

EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



Huckabay, Calvin and David V. Urban, comps, *John Milton: An Annotated Bibliography, 1989–1999*, ed. by David V. Urban and Paul J. Klemp (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2011). xv+488pp. ISBN 978 0 8207 0443 2.

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Compilers of annotated bibliographies can try to be comprehensive, or they can explain their boundaries of inquiry. They can attempt objectivity or announce their biases. But whatever the approach, their final product will fall short of full comprehensiveness, and will be colored, however faintly, by their perspectives and decisions. The wide variety of approaches to bibliography writing is evident in the very existence of bibliographies of bibliographies, an example of which we may find in a section of Calvin Huckabay, David Urban, and Paul Klemp's recent contribution to Milton studies. Within this treasure-house one may also find almost 500 hundred pages of meticulously compiled annotations of Milton scholarship covering the span of eleven years – an excellent example of the value of chasing the horizon of scholarly perfection.

Roughly the size of its predecessor (*John Milton: An Annotated Bibliography, 1968–1988*, also published by Duquesne UP) and yet covering half the length of time, this bibliography represents not so much a growth spurt in Milton studies as it does an improvement in the quality and documentation of it. The volume enjoys the benefits of the experience of Huckabay, Klemp, and Duquesne University Press in similar projects, yet it is especially a labor of love from David Urban, who not only accepted the task of continuing the project at the passing of Huckabay in 2001, but also rechecked, revised, and lengthened those annotations Huckabay had begun. The result is a reference work that is similar to Huckabay's other Milton bibliographies in its attempted comprehensiveness and in avoiding passing judgment on the value of the works it annotates, and superior in its

measure of success in achieving its goals through wealth of detail, uniformity among entries, and inclusion of useful quotations.

David Urban tells his story in his 'Confessions of a Milton Bibliographer', reviewing the isolating and increasingly endangered task of writing a bibliography designed for print. He offers positive recommendations for the future of bibliography in Milton studies, suggesting collaboration, a greater online presence, and more frequent updating. He is aware that his project may be the last of dying breed: the first of his reflections is 'I am a dinosaur'. The pains once required to assemble a Milton concordance have been rendered obsolete with a good searchable online text; now more scholars have come to rely heavily on internet databases such as the *MLA Bibliography* to conduct research, even when the information provided in these databases can be relatively limited. Finding a clothbound annotated bibliography, after all, might require an inconvenient trip across the quad to a brick-and-mortar library. Why then is this a volume worth having on the shelf?

First of all, it's designed to be useful. Impressive in its treatment of the mere eleven years of Milton studies it surveys, this hefty and sober book – and I've affectionately dubbed my copy 'Il Penseroso' – simplifies and expedites research for the Milton scholar. The organization of this volume is clear, sensible, and continuous with Huckabay's previous bibliographies. The annotations are divided into nine different categories: Bibliography; Biography; Editions; Translations; General Criticism and Miscellany; Criticism of Individual Works; Style and Versification; Criticism of Editions, Translations, and Illustrations; and lastly, Fame and Influence. By far the largest section is on criticism of individual works, and this section is divided into five subsections: Shorter Poems, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, *Samson Agonistes*, and Prose Works. There are 2,411 entries, but some of these are duplicates under separate categories. An *index nominum* makes it simple not just to track down the work of particular scholars from the last decade of the twentieth century, but also to discover which historical figures were studied in light of Milton, from Addison to Zwingli. Ariosto and Augustine, Homer and Hobbes are there alongside Fish and Flannagan, Revard and Rajan. Cyriack, Daniel, and Quentin Skinner are all there together. Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, and Said are predictably present. Did anyone in the 90s write on Milton and Machiavelli? Melville? Mussolini? MLK Jr.? Pocahontas, perhaps? Yes, and the index easily indicates where to find the appropriate entries. Even the pseudonym 'Martin Marprelate' makes it into the index of names (Smectymnuus, incidentally, does not). A topical *index rerum* of sorts may be found under Milton's own name, where one can easily discover scholarship on Milton and Ramist logic, or science, or gender. And if the twenty-four categories of the Table of Contents are not specific enough,

works of Milton are also individually listed in the index, directing the reader to relevant scholarship on a particular sonnet or prose tract (and there you will find *Smectymnuus*). I mention the index thus far simply because it reveals and represents the entire volume's meticulous arrangement, proving that even a research tool in print can have a particularly user-friendly interface.

Perusing this bibliography at a more leisurely pace encourages the drawing of unforeseen connections and highlights points of critical debate. This is bound to happen where so many different ideas are artfully and inorganically packed together. For example, in a 1992 issue of *Modern Philology*, Herbert Berry, whose specialization is in early modern English playhouses, presents the case for John Milton Sr being a trustee of the Burbage estate, and for the poet thereby having privileged access to Blackfriars Theatre; the next page records a 1999 essay by Gordon Campbell in *Milton Quarterly*, suggesting that John Milton, Sr. may be the "I.M." who published a poem in Shakespeare's First Folio, the playwright and the scrivener connected through their shared enthusiasm for music (nos. 30 and 36). Since Berry's essay does not mention Shakespeare, you will not find it by searching for 'Milton' and 'Shakespeare' in an online database, but read a few pages into Urban's annotations and you might be tempted to imagine the biographical line between these poets drawn more boldly.¹ Reading through this bibliography also reveals conflicting research and conclusions: Did Milton's trip to Italy significantly shape his thought? Nos. 61 and 62 in the bibliography come to different conclusions. One desires to see if the later monograph directly confronts or somehow acknowledges the different assertions of the earlier article, and this is noteworthy, for a successful annotated bibliography not only provides reliable and adequate summaries of the works it includes, but it also incites, when relevant, a desire to access the full argument.

In this effect the bibliography surpasses its predecessors. Glancing through Huckabay's annotations for the years 1968–88, I quickly find proof of scholarly disagreement, but not of scholarly debate. The older bibliography indicates which critic extends animadversions, remonstrances, and apologies against which other critic, but offers few hints of the substance or progress of the argument. After publication information, combatants and their topics are named, but little else.² Whereas Huckabay must have been confident that, should we be interested in the dispute, he has directed us where to find it, Urban's annotations

¹ In *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*, Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns remind readers that the Mermaid Tavern, frequented by Shakespeare, Jonson, and other poet-potators, had an entrance on Bread Street, where John Milton Sr rented apartments in the house where his son was born (p. 8).

² See, for example, nos. 1910, 1913, 2019, 2020, and 2175 in Huckabay's *John Milton: An Annotated Bibliography, 1968–88*.

seem kindly to assume (however wrongly) that most of us aren't interested in contention for contention's sake, and won't bother to look up the original arguments unless he teases us with a little more detail. Of course, this method of scholarly handholding has its own imperfections. There is always the danger that too much information will tempt us to accept the summary as a substitute for the original. But then again, with so much to read and so little time, a comprehensive familiarity with Milton scholarship is even more elusive than the comprehensive documentation of it. Given too little information, we may not be made aware of the original at all.

Reading a bibliography is also an expedient way to revisit the groundwork for today's scholarship, and to review the development of a particular scholar's interest in a topic, theme, or critical approach. For example, Gordon Campbell's biographical interest in Milton's Syriac (published in 1993 in collaboration with Syriac expert Sebastian Brock) bears upon his inquiry into the provenance of *De Doctrina Christiana* in 2007 (no. 37). Too often the recent past is rejected as passé while the distant past is protected and beautified by the patina of nostalgia, and yet it is worth considering the current projects of Miltonists in light of (and thereby often in contrast with) both their own earlier work and that of their mentors. Moreover, this volume is an unassuming tribute to some of the most mature work of several recently departed Miltonists. It was a pleasure to read, among others, annotations for the works of John Shawcross, Albert Labriola, Stella Revard, Marshall Grossman, J. Martin Evans, Balachandra Rajan, William B. Hunter Jr, Richard DuRocher, and, indeed, Calvin Huckabay, to whom I am particularly indebted because I inherit the advantages of his labors to keep the PR3500 shelves at Houston Baptist University well stacked.

I mentioned – and Urban has mentioned – that true comprehensiveness is impossible; nonetheless the wealth of detail this bibliography provides is excellent. Urban's annotations for editions of Milton's works, for example, indicate which of these modernize spelling and punctuation, whose illustrations are used, who wrote the introduction or preface, and what other textual apparatus distinguishes the edition, noting particularly useful chronologies, figures, tables, glossaries, and appendices, even if their usefulness is not directly related to Milton. Entry number 350, we learn, has a 22-page glossary of Jungian terms. Translations of Milton's works into Arabic, Braille, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Russian, and Spanish are documented. Publication information for thousands of reviews can be found under the relevant entry, and URLs are provided for these reviews when available. If a resource was made available in microfiche, compact disc, CD-ROM, or video format, this is mentioned. For bibliographies, annotations often include the number of entries, the methodology behind its compilation, and a list of categories used. For

collections of essays, all contributors are listed in a general entry under the editor's name, and each essay is given a separate annotation. Even an afterward is given its own entry (no. 295). The volume also includes publications that consider Milton among more general concerns: we may read of a monograph on marriage in early modern England because it was reviewed in *Milton Quarterly* and makes "several passing references to Milton" (no. 557). Because this bibliography is a continuation and improvement of previous bibliographies compiled by Huckabay, it also includes scholarship overlooked by those works. (The last-mentioned entry, for example, was published in 1977, and entry no. 2035 is a journal article published in Tokyo in 1963.) Those interested in the visual arts can find editions of Milton's works graced by the illustrations of H. F. Hallet, Terrance R. Lindall, William Strang, Ian Pollock, Col Salieti, Fernando Saez, Henry Fuseli, William Hamilton, William Blake, Gustave Doré, or the engravers for the 1688 edition. And looking up Wendy Furman-Adams or Virginia James Tufte in the index will direct you to their discussions of other artists inspired by Milton, among them Jean-Frédéric Schall, Mary Groom, Carlotta Petrina, and Alexis Smith – as well as artists who may have inspired Milton – including Raphael, Michelangelo, Masaccio, and Flemish tapestry weavers. This bibliography also includes informal and less scholarly material: a transcript of a lecture at Oxford before a general audience, a biography written by a poet, an appreciative glance into Milton's life created in relation to a PBS television series, and several abridgements and adaptations of Milton's works.³ Even creative works bearing Miltonic influence are mentioned here. Although Urban does not go so far as to annotate Pullman's fantasy trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, he does assign an odd spot in the biography section to Eva Figs' *The Tree of Knowledge*, an historical novel that offers a fictionalized Deborah Milton's perspective into the life of her father (no. 56), and Peter Ackroyd's *Milton in America*, which imagines Milton as a tyrannical leader of a Puritan New England colony, is included under the section for miscellany (no. 279). Annotations do vary in length and detail, but most are over 100 words, and, overall, the expanse of information this volume provides is stunning, yet navigable.

This leads me to a few comments on key considerations in Milton scholarship for the years 1989–1999. Of course, some subjects have been permanently enshrined in Milton studies. Politics and religion will always find a place in Milton scholarship, and in this bibliography the former is well represented by several volumes of collected essays, among them *Milton and Republicanism*, edited by David Armitage, Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner, and *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, edited by Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer (nos.

³ E.g. nos. 60, 84, 108, 172, 192, 197, 264.

284, 523). Interest in the subject of Milton's politics is easy to find: Seventeen book reviews are documented under Sharon Achinstein's *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, a number surpassed in the bibliography only by David Norbrook's *Writing the English Republic*, which had twenty reviews listed, most by Miltonists (nos. 278, 1931; cf. no. 1363). There are several publications that announce, censure Milton for, or seek to explain away his prejudices against the Irish, while Milton's more generous interest in the world beyond England is particularly indicated through his genteel correspondence with Italian acquaintances, and more generally through a wide range of scholarship on Milton in Italy, including a collection of essays under that title.⁴ Interest in Milton and religion from 1989–99 was especially represented in ongoing debates about Milton's sundry unorthodoxies: Arminianism, Arianism, mortalism, monism, etc. These are variously portrayed and neatly combined in *Milton and Heresy*, edited by Stephen Dobranski and John Rumrich (no. 345). Indicating these heresies in Milton's works has been one spur in the debate over the provenance of *De Doctrina Christiana*, an important and frequent concern for Milton studies during the years this bibliography covers.⁵ The period also devoted much scholarship to textual studies, the culture of the book trade, and the state of licensing and literacy in Milton's day.⁶ Historicizing readings are easily located; one may find arguments for *Paradise Lost* as a gloss upon the time it was written (e.g. no. 28) or on the time in which it was published (e.g., no. 31). Scholars crafted arguments for how consistent or inconsistent Milton's views on politics and religion were over the course of his lifetime. There are several attempts to pinpoint when (and in some cases, if) Milton became disillusioned with the Protectorate or the Commonwealth.⁷ The temptation to identify Milton's Satan (or illustrations of Milton's Satan) with a historical figure continues with assessments of the diabolical sides of Shaftesbury (no. 59), Cromwell (nos. 124, 126), Stuart monarchs (no. 2147), Cortez (no. 1157) and even Milton's unsolicited emendator, Dr. Bentley (no. 442). When thrashing on the lake of fire, Satan imitates a plague victim (no. 946); when tempting Eve, he is a probing seventeenth-century anatomist (no. 1054). When among his demons, he is a 'thinly disguised Jesuit casuist' (no. 965). He is similar to Tancredi in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* (no. 1076), and is perhaps a model for Lovelace in Richardson's *Clarissa* (no. 2409). Scholarly interest in self-fashioning and the public persona encouraged essays about Milton's self-perception and self-presentation, many

⁴ E.g. nos. 39, 40, 41, 44, 61, 62, 68, 69, 277, 597, 1917–1919, 1996, 2011.

⁵ E.g. nos. 37, 345, 1453, 1825, 1858, 1864, 1871, 1885–1890, 1896–97, 1911, 1938, 1972, 1977, 2008, 2007.

⁶ E.g. nos. 42, 45, 46, 63, 67, 68, 78, 81, 87, 88, 89, 93, 98, 116, 119, 142, 144, 346, 389, 847, 1982.

⁷ E.g. nos. 28, 54, 78, 106, 124, 285, 440.

warning readers not to take his autobiographical comments at face value.⁸ Milton studies of the period also turned to seventeenth-century views of history and of time, and there is a fair selection of articles on apocalypse, eschatology, and millennialism – a timely topic for the turn of the century and Y2K speculations.⁹ Gender studies and feminist readings of Milton provide, of course, another prominent avenue for lively debate, and the years 1989–99 brought new reviews and responses to Wittreich’s *Feminist Milton* (no. 584), and new arguments by Wittreich, Diane McColley, Mary Nyquist, Tony Davies, William Kerrigan, Eckhard Auberlen, Donald Friedman, John Guillory, Catherine Gimelli Martin, In-Sung Kim, and others, the ongoing struggle to describe Milton as patriarchalist or proto-feminist made unique partly by the establishment of men’s studies as a discipline.¹⁰ The beginnings of modern eco-criticism in Milton studies are represented with essays on Edenic ecology, economy, and utopia.¹¹ At least four different scholars of the period have compared one of Milton’s works – *Paradise Lost*, *Samson Agonistes*, or *A Maske* – with elements of a country-house poem.¹² Studies of Milton’s style include the popular topics of allegory, polemic, and rhyme, with one essay on his use of accent marks and at least three on his use of pronouns.¹³ Literary and stylistic concerns are often blended with historio-socio-political ones; see, for example, the essays in *Literary Milton: Text, Pretext, Context*, edited by Diana Treviño Benet and Michael Lieb (no. 292), and in *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton’s Prose*, edited by David Loewenstein and James Grantham Turner (no. 1914). Of literary predecessors, the three most commonly studied in relation to Milton were Spenser (84 indexed entries), Shakespeare (76), and Virgil (60). Belonging to the first group is Annabel Patterson’s essay seeking to temper critical consensus that Spenser was a major influence on Milton (no. 509). There appear to be more articles on Milton and Bunyan than on Milton and the Bible.¹⁴ And of course, there is plenty of meta-Milton scholarship: essays on Milton criticism itself, on the teaching of Milton, and on reconsidering the literary canon.¹⁵

One obvious reason that any annotated bibliography cannot achieve both exhaustiveness and impartiality is that compilers must be selective, not only in summarizing the claims of an article or the features of an edition, but also in choosing which quotations to include.

⁸ E.g. nos. 46, 63, 67, 78, 81, 87, 116, 119, 142, 144.

⁹ E.g. nos. 282, 410, 933, 1088–89, 1451, 1485, 1490, 1518, 1683, 1714, 1716, 1721, 1925, 1983, 2048.

¹⁰ E.g. nos. 339, 340, 343, 358, 379, 407, 428, 463, 477, 501, 534, 551, 770, 903, 1041, 1103, 1120, 1127–28, 1158, 1169, 1280, 1308, 1368, 1395, 1531, 1468, 1530, 1554, 1586, 1588, 1703, 1779, 1881, 1898, 1937.

¹¹ E.g. nos. 481–82, 1011, 1034, 1318, 1533, 1545, 2074.

¹² Nos. 720, 1443, 1445, 1595, 1761.

¹³ Nos. 2054, 2056–58.

¹⁴ E.g. nos. 72–73, 79, 101, 308, 337, 356, 406, 533, 823, 1262, 1601–02, 1605–06, 1702, 1829, 2001.

¹⁵ E.g. nos. 331, 355, 366, 367–68, 373, 383, 393, 403, 418, 442, 444, 446, 467, 477, 479, 487, 514, 522, 534.

Oddly, one gets the impression that it is in the selection of the words of others that the quirky energy of David Urban finds expression. In these quotes we find more than the salient sentences that capture the core of an argument in the author's own words; there are also curious revelations that can distinguish the tenor of a work: humorous highlights, catchy turns-of-phrase, samplings of wordy dissertation abstracts, accolades that deserve reiteration, and professional sleights that probably don't. Although this is not a critical bibliography, I am occasionally tempted to read into the silences: I can only imagine Urban's self-restraint when quoting the dust-jacket of the abridged, reordered, modernized and transposed *Paradise Lost: The Novel*: 'delivered in the charm and rich texture of the ancient voice' (no. 171). Perhaps I assume too much.

If you missed it the first time around, or simply forgot, this bibliography will let you know who called the massacre in Piedmont an 'unprecedented public-relations bonanza' (no. 605); who sees in *Lycidas* an 'Ad Matrem' (no. 606); who intrepidly attempted to chart the fatal journey of Edward King (no. 660); who calls L'Allegro and Il Penseroso 'failed experiments' (no. 716); who assumes that, in *A Maske*, 'no means yes' (no. 733); who asserts that Comus has 'some of the good looks of a rock-and-roll musician' (no. 785); who argues that the 'Gums of Glutinous Heat' that bind the Lady to her chair are 'obliquely engaging the problem of wet dreams' (no. 837); who offers a translation of Elegy 7 intended to 'unleash the Propertian and Catullan passion' hitherto unexpressed (no. 857); who received the title 'supreme Miltonist' and from whom (no. 292); whose video lecture series is lauded as 'easily the best videotape ever made about Milton', and by whom (1240); who called the 1980s 'an embarrassing decade' for literary criticism (355); who reduced most scholarship of the second half of the twentieth century to 'a solemn game' (373); who accuses whom of 'gender dyslexia' (no. 428); who explains that Milton 'honours women highly' by 'insisting on Dalila's badness' (no. 463); who presents Adam and Eve's marriage as 'basically contractual' (no. 501); who appreciates Milton's 'delicate balance between *chutzpah* and humility' (no. 1008); who believes *Paradise Lost* has an 'omphalic spatiality' (no. 994); who describes the telescope Milton refers to as 'a phallic, a masculinized compensatory device for a body riven by the Fall' (no. 894); who had the good fortune to include the insult 'Squitter-Wits' in a dissertation title (no. 413, cf. no. 700); who believes that Milton and Foucault are 'kindred spirits' (901); who claims that 'Dickens, Milton, and Shakespeare [are] the only writers of pious frauds in English' (no. 1044); who suggests Cowley's *Davideis* taught Milton 'what *not* to do' when writing an epic (no. 1036); who compares Adam's love song to Eve in *Paradise Lost* 5.17–25 to ideas of the allegedly wife-swapping Ranters (no. 1091); who provides insight into what Milton

must have thought about mythological seals that crave sexual union with humans (no. 65); who analyzes Sin as a rape victim (no. 1356); who considers Satan's temptation of Eve 'a protracted rape' (no. 1054); and who believes Milton is worried about being raped by Urania (no. 1084).

Of course one must turn to the originals for their full argument and context, but turning first to this bibliography is an excellent starting point for discovery and recognition. A simple and rewarding reference work, this volume also offers the more leisurely reader an avenue to Milton studies in the 1990s. There is much to celebrate. The years 1989–99 gave us the first Milton biography in Russian (no. 107), two Braille editions of Milton's works – one of the shorter poems and one of a Spanish translation of *Paradise Lost* (nos. 158, 246) – a discovery of two copies of a Dutch translation of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (no. 1808), the *Cambridge Companion to Milton* and its second edition (no. 338); three collections of essays selected and revised from proceedings of the Conference on John Milton in Murfreesboro (nos. 352, 353, 476), and a comparison of Milton's brain to that of an Apple Macintosh computer (no. 669). The decade, with its fair share of interest in time warp and alternate realities, has also given us an essay with the satisfyingly trippy assertion 'that *Paradise Lost* is the never ending preface to itself' (no. 1049).

In writing this review, I am humbly aware of my own limitations that keep me from comprehensive and objective assessment. For example, I have failed to mention several worthy recipients of awards given by the Milton Society of America for excellent scholarship published in the years this bibliography covers (they are listed on the society's website). I am aware that my comments could be interpreted to reveal my own obsessions and quirks in addition to those of the creators of this bibliography, or those of the authors whose works it annotates, or those of Milton himself. Yet the reader who turns to this bibliography, and from thence to the scholarly arguments and editions it includes, will find much that is both enjoyable and still relevant to current thought. The student seeking an introduction to Milton studies can gain a greater understanding of and appreciation for the mind of the poet and thinker who inspired such debate and such homage. And like the cricket on the hearth in 'Il Penseroso', this volume will provide a solemn pleasure to many a Milton scholar burning the midnight oil.

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