The Cambridge Companion to Spenser provides an introduction to Spenser that is at once accessible and rigorous. Fourteen specially commissioned essays by leading scholars bring together the best recent writing on the work of the most important non-dramatic English Renaissance poet. The contributions provide all the essential information required to appreciate and understand Spenser’s rewarding and challenging work. The Companion guides the reader through Spenser’s poetry and prose, and provides extensive commentary on his life, the historical and religious context in which he wrote, his wide reading in classical, European and English poetry, his sexual politics and use of language. Emphasis is placed on Spenser’s relationship to his native England, and to Ireland – where he lived for most of his adult life – as well as the myriad of intellectual contexts which inform his writing. A chronology and further reading lists make this volume indispensable for any student of Spenser.
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO SPENSER

EDITED BY

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University of Wales, Aberystwyth
For Anne, Robert and Olivia Rossell
CONTENTS

List of illustrations                        page xi
List of contributors                      xii
Acknowledgements                           xiii
List of abbreviations                      xiv
Chronology                                 xvi

Introduction: The Relevance of Edmund Spenser
ANDREW HADFIELD                             1

1 Spenser’s life and career
RICHARD RAMBUSS                              13

2 Historical contexts: Britain and Europe
DAVID J. BAKER                                37

3 Ireland: policy, poetics and parody
RICHARD A. MCCABE                             60

4 Spenser’s pastorals: *The Shepheardes Calender* and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*
PATRICK CHENEY                                79

5 *The Faerie Queene*, Books I–III
SUSANNE L. WOFFORD                            106

6 *The Faerie Queene*, Books IV–VII
ANDREW HADFIELD                               124

7 Spenser’s shorter poems
ANNE LAKE PRESCOTT                           143
# LIST OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spenser’s languages: writing in the ruins of English</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WILLY MALEY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sexual politics</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LINDA GREGERSON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Spenser’s religion</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JOHN N. KING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Spenser and classical traditions</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COLIN BURROW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Spenser and contemporary vernacular poetry</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ROLAND GREENE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Spenser’s influence</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAUL ALPERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Index                                             272
ILLUSTRATIONS

1  Wheel of Virgil  
2  ‘Januariye’ woodcut  
3  ‘Aprill’ woodcut  
4  ‘Maye’ woodcut  
5  ‘October’ woodcut

page 80
87
91
91
95
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ABBREVIATIONS

CI Critical Inquiry
CL Comparative Literature
Colin Clout Colin Clouts Come Home Again
ELH English Literary History
ELR English Literary Renaissance
ESC English Studies in Canada
FQ The Faerie Queene
IUR Irish University Review
JEGP Journal of English and Germanic Philology
JMRS Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Met. Ovid, Metamorphoses
MLA The Modern Language Association of America
MLN Modern Language Notes
MLQ Modern Language Quarterly
MLR The Modern Language Review
MP Modern Philology
MRTS Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies
MS Manuscript
N&Q Notes and Queries
P&P Past and Present
PBA Proceedings of the British Academy
PL John Milton, Paradise Lost
PMLA Publications of the Modern Language Society of America
Poetical Works The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. J. C.
## Abbreviations


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PQ</td>
<td>Philological Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RES</td>
<td>Review of English Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP</td>
<td>Renaissance Papers</td>
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<td>RQ</td>
<td>Renaissance Quarterly</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>The Shepheardes Calender</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEL</td>
<td>Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Studies in Philology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp. St.</td>
<td>Spenser Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLS</td>
<td>The Times Literary Supplement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSLL</td>
<td>Texas Studies in Language and Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUSE</td>
<td>Tulane University Studies in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>UTQ</td>
<td>University of Toronto Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Yearbook of English Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHRONOLOGY

C 1552–4 Spenser born in London.

1553 Death of Edward VI and accession of Mary.

1554 Mary marries Philip II of Spain. Execution of Lady Jane Grey. English Church reconciled to Rome.

1555 Persecution of Protestants; Bishops Ridley and Latimer burnt at the stake.

1558 Death of Mary and accession of Elizabeth.


1561 Enrolls in Merchant Taylor’s School under the headship of Richard Mulcaster as a ‘poor scholar’.

1567 Accession of James VI of Scotland. Revolt in Netherlands against Spanish rule.

1569 Feb. Publishes anonymous translations of ‘Visions by Petrarch’ and ‘Visions of Du Bellay’ in Jan van der Noot’s A Theatre wherein be represented as wel the miseries and calamities that follow the voluptuous Worldlings, As also the greate joyes and plesures which the faithfull do enjoy. May Eneters Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, as a sizar (i.e., servant’s duties are required in return for a grant of ten shillings p. a.); friendship with Gabriel Harvey begins. Nov. Northern Rebellion in favour of Mary, Queen of Scots, breaks out.
chronology

1570  
Jan. Execution of 450 rebels.  
July 8 Elizabeth excommunicated by Pope Pius V.

1572  
June 2 Execution of Earl of Norfolk, Catholic conspirator.  

1573  
Graduates with BA degree from Cambridge.  
Pierre Ronsard publishes *Sonnets Pour Hélène* in France;  
Torquato Tasso publishes *Gerusalemme Liberata* in Italy.

1573–5  
Attempts to colonise Ulster half-heartedly supported by Elizabeth.

1576  
Awarded MA degree.  
March 15 Puritan MP Peter Wentworth imprisoned in the Tower of London after he claims that free speech should exist in Parliament.  
First public theatre built in London.

1577  
Possibly in Ireland, as Irenius in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* claims that he witnesses the execution of Murrogh O’Brien at Limerick in July.  
May Archbishop Grindal placed under house arrest after refusal to suppress ‘prophesysings’ at queen’s command.

1578  
Secretary to John Young, Bishop of Rochester (Kent).

1578–81  
Elizabeth contemplates marriage to François, Duke of Alençon.

1579  
In service with the Earl of Leicester as a confidential emissary.  
Oct. 27 Marries Maccabaeus Chylde in Westminster with whom he will have two children, Sylvanus and Katherine.  
Nov. 2 Earl of Desmond proclaimed traitor after his rebellion.  
Nov. 3 John Stubbs loses his right hand after publishing a book arguing against Elizabeth’s proposed marriage to Alençon.  
Dec. 5 *The Shepheardes Calender* is entered into the Stationers’ Register and subsequently published.  
Some of Spenser’s lost works – *Court of Cupide*, *Dreams*, *Pageants*, and the critical treatise, *The English Poete* – probably composed at this time.

1580  
Publication of correspondence with Harvey in two volumes: *Three proper, and witty, familiar Letters* and *Two other, very
CHRONOLOGY

commendable Letters, of the same mens writing. Mention of The Fairie Queene for the first time, and of other lost works (Epithalamion Thamesis, Dying Pellicane, Nine Comedies).
Aug. 12 Arrives in Dublin having become secretary to Arthur Lord Grey de Wilton, the new Lord Deputy.
Nov. 10 Grey massacres Irish rebels at Fort d’Oro, Smerwick. Spenser may have witnessed the event.
Sir Philip Sidney, Astrophil and Stella (published 1591) and Apology for Poetry (published 1595) in MS circulation.

1581
The Shepheardes Calender, second edition.
Appointed to civil service jobs in Dublin and leases land in Wexford.
Munster Rebellion at its height.

1582
Leases more land in Kildare and is accorded the rank of gentleman.
Aug. 31 Lord Grey recalled from Ireland probably because of his harsh methods of dealing with the Munster Rebellion.
Sir Walter Raleigh’s poetry circulates at court.

1582–8
Successful career as civil servant. Friendly with other English writers in Ireland (Barnaby Rich, Geoffrey Fenton and Barnaby Googe).

1583
Death of Earl of Desmond and end of Munster Rebellion.

1584
Sir Richard Genville’s voyage to establish colonies in the Americas. Elizabeth grants aid to the Dutch against the Spanish.

1586

1587
Feb. 8 Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.
May 8 Raleigh attempts to establish colonies in the Americas. Christopher Marlowe’s Tamburlaine, Parts I and II performed.

1588
Spenser occupies Kilcolman Castle, County Cork, with estate of 3,000 acres from forfeited lands of the Earl of Desmond.
July 28 Spanish Armada defeated.

1588–99
Continues civil service career in Cork with a series of important appointments.
Chronology

1589  Oct. Journeys to England with Sir Walter Raleigh and claims to have read parts of The Faerie Queene to Elizabeth. Start of extended lawsuit with Lord Roche over land claims.

1590  Publication of The Faerie Queene, Books I–III.


1594  June 11 Marries Elizabeth Boyle, related to Richard Boyle, the Great Earl of Cork with whom he will have one son, Peregrine.


1595–1603  Nine Years’ War in Ireland after Hugh O’Neill, Earl of Tyrone, challenges the right of English rule.

1596  Publication of second edition of The Faerie Queene, Books 1–vi; Four Hymns, Prothalamion. King James VI of Scotland complains that his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, was slandered as Duessa in FQ, v, ix, and demands that Spenser be tried and punished.
Chronology

June 20 Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex seizes Cadiz in a surprise raid.

Oct. Fear of Spanish invasion in Ireland but fleet again wrecked.

1597 Fear of second Spanish Armada.
Shakespeare, *Henry V*.

1598 *April 14 A View of the Present State of Ireland* is entered into the Stationers’ Register; not published until 1633, but circulating in MS.


Oct. Kilcolman sacked and burnt; family takes refuge in Cork.

Dec. Leaves for London with dispatch for Privy Council from President of Munster.

1599 Jan. 13 Dies in Westminster and is buried in Westminster Abbey next to Chaucer at the expense of Earl of Essex.
Shakespeare, *As You Like It, Julius Caesar*; Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*.

1601 Feb. 25 Essex executed after rebellion.

Dec. 24 Mountjoy defeats Tyrone at Kinsale to effectively end the Nine Years’ War.

1603 Death of Elizabeth and accession of James I.

1609 First folio edition of *The Faerie Queene*, i–vi with ‘Two Cantos of Mutabilitie’.

1611 First folio of Spenser’s collected works.

1620 Funeral monument erected in Westminster Abbey.

1633 Publication of *A View of the State of Ireland*, ed. by James Ware as part of a volume of *Ancient Irish Chronicles*.