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Review of Marshall Grossman, ed., *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre and the Canon*, and Frances Teague, *Bathsua Makin, Woman of Learning*

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Marshall Grossman, ed. *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre and the Canon.*
Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998. viii + 264 pp. $36.95. ISBN: 0-8131-2049-7.

Frances Teague. *Bathsua Makin, Woman of Learning.*
Lewisburg: Bucknell University of Press, 1998. 196 pp. $36. ISBN: 0-8387-5341-8.

Frances Teague begins her study of Bathsua Makin with Virginia Woolf's lament that women writers had no earlier models. But as Teague points out, the scholarship of the last few decades on early modern women writers proves Woolf was wrong. Teague's study of Makin and Marshall Grossman's edited collection of essays on Aemilia Lanyer are two more additions to that body of scholarship. Both excellent, the two books are very different in nature.

Grossman's book is a collection of essays on Lanyer, who was first brought to public attention by A. L. Rowse's problematic identification of her as Shakespeare's "dark lady." Scholarly and popular interest in Lanyer has grown even stronger since Susanne Woods's 1993 edition of her poems for the Brown University Women's Writers Projects, published by Oxford University Press. Grossman's collection brings together a number of the top Renaissance literary/cultural scholars who work on Lanyer. A number of themes, such as patronage, female community, and depiction of Biblical women, are developed by the different authors and link the essays in the collection together.

Grossman begins the collection with an extremely well-written and useful biographical summary of what is known about Lanyer's life and writing, placing her within the context of Renaissance women writers. Grossman notes that in 1611 she did something extraordinary for a middle-class woman of the early seventeenth-century: she published *Salve Deux Rex Judaeorum*, a small volume of religious verse. Grossman discusses the dubious evidence Rowse had gathered that Lanyer was Shakespeare's "dark lady," a claim further demolished by David Bevington, who also discusses Shakespeare's sonnets and how much we can read biography from art. Bevington and Leeds Barroll also explore Lanyer's life and the social contexts in which she wrote, Barroll noting the limited opportunities for middle-class women of literary talent.

Barbara Lewalski's essay is particularly strong; she explores how Lanyer subtly manipulated established genres in her desire to imagine a distinct female community. Lewalski examines Lanyer's dedicatory poems in terms of mothers and daughters, revealing a new depiction of Eve and a re-imagining of fundamental Christian myths to represent a better world. Naomi Miller further explores maternity and subjectivity in early modern England in both actual and mythic mothers described in Lanyer's writings. Michael Morgan Holmes also examines the sense of female community in Lanyer's work by examining her interconnection of eroticism and religion. Achsah Guibbory analyzes Lanyer's feminist thelogy and her exploration of Christ's teaching of sexual equality that countered his disciples' interpretation of the subjection of women.

Another especially insightful essay is by Janel Mueller, who explores how Lanyer gained a sense of authority to write and publish. Mueller focuses on what Lanyer says about herself in her verse epistles and provides an extremely useful comparison with Christine de Pizan, placing both within a feminist perspective. Boyd Berry provides a fine examination of Lanyer's use of rhetoric to look at the gendered nature of power and control. One of the finest essays in the collection is by Woods, who examines the ways Lanyer asserts her own agency and develops her own voice as an author, suggesting that for Lanyer the key word is grace. Woods pays particular attention to the poetry Lanyer addressed to Elizabeth I. Kari Boyd McBride reads Lanyer's poems against the larger literature and social culture of patronage, comparing Lanyer's poems with those of Ben Jonson's.

Grossman asks his readers to reflect on the question of whether we can consider Lanyer to be a canonical poet; he argues that the essays in the collection "explore the ways in which Lanyer enters the canon by disrupting it" (8). This is a thoroughly high quality collection of essays that allows the reader to consider a variety of scholarly questions about the importance of Lanyer. The collection is even more valuable in that it concludes with an extremely useful annotated bibliography of texts and criticism by Karen Nelson.

Equally valuable is Teague's study of Makin, which also includes an edition of Makin's best known work, *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*. This piece demonstrates Makin's own learning and argues that girls as well as boys deserve an education. Makin gives examples of learned women of history and ends her essay by advertising her own school for girls, one she opened when she was in her seventies.

Teague's research presents a great deal of new information about Makin's life and places her in the wider context of other early modern women writers, such as Rachel Speght. Teague places Makin's writings as part of the *querelle des femmes*. Makin's education in modern and classical languages was extraordinary for a woman of her age. Teague has discovered that Makin was not John Pell's sister, as has traditionally been reported, but rather his sister-in-law, the sister to Pell's wife Ithamaria Reginald Pell. Bathsua's father was Henry Reginald, a schoolmaster who had his daughters attend his school.

Teague argues that we need to pay especial attention to the issues most important to Makin, religion, loyalty to the Stuarts, and language studies, and what was happening to her to shape these interests. It is especially important to look at her family and social connections. Makin's husband Richard was a member of James I's household and Makin herself taught Charles I's daughter Elizabeth; Teague notes Makin was called Elizabeth's "tutress" rather than governess. Makin's financial situation was perilous from the 1650s onward and this was what finally prompted her to open a school where girls would be taught not only traditional subjects but also such languages as Latin, French, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, and Spanish. Advertising her school, and justifying the education of women, was what prompted Makin to write her pamphlet. Unfortunately, Teague tells us, there is no evidence about whether the school was a success, how long Makin taught there, or even when she died. Teague admits that Makin's insistence that only rich, upper-class women need an education jars our late twentieth-century sensibilities, but she argues we must put Makin within the context of her age, and that within that context she was a remarkable woman. Teague's book is beautifully researched and written, and her edition of Makin's pamphlet makes available an important work on the education of women in the early modern period. Both these works are worthy additions to the work being produced on early modern English women writers.

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