

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-15830-5 - The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia

Edited by Albert Feuillerat and Sir Philip Sidney

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The Prose Works
of
Sir Philip Sidney

In Four Volumes
Volume I

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SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Born 1554

Died 1586

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THE
COVNTESSE
OF PEMBROKES
ARCADIA,

WRITTEN BY SIR PHILIPPE
SIDNEI.



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Anno Domini, 1590.

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COUNTESSE OF PEMBROKES
ARCADIA

EDITED BY

ALBERT FEUILLERAT



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AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

FEUILLERAT'S edition of the complete works of Sir Philip Sidney has long been out of print, but has continued to be in demand by scholars. Bibliographical research has shown that Feuillerat did not work from the best copy-texts, and that many of his readings are corrupt. Further, three more manuscripts of Sidney have been discovered since Feuillerat's edition was printed. It may, however, be many years before a new and definitive edition is published, and it has therefore been decided to reissue with minor corrections the complete prose works in Feuillerat's edition. The publisher gratefully acknowledges the advice of Professor R. W. Zandvoort and Mrs Jean Bromley in connection with this reprint.

The prose works are divided among the four volumes as follows: vol. I, *Arcadia*, 1590; vol. II, *Arcadia*, 1593 and *The Lady of May*; vol. III, *The Defence of Poesie*, Political Discourses, Correspondence and Translation; vol. IV, *Arcadia* (original version). These volumes combine with Professor Ringler's newly edited *Complete Poems* to make all Sidney's works available again.

The parts of Feuillerat's prefatory notes which are not relevant to this reprint have been removed; the remaining parts are set out below.

* * *

In accordance with the method adopted in the first volume, the text given is that of the earliest edition. Thus, the last part of *Arcadia* is printed from the folio of 1593 and *The Lady of May* from the folio of 1598.

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PREFATORY NOTE

The fact that such an important author should have had to wait so long for his due is probably referable to the difficulties with which a modern editor has to struggle in choosing an authentic text. Sir Philip Sidney was blessed with a most charming and most talented sister; but this fascinating lady made no scruple to revise and, as she probably thought, to better the writings of her deceased brother. Hence, the danger of printing, as Sir Philip's, passages which fell from the pen of Mary. In many cases, it is hopeless to determine how much is due to her collaboration; in others, unauthorised editions fortunately permit us to escape the effects of her revisory spirit. For this reason, my principle has been—whenever this was possible—to choose as a basis of the text the earliest editions known, even when these, from a literary point of view, are inferior to “amended” texts.

As regards the present volume, my choice has proved simple enough. Two forms of *Arcadia* have been preserved. The earlier, known as “the old Arcadia,” contained five books and was circulated in manuscript, several copies of which still exist, three having been discovered by Mr B. Dobell. With this first form, the author, it appears, was not satisfied and he set about revising it; or, rather, he enlarged it by the addition of several new stories dovetailed into the principal one, after the manner of Spanish romances. At the time of his death, Sidney had not proceeded further than a portion of the third Book, and thus his manuscript was left unfinished. This manuscript, having come to the hands of Ponsonby, was printed and published in a quarto volume, in 1590. Three years later, another edition in folio, pretending to wipe away “those spotted wherewith the beauties” of *Arcadia* “were unworthely blemished,” appeared with rearrangements and additions said to have been worked up from “severall loose sheets” sent by the author to the Countess of Pembroke. As a matter of fact, the editor of this new edition—as I shall show in due course—contented himself with slightly modifying the text of the quarto and completing the story from that “old Arcadia” already mentioned, thus giving the unnatural combination of a rejected work and of a work which represented the final form adopted by the author. Such being the case, I have thought it best to give in a separate volume—the first—the text of the

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quarto of 1590, reserving for the second volume that part of the original *Arcadia* which was added in 1593. Thus, the incongruity of blending two incompatible forms has been avoided without omitting what is, after all, an interesting part of Sir Philip Sidney's works.

In accordance with the scheme of *The Cambridge English Classics*, the text adopted is printed without any deviations from the original¹ in the matter of spelling and punctuation, save those recorded in the list found on page 520. These exceptions consist of evident misprints which it has been thought useless to preserve. In the Notes, I have given the variant readings supplied by all the editions published from 1593 down to 1674². These are fourteen in number, or, rather, twelve, for the 1623 and 1629 folios are duplicates of the 1621 and 1627 editions respectively. This long and self-imposed task has been, I need not say, tedious and has involved sacrifices of many sorts. To some, it may even seem foolish to have wasted so much time upon mere collation. Yet I do not regret my pains, for it is now possible to solve most of the bibliographical problems which present themselves, that of the Edinburgh edition amongst others.

¹ In the British Museum (Press Mark: G. 10440).

² The manuscripts of "the old Arcadia" have not been collated; to include their variants would have meant practically printing the whole of the earlier form. It also goes without saying that I have not recorded differences in spelling. In the Notes, the spelling given is that of the earliest edition where the difference appears.

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