own identity and value but also the way in which that edition provides fundamental insight into the nature of the later edition, how it is to be conceived and how it works. By focusing on the 1667 edition, one is likewise invited to come to terms with the contemporary political,

social, religious, biographical, and literary contexts out of which *Paradise Lost* first emerged. Although one need hardly assert the importance of distinguishing the earlier contexts (those of 1667) from the later ones (those of 1674 and beyond), those distinctions are worth remembering.

Accordingly, the present volume makes a point of engaging the first edition of Milton's epic both as a "thing-in-itself" and as the product of the milieu to which it responds. With these goals in mind, the volume brings together ten previously unpublished essays that elucidate major aspects of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*. Of immediate interest is the text of *Paradise Lost*, that is, the poem as a "book." The first three essays here are concerned with the "material culture" that shaped the conception of the epic as it originally appeared in 1667, as well as the changes this edition underwent both in its subsequent issues (1668 and 1669) and in its publication as the second edition in 1674. Complementing these chapters, in turn, are the next four essays, all of which develop historical, literary, social, and political contexts against which the first edition of *Paradise Lost* may be placed. The concluding three essays round out the volume through detailed thematic and textual analyses that address the philosophical, theological, and structural implications of the epic in its original format.

The structure and logic of the volume are made evident by the issues that the individual essays address. Initiating the discussion of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, Michael Lieb's essay functions both as an introduction to the volume as a whole and as an analysis of the changes incorporated in the poem from its first appearance to its later incarnations. As such, Lieb's essay lays the groundwork for the essays that follow. In his finely nuanced study, Joseph Wittreich focuses on the way in which the alterations that emerged between the 1667 text and those that appeared in 1668 and 1669 provide evidence that Milton's epic is "an oracle of its own history," an idea that Wittreich develops in his detailed account of the first edition and its subsequent issues. Rounding out this triad of approaches to the text of the poem in its original incarnation, Stephen B. Dobranski explores the relationship between Milton and his publisher, Samuel Simmons, which is evident in the changing faces of the title pages that preface the first

edition of *Paradise Lost*. The underlying premise of each of these essays is that “meaning” resides as much in the poem as physical object as it does in the poetry itself. In order to come to terms with the later editions of Milton’s epic, one must attend to the various aspects that constitute the changes the epic underwent in its initial appearances.

Elaborating upon such concerns, the second section of the volume engages the all-important question of milieu. The underlying assumption here is that a truly enlightened understanding of the first edition must take into account the historical milieu out of which the poem emerged. Achsah Guibbory’s essay discloses how the 1667 edition of Milton’s epic participated in the “cultural conversation” that distinguished the decade following the Restoration. In response to that task, Guibbory delineates the historical and literary setting against which one might most profitably place the first edition of *Paradise Lost*. Doing so, she demonstrates the extent to which Milton’s epic is a work that must be read in the context of both the literature and the events of the time. Drawing upon the political life of the Restoration, Richard DuRocher, in turn, addresses the issue of regal attire both in the 1660s and in *Paradise Lost*. Specifically, DuRocher offers what he terms “contextual evidence” that associates Charles II with Milton’s Satan, both of whom, it appears, adorn themselves with a “shared mode of dress and imperial styles.” What results is a reading of the first edition as sensitive to the topical dimensions as to the larger thematic concerns of the epic. Essays by Laura Lunger Knoppers and Bryan Adams Hampton bring this issue of milieu to a close. Focusing on the social implications of the gardens and royal parks that flourished during the Restoration, Knoppers views Milton’s depiction of his own “pleasure garden” or garden of Eden (from “*gan ‘eden*” or “garden of pleasure” in Hebrew) in the context of the detailed descriptions of the pleasure gardens by Samuel Pepys, among others. Knoppers’s essay thereby provides a renewed sense of how the Miltonic depiction of Eden implicitly comments upon “the commercialization of leisure” in the 1660s and beyond. Concluding the group of four essays that address the contemporary milieu, Hampton provides a way of locating the insurrection of the rebel angels in *Paradise Lost* within the “crackling atmosphere of persistent paranoia, political conspiracy, and importunate dissent” that followed

hard upon the Restoration. In particular, Hampton contends that the politics of the Clarendon Code represents a contemporary context through which to approach Milton's portrayal of the dissenting angels in the first edition of *Paradise Lost*. All of the essays in this second group prove themselves germane to an understanding of the first edition of Milton's epic within its contemporary setting.

Rounding out the volume as a whole, the final three essays mount detailed thematic and textual arguments that engage the philosophical, theological, and structural implications of the epic as it originally appeared. Phillip J. Donnelly addresses essential questions about matters of structure and narrative treatment in the 1667 edition by highlighting Plato's *Republic*. Through an analysis of various aspects of this seminal work, Donnelly demonstrates the existence of a "sustained intertextual engagement" between the *Republic* and *Paradise Lost* 1667. At issue is what Donnelly calls the "architectonic symmetries" that bind the two works. So compelling is the architectonic relationship between them that Milton's epic does not simply reenact Platonic themes; rather, as a ten-book epic, it veritably subsumes the argument in Plato's great work. Moving from the philosophical dimensions of Donnelly's essay to the theological dimensions of Michael Bryson's essay, one is made aware yet once more of the primacy of Milton's epic in its first incarnation. Once again, the ten-book structure is at issue, but for Bryson the energies that shape the poem assume particular importance in the strain of negative or apophatic theology that underlies the depiction of God at various points in the narrative. Complementary accounts of the philosophical and theological implications of the ten-book epic, Donnelly's and Bryson's respective essays demonstrate the extent to which the first edition of *Paradise Lost* is its "own poem," one that demands to be read and understood on its own terms as well as in conjunction with the later editions of the poem. A coda to this third and final group of essays, John T. Shawcross's study comments implicitly upon the volume as a whole. Through an analysis of both structure and theme, Shawcross, like Donnelly and Bryson, reinforces the idea that Milton's epic in its first incarnation must be accorded the kind of careful attention that has been given its later incarnations over the centuries.

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*Paradise Lost* 1667 can no longer be “silenced” as a poem that simply anticipates the “true” version that appeared some seven years later and that has subsequently been canonized as Milton’s final statement. Drawing attention to the significance and complexities of the first edition, this volume seeks to justify the title of the session mounted on the occasion of the International Milton Congress: the essays gathered here amount in effect to “The Discovery of a New Milton Epic: *Paradise Lost* 1667.” Having sought to accord that epic its due in the present collection, the editors hope to generate renewed interest in a work that later generations would not willingly let die.

Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross  
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