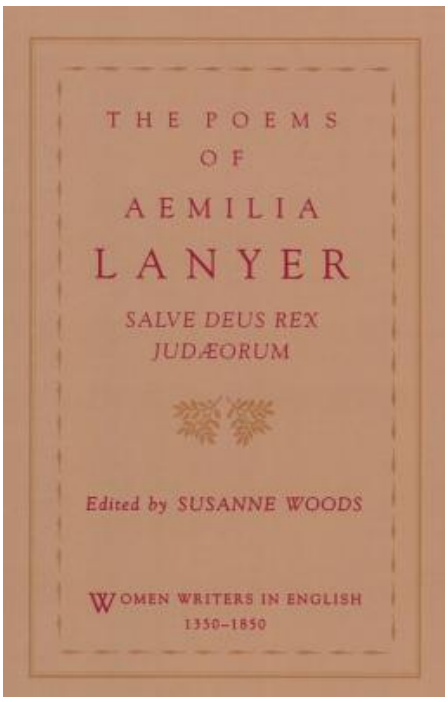

Salve Deus Rex Judæorum

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Aemilia Lanyer (1569-1645) was the first woman poet in England who sought status as a professional writer. Her book of poems is dedicated entirely to women patrons. It offers a long poem on Christ's passion, told entirely from a woman's point of view, as well as the first country house poem published in England. Almost completely neglected until very recently, her work changes our perspective on Jacobean poetry and contradicts the common assumption that women wrote nothing of serious interest until much later. Mistress and friend of influential Elizabethan courtiers, Lanyer gives us a glimpse of the ideas and aspirations of a talented middle class Renaissance woman.

Salve Deus Rex Judæorum Details

Date	:	Published August 11th 1993 by Oxford University Press, USA (first published 1611)
ISBN	:	9780195083613
Author	:	Aemilia Lanyer , Susanne Woods (Editor)
Format	:	Paperback 192 pages
Genre	:	Poetry, Classics, Academic, School, Feminism

From Reader Review Salve Deus Rex Judæorum for online ebook

Bill Lancaster says

While the poetry itself isn't particularly beautiful, Lanyer was able to accomplish significance in meaning at a time when women, especially one who wasn't noble-born, were seldom educated or allowed to publish.

Molly Amster says

So phenomenal to see such a talented, strong, vocal woman at such a time in history. Had they lived at the same time, she and Woolf would have been good friends.

Mary says

Interesting from an historical perspective, but otherwise just boring. I found it disingenuous that her tributes to court ladies glorified their chastity while she, now generally accepted as the dark lady of Shakespeare's sonnets, lived a life that was anything but chaste.

Kit says

The edition I read is a 70s hardback edited by A.L. Rowse with a prefatory essay arguing that Lanyer is the "dark lady" of Shakespeare's sonnets. Four stars for that edition; three for the poems on their own. The long poem about the Passion is boring to me except for the apology for Eve in the middle of it.

Dominic says

I'm not going to say I *loved* the initial reading of this early 1600s poem about the Passion of Jesus Christ, but when the pieces finally clicked, and I realized just how radical this woman was getting in her representations of Biblical stories and her validation of a truly powerful and sober female space, I had to admit I was intrigued. I'm still enjoying thinking about feminist issues all over this text still relevant today about the role of women within churches and the power of the written word to reimagine and complicate the important, driving narratives of our lives. I'm not convinced this is "great" poetry (and the religious heaviness of the prose will be a challenge to many readers), but Lanyer's ideas sure deserve 4 gold stars.

Porter Sprigg says

It didn’t really draw me in whatsoever. She tells the passion narrative through long poetry which is an interesting idea but gets boring fast.

Roman Clodia says

This is a well-edited critical edition of Lanyer's volume Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum. Woods gives excellent critical and textual introductions, and has edited the text well with helpful notes for students. The Salve Deus itself is a chaotic volume speaking through multiple voices and moods, and the dedicatory letters which preface it are as much a part of the text as the poetry itself.

Lanyer tends to be read as a straightforwardly proto-feminist poet particularly in her defence of Eve, but recent scholarship has exposed some of the slippages which seep through (her 'To The Vertuous Reader' letter with its intimations of female rivalry, for example), and the extent to which she's soliciting patronage rather than (or as well as?) creating space for herself as a female poet.

This isn't a cheap volume so casual readers wanting to try Lanyer might be better off with a popular volume such as Renaissance Women Poets: Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemilia Lanyer which makes some cuts but still offers a full selection from Salve Deus.

Mandy says

The most interesting parts of this poem were, for me, Lanyer's dedications to her female patrons which comprised a good third of the poem. In these dedicatory addresses she safely (because of her female audience) expresses strong proto-feminist sentiments, which I think are pretty kick-ass. In line with that, the section of the poem called "Eve's Apology" did a bold re-writing of the fall from Eden, laying the blame on Adam - if he was so superior to Eve, why wasn't he strong enough to reject her offering?
Indeed.

Kristina says

Four stars for the poetry, 1.5 for the essay by Rowse.

The poetry itself was sometimes radical and repetitive, with both simple and complex imagery, stunningly beautiful in places, harsh and bitter in others. The wealth of dedications is rather off putting and I came to think of it as a reminder to misogynist male readers that there are many many virtuous women who are far better than them. Eve's Apology is a fascinating approach to original sin and the image of the Risen Christ as a masculine snow white beauty was unexpectedly sexualized, fitting well with repeatedly images of him as the Bridegroom. (Apparently the H in Jesus H Christ stands for hottie!).

While pleased that Rowse provides biographical
Information (not without many layers of interpretation and assumption) and got this edition published, he's firmly mired in the first half of the 20th century as far as criticism is concerned, despite the publication date of 1979. Looking forward to reading scholarship that focuses on Lanier's work and not Rowse's desire to cast her as the object of Shakespeare's love and loathing in the Dark Lady sonnets.

Danela says

The best poem in all the world. I like how she defends all women from Adam's sin. I used to like old English poems but Eve's Apology is the best of all. I recommended this book to all the person who agrees that Eve was not guilty about the sin.

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mimo says

Religion has never been my thing, but I can appreciate the way that religious discourses provide this rich text on which writers draw. Lanyer gives some really powerful passages here, reflecting not only how she locates women at the centre of her worldview, but also a woman's perspective on the relationship between God and humankind. Quite the achievement.

Adam says

It's not very good poetry, but it's a, pardon, ballsy piece of rhetoric. It basically does what most early proto-feminist texts do, which is speak from a stereotypically feminine position but reclaim that as a position of power. In this, Lanyer argues against the doctrine of original sin and even goes as far as saying that if anyone should take the blame it's Adam, that hedonist male moron, because Eve's just a poor old woman behaving femininely and was duped by that more cunning male figure, Satan, then just lovingly offered this delicious treat to her husband. Plus, if she came from him, isn't any evil in her really his fault. And other stuff. It's a neat little rhetorical strategy, though it's not exactly feminist in the contemporary sense, because she's still playing the role of innocent and naive woman who only knows a few core values (which she then endows Christ with, which is cool).

That part is the most interesting bit. Other than that there's a lot of boring poetry praising the lord and the like.

Sean says

Published in 1611, and in writing about the betrayal of Christ and the flight of the disciples –

For they were of earth, and he came from above,
Which made them apt to flie, and fit to fall:
Though they do protest they never will forsake him,
They do like men, when dangers overtake them.

– and no man would ever have written that. And it’s oddly glorious and eye-opening that a woman did. (And also leaves you wondering if Milton read this and borrowed “Which made them apt to flie, and fit to fall” into “Sufficient to have stood, but free to fall.” And then you realize that since Lanyer lived until 1645, she might have actually met Milton, as well as Shakespeare. And then your brain starts doing a little happy dance

at the wonder and possible interconnectedness of all things.)

Lesliemae says

I'm still hung up on Donne and it is truly RUINING all subsequently read poets. Aemilia Lanyer is probably, more than likely even a great read that gives you some intersections between culture and gender in 1611, and lets you in on the female patronage model and how its dedicatory arts or encomia (if we want to look at it that way) complicate any kind of proto-feminist rhetoric. The lurking question being, did the patron have more than a gendered lexicon of power in rhetoric? Were they *actually* respected empowered women? And if these were limited (excepting the queen) in their expression of power and femininity, then what could they offer a poetess of lower station? Perhaps, in spite of the extensive bid for patronage, what is more important to focus on is her cultural positionality - Lanyer is a poetess for hire, and in that economic reconfiguration in a different class level of society the potential for the ontological position of the emergent feminist may be borne after her.
