

SUMMARY: This document is a response by Oxford as the Knight of the Tree of the Sun to a challenge by the Earl of Arundel as Callophiscus issued in the form of a printed broadside. The only surviving copy of the latter is at the Folger Library (STC 13868.5). The White Knight is generally thought to have been Philip Sidney, and the Red Knight Sir William Drury, Arundel's co-challenger. The tournament to which these documents have reference was held at Whitehall on 22 January 1581.

CALLOPHISCUS, as it seems more covetous of glory than able to merit, hath put his challenge to the print, but not his virtue to the proof. Yet to shadow his imperfection he hath covered himself under the wings of the most perfectest, for whom each would adventure, but against whom none will lift his lance. But whereas he vaunts himself to honour her above all, to love more, and serve more than any besides, this is so far beyond his compass as the White Knight is above him in zeal and worthiness, who albeit to me he be unknown, I praise his attempt, wishing he had chosen a fitter day wherein he might have had full means to have taught Callophiscus his fault, and the worthiest wight have showed his desire to honour her whom he serveth in loyalty. Wherefore as a friend to his mind and any other that in honour of that rare mistress which is accomplished with virtue's perfection and every good quality which may enrich a mortal creature with immortal praise, being of none other to be spoken or understood but of herself, I mean to try my truth with no less valour than I have desire, not minding to disorder so noble a presence, but rather to entertain the same with a longer abode by diversity & change of arms, and to join with this worthy White Knight if the next day may be given to the sword as the former challenge is to the lance, not wandering from the rules of arms, neither wronging the rest of the defendants of which it is to be thought many will make proof of their loyalties as pleasure to their lady. And as for Callophiscus, I know not whether the Red Knight, having added a little to his challenge, hath not taken away a great part of his honour. But whereas either of them seem absolute preferers of themselves before all others in loyalty, love, and worthiness, I must say and do avow I am of a far contrary opinion, and think either of them to be as unfit to usurp the title of her servants as she worthy to be mistress of the world, as void of loyalty, merit, valour, and love as she is complete with wisdom, grace, beauty, and eloquence. Their works be as far less than their words as their praise is short of her worth. And in this am I to assist the White Knight, unknown to me, against the Red Knight in all points of arms that either the place will suffer, time permit, or company allow, and for the rest of his bragging words, they may supply the want of his works. They nothing appertain to me, who presume nothing of myself in respect of mine assurance in my mistress' virtue and excellency, upon whose face their eyes are unworthy to look.

The Knight of the Tree of the Sun, affronter to the Red.

Endorsed: The Knight of the Tree of the Sun.