

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2009

Department:English

Degree:MA

Title:NOBLE VIRTUES AND RICH CHAINES: PATRONAGE IN THE POETRY OF AEMILIA LANYER

Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Dues Rex Judaeorum* has been primarily discussed by literary scholars as a protofeminist text, one that celebrates and defends female community. While such readings have illuminated Lanyer's radical claims of gender equality, these interpretations tend to idealize Lanyer's utopian community, thereby effacing the historical roots of its construction. This study aims to return to the social, political, and economic framework that shaped Lanyer's work, in order to demonstrate how her Eden is less an allegorical utopia than a reaction to and incorporation of patronage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Consequently, I turn to networks of female alliance that were at once developed and shaped by the patronage system. I also seek to highlight the contradictions of Lanyer's work as reflections of her struggle to carve out a space for herself as a female writer in an essentially patriarchal realm. In developing multi-level systems of patronage and reward in *Salve Dues*, Lanyer's utopia mirrors the network of female alliance in early modern England, relationships governed by not only by the interaction of women, but also the ubiquitous presence of patriarchal influence. Lanyer's *Salve Deus* reinfects issues of female alliance, marriage, and inheritance in light of her bid for patronage, and her work can subsequently be viewed as a strategy of betterment on Lanyer's behalf.

