



# John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought

By Gordon Campbell, Thomas N. Corns

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**John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought** By Gordon Campbell, Thomas N. Corns

Written by two of the world's leading Milton scholars, widely praised as "illuminating" (*Times Literary Supplement*), "seamlessly written" (*Publishers Weekly*), and "a book of permanent value" (*Literary Review*), and winner of the Milton Society's James Holly Hanford Award, this magnificent biography sheds fresh new light on the writings, the thought, and the life of poet John Milton. A more human Milton appears in these pages, a Milton who is flawed, self-contradictory, self-serving, arrogant, passionate, ruthless, ambitious, and cunning. He is also among the most accomplished writers of the period, the most eloquent polemicist of the mid-century, and the author of the finest and most influential narrative poem in English, *Paradise Lost*, which the book examines in detail. What Milton achieved in the face of crippling adversity, blindness, bereavement, and political eclipse, remains wondrous. Here is a fascinating biography of this towering literary figure--the first new serious study in forty years--one that profoundly challenges the received wisdom about one of England's leading poets and thinkers.

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## John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought By Gordon Campbell, Thomas N. Corns Bibliography

- Rank: #945742 in Books
- Published on: 2008-11-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.30" h x 1.80" w x 9.30" l, 2.00 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 488 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

There is renewed interest in Milton, particularly his political life, this year, the 400th anniversary of his birth. This substantial biography, seamlessly written by the editors of the *Oxford Milton*, draws chiefly on documentary evidence and an easy familiarity with the 17th-century English scene. As a prodigy scholar, pamphleteer, government translator on the international stage and the blind (probably from glaucoma) bard of the Bible, Milton found himself astride a world of hardening views, as it spiraled in political and spiritual transition. He wrote on divorce, freedom of expression and the tenure of kings; his *De Doctrina Christiana*, not unearthed until the 1820s, is an essential work of systematic theology. The authors set Milton's imaginative life against this backdrop, stretching from Shakespeare, to whom Milton's father may have been loosely connected, to Dryden's ingenious staging of *Paradise Lost* in couplets. With nearly 100 pages of notes and bibliography, this is a no-nonsense contribution to our understanding of a genius who, in many ways, is hardly remote from our times. 25 b&w illus., maps. (Jan.)

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## **Review**

Impressive, rigorous, nuanced...the fullest portrait yet...Anchored by impeccable scholarly acumen, this biography supersedes all recent accounts. Choice Impressive, rigorous, nuanced... the fullest portrait yet of this brilliant, controversial, and ambitious politician, theologian, and artist. Anchored by impeccable scholarly acumen, this biography supercedes all recent accounts. Choice An illuminating accretion of historical and personal detail; it is an assiduous study of a difficult man. Sophie Read, Times Higher Education Supplement Lucid and engaging. Sophie Read, Times Literary Supplement A book of permanent value...tight, learned, packed biography. Colin Burrow, Literary Review Exceptionally good...tight, learned, packed biography. Colin Burrow, Literary Review Marvellous new biography...This is an enthralling, rewarding read. Marcus Nevitt, Daily Telegraph An exceptionally readable and interesting relation of the poet's life that makes some fascinating observations about the work. Advance praise from Philip Pullman

## **About the Author**

**Gordon Campbell** is Professor of Renaissance Studies at University of Leicester. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He is a former chairman of the English Association and of the Society for Renaissance Studies He has published widely on Milton and on art and architecture, mostly for OUP.

**Thomas N. Corns** is Professor of English at Bangor University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and a Fellow of the English Association. He has published six books on Milton and other books on seventeenth-century literature.

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