

Gilbert, Allan H., On the Composition of Paradise Lost, 1966

Chapter 8 - The Building of Paradise Lost
50. A Table Showing Sequence in Composition pp. 151-155

The Order of Composition of Parts of Paradise Lost

Group I. From the Early Tragedies on the Fall

Group II From Other Early Tragedies

Group III From the Late Tragedy

Group IV Tragedy Transformed to Epic

Group V The Independent Epic

Group VI The Epic Complete

51. Milton's Process pp. 156-163

p. 158 The components of Group V are striking in view of the 19th century criticism which - tacitly or openly - held the first two books the most "Miltonic" part of Paradise Lost.

Any one who still holds that view may find in my analysis a new reason for it, namely that after/^{p/159} the experience of writing the greater part of Paradise Lost Milton was at the summit of his poetical powers. Similarly one who wishes to depreciate the eleventh and twelfth books can support his views by suggesting early planning and composition.