

Victoria, McPherson Library, MS.Eng.1
Acc. 1977-005
John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*
England s. XV²

ff. 1r – 122v

¶Emonge theis Bochas writeth of swetnes ... And of eir citi almost subu sion

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

Codicology

122 folios. I-IX¹² (I wants 1) + X¹⁰ + 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

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