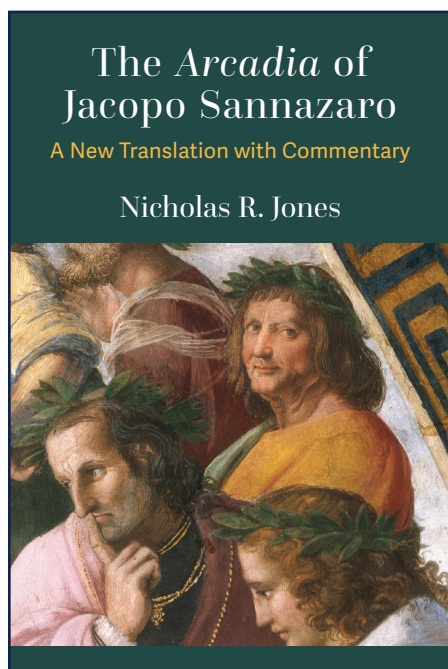




The *Arcadia* of Jacopo Sannazaro

A New Translation with Commentary

Nicholas R. Jones

Translating the foundational text of pastoral fiction and poetry into English for the modern scholar and reader

Five hundred years ago, working from hints in classical Greek and Latin poets, the young author Jacopo Sannazaro crafted the book called *Arcadia*, a narrative in richly descriptive Italian prose interwoven with elegant and passionate poems. A young man—transparently a stand-in for the author—leaves his home in Naples to join a community of shepherds in the remote Greek region of Arcadia. Yet he finds that this seemingly idyllic land is as fraught as the homeland he fled. Like the author's humanist community in Naples, ravaged in the fifteenth century by invasion and regime change, the eloquent shepherd-poets of *Arcadia* are driven to distraction and depression by the frustrations of desire and the social unrest that threatens their pastoral lives. Amidst all that, they tell each other their personal histories and share their sorrows in song.

Sannazaro's *Arcadia* is widely recognized as a foundational text of pastoral poetry, humanism, and Italian literature. But the book itself has been largely inaccessible to English-language students and readers. This new translation uses contemporary American English to convey *Arcadia*'s youthful vigor, narrative energy, and poetic inventiveness. The extensive introduction and commentaries place *Arcadia* in the context of late fifteenth-century humanist thought and writing, as well as the complicated crisis of Naples in the years just before 1500. This translation is designed to facilitate the re-entry of *Arcadia* into scholarly discourse and general readership while outlining its lasting cultural influence on poetry, drama, art and music.

Nicholas R. Jones taught English at Oberlin College for over forty years, specializing in Renaissance literature. Now living in Berkeley, California, he is a translator and scholar, as well as a reviewer of classical music. Jones's translation of the madrigals of Giovanni Battista Guarini was published by the University of Michigan Press in 2018.

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"The introduction is both informative and enjoyable to read—it is clearly written, well-paced and engaging and covers the range of relevant current perspectives on Sannazaro's work. The whole volume will be readily accessible to both the specialist and general readership and offers a new and timely translation of Sannazaro's *Arcadia*."

—Michael Brennan, University of Leeds

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