

9-2006

Introducing the Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection of John Milton

University Libraries--University of South Carolina

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/rb_sc_pubs



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

University of South Carolina, "University of South Carolina Libraries - Introducing the Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection of John Milton, September 2006". http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/rb_sc_pubs/39/

This Catalog is brought to you by the Irvin Department of Rare Books & Special Collections at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rare Books & Special Collections Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact dillarda@mailbox.sc.edu.

Introducing the
Robert J. Wickenheiser
Collection of John Milton

September 21, 2006
Thomas Cooper Library
University of South Carolina



Cover illustration:

Adam and Eve leaving Eden, from
John Martin, illus., *Paradise Lost*, 2 vols.
(London, 1827), with proofs of the
mezzotint illustrations

"Dr. Robert Wickenheiser is the uncontested premier collector of Milton and Miltoniana in the world. . . . There is, to the best of my knowledge, no other privately held collection in the world that even remotely begins to approach the Wickenheiser Milton Collection in scope, range, or importance. . . . The purchase of this collection would immediately catapult the purchaser into world-class status."

— G.W. Stuart Jr.

" . . . one of the major collections of materials related to John Milton, editions and studies and artworks, in the world . . . indicating the breadth and nature of Milton's position in the literary, political, religious, and sociological world over the nearly three and a half centuries since his death."

— John T. Shawcross

" . . . a magnificent collection, in mint condition, preserved under ideal circumstances, broad in scope, and unique in some of its items . . . what has to be one of the best private collections of Milton and Miltoniana in existence."

— John Mulryan

"Dr. Wickenheiser's collection is . . . a paradise for a scholar of seventeenth-century English literature."

— Roy Flannagan

" . . . breathtaking in its reach—Milton is here but also Miltoniana, the latter in abundance. This is a collection that, unlike any other I have seen, represents Milton on an international scene and as an important token of his culture."

— Joseph Wittreich

Introducing the Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection

The Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection of John Milton is a very significant as well as a very welcome acquisition for the University of South Carolina and its library. To support the teaching and research of a major university, its library must provide both current resources and distinguished research collections. The Wickenheiser collection brings the library its first major seventeenth-century research collection, to join our earlier acquisition of great collections in succeeding centuries. It brings a collection with the depth, scope, and size to support and stimulate a wide range of teaching and research, from the undergraduate level upward. It brings to the University a collection that is already widely recognized among scholars in the field. We believe it is a collection that will draw faculty and scholars to South Carolina, to the continuing benefit of the academic community here.

The Wickenheiser collection has come to the University through the generosity and support of three people. Dr. and Mrs. Wickenheiser, who had built the collection over a period of nearly forty years, held to their wish that it could be maintained and made available to future scholars as a single collection, in one library, and to accomplish that aim accepted a very conservative valuation for purchase. Their cordiality and helpfulness throughout the acquisition process have been much valued.

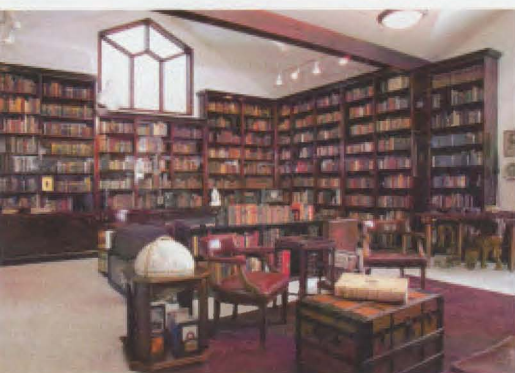
The leading support for the acquisition has been generously provided by Mr. William L. Richter and the William L. Richter Family Foundation. Mr. Richter's willingness to visit the University, to recognize what the collection might accomplish here for the University, and to commit the lead funding to bring the collection here were pivotal to the acquisition.

From the library's first contact with Dr. Wickenheiser, in 2004, we recognized that the prospect of additional space in the projected Special Collections library wing would be crucial if the collection is to have the greatest long-term benefits to teaching and research. The Board of Trustees has approved naming a dedicated room in the new wing The William L. Richter Room, recognizing Mr. Richter's generosity and ensuring that the Wickenheiser collection will be known and used. President Andrew A. Sorensen and Provost Mark Becker have both been extremely supportive of the acquisition of the Wickenheiser collection.

Paul Willis
Dean of Libraries



**Jonathan Richardson (1665–1745),
sepia drawing of Milton from clay
bust (ca. 1730)**



A portion of the Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection, in the library of the Wickenheisers' home in Olean, N.Y. Many of the photographs in this publication were taken in this room by Carl V. Margeson, of Allegany, N.Y., for Dr. Wickenheiser's forthcoming book about the collection and are used here courtesy of Dr. Wickenheiser.

Dr. Robert J. Wickenheiser started collecting Milton and other seventeenth-century poets as a graduate student at the University of Minnesota in the late 1960s. As a young professor at Princeton in the early seventies, he began focusing on the history of Milton illustration, and with his wife, Pat, and the late Robert H. Taylor, past president of the Grolier Club, he visited and established friendships with many of the best-known antiquarian book dealers on both sides of the Atlantic. The Milton collection of more than 6,000 volumes that he and Pat built over the next 35 years became a place of pilgrimage for Milton scholars. Since retiring, Dr. Wickenheiser has completed a full-scale illustrated catalogue of the collection that is scheduled for publication for the John Milton quatercentenary in 2008.

The Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection of John Milton has been purchased for the University with the leading support of **Mr. William L. Richter** and the William L. Richter Family Foundation. In recognition and appreciation of this generous gift, the University's Board of Trustees has approved naming a room in the library's new Special Collections wing for Mr. Richter, dedicated to housing and selectively displaying the Wickenheiser collection.



Richard Westall (1765–1836), "Milton Composing *Paradise Lost*," hand-colored aquatint (ca. 1810)

"Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life. . . . They do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. . . . A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit."

— John Milton, *Areopagitica* (1644)

"The slightest Pamphlet is nowadays more vendible than the Works of learnedest men; but it is the love I have to our own Language that hath made me diligent to collect, and set forth such peeces both in Prose and Verse, as may renew the wonted honour and esteem of our English tongue . . . presenting . . . these ever-green, and not to be blasted Laurels."

— Humphrey Moseley, Milton's publisher, in *Poems* (1645)

An Overview of the Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection of John Milton

John Milton (1608–1674) is the most important English-language poet of the seventeenth century, and central to the wider culture of his time. He was active in politics (as author of the first major text on the freedom of the press and as Latin secretary to Britain's revolutionary government in the late 1640s and 1650s), deeply involved in the same religious debates as the Pilgrim fathers, and a pioneer also in his writings on education and on marriage law. He was a learned, even bookish, poet whose works lead outward to other writers and thinkers. For centuries after it was written, his poetry drew responses from poets, learned scholars, ordinary readers, musicians and composers, and (as the Wickenheiser collection particularly shows) artists and illustrators.

The Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection of John Milton, with more than 6,000 volumes, has both depth and range. Its holdings of first and other seventeenth-century editions of Milton's own writings places this library among the top ten Milton collections in North America. The holdings of seventeenth-century Miltoniana—books referring to Milton or otherwise relating to him—are likewise distinguished. The long ranges of shelves in the collection with eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century Milton editions present a comprehensive record of Milton's continuing impact, while similarly comprehensive holdings of Milton biography, scholarship, and criticism document the development of knowledge about his writings, thought, and influence.

Dr. Wickenheiser has been especially successful in building what is perhaps the most comprehensive collection anywhere of Milton illustration, from the first illustrated edition in 1688 through all the major illustrators that follow, with original drawings by several of the artists, and with especial depth for the work of John Martin (1789–1854) and Gustave Doré (1832–1883).

The Wickenheiser collection broadens the historical range represented in the University's research collections. It is the first major acquisition focused on any author or topic before the mid-eighteenth century. Moreover, the breadth of Milton's own interests and the international and chronological range of those who have responded to him make this a collection that will stimulate an equally broad range of research projects, across a variety of disciplines, both by established researchers and by students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. This is the kind of special collection, on a major author of central cultural significance, with the strength to support both teaching and research, that any University library should covet. We salute with gratitude the collector and the donor who have brought it here to Thomas Cooper Library.

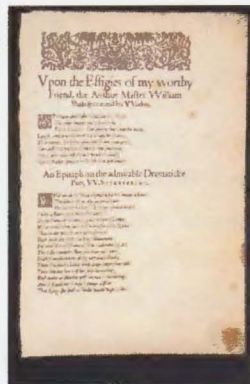
Patrick Scott
Director of Special Collections



Frontispiece portrait from *Paradise Lost* (1688), engraved by Robert White after William Faithorne

Milton in the Seventeenth Century

The Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection includes more than sixty different first and other early editions of Milton published in Milton's own century. These cover all phases of Milton's career and all the varied aspects of his published writing.



Milton as Poet

Leaf with Milton's first published poem, from the Shakespeare Second Folio (1632)

The foundation of Milton's significance remains his poetry, and the Wickenheiser collection includes Milton's first published poem, his tribute to William Shakespeare, published while he was still a student at Cambridge.

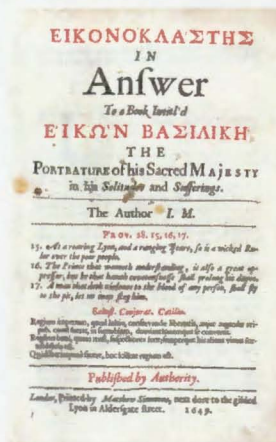


Milton's Early Recognition

Milton's Poems English and Latin (1645)

From his first published collection in 1645, which included tributes from Italian scholars, Milton's stature as a poet was recognized not only by English readers, but also internationally.

The Wickenheiser collection has a fine copy of the 1645 collection, with the Marshall portrait.



Milton's Historical Importance

Milton's Eikonoklastes (1649)

Milton was deeply engaged in the English political revolution of the mid-seventeenth century, both as pamphleteer and as Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth after the execution of King Charles I. The Wickenheiser collection includes first editions of many of his political writings.



Five variant issues of Paradise Lost (1667-69)

Paradise Lost

At the heart of the Wickenheiser collection are five fine copies of the first edition of Milton's masterwork, the epic *Paradise Lost* (1667). The collection includes five of the six variant issues traditionally identified from the first edition, which was arranged in ten epic books rather than the twelve of the second and later editions.

Illustrated Editions of *Paradise Lost* The first illustrated edition (1688)

The initial focus of Dr. Wickenheiser's Milton collecting was Milton illustration, and the collection has all three variant issues for the first illustrated edition, the fourth folio (1688), with twelve engravings chiefly by J.B. Medina. Shown here is the expulsion from Eden.



"By labour and intent study . . .
I might perhaps leave something
so written to after-times, as they
should not willingly let it die."

— John Milton (1641)

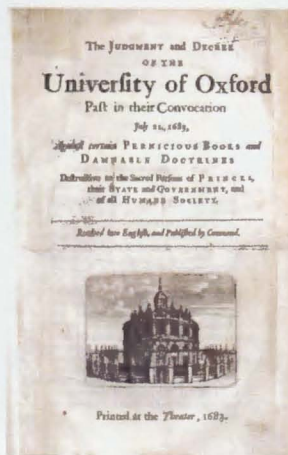
Books that Influenced Milton DuBartas, *His Divine Weekes and Workes* (1605)

In addition to Milton's own works, the Wickenheiser collection has more than fifty related seventeenth-century items. Of writers that influenced Milton, the collection has first editions of Giovanni Andreini (1617), Phineas Fletcher (1633), Thomas Heywood (1635), and George Sandys (1636), as well as several editions of Sallust DuBartas.



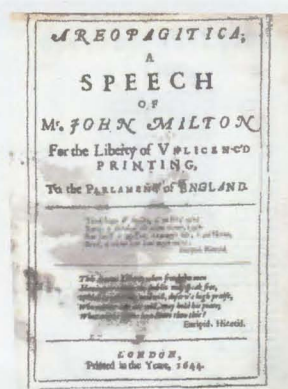
Contemporary Reaction to Milton *Judgment and Decree of the University of Oxford* (1683)

Milton's political views made him a controversial figure to his contemporaries. In addition to books mentioning and commenting on Milton's poetry by George Sikes, Joshua Poole, John Phillips, Patrick Hume, and others, the Wickenheiser collection has items like this, the University's condemnation of "pernicious books and damnable doctrines," including Milton's.



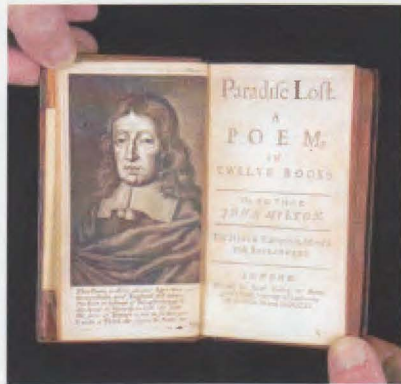
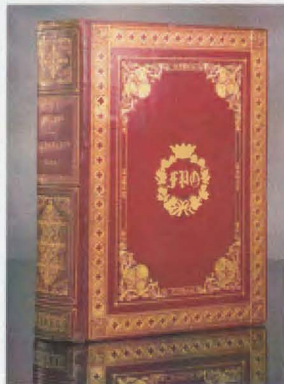
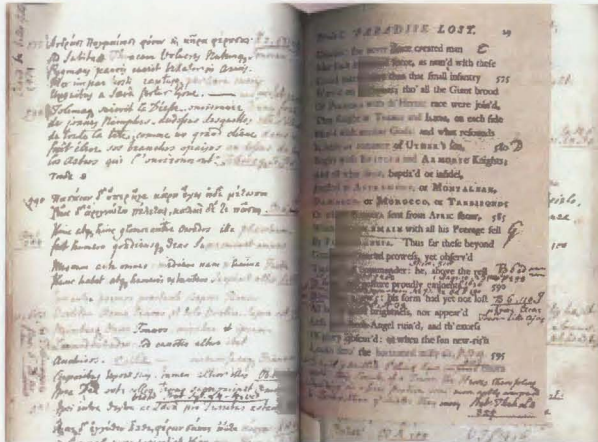
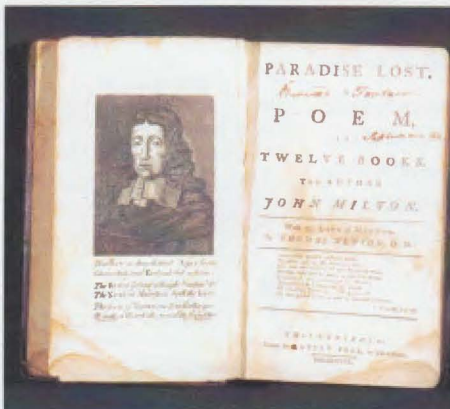
Milton as Political Thinker The first edition of *Areopagitica* (1644)

Milton's ideas on controversial issues—church-state relations, marriage law, education, and the rights of those governed to remove the government—were of lasting influence. His 1644 letter to Parliament, *Areopagitica*, was a milestone in establishing the freedom of the press.



Milton in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The Wickenheiser collection contains holdings in depth charting Milton's readership and influence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These holdings in particular hold the potential for a wide variety of research projects, not only on Milton, but on his publishers, illustrators, biographers, and commentators and on the developing history of book production.



The Growth of Milton's Influence Joseph Addison's copy of *Paradise Lost* (1711)

Among items documenting Milton's influence is this unassuming edition, once owned by the poet and critic Joseph Addison (1672–1719), given to Dr. Wickenheiser in 1980 by the late John Fleming, to whom it came from the legendary Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach. The first separate edition of Addison's influential essays on Milton is also in the Wickenheiser collection.

Milton's International Reputation *Paradise Lost* (Paris, 1792), with color illustrations

The Wickenheiser collection documents Milton's extraordinary international influence, with early translations that include Latin, German, French, Dutch, and Italian. The French edition shown here (in a sumptuous binding) pioneered a new technique for direct color printing, rather than hand-colored engravings.

Milton and His Editors *Paradise Lost* (1727), interleaved with manuscript annotations

The Wickenheiser collection also documents how editors wrestled over the texts and interpretation of Milton's poetry. This specially interleaved copy preserves the copious and detailed annotations of its mid-eighteenth-century owner.

Milton and America The first American edition of *Paradise Lost* (1777)

Milton was as influential in America as in Europe, and not only among the Puritans. The Revolution freed Americans from British copyright, and the Wickenheiser collection includes not only the first American editions of Milton's poetry but also rare printings of political pamphlets, influential in debates on the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Francis Hayman (1708–1776)
Hayman, “Satan, Sin & Death”

The Wickenheiser collection has two original Hayman watercolors. The subject of this one is also treated by several other artists, including Hogarth and (in political caricatures) Rowlandson and Gilray.



Henry Richter (ca. 1770–ca. 1820)
Richter, original drawing (ca. 1794)

Henry Richter's illustrations for *Paradise Lost* were published in 1794. In addition to the published versions, the Wickenheiser collection has a portfolio with twelve of Richter's original drawings for the series.



John Martin
Original mezzotint proof for *Paradise Lost* (1825)

The Romantic or apocalyptic landscapes by John Martin (1791–1855) are among the greatest of Milton illustrations. The Wickenheiser collection has an extraordinary range of the published editions of Martin's work, including this proof for his first mezzotint edition. Another Martin proof is used on the cover of this publication.



Gustave Doré
Doré's Milton in original parts (1866)

Among the most widely popular mid-nineteenth-century Milton illustrations were those by the French illustrator Gustave Doré (1832–1883). Doré's work was marketed using all the resources of Victorian mass publishing, including part issues (as here) and multiple variant bindings. The Wickenheiser collection includes all these, along with Doré's other illustrated works.

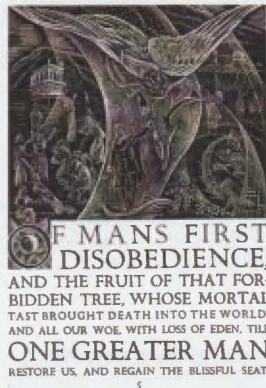


Milton and His Illustrators

The Wickenheiser collection's comprehensive holdings of illustrated editions of Milton include many rare variant issues and editions and a number of original drawings and separately issued engravings by such artists as Francis Hayman, Thomas Rowlandson, James Gilray, Henry Richter, Henry Fuseli, Richard Westall, Henry Howard, John Martin, John Bell, and Gustave Doré.

Milton and the History of the Book

A collection of this depth not only illustrates its own special field but also provides research opportunities in many adjacent disciplines. The Wickenheiser collection is especially valuable in the research materials it provides for the growing research interest in book production and the history of the book.



Milton and Fine Printing *Paradise Lost* (Golden Cockerel, 1937)

The Wickenheiser collection includes editions of Milton by influential printers and book designers from John Baskerville in the eighteenth century through to the modern fine printing movement, with examples from the Daniel Press, Eragny Press, Vale Press, Doves Press, Chiswick Press, Cresset Press, Nonesuch, Golden Cockerel, Rampant Lion Press, and Whittington Press.



Fine Bindings *Paradise Lost* (1688), in contemporary black morocco

Many of the volumes in the Wickenheiser collection have been specially bound, and in addition to such earlier fine bindings as the one illustrated, the collection contains examples by many of the major binders of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the Doves Bindery, Rivière, Sangorski and Sutcliffe, Bayntun, and others.



The Development of Book Production Techniques

Victorian decorated cloth bindings

The scale of the collection means that it also includes, generally in fine condition, a very full range of examples of book production history, from seventeenth-century folios (and pamphlets), through the paper-covered boards of the late eighteenth century, through the evolution of publishers' decorated cloth bindings in the nineteenth century.

Milton Scholarship and Reference

The primary materials in the Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection are supported by a full range of the scholarship on Milton, including modern biographies, critical monographs, editions, specialist journals, auction and booksellers' catalogues, and reference works relating to Milton illustrators and the history of illustration techniques. Many of these books are inscribed to Dr. Wickenheiser by their authors.

Rare Books and Special Collections at Thomas Cooper Library

The University of South Carolina (then South Carolina College) started building its library collections in 1803. By 1850, with 25,000 volumes, it had the largest library collection south of Washington, D.C., housed in the first purpose-built free-standing college library building. Many of the valuable books acquired during that time period are still in the library's care and form the core of the current Special Collections. Since the mid-twentieth century, the libraries as a whole have grown exponentially until, with more than 3.3 million volumes, USC's libraries constitute a major research and teaching resource for the University, the community, the state, and the nation. USC has the only nationally ranked research library in the state and the only S.C. membership in the Association of Research Libraries.

The Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at Thomas Cooper Library has also grown dramatically in recent years. Its special mission is to acquire, preserve, and make available distinctive (often rare or valuable, sometimes unique) materials and collections, such as books, manuscripts, and other materials, in support of teaching and research. Over the past twenty years the department's holdings have grown sixfold, attracting international scholarly attention and adding significant new collections, largely through generous response to an expanded gift program, in the areas of philosophy (Hume, Russell); history (Garibaldi), exploration (Renaissance maps), military history (Civil War, World War I), and military aviation (World War II); natural history (eighteenth century watercolors, Abbot) and the history of science (Darwin, Babbage); English literature (Milton), Scottish literature (Ramsay, Burns, Carlyle, Stevenson, MacDiarmid), and American literature (Emerson, Fuller, Whitman, Johnson, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Heller, Dickey); children's literature (Rawlings, African-American); and the history of the book.

Over the same period, the department has also added new initiatives in the areas of teaching, exhibits, digitization, and scholarly and public programs. Its community organization, the Thomas Cooper Society, founded in 1990, now has more than 600 members. An extensive series of Web exhibits and Web projects based on the collections has been attracting more than 25 million hits a year.

When it opens in 2008, the department's new home, part of a multistage plan to modernize and upgrade physical facilities for all USC libraries, will provide attractive space for all these activities—exhibits, teaching, public programs, and digital projects as well as expanded and up-to-date study space for researchers, enhanced environmental conditions and security for both people and books, and much increased and upgraded stack space to ensure the long-term availability of these extraordinary collections.



The Thomas Cooper Library's new west wing will provide space for the collections and services offered by the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Rare Books & Special Collections

Thomas Cooper Library