Feminism versus Religion:
Towards a Re-Reading
of Aemilia Lanyer's
Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum

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Résumé : *D'après la manière dominante d'aborder la poésie de Lanyer, ses croyances religieuses ne servaient qu'à lui fournir un discours socialement acceptable pour transmettre ses arguments proto-féministes. La plus grande attention prêtée à sa position sociale et raciale problématiques a mis l'accent sur le désaccord plutôt que sur l'unité dans son texte, mettant en cause à la fois son féminisme imputé, ainsi que son Protestantisme. Cet article souligne le besoin d'intégrer de la théorie féministe dans les études récentes de la religion pré-moderne afin d'apprécier pleinement la complexité de l'œuvre de Lanyer.*

Consigned to oblivion for nearly four hundred years, Aemilia Lanyer re-entered modern literary-critical consciousness via an unlikely source: A. L. Rowse's edition of her poetry, *The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady*.¹ Paradoxically, given her overcoming of early modern cultural constraints to publish *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* in 1611, Rowse's dubious identification of Lanyer as Shakespeare's mistress, and his ensuing conclusions about her character and writing, disturbingly recall the early modern association of female expression with sexual transgression. Despite extensive subsequent research, it has taken twenty years to discredit his theory fully.² Curiously, however, "Rowse has done more for [Lanyer's] reputation than he could have imagined possible."³ It is indeed ironic that Rowse inadvertently contributed to the emergence of a new field of serious academic enquiry: early modern women's writing. This is partly due to the date of the edition. Its appearance in 1978 coincided with theoretical critiques of both the academy and the literary canon from a number of perspectives and, most significantly for my concerns here, with the growth of feminism as a

political movement, which, in turn, stimulated interest in the history of women's writing.

Unsurprisingly then, most early feminist critics were concerned with challenging the terms in which Lanyer and her text had been read. Consequently, they emphasised the text's perceived feminism and its representation of an idealised Protestant "community of good women."⁴ While commenting on the text's religious subject matter, the critical consensus has so far suggested that Lanyer appropriated religious discourses in order to disseminate her proto-feminist ideas. However, as feminist critics have become increasingly sensitive to differences between women, responses to Lanyer's poetry have begun to diverge. Increased attention to the complexity of her racial and social position has prompted disagreement about the form and extent of Lanyer's "feminism." More recently, some critics have initiated a reassessment of Lanyer's perceived "Protestantism." Nevertheless, Lanyer's writing is primarily studied for what it can potentially reveal about early modern female consciousness or subjectivity, rather than for its participation in doctrinal debates. Whereas critical discussion of Donne and Herbert's religious writing centres on disagreements about their exact doctrinal and consequent ideological position, Lanyer's poetry is assumed to be "defined" by the broad, umbrella terms: "Protestant" and "feminist." Kate Narveson has recently argued that literary studies of early modern religious writing tend to divide between those that view religion as a "profession" and those who see it as a "performance." While Donne and Herbert tend to attract critics "who look at religion as a propositional belief," Lanyer is predominantly discussed by "those for whom [religion] is a cultural system imbricated in structures of power, gender, ritual, sexuality, and so forth."⁵ While it is not my intention to initiate a detailed investigation of the minutiae of Lanyer's doctrinal position, I do want to suggest that the current focus on feminism limits both Lanyer's text and our understanding of it. As an alternative, I advocate relocating *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* within a broader socio-historical context in the hope that this will lead to a fuller appreciation of the complexity of Lanyer's multiple religious identification(s).

Defender of her Sex?

Feminist Readings of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*

With the exception of Rowse, most discussions of *Salve Deus* are motivated by a commitment to some form of feminist criticism. Arguably, Lanyer's text invites such an approach. Written by a woman, *Salve Deus* is also dedicated to women, who are explicitly instructed to read it. The narrative centres on a rewriting of Christ's Passion from the perspective of women,

past and present. And, particularly in “Eve’s Apologie,” it seems to argue forcefully for a re-evaluation of women’s social position. In sum, a female author rewrites a biblical narrative by locating women at its centre, simultaneously critiquing patriarchal social relations for the enjoyment of a female audience. Apart from a female publisher, what more could a feminist critic ask for in a text? It demonstrates that women’s writing has a history; it indicates that women read other women’s texts; it apparently establishes a sense of female community; it suggests that women actively interpreted the scriptures for themselves; and it seems to question the validity of inequalities between the sexes.⁶ It is, therefore, hardly surprising that initial studies of *Salve Deus* almost unanimously celebrated its overt femino-centric representation of an idealised, co-operative “community of good women.”⁷ In relation to more recent studies, this description of *Salve Deus* may well seem almost as dated to some readers as some critics have suggested Lanyer’s position can be.⁸ However, it is easy to forget that until the work of Barbara K. Lewalski and Elaine V. Beilin appeared in the 1980’s, Lanyer was virtually unheard of; indeed, the field of early modern women’s writing had barely emerged as a serious subject of academic enquiry. In “Of God and Good Women: The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer” (1985), Lewalski stressed the significance of its femino-centric perspective.⁹ Acknowledging the poem’s religious subject, she warned that to view it as “a thin veneer for a subversive feminist statement . . . would be wrongheaded.” Instead, she suggested that *Salve Deus* “is set forth as a comprehensive ‘Book of Good Women,’ fusing religious devotion and feminism so as to assert the essential harmony of those two impulses.”¹⁰ Yet, although Lewalski mentioned Lanyer’s revision of the myths of Eden, the Passion and the Community of Saints, her primary focus remained on female relations both within the text and outside it. This predisposition is indicated by Lewalski’s concentration on the dedications and “The Description of Cooke-Ham,” rather than *Salve Deus* itself.

Intentionally or not, Lewalski’s essay established a framework for Lanyer studies which remains influential. Although Lewalski herself claimed that Lanyer’s text “fused” feminism and religion in a harmonious fashion, her analysis ultimately subordinates religious concerns to feminist issues. It was Lewalski who first defined Lanyer as a “feminist” poet.¹¹ However, in 1992 Lynette McGrath pointed out that, whether used pejoratively or positively, the historical problematics of using this term had not been adequately addressed.¹² Investigating this issue, McGrath concludes that “although Lanier lacked the term [feminism] to describe her politics, she forced the grounds of protest available in her culture to their most radical possible feminist expression.”¹³ McGrath is not alone in maintaining this

position, but the form and force of Lanyer's feminism has become a contentious issue. Tina Krontiris, for example, argues that "To the Vertuous Reader" is an essentially conservative piece requiring women "to comply with the rules that reproduced their subordination," but that "Eve's Apologie" both "discloses and exploits the biases and contradictions [Lanyer] sees in long-standing patriarchal arguments."¹⁴ Krontiris notes that such inconsistencies were primarily due to historical circumstance, but asserts they are "partly due to the author's own unease, uncertainty, and confusion about her expressions of female solidarity."¹⁵ For Krontiris, Lanyer's "appeal to sisterhood seems to have been a misguided tactic," as "a woman who fostered feminist notions [could not] assume that other women around her shared these notions."¹⁶ Lanyer's "feminism" is thus positioned as "individualist" rather than "relational," a stance which challenged the motif of "a community of good women." Krontiris also declared that Lanyer failed "to consider matters of economics and culture."¹⁷ The disparities in early modern women's economic positions have since become the focus of critical debate regarding Lanyer's "feminism."

Where Krontiris perceived absence, successive critics have established abundant evidence of Lanyer's economic concerns, especially in her dedications and her attempts to obtain female patronage. Curiously, although some critics have mused about whether or not Lanyer knew her dedicatees, or if the relationship she had with them is accurately represented in her poetry, few take pains to discuss this subject in historical detail.¹⁸ While the idea of a co-operative female community supporting a female poet, a community in which social distinctions are erased (at least imaginatively), has not entirely lost its sway, the current critical consensus emphasises discontinuities and difference.¹⁹ This shift in perspective can be partially explained by changes within the feminist movement and in its political agenda. Additionally, in a more specifically literary context, such revisions were encouraged by the combined theoretical influences of feminism, new historicism, psychoanalysis and post-structuralism. Although Lanyer's choice of a group of female dedicatees remains unusual, it is not unique, as was initially thought. Further research into the structures of patronage, especially in relation to printed texts, indicates that the early seventeenth century was a time of transition. By this point, more women were sought out for patronage and addressing a range of patrons had become more common, even for male writers.²⁰ Lanyer's "female community," then, may reflect financial necessity rather than feminist strategy. Or, as Mary Ellen Lamb succinctly states: the "asymmetrical power relationship between writer and patron emerges as a primary preoccupation of the text, so that far from erasing disparities in class, the *Salve Deus* is predicated upon them."²¹ In

relation to the dedicatory poems at least, it seems that class rather than sex has become the guiding principle. Very few articles on these poems make any reference to the question of religion. Indeed, Lamb suggests that scholars who do so are being distracted “by discussing a religious sincerity that is surely difficult to ascertain from the text.”²² Yet religious alliances often influenced both the choice of patron and the likelihood of receiving assistance. And, as I will argue below, re-examining the socio-political and religious positions of her patrons complicates Lanyer’s identification as a “Protestant” poet.

The other main areas of feminist interest in Lanyer’s writing relate to “The Description of Cooke-Ham” and broader debates concerning the basis upon which Lanyer “authorises” her text. Interest in the former was prompted by Lewalski’s declaration that the “Description” was “the gem of the volume” in both form and content.²³ Motivated partly by a desire to affirm the aesthetic merits of Lanyer’s poetry, this assertion simultaneously provided another means of validating Lanyer’s text: the existence of the “Description” meant that Lanyer, rather than Jonson, could be said to have invented a new literary genre, the “Country-House” poem. While being the “first” can be a dubious accolade, the fact that Jonson and Lanyer appeared comparable, insofar as they were both non-aristocratic authors who attempted to procure patronage in print from their social superiors, had two important consequences. It created a means of integrating Lanyer’s poetry into the existing canon of Renaissance literature and, concurrently, it provided the unprecedented opportunity to explore how “gender” related to “genre” in the early modern period.²⁴ This connection seemingly also enabled a more detailed investigation of the specific strategies Lanyer deployed to legitimise her writing. Despite critical scepticism concerning the sincerity of Lanyer’s beliefs, the majority of critics agree that the most influential factor in this process was religion: as Wendy Wall put it, Lanyer “authorizes herself through the divinity of her subject.”²⁵

Ironically, although the divine is acknowledged as the source of Lanyer’s literary authority, the religious dimensions of her text remain relatively unexamined. The field is currently dominated by the understandable feminist interest in early modern female authorship and subjectivity. Unfortunately, a side-effect of these topics’ critical ascendancy has been the carving up of Lanyer’s “little Booke”²⁶ into its constituent parts. Although early studies generally attempted to address the book as a whole, recent criticism tends to focus on a specific section of it. A breakdown of Kari McBride’s meticulously maintained bibliography indicates that over 80% of the articles are feminist in perspective: of these, roughly 25% focus on the dedicatory poems and the politics of patronage; just over 20% address

the question of how Lanyer constructs “authority” for herself as a woman writer; and another 15% focus on “The Description of Cooke-Ham.” Although a minority of essays (about 5 %) focus on *Salve Deus*, many of them are not primarily concerned with religion.²⁷ While the subject is never entirely ignored, as nearly all essays make at least some reference to Christ’s Passion, Eve’s Apologie, the Song of Songs or other scriptural allusions in the text, such allusions are usually discussed with reference to gender rather than in relation to devotion. The subordination of religious concerns to feminist issues is perhaps most obvious in the predominant assumption that the religious content of Lanyer’s text is a “cover” for her subversive critique of patriarchy.²⁸ For the overwhelming majority of critics, “religion” in *Salve Deus* is merely a means to an end: in Narveson’s terms, it is perceived as a “performance” rather than a “profession.” This perspective is partially explained by many feminist scholars’ understandable distrust of the historically patriarchal organization of institutionalised Christianity. Yet, as Lewalski herself declared, dismissing the possibility of the sincerity of Lanyer’s devotion is potentially anachronistic. It is also potentially patronising. Viewed in this way, early modern women writers of religious texts are effectively denied any agency by modern scholars, even if that scholar is feminist. Fortunately, the religious dimension of *Salve Deus* is beginning to generate more critical interest. But to what extent do even these studies presume that Lanyer’s religion is a performance? What difference might it make if we “suspend disbelief” and read *Salve Deus* as a profession of faith, rather than as feminist propaganda?

**“A Womans writing of divinest things”:
Doctrine and Devotion in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum***

In addition to the title page, which draws attention to the religious contents of *Salve Deus*, Lanyer’s opening dedication to Queen Anna similarly announces the poet’s interest in the divine: “Vouchsafe to view that which is seldome seene, / A Womans writing of divinest things.”²⁹ Ironically, it is precisely because Lanyer makes reference to the “sacred” in dedicatory poems expected to be “secular” that the “sincerity” of her devotional perspective has been called into question. The poem’s apparently contradictory concern with both the “world” and the “spirit” has produced a bifurcation in Lanyer studies, whereby, as Marie H. Loughlin has recently summarised, “it is tempting to view the poem *either* as a radical appropriation of scripture to re-envision woman’s relationship with God, Christian institutions and texts, *or* as a fatally compromised, and ultimately cynical use of scripture to further this particular poet’s patronage goals.”³⁰ Whereas

Elaine V. Beilin's work arguably epitomises the former position, Lewalski's work effectively enabled the emergence of the latter, itself embodied in Mary Ellen Lamb's article (cited above). Beilin insisted that Lanyer's devotion should be taken seriously, as her praise of women "evolves from her own piety and her poetic calling as a Christian visionary who yearns for a world greatly different from the one she knows."³¹ For Beilin, it is not Christianity which is a "cover" for feminism, but, conversely, that a feminist argument is derived from re-reading the Scriptures: "her great centrepiece, the Passion of Christ, serves as both doctrinal and poetic pattern for the rest of the poem, presenting as it does the archetypal object of praise, the image of perfect virtue."³² As Loughlin points out, "it is only very recently that critics ... have begun a re-evaluation of Lanyer's relationship to scripture and spirituality."³³ The influence of both feminism and new historicism has unfortunately had the result of distracting attention from religion. Michael Schoenfeldt has argued forcefully that "Lanyer's religious subject is not merely window-dressing for protofeminist polemic but essential to her understanding of the central place of women in the world." Indeed, he goes further and claims that "the most striking aspect of the *Salve Deus* is the way it links devotional postures to the dual ends of individual promotion and social practice."³⁴ In addition to Loughlin and Schoenfeldt, recent critics who have taken Lanyer's devotion seriously include Kari Boyd McBride, Aschah Guibbory, Esther Gilman Richey and Helen Wilcox.³⁵ Although some of their articles focus on specific constituent parts of Lanyer's text, such as McBride's analysis of the patronage poems, overall they tend to view each section as part of the whole. Consequently, Lanyer's project is viewed in its entirety, and its significance is relocated within a broader socio-historical context which facilitates a reconsideration of the doctrinal and devotional elements of *Salve Deus*. It is my contention that this group of critics truly demonstrate the possibility of an empowering and productive "fusion" of feminism with theology. Consequently, they bring us closer to an understanding of both the force of Lanyer's poetry and the complexity of her religious identification(s).

If she has been firmly labeled as "feminist," Lanyer has also been resolutely defined as "Protestant." While Lanyer's "feminism" has been the subject of much critical scrutiny, it is still generally assumed that she can be identified as "Protestant." However, although Beilin unequivocally identified her as "ardently Protestant," this appellation was neither explained nor justified.³⁶ Rather, it was asserted on the association of the re-reading of Scriptures with Protestant practices: direct access to the "Word" in one's own language was, of course, pivotal to the Reformation and the establishment of the Protestant church. Yet Protestantism, like Puritanism or, for

that matter, Catholicism, could take a variety of forms. Just as McGrath argued the need to define Lanyer's "feminism," it is now surely apt that the exact nature of Lanyer's "Protestantism" should be examined and, possibly, reappraised. Until recently, any doubt about Lanyer's religion was predicated not upon her doctrinal or devotional practices, but upon the insincerity of her faith *per se*.³⁷ It was an article about Lanyer, Jonson and patronage which brought attention to alternative ways of reading both Lanyer's social position and the religious influences upon her writing, by stating that "it really is impossible to emphasise strongly enough how marginal, how unusual [Lanyer's] position was in Renaissance England — as a Jew, converted or not, as an Italian, as the wife of a Catholic, as a woman artist making a living as a fringe member of court".³⁸ Given that she was part Jewish, part Italian and married to a Catholic, it strikes me as curious that Lanyer is still defined as unambiguously "Protestant," especially as, despite the Protestant connections of many of her dedicatees, by 1611 Anna of Denmark's conversion to Catholicism was well documented. Moreover, Lanyer's listing of exemplary female biblical figures not only participates in the discourse of the contemporary debate about the nature of women, but could also be seen as participating in Catholic discourses. Add to this Lanyer's extended meditation on the Virgin Mary and her inclusion of a number of male saints at the end of the *Salve Deus*, and her "ardent Protestantism" is, at the very least, questionable. More recently, Nona Fienberg has begun to explore the influence of Lanyer's "secret youth among the crypto-Jews of London," persuasively suggesting that some aspects of *Salve Deus* are more easily understood in a Jewish context than in a Christian one.³⁹

The complex interplay between different theological influences still requires further analysis: more detailed studies of these traditions offer new ways of understanding *Salve Deus*. While these studies are yet to be done, some work has begun to unravel aspects of Lanyer's engagements with particular doctrinal and devotional practices. Catherine Keohane and Esther Gilman Richey have demonstrated how *Salve Deus* engages with pre-existing theological texts.⁴⁰ Whether Lanyer had read Agrippa or not, for example, Richey illustrates how her re-writing of the Fall echoes his exegesis more closely than others. Work like this, which locates Lanyer's arguments within intertextual relations, should help us to establish whether Lanyer really was a Protestant and, if so, what kind. Surprisingly, while there are only a few articles examining Lanyer's possible sources for her arguments, there are even fewer that specifically discuss her poetry in a devotional context. The only articles that fit this category are those by Michael Schoenfeldt and Helen Wilcox. While both articles take Lanyer's religious concerns as sincere rather than calculated, and therefore see them as a profession, both

also explore gender differences in devotional texts by Donne, Herbert and Lanyer and thus could simultaneously be said to manifest a concern with the performative, insofar as they focus on religion as a cultural system. Both critics note the importance of the metaphors, derived from the Song of Songs, of Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as the Bride. And both argue that Donne and Lanyer unsettle or disrupt existing devotional discourses, as, in Schoenfeldt's words, they "show how the devotional subject is drawn to articulate desires which transgress the precepts of the society it inhabits."⁴¹ Schoenfeldt also argues that Lanyer "forces the language of devotional desire to challenge the practices of patriarchy."⁴²

Crucially, Schoenfeldt and Wilcox relocate Lanyer within the context of other seventeenth-century religious writers, namely the "Metaphysicals." Michael Morgan Holmes has also contributed to this trend by including Lanyer in his recent study of Metaphysical literature. Thus Holmes's book represents exactly the kind of challenge to the "all-male 'school of Donne'" that Helen Wilcox desires to see.⁴³ However, the emphasis in Holmes's book is upon the vicissitudes of "strange desires," and thus his work, fascinating as it is, again focuses upon religion as a cultural system rather than a system of beliefs. Holmes's work, like that of some other recent critics, does at least have the advantage of challenging the assumption that Lanyer's text is aimed at a purely female audience.⁴⁴ While the majority have emphasised Lanyer's construction of a kind of separatist community of women, based upon a binary dichotomy in which men are negated and women are privileged, a few have sounded a note of caution. As early as 1982, Alik Barnstone argued that while Lanyer's text "seeks to subvert the meaning of the myth of Eden in order to redeem women in the name of Eve," its aim was "to bring harmony and equality to women and men."⁴⁵ Moreover, she suggested that in her representation of Christ, Lanyer "provides a model for an harmonious exchange between women and men."⁴⁶ More recent studies have tended to interrogate the circulation of desire within Lanyer's poetry and the way in which this challenges hetero-eroticism in general and the problematics of homosocial/homoerotic desire within early modern discourses of Christianity.

With few exceptions, then, Lanyer's poetry has been primarily positioned as a performance rather than a profession. Although critics have found it difficult to define Donne's and Herbert's doctrinal positions, there has little doubt about the seriousness of their expressions. The same cannot be said about responses to *Salve Deus*. Does this not mean that modern critics are, even if inadvertently, replicating early modern biases in their readings of devotional texts by male and female writers? Even though it was (relatively) acceptable for an early modern woman writer to produce a religious text, modern critics' tendency to dismiss Lanyer's contribution to theologi-

cal debates suggests that they too do not wish to allow a woman to write of “divinest things.” The most recent work that has begun to see Lanyer’s “little Booke” in its entirety has done much to deconstruct the modern preoccupation with dividing the secular from the sacred. Loughlin, Guibbory and McBride, in particular, in their emphasis upon typology and eschatology, have consequently been able to pinpoint a radicalism in *Salve Deus* which goes beyond a simple interest in the inequality of the sexes. For Guibbory, Lanyer’s re-reading of the Bible “discovers a disturbing discontinuity between Christ’s teachings and those of his disciples.”⁴⁷ Loughlin questions the way in which modern criticism has constructed a “rigid opposition between the poem’s spiritual and material concerns.”⁴⁸ And McBride argues that Lanyer’s “repeated references to the values of another world resembles a kind of liberation theology: the use of biblical prophecy to fire and fuel revolutionary doctrine demanding the end of social and economic inequalities.”⁴⁹ While most modern forms of Western Christianity are currently subject to a right-wing agenda, the radicalism of Lanyer’s text anticipates the disruption of the social order associated with the English Civil Wars, in which female prophets played a significant part. In Lanyer’s case, faith does not preclude feminism; rather her feminism is facilitated by her faith.

Notes

1. A. L. Rowse, ed., *The Poems of Shakespeare’s Dark Lady: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, by Emilia Lanier (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978).
2. David Bevington, “A. L. Rowse’s Dark Lady,” in *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre, and the Canon*, ed. Marshall Grossman (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998), pp. 10–28.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
4. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, “Imagining Female Community: Aemilia Lanyer’s Poems,” in *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 241.
5. Kate Narveson, “Profession or Performance? Religion in Early Modern Literary Study,” in *Fault Lines and Controversies in the Study of Seventeenth-Century English Literature*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), p. 111.
6. The most useful starting place for a discussion of feminist literary theory in relation to early modern women’s writing is Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
7. See especially, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, “Of God and Good Women: The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer,” in *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*, ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1985), pp. 203–24, and Elaine V. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987). In one of the earliest anthologies to include excerpts from *Salve Deus*, Betty S.

Travitsky suggested the poem's true subject is the "commendable qualities of women" and that it was "societal rather than religious in purpose" (*The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance*, ed. Betty S. Travitsky [Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981], pp. 97, 29).

8. See, for example, Lynette McGrath, "'Let Us Have Our Libertie Againe': Amelia Lanier's 17th-Century Feminist Voice," *Women's Studies* 20 (1992): 331–48, and Janel Mueller, "The Feminist Poetics of Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," in *Feminist Measures: Soundings in Poetry and Theory*, ed. Lynn Keller and Christianne Miller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 210, 211.
9. Lewalski, "Of God and Good Women," p. 207. See also Lewalski, "Imagining Female Community," pp. 218–19, 221, 241, and "Rewriting Patriarchy and Patronage: Margaret Clifford, Anne Clifford, and Aemilia Lanyer," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991): 102.
10. Lewalski, "Of God and Good Women," p. 207.
11. However, sometimes Lewalski describes Lanyer as a "feminist," at other times as a "proto-feminist" writer ("Rewriting Patriarchy and Patronage," pp. 99, 98).
12. McGrath, p. 332.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 345.
14. Tina Krontiris, "Women of the Jacobean Court Defending Their Sex," in *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 114, 115.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
18. In one of the few articles that does explore the historical context of Lanyer's dedication to the Countess of Kent, Leeds Barroll expresses concern about potential inaccuracies in unhistoricised readings of her poems ("Looking for Patrons," in Grossman, ed., pp. 29–48).
19. Recent articles which see Lanyer's patrons as part of a female community, include Barbara K. Lewalski, "Seizing Discourses and Reinventing Genres," in Grossman, ed., pp. 49–59; Jacqueline Pearson, "Women Writers and Women Readers: the Case of Aemilia Lanier," in *Voicing Women: Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern Writing*, ed. Kate Chegdzoy, Suzanne Trill and Melanie Hansen (Keele: Keele University Press, 1996), pp. 45–54. In "'To All Vertuous Ladies in Generall': Aemilia Lanyer's Community of Strong Women," Sharon Cadman Seelig emphasizes the importance of imagining such a community, and further argues this community is not only "a community of good women, but also a community of strong women, a constellation of heroic virtue" (in *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000], pp. 44, 48). Those critics who focus on discontinuities and difference include Ann Baynes Coiro, "Writing in Service: Sexual Politics and Class Position in the Poetry of Aemilia Lanyer," *Criticism* 35 (1993): 357–76; Lisa Schnell, "'So Great a Difference Is There in Degree': Aemilia Lanyer and the Aims of Feminist Criticism," *Modern Language Quarterly* 57 (1996): 23–35, and "Breaking 'the rule of Cortezia': Aemilia Lanyer's Dedications to *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27 (1997): 77–102; Mary Ellen Lamb, "Patronage and Class

- in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," in *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, ed. Mary E. Burke, Jane Donawerth, Linda L. Dove, and Karen Nelson (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), pp. 38–57; and Su Fang Ng, "Aemilia Lanyer and the Politics of Praise," *ELH* 67 (2000): 433–51.
20. See Arthur F. Marotti, "Patronage, Poetry, and Print," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 21 (1991): 1–26, and Lamb, pp. 38–57. Lewalski argues that Lanyer's text is first English example of a woman writer seeking a female patron ("Seizing Discourses and Reinventing Genres," p. 50); for an alternative possibility, see Suzanne Trill, "A Feminist Critic in the Archives: Reading Anna Walker's *A Sweete Savor for Woman* (c. 1606)," *Women's Writing* 9.2 (2002): 199–214.
 21. Lamb, p. 40.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
 23. Lewalski, "Of God and Good Women," p. 220.
 24. See Marshall Grossman, "The Gendering of Genre: Literary History and the Canon," in Grossman, ed., pp. 128–42. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, "The Lady of the Country House Poem," in *The Fashioning and Functioning of the British Country House*, ed. Gervase Jackson-Stops, Gordon J. Schochet, Lena Cowen Orlin, and Elisabeth Blair McDougall (Hanover: National Gallery of Art, 1989), pp. 261–75; Lewalski, "Rewriting Patriarchy and Patronage" and "Seizing Discourses and Reinventing Genres"; Alik Barnstone, "Women and the Garden: Andrew Marvel, Emilia Lanier, and Emily Dickinson," *Women and Literature* 2 (1982): 147–67; Hugh Jenkins, "Petitions for Absolute Retreat: Genre and Gender in the Country-House Poems of Aemilia Lanyer and Anne Finch," *Feigned Commonwealths: The Country-House Poem and the Fashioning of the Ideal Community* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998); Kari Boyd McBride, *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A Cultural Study of Landscape and Legitimacy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); and Hi Kyung Moon, "Gender, Class and Patronage: Aemilia Lanyer's Country-House Poem, 'The Description of Cooke-ham,'" *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 9 (2002): 95–118.
 25. Wendy Wall, "Our Bodies/Our Texts?: Renaissance Women and the Trials of Authorship," in *Anxious Power: Reading, Writing and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women*, ed. Carol J. Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 64.
 26. "To the Ladie Arabella," in *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, ed. Susanne Woods (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), l. 9.
 27. The bibliography cited is available on the Internet at "<http://www.u.arizona.edu/ic/mcbride/lanyer/lanyerbib.htm>" (8 October 2003).
 28. See Lynette McGrath, *Subjectivity and Women's Poetry in Early Modern England: "Why on the ridge should she desire to go?"* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002): "Lanyer's 'cover' as she marks out a subversively separatist feminist discourse is the accepted stance of women as devotees of the Christian faith and maintainers of spiritual discourse" (p. 228).
 29. "To the Queenes Most Excellent Majestie," in Woods, ed., ll. 3–4.
 30. Marie H. Loughlin, "'Fast ti'd unto them in a golden Chaine': Typology, Apocalypse, and Women's Genealogy in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53 (2000): 133; my emphasis.

31. Beilin, p. 181.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
33. Loughlin, p. 133.
34. Michael Schoenfeldt, "The Gender of Religious Devotion: Amelia Lanyer and John Donne," in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, ed. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), p. 212.
35. Kari Boyd McBride, "Sacred Celebration: The Patronage Poems," in Grossman, ed., pp. 60–82; Kari Boyd McBride and John C. Ulreich, "Answerable Styles: Biblical Poetics and Biblical Politics in the Poems of Aemilia Lanyer and John Milton," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 100 (2001): 333–54; Achsah Guibbory, "The Gospel According to Aemilia: Women and the Sacred in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," in *Sacred and Profane: Secular and Devotional Interplay in Early Modern British Literature*, ed. Helen Wilcox, Richard Todd, and Alasdair MacDonald (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit University Press, 1996), pp. 105–26, rev. and rpt. in *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre, and the Canon*, ed. Marshall Grossman, pp. 191–211; Esther Gilman Richey, "'To Undoe the Booke': Cornelius Agrippa, Aemilia Lanyer and the Subversion of Pauline Authority," *English Literary Renaissance* 27 (1997): 106–28, and "Subverting Paul: The True Church and the Querelle des Femmes in Aemilia Lanyer," in *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), pp. 60–83; Helen Wilcox, "'Whom the Lord with love affecteth': Gender and the Religious Poet, 1590–1633," in *"This Double Voice": Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 185–207.
36. Beilin, p. 182.
37. See Krontiris, pp. 108, 109.
38. Ann Baynes Coiro, "Writing in Service: Sexual Politics and Class Position in the Poetry of Aemilia Lanyer," *Criticism* 35 (1993): 362.
39. I would like to thank Nona Fienberg for allowing me to refer to her work, presented in a paper given at the Renaissance Society of America conference, Chicago, 2001. See also Kari Boyd McBride, "Gender and Judaism in Meditations on the Passion: Middleton, Southwell, Lanyer, and Fletcher," in *Discovering and Recovering the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*, ed. Eugene Cunnar and Jeffrey Johnson (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2001), pp. 17–40.
40. Catherine Keohane, "'That Blindest Weaknesse Be Not Over-Bold': Aemilia Lanyer's Radical Unfolding of the Passion," *ELH* 64 (1997): 359–89; Richey, "'To Undoe the Booke'" and "Subverting Paul."
41. Schoenfeldt, p. 228.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
43. Michael Morgan Holmes, *Early Modern Metaphysical Literature: Nature, Custom and Strange Desires* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001).
44. See, for example, Michael Morgan Holmes, "The Love of Other Women: Rich Chaines and Sweet Kisses," in Grossman, ed., pp. 167–90; Naomi J. Miller, "(M)other Tongues: Maternity and Subjectivity," in Grossman, ed., pp. 143–66; Theresa M. DiPasquale, "Woman's Desire for Man in Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 99 (2000): 356–78; and Suzanne Trill, "Reflected Desire: The Erotics of the Gaze in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," in *Culture at the*

Courts of the Stuart Queens, ed. Claire McManus (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 167–92.

45. Alik Barnstone, "Women and the Garden: Andrew Marvell, Emilia Lanier, and Emily Dickinson," *Women and Literature* 2 (1982): 149.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
47. Guibbory, p. 194.
48. Loughlin, p. 134.
49. McBride, "Sacred Celebration," p. 79.