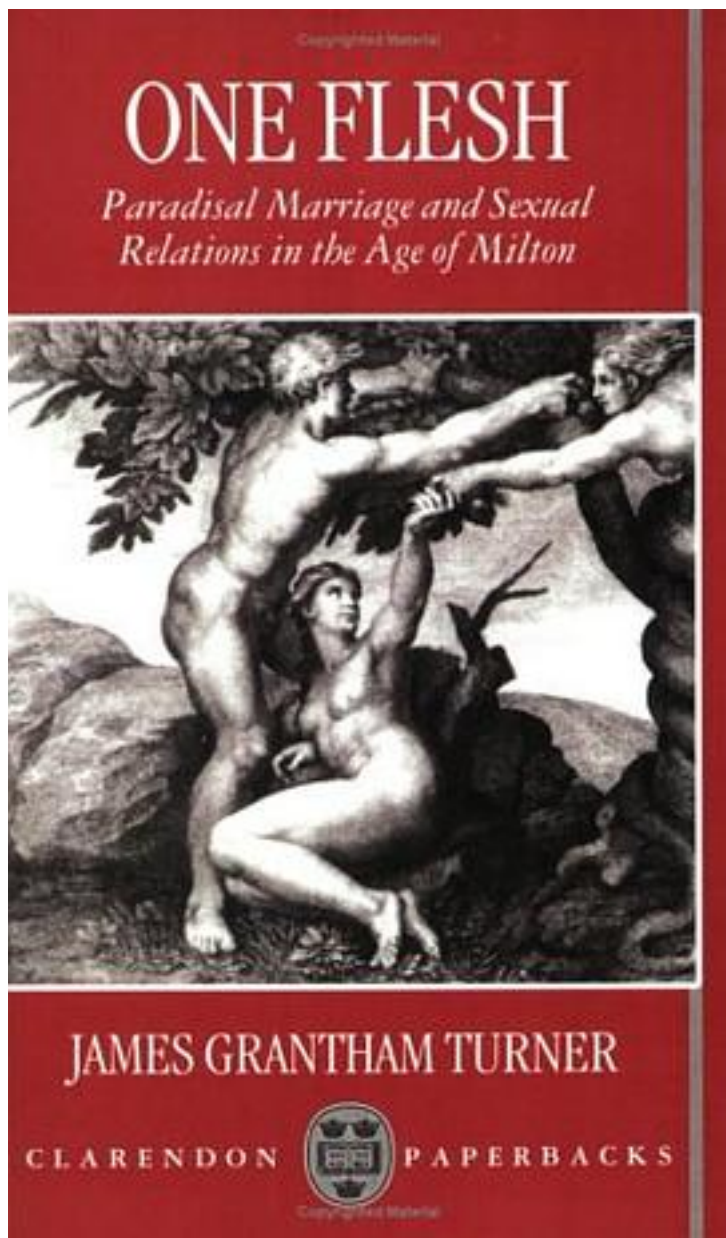


One Flesh



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This is an acclaimed study of the understanding of sex and gender in the early modern period, examining in particular Milton's interventions in these debates. Focusing on contemporary readings of the Eden-myth in Genesis, the book shows that the reconstruction of Paradisal marriage raised many problems of interpretation. How can the cryptic and contradictory elements of Genesis be reconciled? Was sexuality the 'True Paradise' or the destroying serpent? Since Genesis pronounces knowledge and imagination 'evil', how can the interpreter arrive at the truth? Is Paradise Lost forever, or can we 'force through the Fire-sword' and regain the Edenic state? These questions, perennial sources of contradiction in the Christian tradition, come to a head in the turmoil of Milton's lifetime, and they were particularly urgent for the poet himself, caught up in the problems of a failed marriage but unwilling to give up his vision of Paradisal sexuality. James Grantham Turner's accomplished and incisive analysis of Milton's confrontation with his precursors and contemporaries established him as a monumental but divided figure - torn between radical and conservative mentalities, between eroticism and hatred of the flesh, and between patriarchal and egalitarian conceptions of Paradisal marriage.

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