

Justification by good works: Skelton's 'The Garland of Laurel'

Article

Published Version

Gillespie, V. (1981) Justification by good works: Skelton's 'The Garland of Laurel'. Reading Medieval Studies, VII. pp. 19-31. ISSN 0950-3129 Available at <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/84789/>

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work. See [Guidance on citing](#).

Publisher: University of Reading

All outputs in CentAUR are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including copyright law. Copyright and IPR is retained by the creators or other copyright holders. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the [End User Agreement](#).

www.reading.ac.uk/centaur

CentAUR

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online

Justification by Good Works: Skelton's *The Garland of Laurel*

As his frequent references to his laureate status suggest, Skelton was an extremely self-conscious artist concerned with his vocation not only as a poet to the court, but also as a vates, a prophetic voice crying in the wilderness of Wolsey's England. Both these aspects of his career, the public or official and the vatic, led to discussions in his poetry of his role in each of them. He presents his prophetic credentials in the second part of the late Replicacioun where, replying to criticism that poetry is an unsuitable medium for theological debate, he draws on a long tradition of defences of the doctrine of divine inspiration to poets by citing St Jerome's classic discussion of the poetical and prophetic status of the Psalter and of David's role in its composition. Using the rime-royal stanza he reserves for the most elevated subjects, Skelton translates Jerome's Latin:

Kyng David the Prophete, of prophetes principall,
Of poetes chefe poete, saint Jerome doth wright (329-30)

and continues with Jerome likening David to Simonides, Pindar and other classical poets.¹ Behind the charge and its refutation lies a history of similar debates about the status of poetry, and Skelton is deliberately and consciously appealing to that tradition to validate his claim to be inspired through the Holy Spirit.²

By contrast with this invocation of the power of the Christian muse, the public or courtly poetry is presided over by a very different genius. On several occasions, notably in the Northumberland Elegy and the poem Calliope, he invokes the power of individual Muses, appealing to them for inspiration or 'elect utterance'. The Muses also appear in The Garland of Laurel, and in this study of that poem, I hope to be able to suggest why Skelton employed the highly conventional, almost formulaic appeal to the Muses in his public poetry and to demonstrate how he manages to endow them with a new and highly personal significance.³

As with much of Skelton's erudition, it is difficult to identify the source of his knowledge of the Muses. It is, of course, probable that his knowledge of literature acquired through education and private reading would lead him to a familiarity with standard literary topoi through a kind of osmosis. But Caxton's preface to the Eneydos asks correction of Skelton because of his great learning 'and also he hath redde the six muses and understands theyr musicall scyences and to whom of thym eche scyence is appropred'. This seems to go beyond a conventional allusion to erudition and to refer to something more specific. Indeed, there is another more likely source from which Skelton could have learnt of the Muses. This is the Library of History of

Diodorus Siculus which Skelton translated early in his career at court, and to which Caxton also refers in his preface.⁴

As its editors have pointed out, Skelton's Diodorus 'was not only one of the earliest productions of Skelton himself, but one of the first English translations of the classics'.⁵ His choice of the Library of History owes as much to the popularity of medieval encyclopaedias as it does to humanistic zeal, for its eclectic wisdom is similar to the picaresque erudition of works such as Mandeville's Travels.

The discussion of the Muses arises from the 'faytis and gestis of Dionisius', which occupy much of book 5 of the work. Skelton's rendering discusses two divergent accounts of their origin. On the one hand many 'historious wrytars' recount that the Muses were the daughters of Jupiter and Dame Memory. On the other 'ther be poetes one or tweyne' that hold that they were the offspring of Celum and Terra. Skelton does not worry unduly about this disparity, nor about the variant traditions claiming that they were three or nine in number, which Diodorus resolves in favour of nine Muses, citing Homer and Hesiod in support. He names them and, with the authority of Hesiod, Calliope is singled out 'whos noblesse emonge all poemys above all other, for a synguler preemynence, hath her avauncement'. This assessment of Calliope is reflected in Skelton's later poem about her:

Calliope
 As ye may se,
 Regent is she
 Of poetes al,
 Whiche gave to me
 The high degre
 Laureate to be
 Of fame royall. (1-8)

Clio, to whom Skelton appeals in the Northumberland Elegy, is described by Diodorus in terms which reflect Skelton's own fascination with his status as laureate:

The first is named Dame Clio, emportynge by just signyficacioun the laureate glory and renommed fame that sourdeth of the laudable reporture of excellent poetes.

There is an ambiguity in this definition which is not entirely without significance for Skelton's writing. On the one hand, the glory and fame arising from 'laudable reporture' redounds to the praise of the subject (as with the elegy on Northumberland) and it is therefore fitting for Skelton to ask Clio to

Adres the to me, whiche am both halt and lame
In elect uteraunce to make memoryall, (10-11)

where he manages to combine the usual modesty topos with a tacit claim to be among those capable of 'elect utterance'.⁶ On the other hand the description of Clío by Diodorus (or rather Skelton's rendering of it) could easily be interpreted as meaning that 'laureate glory' arises for poets from their writings. That Skelton believed this to be the case is suggested by the panoply of classical laureates he assembles at the court of Fame in The Garland of Laurel.

It seems likely that the discussion of the Muses by Diodorus was one of the many formative influences on Skelton's conception of them. But more significantly I think it can be shown that he used the Muses as symbolic representatives or 'significacious' of the ideals by which he worked in the vernacular poems of a more public and official nature. In the poem to Calliope, Skelton asserts that she gave him the 'high degree' of Laureate although he claims elsewhere that his 'habit was a gift from the King. There is, however, no contradiction or confusion in these statements if Calliope represents the personified 'spirit' of the poetry written at court in the service of the king, especially as the habit referred to is probably to be identified with the 'singing robes' in the King's livery and embroidered with the name of Calliope, which Skelton is known to have worn.⁷ In the introductory rubric, Skelton begins by referring to himself as Orator Regius and in the poem itself he refers to Calliope as:

... my soverayne
moost of pleasure. (23-4)

This link between Calliope (and by implication the other Muses) and poetic service to the crown is supported by the general description of the function of the Muses given by Diodorus:

Of former institucion the Muses were named and callyd in general by enchesoun that they unto the ornacy of mannes morall lyvyng admynystred notable enseynementis and vertuuous instruction, foundyd upon the groundid assuraunce bothe of his honeste ... and for the expedition of his avauntage, with the usual byhoef necessarye bothe for her pryvate wele and for the wele in comyn.⁸

The central concerns of this passage - the development of moral living and the concern for common and private welfare - are easily recognisable as central concerns of Skelton's poetry. In particular, the relationship between private and public welfare is fully analysed in the poems criticising Wolsey's

handling of affairs as Lord Chancellor. But more specifically the importance of virtuous instruction and the prosperity of the commonwealth are fundamental tenets of the Burgundian concept of courtly and public poetry.

The influence of Burgundian ideas and attitudes on the early Tudor court has recently been the subject of a provocative study by Gordon Kipling. He has suggested that 'Skelton's place in a court literary establishment [was] deliberately modelled after a Burgundian plan'.⁹ Although there are objections to so specific a location for the literary archetypes used by Skelton (it has, for example, been argued that Kipling fails to distinguish fully the unique aspects of the Burgundian influence which can be isolated from the more general trend of European renaissance thought¹⁰), his thesis remains valuable, particularly in relation to the literature of the court.

Burgundian influence has long been recognised in the works chosen for printing by Caxton, whose own early career developed in a Burgundian milieu.¹¹ After Caxton's death, the development of the library at Richmond Palace under the supervision of a Flemish librarian, Quentin Poulet, was designed to provide Henry VII with a library comparable to that of Philip the Good. Kipling also points out that Skelton's co-tutor of the royal princess was the Burgundian poet Bernard André and that the syllabus studied by the royal princess was directly comparable to that studied widely in Burgundian aristocratic circles.¹² There is no evidence of any direct or prolonged contact with the Burgundian court in Skelton's life, although his laureateship from the University of Louvain might suggest that his work was known there. Significantly for his own poetry, Louvain linked the laurel with poetic service to the state. A series of lectures on the science of poetry had been given since 1478 and its founders had expressed the hope that 'the science of poetry would prove of value to the state'. As these lectures were given under the aegis of a poet laureate, it is tempting to speculate that Skelton's laureateship at Louvain was given in recognition of his fulfilment of this criterion.¹³ Certainly, as he frequently tells us, many of his poems were written 'by kinges most noble commaundement'.

His desire to use his poetic talent in the service of the King is expressed eloquently and allusively in the Latin poem he added to the *Speculum Principis* probably as a birthday offering to the King shortly after his accession in 1509:

Dulce meum decus est, illi hanc ego phillida mitto.
 Dulce meum decus est, illi mea plectra repono.
 Dulce meum decus est, illi mea camina servo.¹⁴

Skelton's commitment to the use of poetry for public rhetorical purposes is not exclusively dependent upon Burgundian attitudes to the art.

In addition to the traditions in Latin and French poetry, his work probably draws some of its pragmatism from the native school of Lydgate who was employed as poet-propagandist by the Lancastrian dynasty.¹⁵ Indeed, other writers in the vernacular contemporary with Skelton display similar attitudes. Stephen Hawes, for example, discusses the function of Poetry in his allegorical romance *The Passtime of Pleasure*. The hero, Graunde Amoure, seeks the love of La Bell Pucell and embarks on a journey of discovery. The first stage in this journey takes him to the Tower of Doctryne where he is instructed by the Seven Liberal Arts, the seven daughters of Dame Doctryne. The last member of the *trivium* to instruct him is Rhetoric. He ascends to the third story of the tower

Where sate a lady gretely magnyfed
 And her trewe vesture clerely puryfyed
 And over her heed, that was bryght and shene
 She hadde a garlande of the laurell grene.¹⁶

Rhetoric is crowned with the symbol of laureateship by classical precedent, but also because she instructs Graunde Amoure in the function and techniques of poetry, as part of his courtly education. The five parts of a rhetorical discourse are discussed in order. The first, *Inventio*, includes a 'commendacyon of poetes'. Ancient poets are praised because they wrote fables to 'eschewe ydelnes'; because modern learning is founded on the knowledge contained in their writings; and finally because:

ryght well you dyde endyte
 Of the worthy actes of many a conqueroure
 Through whiche labour that you dyde so wryte
 Unto this daye reyneth the honoure
 Of every noble and myghty warryoure
 And for your labour and you besy payne
 Youre fame yet lyveth and shall endure certayne.¹⁷

The commonplace references to the 'key of remembrance' role of literature apart, this discussion displays the same ambivalent attitude to the praise of great men that we have already noted in Skelton's translation of Diodorus.

I suggested above that Skelton had an advanced conception of poetry being used in the rhetorical service of the state. Hawes, with his emphasis on the praise of heroes and the persuasion to good living in ancient poetry, is only one of many writers to support this attitude. What distinguishes Skelton from the commonplace rehearsal of this *topos* is his capacity to synthesise the rhetorical pragmatism of his poetry and the attitude to classical authors typified by Hawes in his use of the equally venerable *topos* of the Muses. The outstanding result of this synthesis is *The Garland of Laurel* which

is in part a claim for the historical respectability of poetry in the service of the state, and for his own preeminence in that art.

The Garland is, of course, on one level a courtly entertainment written for the inhabitants of Sheriff Hutton castle perhaps as early as 1495, but certainly revised and expanded around 1523.¹⁸ The poem revolves around a series of debates about Skelton's admission to the court of Fame and includes a debate between the Queen of Fame and Dame Pallas on the role of the poet and the nature of poetry. Pallas 'regynt of the sciences seven' has ordered his admission because of his services to her. Fame finds him lacking by comparison with other inmates of the court, most of them classical authors. Pallas defends Skelton's criticisms of vice by citing the example of Ovid and Juvenal who were both criticised for their moral literary activity, and accuses Fame of confusing notoriety with immortality. Fame asks for reasons for Skelton's admission and Pallas orders a review of the inhabitants of Fame's court:

... that we may take a vewe
 What poetis we have at our reteneve
 To se if Skelton wyll put hymselfe in prease
 Amonge the thickeste of all the hole rowte. (237-40)

The poets are summoned by a wry allusion to the Last Judgement:

A thowsand thowsande I sawe on a plumpe:
 With that I harde the noyse of a trumpe. (258-9)

and as they pass by Skelton decides to 'specify' some of the writers featured in the procession.

Inevitably several of the authors are directly linked with eloquence and rhetorical excellence. The choice is partly a function of the contemporary desire to enrich the language for literary purposes and in particular reflects the tastes of the 'aureate' writers for ornate and Latin vocabulary. This concern for 'telling the tale in termes eloquent' (Passtime, 1918) is reflected in the authors 'specified' by Skelton; 'Prince of Eloquence, Tullius Cicero', 'Horace also with his new poetry', Quintus Curtius, Plutarch and Petrarch. Gower is praised because he 'first garnished our English rude', and Chaucer because he renewed the language. Lydgate is not praised directly but instead delivers the verdict of the assembled poets that Skelton should:

be prothonotary
 Of Fame's court, by all our holl assent
 Avaunced by Pallas to laurel preferment. (432-4)

Lydgate's status was sufficiently well established for the significance of this judgement to be unmistakable, pronounced by one poet who wrote in the service of his sovereign on another who fulfilled the same function. Lydgate is welcoming Skelton into the tradition of great rhetoricians and, equally significant, into the company of other writers of public rhetoric. A striking proportion of the assembled writers are historians: Homer, Lucan, Livy, Ennius, Aulus Gellius, Vincent of Beauvais (the great encyclopaedist), Poggio (first translator of Diodorus Siculus) and Boccaccio with whose views on poetry Skelton is in harmony. Others, like Sallust, were involved in political invective (and here the parallel of Skelton's writings against Wolsey presents itself), and earlier in *The Garland* Skelton refers to the controversy between Demosthenes and Aeschines. Hesiod is called 'the freshe economicar', presumably a reference to his treatise on husbandry, *Works and Days*. Writers like Macrobius, Boccaccio, Boethius, Ovid, Propertius and Pisander are all notable for their sometimes involuntary contributions to moral poetry. Most of these contributions are of a highly practical and unspeculative nature - the choice of particular works from the *opera* of the various writers suggests the particular branch of the classical tradition with which Skelton wishes to associate himself.¹⁹ The gathered writers are a working fellowship of skilled rhetoricians many of whom wrote for the good of their respective commonwealths, ('for the wele in comyn') as well as for the moral well being of the individual ('the omacy of mannes morall lvynges').

This extensive list of classical and post-classical writers serves, on the level of courtly entertainment, to display the apparently considerable erudition of Skelton himself. Of course there is no evidence that Skelton had indeed read all the writers he quotes. Many of them formed the backbone of the new school curricula, such as that proposed by Erasmus (who met Skelton in 1499, and described him as 'the light and glory of British letters') and implemented by Colet in St Paul's School, and the list of approved authors provided by Melancthon.²⁰ As Curtius has shown, authorial canons were consistently being developed, extended and refined.²¹ Skelton's list of authors is in the tradition exemplified by the medieval curriculum lists as well as the new Humanist lists.²² *The Pallace of Honour*, a formal analogue of *The Garland*, has nearly half the authors (17 out of 35) cited by Skelton. However, he does not follow slavishly the contemporary canons, and includes several authors not found in Erasmus, Melancthon or in the Burgundian school curriculum discussed by Kipling. His additions are almost all historians: Ennius, Pisander, Quintus Curtius and Robert Gaguin (a French historian who translated Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* (c.1488), which work was included by Erasmus in his Latin curriculum). Macrobius is also included, presumably because of his central position in dream-lore and poetry, as is Aulus Gellius who was praised by Erasmus although not included in the curriculum.

Skelton consistently presents himself as a 'vox clamantis', an isolated figure speaking out against the corruptions of court life. This attitude is strikingly illustrated by the citation from Psalm 9 which stands at the head of Colin Clout:

Quis consurget mecum adversus malignantes? Aut quis stabit
mecum adversus operantes iniquitatem? Nemo, Domine!

This position of moral isolation is rendered more tenable and perhaps more justifiable by his passing references to Juvenalian satire in the Latin elegy for Lady Margaret and in Why Come Ye Not to Court?, while the spirit of the satirist pervades much of his work. But it is in The Garland of Laurel that the link between Skelton and his masters is forged. Despite their common membership of the Court of Fame, it is their roles as contemporary commentators, critics and moral historians rather than their historical durability which makes them particularly attractive to Skelton.

Placing his list of authors in its contemporary context, therefore, it is possible to see that, in addition to the element of sheer intellectual bravado, Skelton is tacitly establishing his claim to be an exponent of pietas litterata. The unbroken chain of pagan and Christian writers which he describes illustrates the contemporary belief that, in Bolgar's formulation, 'Christianity was the crowning achievement of Greece and Rome. The best of their culture led up to it and was therefore in harmony with its dictates'.²³ But this cultural ecumenism has a particular importance for Skelton because of his own position as a court writer, Orator Regius, and laureate poet.

In The Garland of Laurel the review of writers is followed by a review of writings - Skelton's own works. Occupation 'redith and expoundyth sum parte of Skeltons boke and baladis with ditis of pleasure, in as moche as it were to longe a proces to reherse all by name that he hath compyld'. Given the substantial list which follows this is typical Skeltonic understatement. The works listed reveal the different areas of his poetic activity and its wide range; his concern for private morality ('the Boke how men shulde flee sin', 'to learn to die when ye will', 'Of man's life the peregrination'); his interest in eloquence ('New grammar in English compiled'); his classical learning and translation ('His comedy Achademios called by name; of Tully's Familiars the translation', to which should be added his translation from the French and, of course, Diodorus Siculus); his interludes (Of Virtue and Magnificence) and other works of a more directly courtly significance (Royal Demeanance, 'worship to win', 'Of Sovereignty a noble pamphlet', and the Speculum Principis). The list contains at least one work of an overtly propagandist nature, The Tratyse of Triumphis of the Red Rose, dealing with the Wars of the Roses and the final triumph of the Lancastrian dynasty. The range of works cited is deliberately intended to encompass the range of works

READING MEDIEVAL STUDIES

cited in the list of other writers. His comprehensiveness, apparently subsuming all the interests and concerns of his predecessors in the court of Fame, makes him a worthy member, and he is admitted by acclamation.

Of course, in addition to his more serious works, he lists many of his more frivolous productions (the 'ditties of pleasure' of the rubric) which he excuses:

To make such trifels it asketh sum konnyng,
In honest myrth parde requireth no lack;
The whyte apperyth the better for the black. (125-7)

This should remind us of the poem's function to delight and amuse as well as educate, with its poems of compliment to various aristocratic members of the company assembled in the Yorkshire castle. In these, Skelton reserves a decorous hierarchy by using a whole range of stanzaic forms, reserving the dignified rime-royal for the most elevated ladies, such as the Countess of Surrey herself. The masque-like presence of the ladies in the vision of the court of Fame is testimony to the conscious artifice of the poem's creation. However, it is not out of place to seek for more serious matters beneath the highly burnished exterior. Other formal analogues for the poem are to be found in Chaucer's House of Fame, Lydgate's Court of Sapience, and Hawes's Passtime of Pleasure which all contain discussions of the poet's role.²⁴

In the context of Skelton's attempt in The Garland to bolster his status as court poet by claiming a historical respectability for the post, it is perhaps possible to return to his use of the Muses and to clarify his attitude to them. They appear fleetingly in The Garland during the guided tour led by Occasion which culminates in the hortus conclusus. The description of this ideal garden, drawing on the Song of Songs and the Roman de la Rose as well as the Chaucerian gardens for its effects, has as its centre piece 'a goodly laurell tre':

Dryads there daunsid upon that goodly soile,
With the nyne Muses, Pierides by name. (679-80)

The Muses here are explicitly linked with the laurel as they dance around it. Elsewhere, in his envoy to the poem, Skelton writes, 'Say Skelton was your Adonis, say Skelton was your Homer: though barbarous you now run an equal race with Latin verse. And though the greater part is woven of British words, our Thalia is not too uncouth nor my Calliope too unlearned'.²⁵ The usual concern for eloquence is here directly linked with the Muses but I would suggest that this reference is more than a conventional topos from classical tradition. Historically the Muses were never presented as having personalities. As Curtius points out, they were thought of as incarnation of

READING MEDIEVAL STUDIES

a purely intellectual principle. Similarly I would suggest that Skelton's invocation of the Muses refers to a personification or incarnation of the traditions of classical literature. Thus, when establishing his claim to fame in *The Garland*, he produces the historians by name to validate his activity. But in the *Northumberland Elegy* he invokes the spirit of these writers personified as *Clio* as a branch of public writing:

Of noble actes aunciently enrolde
Of famous pryncis and lordes of astate,
By thy report ar wont to be extold,
Regestringe trewly every formare date.
Of thy bounty after the usuall rate
Kyndell in me such plenty of thy nobles
These sorowfulle dities that I may shew expres. (15-21)

Similarly, in the Latin epitaph on Henry VII, he appeals to 'Tristia Melpomones' and in the *Eulogium pro suorum temporum conditione* and the poem at the end of the *Speculum Principis* he appeals to *Calliope*. He does so confidently because these appeals are not empty gestures but rather formal supplications to branches of ancient literary tradition:

Huc, pia Calliope, propera, mea casta puella,
Et mecum resona camina plena deo.²⁶

One of the effects of the confidence which this extrapolated pedigree gave him was the creation of a poetry of courtly compliment the decorum of which was not rivalled until Ben Jonson took up the mantle of King's Poet in 1616.

VINCENT GILLESPIE,
ST ANNE'S COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.



READING MEDIEVAL STUDIES

NOTES

1. All references to Skelton's poetry are to the edition by A. Dyce, The Poetical Works of John Skelton, with Notes and Some Account of the Author and his Writings, 2 vols., London 1843. This reference i, 220.
2. The traditional view is also well expressed by Boccaccio; see C.G. Osgood, Boccaccio on Poetry, Princeton 1930, esp. pp.46-8, 76, 99. The traditional view was challenged by Dominican thought, and the conflict between them is typified by the debate between Albertino Mussato and the Dominican Giovanino of Mantua in 1315; see E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. W.R. Trask, London 1953, pp.214-21.
3. On the Muses, see Curtius, ibid., pp.228-246, and articles cited there (229, n.1.).
4. The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton, ed. W.J.B. Crotch, E.E.T.S. (O.S.) 176, London 1928, p.109.
5. The Bibliotheca Historica of Diodorus Siculus translated by John Skelton, ed. F.M. Salter and H.L.R. Edwards, 2 vols., E.E.T.S. (O.S.), 233, 239, London 1956-7, ii, p.xxii.
6. Dyce, i, 197. On the theory of poetry as perpetuation of subject and poet, see Curtius, op.cit., Excursus IX, 476-7.
7. M. Pollet, John Skelton: Poet of Tudor England, trans. J. Warrington, London 1971, pp.65-6.
8. The Bibliotheca Historica, i, 358. The discussion of Erato speaks of her 'promocioun' of scholars to the favour of Royal Princes that they might 'attheyne unto the spirytyal rowme of prelecye or other temporal promocioun ...' Quoted Pollet, op.cit., p.12.
9. G. Kipling, 'John Skelton and Burgundian letters', in Ten Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations, ed. J. van Dorsten, Publications of the Sir Thomas Browne Institute, G.S.5, Leiden 1974, pp.1-29, this comment p.2; The Triumph of Honour, Publications of the Sir Thomas Browne Institute, G.S.6, Leiden 1977.
10. See the review of The Triumph of Honour by Frances Yates in T.L.S., 23 June 1978, p.696.

READING MEDIEVAL STUDIES

11. N.F. Blake, Caxton and his World, London 1969, pp.30-48; The Triumph of Honour, pp.33-6.
12. Kipling, 'John Skelton', p.3; The Triumph of Honour, p.18.
13. Kipling, 'John Skelton', p.12.
14. F.M. Salter, 'Skelton's Speculum Principis', Speculum 9 (1934), 25-37, this quotation p.37.
15. D. Pearsall, John Lydgate, London 1970, pp.160ff.
16. The Pastime of Pleasure by Stephen Hawes, ed. W.G. Mead, E.E.T.S. (O.S.) 173, London 1928, p.31, ll.655-8.
17. Ibid., p.36, ll.778-84.
18. R.S. Kinsman and T. Yonge, John Skelton: Canon and Census, Renaissance Society of America Bibliographies and Indexes, 4 (1967), 9.
19. Skelton's use of classical tradition in the author list is pointed out in R. Skelton, 'The Master Poet: John Skelton as Conscious Craftsman', Mosaic 6 (1973), 67-92. The details of our arguments are quite different; in particular Skelton wishes to conflate the pagan and Christian traditions of inspiration which I try to distinguish.
20. J.H. Lupton, A life of John Colet D.D., London 1909, pp.271-84; on Melancthon, see R.R. Bolgar, The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries, Cambridge 1954, p.348.
21. Curtius, op.cit., pp.48-54, 256-72. On p.256 he comments that 'The formation of a canon serves to safeguard a tradition'.
22. The leading medieval curriculum lists are the Laborintus by Edward the German (printed by E. Faral, Les arts poétiques du XII^e et du XIII^e siècles, Paris 1924, pp.358-61) and the list by Conrad of Hirsau (Curtius, op.cit., p.49.
23. Bolgar, op.cit., p.337, paraphrasing Erasmus.
24. A.C. Spearing, Medieval Dream-Poetry, Cambridge 1976, argues that 'the dream-poem becomes a device for expressing the poet's consciousness of himself as poet and for making his work reflexive'.

READING MEDIEVAL STUDIES

25. The translation is that provided in The Complete Poems of John Skelton, Laureate, ed. P. Henderson, 4th ed., London 1964, p.394.
26. Henderson, ibid., p.435.