

**Victoria, McPherson Library, MS.Eng.1**  
**Acc. 1977-005**  
**John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes***  
**England s. XV<sup>2</sup>**

ff. 1r – 122v

¶Emonge theis Bochas writeth of swetnes ... And of þeir citi almost subuersion

Lydgate, John. *Fall of Princes*. 4 vols. Edited by Henry Bergen, Early English Text Society e.s. 121-124, London, 1924-27.

**Codicology**

122 folios. I-IX<sup>12</sup> (I wants 1) + X<sup>10</sup> + 1 singleton + 1 bifolium + 2 half sheets, and wanting four leaves at end of manuscript. Paper and parchment throughout, with parchment on outermost and innermost leaves of each quire, except first quire (where first leaf is missing) and end of manuscript (where singleton following quire X is parchment but the following bifolium and half leaves are paper). In total 82 surviving folia are paper, 40 parchment. Leaves are 260 x 350mm, two columns per page (90 x 300mm, 60-70 text lines per column). Paper has two distinct watermarks (see Badke, “Watermarks”). Despite lacking first leaf, medieval foliation starts at ‘1’ indicating that the first page may have been lost early in the manuscript’s history. Medieval foliation in black ink stops at f. 105; modern pencil foliation in bottom left margins.

**Hand and Decoration**

One scribe for main text throughout (with the exception of some marginal notations and corrections); scribe is also the rubricator. Fifteenth-century English secretary hand. Minimal decoration. Red paraps mark the start of each seven-line stanza (no space between stanzas); rubricated titles in Latin at the start of sections; large blue initials at the start of each section (though initials in red appear on ff. 26rb, 55ra, 55rb, 80vb).

**Contents**

Manuscript contains only John Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes* and begins at Book I.120. Book II begins at f. 27, Book III at f. 44v, Book V on f. 72v, Book VI on f. 83, Book VII on f. 94v, Book VIII on f. 100v, and Book IX on f. 112. Book III ends imperfectly on f. 61r, where the text stops after fourteen lines in column a and then picks up again halfway through column a on f. 61v; the beginning of Book IV is missing, and the scribe evidently left space planning to provide the text at some point in the future. The manuscript ends 901 lines before the end of Book IX, at IX.2727, indicating that four leaves (13-16 columns) are missing. Text is continuous to last verso.

**Binding**

Previously bound in seventeenth-century leather binding; disbound by University of Victoria for restoration purposes and now housed in archival folders that do not correspond to quires (see just below). Leaves were edged in red ink after trimming, creating a red mottled effect when all leaves are viewed closed together.

### **Damage and Restoration**

Due to extensive water damage and purple mold, the book could not be closed at the time of acquisition. The manuscript was disbound and repaired by local Victoria conservator Jean Topham. After the leaves were removed from the binding, they were cleaned and washed with an alkaline solution to eliminate mold, pressed to flatten, and an archival rice paper was used to repair and reinforce missing and damaged areas of paper while modern parchment was grafted to the medieval parchment sheets. The seventeenth-century binding was unfortunately discarded after restoration (see Badke, "Restoration"). Several leaves that were not originally attached were grafted together in the restoration process, creating a false sense of bifolia arrangements, and the current housing separates parchment and paper leaves rather than quires. Lasting damage is concentrated on the edges of leaves, and text loss is not extensive. Some marginal annotations and corrections are lost due to trimming at the time of binding (either originally or in the seventeenth century). A small rectangle of paper (about 90 mm long) has been cut from the bottom left corner of f. 80r, and marks visible on ff. 77-79 indicate that the cut was braced against these pages.

### **Provenance**

Sold at Sotheby's 14 July 1947 (lot 181), and purchased by University of Victoria from the family of the 1947 buyer in 1977.

### **Works Consulted**

- Badke, David. "Restoration." *University of Victoria Lydgate MS Fall of Princes*. UVic Special Collections, 10 May 2001. Accessed 9 November 2016.  
<http://spcoll.library.uvic.ca/Digit/lydgate/lydgatems/pages/manuscript/manuscriptframe.htm>
- . "Watermarks." *University of Victoria Lydgate MS Fall of Princes*. UVic Special Collections, 10 May 2001. Accessed 9 November 2016.  
<http://spcoll.library.uvic.ca/Digit/lydgate/lydgatems/pages/manuscript/manuscriptframe.htm>
- Edwards, Anthony S. G. "Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*: A 'Lost' Manuscript Found." *Manuscripta*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1978, pp. 176-178.
- Lydgate, John. *Fall of Princes*. 4 vols. Edited by Henry Bergen, Early English Text Society e.s. 121-124, London, 1924-27.

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**Description by Megan Kazakoff, December 2016, as part of coursework for a manuscript studies class with Dr. Adrienne Williams Boyarin (ENGL).**