

The Life of Our Lady

Date: 1409-1411(?)

Manuscripts Surviving: 47

Source:

Commissioned by: Prince Hal

Lines: 6,000 (seven line stanzas)

Standard Editions: *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate's Life of Our Lady*, edited by Joseph A. Lauritis, Ralph A. Klinefelter, and Vernon F. Gallagher, Duquesne Studies Philological Series 2 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1961)

Synopsis:

Troy Book

Date: 1412-1420

Manuscripts Surviving: 20+

Source: Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* (1287)

Commissioned by: Prince Hal

Lines: 30,000 (pentameter couples)

Standard Editions: *Troy Book*, edited by Jenry Bergen, 4 volumes, EETS, e.s. 97, 103, 106, and 126 (1906-1935; reprinted 1973)

Synopsis: Troy Book consists of five books and traces the story of Troy from before the capture of Hesione by the Greeks to the exploits after the fall of the city.

Fall of Princes

Date: 1431-1439

Manuscripts Surviving: 34 (plus numerous extracts)

Source: Giovanni Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355-1360)

Commissioned by: Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester

Lines: 36,365

Standard Editions: *Fall of Princes*, edited by Henry Bergen, 4 volumes (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Institution, 1923-1927) and EETS, e.s. 121-124 (1924-1927; reprinted 1967)

Synopsis:

The Dictionary of National Biography calls the *Fall of Princes* "an encyclopedia of cautionary tales." The tales are derived from myth and history and encompass the times of Adam and Eve to much later events such as the capture of King John of France in 1356. Throughout the book, Lydgate underscores the importance distrust in the things of this world in order to keep Fortune at bay. Lydgate's fortune is the hand of God: punishing the sinful and rewarding the virtuous.

The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man

Date: 1426-1430

Manuscripts Surviving: 3 (2 Fragments)

Source: Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*

Commissioned by: Earl of Salisbury

Lines: 25,000

Standard Editions: *Deguileville's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, 3 volumes, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall and Katharine B. Locock, EETS, e.s. 77, 83 & 92 (1899-1904; reprinted 1973)

Synopsis:

The Temple of Glas

Date: 1403?

Manuscripts Surviving: 9

Source: Chaucer's *House of Fame*

Commissioned by:

Lines: 1,4000

Standard Editions: *The Temple of Glas*, edited by Joseph Schick, EETS, e.s. 60 (1891; reprinted 1924, 1973). In *John Lydgate: Poems*, edited by Norton-Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1966)

Synopsis:

The Siege of Thebes

Date: 1420-1422

Manuscripts Surviving: 30

Source: *Roman de Thebes* (French Prose Romance 12th century)

Commissioned by:

Lines: 4,700 (iambic pentameter couplets)

Standard Editions: *The Siege of Thebes*, 2 volumes, edited by Axel Erdmann and Eilert Ekwall, EETS, e.s. 108 (1911; reprinted 1960) and e.s. 125 (1930; reprinted 1973)

Synopsis:

The Siege of Thebes is Lydgate's "Canterbury Tale." It is meant to be a companion piece to Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale," taking place before Chaucer's story begins. In Part I, he describes the founding of Thebes by Amphioun, the story of Oedipus, and the dispute between Eteocles and Polyneices. During these stories, Lydgate inserts advices to contemporary princes. Part II describes the events prior to the siege centering around the lives of Eteocles and Polyneices. Lydgate's hero is an Caledonian prince, Tydeus, who is in exile for killing his brother. In Part III, the Greeks decide to make war on Thebes and Lydgate makes comments both directly and indirectly on the foolishness of war. Tydeus is killed by an arrow, and Eteocles and Polyneices die shortly after.

Reson and Sensuallyte

Date: 1408

Manuscripts Surviving: 2

Source:

Commissioned by:

Lines: 7,000 (couplets)[unfinished]

Standard Editions: *Reson and Sensuallyte*, edited by Enst Sieper, 2 volumes, EETS, e.s. 84 & 89 (1901-1903; reprinted 1965)

Synopsis:

The Serpent of Division

Date: 1422

Manuscripts Surviving: 5

Source:

Commissioned by:

Lines:

Standard Editions: *The Serpent of Division*, edited by Henry Noble MacCracken (London: Frowde/ New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911)

Synopsis:

The Daunce of Machabree

Date: 1426-1430

Manuscripts Surviving: 15 (7 without prologue)

Source: French wall painting accompanied by versified dialogues between the living and the dead (1424).

Commissioned by:

Lines: 700 (stanza)

Standard Editions: *The Dance of Death*, edited by Florence Warren and Beatrice White, EETS, o.s. 181 (1931; reprinted 1971)

Synopsis:

Lives of St. Edmund and St. Fremund

Date: 1433

Manuscripts Surviving: 13

Source:

Commissioned by: for presentation to Henry VI on his official visit to Bury Saint Edmunds

Lines: 3,700 (rime royal)

Standard Editions: "John Lydgate's Saint Edmund and Saint Fremund: An Annotated Edition," edited by James I. Miller. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1967

Synopsis:

The Lives of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal

Date: 1433

Manuscripts Surviving: 13

Source:

Commissioned by: Abbot of St. Albans

Lines: 4,700 (sevens)

Standard Editions: "John Lydgate's Saint Edmund and Saint Fremund: An Annotated Edition," edited by James I. Miller. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1967

Synopsis:

Secrees of the Old Philisoffres

Date: 1446

Manuscripts Surviving: 20

Source: *Secreta Secretorum*

Commissioned by:

Lines: 1,500

Standard Editions: *Secrees of the Old Philisoffres*, edited by Robert Steele, EETS, e.s. 66 (1894; reprinted 1973)

Synopsis:

“A version of the so-called advice of Aristotle” *Secreta Scretorum* was a compilation of advice on political and ethical concerns and was claimed to be advice from Aristotle to Alexander.

The Testament of Lydgate**Date:** 1448-1449**Manuscripts Surviving:** 12 (some fragments)**Source:****Commissioned by:****Lines:** 900 (stanza)**Standard Editions:** The Testament of Lydgate in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, edited by Henry Noble MacCracken, volume 1, EETS, e.s. 107 (1911; reprinted, 1962)**Synopsis:**