

that is informative, engaging, and aesthetically appealing. It more than justifies the observation of John Shawcross, cited by Wickenheiser in his introduction, that the Wickenheiser collection is “one of the major collections of materials related to John Milton, editions and studies and artworks, in the world” (31).

Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns. *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. xvi + 488 pp. + 48 illus. \$39.95. Review by ANNA K. NARDO, LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY.

John Milton's life makes a great story, and Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns tell it well. By their account, Milton “is flawed, self-contradictory, self-serving, arrogant, passionate, ruthless, ambitious, and cunning” (3). Yet, “what he achieved in the face of crippling adversity, blindness, bereavement, political eclipse, remains wondrous” (4). Campbell and Corns come to their final judgment that “This is a hero's life” (4), however, only after scrupulously returning to the archival evidence—from minutes of academic meetings in Florence to burial records in the Horton parish Church, from the salary records of Protectorate functionaries to the minutia of handwriting variants. They employ the most recent developments in Stuart historiography, formidable linguistic expertise in Greek and Latin, and the arts of rhetorical analysis to create a revisionary biography of a figure whose life has often taken on mythic status.

Two themes that dominate their study are Milton's early Arminianism and his uneven progress throughout his life toward radicalization. Explicating these themes, they tell the story of a poet/polemicist actively engaged with an unfolding revolution. After Milton's dispute with his first Cambridge tutor, they read in his father's choice of a replacement “a continuity of Arminian and ceremonialist influence” (40). In the timing of the move to Hammersmith, where Milton joined his family upon leaving Cambridge, Campbell and Corns read Milton senior's attraction of “the opening of a Laudian chapel that accorded with his ecclesiastical preferences” (68). Then, in Milton's Ludlow masque, written during his long residence at Hammersmith, Campbell and Corns read a “complex and thorough expression of

Laudian Arminianism and Laudian style . . . indeed the high-water mark of his indulgence of such beliefs and values" (84). When, however, the Miltons experienced, first hand, Laudian authoritarianism and sacerdotalism in the church's objections to the orientation of Sara Milton's gravestone (96), and when so many of the "middling sort" were scandalized by the spectacle of William Prynne's public mutilations, Milton, according to Campbell and Corns, "began to bid William Laud good night" (95).

As Milton engaged the proliferating controversies of his revolutionary times, he becomes, to Campbell and Corns, a moving target. Now, he shares soteriological positions with General Baptists, then, anti-clerical positions with Quakers (194-95), and even an interest in polygamy with radical Anabaptists (275). Now, he eloquently attacks pre-publication censorship; then, "taking the republican equivalent of the king's shilling," he became a "servant of the state" and a "practitioner of pre-publication censorship" (247). Once, he attacked the authoritarianism of Charles I and Laud, then, however, when Cromwell dismisses the Parliament, and other prominent figures like Bradshaw and Vane object or retire, "Milton stayed on" (251). Now, a reticent public servant, then, after Cromwell's death, Milton published arguments for toleration of a wide spectrum of Protestant belief and against the investment of political power in a single person (289). The detailed historical contextualization provided by Campbell and Corns weaves the twists and turns of Milton's thought and actions into the fabric of England's revolutionary experiment.

Their careful contextualization also illuminates events and works that have often puzzled Milton scholars. For example, they reconstruct Milton's participation in raucous college disputations, especially his most famous Prolusion that ends with "At a Vacation Exercise," by explaining the conventions of the "salting" and by untangling the story of drunken students who tumbled into (or urinated in) the King's Ditch (59-60). They correct common misinterpretations of the "contempt" with which Milton's messenger, sent to request Mary Powell's return, was treated, by detailing the historical evidence that "ideologically suspect visitors from London were subject to rough treatment in royalist strongholds alert to the danger from spies" (157). At one point, the mighty labor in archives among dusty tomes that allows

them to bring the past to life seems to have rendered Campbell and Corns quite impatient with Milton's comparatively "shallow scholarship." Noting that he bases *The History of Britain* "wholly on published sources," they sniff, "Milton suggests that no liberal scholar would waste his time on the kind of dross the antiquaries worked on" (356). By contrast, these two modern antiquaries turn dross into true coin.

Campbell and Corns do for Milton's prose what Barbara Lewalski did for Milton's poetry in her 2000 contribution to the Blackwell Critical Biographies series. Each of her chapters ends with a brief, but rich analysis of a work, most often a poem or poems, written during the years discussed in the chapter. Likewise, throughout their biography, Campbell and Corns provide concise, but rich discussions of many of Milton's prose treatises, interweaving historical contextualization with artful analysis of Milton's varying prose styles. Comparing Milton's contributions to the anti-episcopal debate to others' tracts, they demonstrate that "Milton brought . . . a new, undeferential, incisive, vivid, violent, and vindictive perspective to the Smectymnuan cause" (143). Contrasting "the indecorous flashiness of Charles" to Milton's disciplined, unflamboyant prose in *Eikonoklastes*, they claim that Milton's answer to *Eikon Basilike* was "powerfully persuasive, reminding [his targeted audience] of the ceremonialism and repressiveness of the Caroline church" (226-27). And deftly explicating the "allusive and lexical pyrotechnics" of Milton's *Pro Se Defensio*, they relate Alexander More's alleged summerhouse trysts to labored jokes about priapic statues, figs, mulberries ("morus"), and penile mushrooms. "Sadly," they sigh, "the humour has lost little in translation" (264-65).

Obviously, their mastery of prose analysis is matched by their own artful prose. Indeed, one of the pleasures of this biography is its readability; it is full of humanizing zingers. A paragraph on "L'Allegro" ends, "These are not the pleasures of a radical-in-waiting, but of one who loves cakes and ale" (61). A summation of all Milton encountered in Italy ends "Not to mention some decent cooking" (127). Campbell and Corns even turn their own biting prose against the master, as when they describe "Of Education," as "repressive, prescriptive, elitist, masculinist, militaristic, dustily pedantic, class-ridden, and affectionless" (181). But a review should not give away all the good lines.

It is, however, a shame that such a well-researched and entertaining work of scholarship should be marred by bad production values. Many of the forty-eight illustrations are so dark and blurred that their relevance to the analyses they are supposed to complement is wholly lost. By contrast, the illustrations in Anna Beer's 2008 biography, *Milton: Poet, Pamphleteer, and Patriot* (Bloomsbury Press) are clear and helpfully illustrative, sometimes in color.

John T. Shawcross. *The Development of Milton's Thought: Law, Government, and Religion*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008. x + 283 pp. \$60.00. Review by JOHN MULRYAN, ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY.

The title of this book, *The Development of Milton's Thought*, is an implicit rebuke to those Miltonists who see Milton's thought as consistent, constant, and unchanging. Part of the problem (explored in chapter one, "Milton and Constancy of Thought"), according to Shawcross, is that critics focus on individual works without taking into account the complete oeuvre of Milton. For "not all of what he wrote has been read" (5). In addition, critics tend to reshape Milton's thought until it is congruent with their own thinking, which is of course (in their minds) absolutely correct: "Too often critics espouse their own thinking as Milton's position or find Milton's thinking so opposed to theirs that Milton therefore is wrong" (5). Others conveniently forget that fiction is not fact, and that poetry does not pretend to literal truth. Milton is at one with orthodox Christians in the fundamentals (the "constancy of belief in God's omnipresence and omnipotence"[3]), but at odds with them in doctrinal views of the Trinity: "Milton's theological position [on the Trinity and other subjects] in both *De doctrina* and *Paradise Lost* is unorthodox" (ix).

In chapter two, "Milton and Legal Matters," Shawcross notes that Milton's father and Milton himself were involved in "usurious activities" (34). Usury, however, did not, in Protestant England, bear the stigma associated with the practice in the middle ages; as Shawcross points out, Calvin himself defended usury. Milton also took a healthy interest in intellectual property rights (including of course those of his own texts), and physical property as well. And although there is no hint