



The Complete Works of John Milton: Volume III: The Shorter Poems

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Volume III of the new eleven-volume edition of Milton's *Complete Works* from the Oxford University Press provides a definitive scholarly edition of all of Milton's shorter poems in English, Italian, Latin, and Greek, as well as his *Mask*, taken from both published and manuscript sources. It presents his 1645 *Poems* complete, with all prefatory materials, to display the ways in which author, publisher, and printshop shaped this volume. It then presents all the new poems added in the 1673 edition (with the new Table of Contents), and the poems omitted from both editions. A careful collation of textual variants among these sources as well as the 1637 anonymous publication of Milton's *Mask* is provided. Also, the Bridgewater manuscript version of Milton's *Mask* (close to the acting version), and his working copy from the Trinity Manuscript, with its many alterations and additions, are transcribed in their entirety, so that the various versions may be compared and studied.

A special feature of this edition is the new translation of Milton's many Latin and Greek poems that is both accurate and attentive to their literary qualities. Also, it supplies a poetic translation of Milton's six Italian sonnets and Canzone. In addition, it presents in Appendices, of all the versions of Milton's shorter poems in all the contemporary manuscript and printed sources, so they may be compared and examined in relation to their specific contexts. The transcription of all the versions of Milton's poems in the Trinity Manuscript allows in several cases, notably 'Lycidas' and 'At a Solemn Music', for examination of the evolution of these poems as Milton weighed choices of diction and sound qualities and so enables further understanding of his poetic practices.

Introductory essays address the occasions and circumstances for all these poems, the poetic development of the Vernacular poems as Milton worked in several genres, and for his Latin and Greek *Poemata* it provides an overview of Milton's achievement as a Neo-Latin poet, as well as a detailed account of the criticism pertaining to each poem. A Textual Introduction discusses all of the sources, printed and manuscript, in which Milton's poems appear, points up special features of many copies of both collected editions as well as the volume in which Milton's 'Lycidas' was first published (*Justa Edouardo King naufrago*), and indicates the marginalia and other notes supplied by several contemporary readers. As an aid to both students and scholars, the Commentary sections provide word definitions from the OED, highlighting occasions when Milton's usage was the earliest one recorded, and also identify biblical, classical, historical, and geographical allusions and references, and some relevant critical studies of particular elements.

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