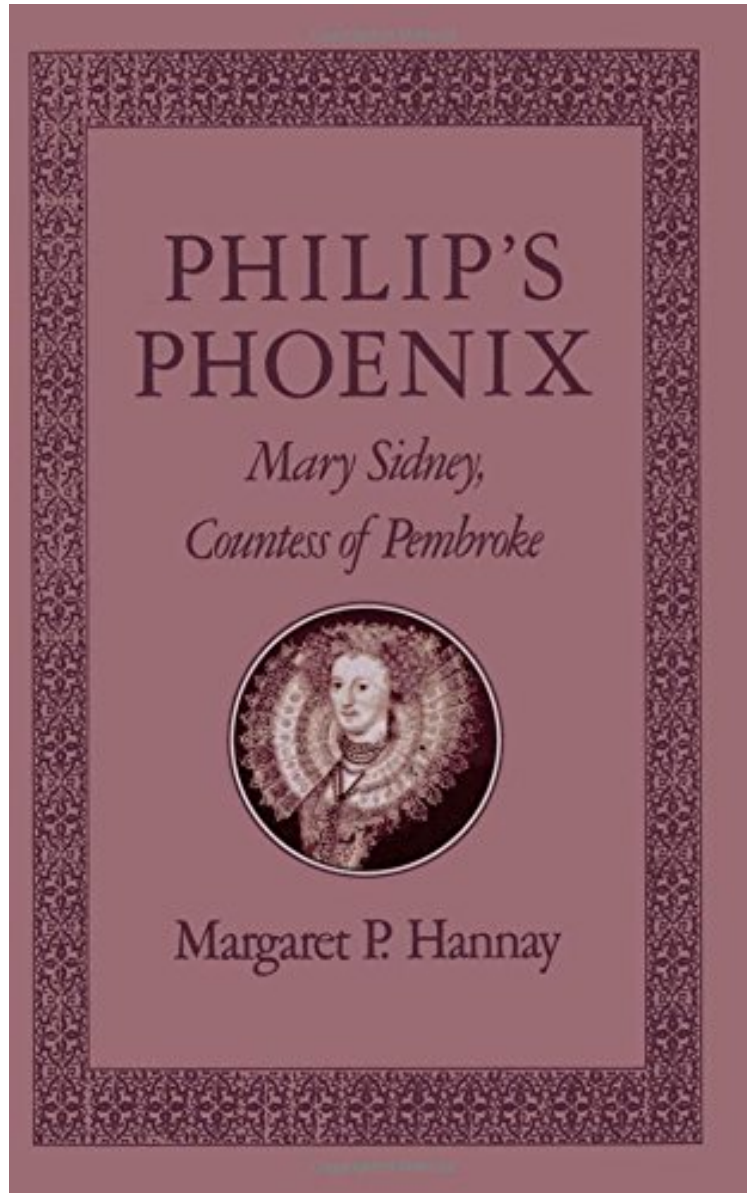


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Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke

Margaret P. Hannay

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Margaret P. Hannay : Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Mary Sidney Herbert's indispensable biographyBy CustomerThis

book is indispensable in understanding the greatest woman writer of the Elizabethan Age -- but does not understand her crucial relationship with the works of Shakespeare. 16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Excellent, well-written account of Mary's life and works By E. Stein Crucial for anyone writing about the Sidneys, this book is balanced, fascinating and readable. Hannay's impeccable research includes the religious background, which is somewhat rare among Sidneyans; she doesn't waste time on speculation, which is the abiding fault of Duncan-Jones' biography of Philip Sidney. I can't wait for Hannay's edition of the Countess's works.

In contrast to previous studies that have portrayed Mary Sidney as a demure, retiring woman, this biography shows that she was actually an outspoken and dynamic figure. Basing her work on primary sources including account books, legal documents, diaries, and family letters, Hannay shows that Sidney was a vibrant, eloquent, self-assertive woman who was deeply involved in Protestant politics. Although she did confine her writings to appropriately feminine genres, she called herself "Sister of Philip Sidney" to establish a literary and political identity. As a Phoenix rising from her brother's ashes, she transcended gender restrictions by publishing her brother's writings, by writing and translating works which he would have approved, by assuming his role as literary patron, and by supporting the cause for which he died. Hannay also reveals--via court cases--that in her final years the countess turned from literary to administrative responsibilities, contending with jewel thieves, pirates, and murderers.

"Hannay's impressive book is a no-nonsense literary biography of one of the most important women on the literary scene of the time."--Recent Studies in English Renaissance "Hannay's book is very rewarding to read...thorough and meticulous primary research."--Renaissance Quarterly "An invaluable resource for some years to come."--Literary History "This important biography of a leading early modern woman writer will be an extremely useful resource: it is packed with detail, and includes five previously unknown and unpublished letters by the Countess of Pembroke....[I]t is a highly impressive work of scholarship."--Notes and Queries "A biography that is at once more candid, clearer, and more comprehensive than any we have had before."--Sixteenth Century Journal About the Author Margaret P. Hannay is at Siena College, Loudonville, New York.