

EDMUND SPENSER IN CONTEXT

Edmund Spenser's poetry remains an indispensable touchstone of English literary history. Yet for modern readers his deliberate use of archaic language and his allegorical mode of writing can become barriers to understanding his poetry. This volume of thirty-seven chapters, written by distinguished scholars, offers a rich introduction to the literary, political, and religious contexts that shaped Spenser's poetry, including the environment in which he lived, the genres he drew upon, and the influences that helped to fashion his art. The collection reveals the multiple personae that Spenser constructs within his work: to read Spenser is to read a rich archive of literary forms, and this volume provides the contexts in which to do so. A list of Further Reading at the end of the volume will prove invaluable to further study.

ANDREW ESCOBEDO has been co-editor of the journal *Spenser Studies* since 2010, and his second book, *Volition's Face: Personification and the Will in Renaissance Literature*, is forthcoming. His work has been recognized by several national awards and distinctions, and his research won the support of a residential fellowship at the National Humanities Center in 2009–10.

EDMUND SPENSER
IN CONTEXT

EDITED BY
ANDREW ESCOBEDO



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*To Paul Alpers and Harry Berger – two great Spenserians
not in this volume but present nonetheless*

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and “*the Human*,” a special volume of *Spenser Studies* (with Ayesha Ramachandran); and *Desiring History and Historicizing Desire*, a special volume of *JEMCS* (with Ari Friedlander and Will Stockton).

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Note on Editions Used

Unless otherwise indicated, the chapters in this volume quote from the following editions:

- The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. Text ed. Hiroshi Yamashita and Toshiyuki Suzuki. London and New York: Longman, 2001.
- Selected Letters and Other Papers*. Ed. Christopher Burlinson and Andrew Zurcher. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Spenser's Prose Works*. Ed. Rudolf Gottfried. *Variorum Edition*, vol. 9. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949.
- Spenser: The Shorter Poems*. Ed. Richard A. McCabe. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1999.
- A View of the Present State of Ireland*. Ed. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
- The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*. Ed. Edwin Greenlaw et al., 11 vols. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1932–57.
- The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Ed. William Oram et al. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.

Chronology

Date	Spenser's life and works	Other events
1552–54	Edmund Spenser born, probably in London.	
1561	Enters Merchant Taylors' School as "poor scholar."	
1565		Sir Henry Sidney appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland.
1569	Anonymously publishes "Visions of Petrarch" and "Visions of du Bellay" in Jan van der Noot's <i>A Theater for Worldlings</i> . Admitted to Pembroke Hall at Cambridge as sizar (a poor scholar with servant's duties).	
1570		Papal Bull excommunicates Elizabeth.
1572		St. Bartholomew's Day massacre.
1576	Graduates with MA.	Archbishop Grindal censured for refusing to suppress "prophesyings."

- 1577–79 Whereabouts uncertain. Possibly in Ireland: in 1577 recorded delivering letters to Earl of Leicester from William Drury, president of Munster. In 1578 presents Gabriel Harvey in London with four “foolish bookes.” In 1579 writes letters to Harvey from Leicester House and from Westminster.
Mother Hubberds Tale probably circulates in manuscript, perhaps angering Lord Burghley.
- 1579 Marries Maccabaeus Childe, with whom he has two children.
 Publishes *The Shepheardes Calender* anonymously.
- 1580 Publishes, with Harvey, *Three Proper, and Wittie, Familiar Letters*, in which Harvey mentions “The Faerye Queene.”
 Appointed secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, Lord Deputy of Ireland. May have been present during the massacre of six hundred Spanish and Italian troops at Smerwick.
- 1582 Lord Grey recalled.
- 1583 Spenser’s friend Lodowick Bryskett installed as clerk of the council of Munster.
- 1586 Acquires Kilcolman estate in County Cork. Sir Philip Sidney dies fighting in the Netherlands.
- 1587 Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Chronology

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|------|---|---|
| 1588 | Property disputes with Lord Roche begin. | Spanish Armada. |
| 1590 | Travels to London with Sir Walter Raleigh to oversee publication of <i>The Faerie Queene</i> (Books I–III). | |
| 1591 | Elizabeth grants Spenser life pension of £50 a year.
<i>Complaints</i> published under direction of William Ponsonby. The collection “called in” by authorities due to satire of Burley in <i>MHT</i> .
May have drafted <i>Colin Clouts Come Home Againe</i> . | |
| 1592 | <i>Daphnaïda</i> published.
<i>Axiochus</i> published. | |
| 1593 | | Henry IV of France (Bourbon) renounces Protestantism. |
| 1594 | Marries Elizabeth Boyle, with whom he has one child. | |
| 1595 | <i>Amoretti</i> and <i>Epithalamion</i> published as a single volume.
<i>Colin Clouts Come Home Againe</i> published, along with <i>Astrophel</i> . | Sir Walter Raleigh’s unsuccessful first voyage to Guiana. |
| 1596 | Second edition of <i>The Faerie Queene</i> (Books I–VI) published.
<i>Fowre Hymnes</i> and <i>Daphnaïda</i> (second edition) published in same volume.
<i>Prothalamion</i> published.
Probably finishes <i>A View of the Present State of Ireland</i> . | |
| 1598 | Kilcolman estate overrun by Irish rebels; Spenser and family escape through underground tunnel. Delivers letters from Thomas Norris (president of Munster) to the privy council in December. | Tyrone’s rebellion in Ireland. |

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Chronology

- 1599 Dies on January 13 in Westminster.
1609 First folio edition of *The Faerie
Queene* published, with *Two
Cantos of Mutabilitie* included.
1633 *A View of the Present State of Ireland*
published in James Ware's *Ancient
Irish Chronicles*.