



ANS ELTING

K A R L S R U H E . B E R L I N

JACOPO SANNAZARO *et* HIS READERS

THE ARCADIAN DREAM IN THE
POCKET BOOK

At the time when Bembo published his *Asolani* and Colonna his novel, they were soon overshadowed by the popular success of the pastoral novel *Arcadia*, the work of the Neapolitan poet Jacopo Sannazaro (1458–1530). It had been written at the Aragon court in Naples where Sannazaro was a member of Giovanni Pontano’s Academy.¹ Its unique career began with a pirated edition, which circulated in Venice in 1502 without Sannazaro’s knowledge. Sannazaro was hailed as a reincarnated Virgil from Naples where he owned a house near Virgil’s tomb. In the short epilogue to the *sampogna*, his bagpipe, he claims to have come to Arcadia “not as a rustic shepherd (*rustico pastore*), but as a most cultured youth” (*coltissimo giovane*), who for that very reason would always remain a stranger in the pastoral places of olden times. With these words, the author places his own work, as it represented another time, at a distance. In the prologue, he states that:

¹ Carol Kidwell, *Sannazaro and Arcadia* (London, 1993) with Chapters 2 and 4 on “Arcadia”, and with an earlier bibliography. On Pontano, see the monograph by the same author: *Pontano: Poet and Prime Minister* (London, 1991). On humanism in Naples, see Jerry H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton, 1987). Editions of “Arcadia” include an Italian edition in: *Opere di Jacopo Sannazaro*, ed. Enrico Carrara (Turin, 1926), and an English translation by Ralph Nash, ed., *Arcadia and Piscatorial Eclogues* [Naples, 1825] (Detroit, 1966). For an overview of editions and on Sannazaro’s work, see: Ulrich Töns, Sannazaros Arcadia. Wirkung und Wandlung der vergilschen Ekloge, in: *Antike und Abendland* 23. (Heidelberg: de Gruyter, 1977), pp. 143–161.