

## LONDON LICKPENNY.

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The two copies of this poem which have thus far been discovered exist in two mss. of the Harleian Collection, preserved in the British Museum. Of these manuscripts, one is numbered 367, the other 542; both are miscellaneous collections mainly in hands of the latter 16<sup>th</sup> and earlier 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The two texts represent two different recensions, as will appear from the accompanying parallel reprint.

Harley 542 is described in the Harleian Catalogue as "A book in 4<sup>to</sup>, containing part of the Collections of Mr. John Stowe; almost all written by his own hand". — "London Lickpenny" is found on foll. 102—104a, in Stow's scratchy needle-like handwriting, with title and colophon as here indicated, but with no mention of Lydgate as the author. The manuscript as a whole is contemporary with Stow († 1605), and contains 168 leaves.

In Stow's *Survey of London* he twice quotes from this poem, printing small portions, and stating that it is by Lydgate. That he knew only the recension which he himself had copied is evident from his comment on the traffic of Cheapside, where he mentions both in the text and in a foot note that Lydgate speaks of no silks as on sale there. The recension of the poem as preserved in Harley 367, where silks are included in the list of Stanza 10, was plainly unknown to him.

W. J. Thoms, in his edition of Stow's *Survey*, London 1842, considers that Stow has here fallen into error, since silks are spoken of in the poem as on sale in "Chepe". Thoms however consulted the recension of Harley 367, printed in 1840 by Halliwell, and previously; while Stow cited from the only version known to him, that preserved by himself in Harley 542. As the two recensions differ on this point, it is Thoms who errs rather than Stow.

The volume Harley 367 is described in the Harleian Catalogue as "A Book in fol. wherein are contained many Papers & Fragments, with various Poems, written by the hands of Mr. John Stowe, and others; now bound up together." — The various written and printed pieces which go to make up this collection are either of Stow's own age or of the first third of the seventeenth century; none date earlier. On fol. 162 are verses written on Prince Charles' visit to Spain, after 1623; and the book includes a copy (printed) of the licence to beg, granted by James I to Stow, and dated March 8, 1603. Connected copying in Stow's hand ceases with fol. 87, though fol. 144 contains a transcription listed in the catalogue's table of contents as by him. The version of "London Lickpenny" which is here found is written on foll. 127 and 126, in a loose scrawling hand either contemporary with Stow's or a little later. Fol. 126 is imperfect, wanting the lower half; and from this fact and from the manner in which the copying is carried from 127 back to 126 we may perhaps infer that the ballad was a later entry into the book, inserted into a limited space.

On the other hand, as these two leaves are of thinner paper than the larger part of this very nondescript volume, it is also possible that they may be bound up here quite apart from their original connection. In either case the handwriting is plainly of the period above indicated, and Dr. Gattinger's linking of Shirley's name with the MS. heading of this particular poem is quite incomprehensible. [*Die Lyrik Lydgate's*. Dr. E. Gattinger. Wien u. Leipzig. 1896. See page 80.]

This recension of London Lickpenny has been occasionally corrected in a hand later than that of the scribe. A list of these later emendations is subjoined to the text as here given.

That they were made after the volume was bound is evident from the footnote to fol. 127, b. and the heading to fol. 126, a. [See list following.] Beside these later corrections to the text, the original scribe made various slight alterations and additions to his copy, which are included, in parentheses, in the text here printed, and commented upon in the footnotes.

This Harl. 367 recension has been several times printed, viz.; —

By Joseph Strutt, in his “Horda Angel-cynnan: or a Com-  
pleat View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits, etc.  
of the Inhabitants of England, etc.” 2 vols. 4<sup>o</sup>,  
London. 1775—6.

By David Hughson, in his “London, being an accurate  
History and Description of the British Metropolis and  
its Neighbourhood to thirty miles extent, from an  
actual perambulation. By David Hughson, Ll. D.  
London. 1805. 6 vols.

“London Lickpenny” is printed in a note, by way  
of illustration, in vol. 2, pp. 124—127. [The above  
print is that mentioned by J. O. Halliwell, in a remark  
accompanying his own reprint, as by Pugh. Hughson  
was a Welshman, and Welsh *P* is English *H*.]

By Sir Harris Nicolas, in the appendix to his edition of  
the Chronicle of London”, London, 1827, 2 vols. 4<sup>o</sup>.  
[Both MS. versions printed.]

By J. O. Halliwell, in his edition of Lydgate’s Minor poems,  
London, for the Percy Society, 1840.

By W. W. Skeat, in his “Specimens of English Literature  
... A. D. 1394 to A. D. 1579”, Oxford, 1871, fifth  
edition 1890.

By Henry Morley in his collection entitled “Shorter Eng-  
lish Poems”, forming volume I of his “Library of  
English Literature”, — Cassell and Co., n. d., but dated  
by Sonnenschein as 1876—82, reprinted 1883—86.

By H. M. Fitzgibbon, in his chrestomathy entitled "Early English Poetry", London 1887, and New York 1888. Fitzgibbon uses the title "London Lackpenny", probably in imitation of Halliwell, who in his reprint altered the heading to that form because of the refrain of the poem. The suggestive force of the real title is pointed out by Prof. Skeat in a note accompanying his reprint.

Portions are also printed in handbooks such as Chambers' *Cyclopaedia of English Literature*, first edition 1843, fourth edition 1892; in Beeton's *Great Book of Poetry*, in Routledge's *Family Library of British Poetry*, edited by Fields and Whipple, Boston. 1878, &c. The above mentioned compilations each give eight stanzas of the poem; Mr. A. W. Tuer, in his book on *Old London Cries*, London, no date, inserts three stanzas and two lines; and Mr. T. H. Ward, in the first volume of his *English Poets*, 1880 and 1883, prints nine stanzas.

All assign the poem to Lydgate.

The recension Harley 542 has been once printed, by Sir Harris Nicolas, in the third work of the list above cited.

From the heading of the poem in MS. Harl. 367, which is in the same handwriting as the body of the ballad, it will appear that this recension does not profess to be Lydgate's own composition, but to be "now newly oū' sene and amended" from his original.

Just what this revision and emendation may have meant to the scribe we cannot tell. It may have had reference merely to the few slight corrections and additions made by himself in copying; but in view of the trivial nature of these changes, half of which were carried out immediately, and without the use of a caret, it seems more probable that the transcriber, writing as he did in an age of inexactness, referred in his heading to alterations more extensive than these. If the two recensions of the poem are placed side by side, another explanation of his words suggests itself. It is possible to derive the 7-line stanzas of Harley 367 from the 8-line stanzas of Harley 542, by a process of omission. If we refuse

to entertain this possibility, we shall still have to account for the existence of two versions, one in seven-line stanzas and one in eight-line stanzas, of a single body of material. If on the other hand we examine the possibility that the recension Harl. 367 is derived from the recension Harl. 542 or its prototype, we have the following data: —

The rime scheme of Harl. 542 is *ababbcbc*; that of Harl. 367 is *ababbcc*. An adaptation of the former to the latter may be effected by the omission of one of the *b*-rimes, either l. 7, l. 4, or l. 5. Line 7 is omitted in stanzas 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, and 16; line 5 is omitted in stanzas 6, 13, and 15; line 4 is omitted in stanza 8. Where the fourth or fifth line is omitted, a transposition of lines 6 and 7 becomes necessary to give the proper rime-sequence; and this transposition is carried out accordingly in stanzas 6, 8, 13, and 15. Other changes are the combination of two lines into one, as in stanza 4, where the rime of the 5<sup>th</sup> line (*a*-rime) is omitted; and the more extensive alterations in stanzas 5, 7, and especially 10, in all which cases the rime words are changed, apparently to get rid of the words *qui tollis*, *woon*, and *umple*. Line 7 of stanza 10 (Harl. 542) is transferred to stanza 11 of the shorter recension, where it does not fit well with the context; and the omission of line 7 occasionally produces a slight break in the sense, as in stanzas 3, 12, and somewhat less so in 14 and 16.

Further we may note that the text offered by Harl. 542 is decidedly more archaic in language than is the other recension. The substitution of later for older syntactical constructions, and the dropping of obsolescent words (*woon*, *umple*, *hewre* — for *hure* —, and *melwell*), are noticeable features of Harl. 367.

Stow probably took liberties with the text he was transcribing, as was his usual failing. The occasional slight obscurities of Harl. 542 may be due either to him or to his original; in reading passages such as lines 100 and 103 we feel that *in westminstar* and *agayne* were explanatory additions to the text from which Stow copied; but both recensions are late copies, and it is hardly possible to draw trustworthy conclusions as to their exact relationship.

One fact however may be definitely and confidently stated: neither recension can be by John Lydgate.<sup>1</sup>

The external evidence for his authorship is all centred in John Stow and the unknown scribe of Harl. 367: it therefore does not reach back further than 1560, if so far. The value of John Stow's unsupported statement on a point of this sort is nothing at all; one has only to glance at his Chaucer, of 1561, to form a conclusion as to his judgment in matters literary. And the statement of an unknown seventeenth century scribe, whether independent or following Stow, is also of no weight unless corroborated by internal evidence.

In this matter of internal evidence, there is not a shred to render Lydgate's authorship probable. Not only are all the Lydgatian hall-marks of style conspicuously absent, — with the sole exception of the common mediaeval refrain, — but the poem is direct, spirited, colloquial, and free from any trace of moralizing or padding. Lydgate, even in his lighter and more jocose moods (as I hope to show before long by reprinting other bits of his work), presents always the same unmistakable peculiarities of style — of a style the complete opposite of that here shown. That a series of reprints, beginning with the year 1775, should have firmly connected this poem with Lydgate's name, is but one of the freaks of literature; the existence of such a series of reprints does not, however, add a jot to the evidence for Lydgate as author of the poem. Professor ten Brink expressed his doubts on the subject of "*London Lickpenny*" in a note to the second volume of his history of English literature; his conclusion is disputed by Dr. E. Gattinger of Vienna in the work previously cited, p. 80, although no reason is there assigned for the contradiction except the plainly insufficient one that tradition has always regarded Lydgate as the author. The value and antiquity of this tradition may be estimated from the foregoing facts; Professor ten Brink is fully borne out in his declaration that this ballad is "above all, assuredly no work of Lydgate's, at all events not in the form it has come down to us".

<sup>1</sup> And it must be noted that if either of the two texts be claimed for Lydgate, it cannot be that of Harley 367, usually printed as his; Stow's evidence, such as it is, is for the recension of Harley 542, copied by himself.

[MS. Harley 542, foll. 102—104 a.]

london licpenye /

- [1] In london there I was bent  
 I saw my selfe, where truthe shuld be ateynte  
 fast to westminstar ward I went  
 to a man of lawe, to make my complaynt  
 I sayd for maris love, that holy seynt [5]  
 have pity on the powre, that would procede  
 I would gyve (sylvar), but my purs is faynt  
 for lacke of money, I may not spede /  
 As I thrust thru
- [Fol. 102b]
- [2] As I thrust thrughe out the thronge  
 amonge them all, my hode was gonn [10]  
 netheles I let not longe,  
 to kyngs benche tyll I come  
 by fore a juge I kneled anon  
 I prayd hym for gods sake he would take hede  
 full rewfully to hym I gan make my mone [15]  
 for lacke of money I may not spede /
- [3] benethe hym sat clerks, a great Rowt  
 fast they written by one assent  
 there stode vp one, and cryed round about  
 Richard Robert and one of Kent [20]  
 I wist not wele what he ment  
 he cried so thiike there in dede  
 there were stronge theves shamed & shent  
 but they that lacked money mowght not spede /
- [4] vnto the comon place I yowde thoo [25]  
 where sat one with a sylken houde

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In l. 7, the word *money* was first written by the scribe, then crossed out, and *sylvar* written.

[MS. Harley 367, foll. 127–126 b.]

London Lyckpenny A Ballade compyled  
by Dan John Lydgate monke of Bery  
about yeres agoe, and now newly  
ou'sene and amended.

[MS. leaves a blank space between *about* and *yeres*.]

- [1] To london once my stepps I bent  
where trouth in no wyse should be faynt  
To westmynster ward I forthw<sup>th</sup> went  
to a man of law to make complaynt  
I sayd for marys love that holy saynt [5]  
pyty the poore that wold pceede  
but for lack of mony I cold not spede.

- [2] (and) as I thrust the prese amonge  
by froward chavnce, my hood was gone  
yet for all that I stayd not longe [10]  
tyll to the kynges bench, I was com  
before the Judge I kneled anon  
and prayd h̄y for gods sake to take heede  
but for lack of mony I myght not speede.

- [3] Beneth them sat clarkes a great Rout [15]  
which fast dyd wryte by one assent  
There stode vp one and cryed about  
Rychard, Robert, and John of Kent  
I wyst not well what this man ment  
he cryed so thicke there in dede, [20]  
but he that lackt mony myght not spede /

- [4] Vnto the comon place I yode thoo  
where sat one w<sup>th</sup> a sylken hoode

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In l. 8, the *and* is written above *but*, which the scribe crossed out.



I dyd hym reverence as me ought to do  
 I tolde hym my case, as well as I coude  
 and seyde all my goods by nowrd and by sowde  
 I am defraudyd with great falshed [30]  
 he would not geve me a momme of his mouthe  
 for lake of money, I may not spede /

[5] Then I went me vnto the Rollis  
 before the clerks of the chauncerie  
 there were many qui tollis [35]  
 but I herd no man speke of me  
 before them I knelyd vpon my kne  
 shewyd them myne evidence & they began to reade  
 they seyde trewer things might there nevar be  
 but for lacke of money I may not spede / [40]  
 In westminstar

[Fol. 103 a]

[6] In westminster hall I found one  
 went in a longe gowne of Ray  
 I crowched I kneled before them anon  
 for marys love of helpe I gan them pray  
 as he had be wrothe, he voyded away [45]  
 bakward, his hand he gan me byd  
 I wot not what thou menest gan he say  
 ley downe sylvar, or here thow may not spede /

[7] [In all westminsta' hall I could find nevar a one  
 that for me would do, thowghe I shuld dye [50]

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In l. 49, the scribe, anticipating the *-all* of *hall*, wrote *Westminstall*,  
 — then crossed out the *-ll* and made the *r* curl above.

I dyd hym reverence (for) I ought to do so  
 & told my case as well as I coolde [25]  
 (how) my goode were defravded me by falshood  
 I gat not a mvm of his mouth for my meed  
 and for lack of mony I myght not spede.

Vnto the Rolls I gat me from thence  
 before the Clarkes of the Chavncery [30]  
 where many I found earnyng of pence  
 but none at all once regarded mee.  
 I gave them my playnt vppon my knee  
 they lyked it well, when they had it reade  
 but lackyng mony I could not be sped [35]

[Fol. 127 b]

London Lyckepeny

[title repeated]

- [6] In westmynster hall I fovnd out one  
 which went in a long gown of Raye  
 I crowched and kneled before hy anon  
 for Maryes love of help, I hym praye  
 I wot not what thou meanest gan he say [40]  
 to get me thence he dyd me bede  
 (For) lack of mony I cold not speede.
- [7] w'hin thise hall nether rych nor yett poore  
 wold do for me ought, although I shold dye

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In l. 24 the scribe wrote, after *reverenc*, *þ do*, then crossed it out and finished the line with *I ought to do so*, inserting the *for* above with a caret.

In l. 26 *how* is written above an illegible word which the scribe has crossed out.

In l. 39, Skeat's footnote (loc. cit. edit. 1890, p. 25) as to the MS. reading is not correct.

In l. 42, the scribe began the line with *but*, then crossed it out and continued with *for*.

In l. 43 the second word is either *thise* or *the*; one word has been written upon the other.

w'tout þ<sup>e</sup> dores, were flemings grete woon  
 vpon me fast they gan to cry  
 and sayd mastar what will ye copen or by  
 fine felt hatts, spectacles for to rede  
 of this gay gere, a great cause why [55]  
 for lake of money I might not spede /

[8] Then to westminster gate I went  
 when the sone was at highe prime  
 Cokes to me, they toke good entent  
 called me nere, for to dyne [60]  
 and proferyd me good brede ale & wyne  
 a fayre clothe they began to sprede  
 rybbes of befe, bothe fat and fine  
 büt for lacke of money I might not spede /

[9] In to london I gan me hy [65]  
 of all the lond it beareth the prise  
 hot pescods, one gan cry  
 strabery rype, and chery in the ryse  
 one bad me come nere and by some spice  
 pepar and saffron they gan me bedde [70]  
 clove, grayns, and flowre of Rise  
 for lacke of money I might not spede /  
 Then in to chepe

[Fol. 103 b]

[10] Then into Chepe I gan me drawne  
 where I sawe stond moche people [74]  
 one bad me come nere, and by fine cloth of lawne  
 paris thred, Coton, and vuple  
 I seyde there vpon I could no skyle  
 I am not wont there to in dede  
 one bad me by an hewre, my hed to hele  
 for lake of money I might not spede [80]

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The *hewre* of l. 79 is again written in the margin in another hand.

which seing, I gat me out of the doore [45]  
 where flemynge began on me for to cry  
 master what will you copen or by  
 fyne felt hatte or spectacles to reede  
 lay down yo<sup>r</sup> sylver and here you may speede

[8] then to westmȳster gate I p<sup>r</sup>esently went [50]  
 when the sonn was at hyghe pryme  
 Cookes to me, they tooke good entent  
 and pfered me bread w<sup>th</sup> ale and wyne  
 rybbs of befe both fat and ful fyne  
 a fayre cloth they gan for to sprede [55]  
 but wantyng mony I myght not speede.

[9] Then vnto London I dyd me hye  
 of all the land it beareth the pryse  
 Hot pescape one began to crye  
 stabery rype and cherryes in the ryse [60]  
 one bad me come nere and by some spyce  
 peper and safforne they gan me bede  
 but for lack of mony I myght not spede.

[10] Then to the Chepe I gan me drawne  
 where mutch people I saw for to stand [65]  
 one ofred me velvet sylke and lawne  
 an other he taketh me by the hande,  
 here is parys thred the fynest in the land  
 I never was used to such thyng in dede  
 and wantyng mony I myght not spede. [70]

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In l. 56 a word is crossed out before *speede*, and *be* inserted, in later hand, with a caret. Skeat reads the scored word as *then*; it seems to be *pre*, probably for *sprede*, — see l. 55.

- [11] Then went I forth by london stone  
 Thrwghe out all canywikie strete  
 drapers to me they called anon  
 grete chepe of clothe, they gan me hete [84]  
 then come there one, and cried hot shepes fete  
 Risshes faire & grene, an othar began to grete  
 both melwell and makarcll I gan mete  
 but for lacke of money I myght not spede /
- [12] Then I hied me into estchepe  
 one cried ribes of befe, and many a pie [90]  
 pewtar potts they clatteryd on a heape  
 ther was harpe pipe and sawtry  
 ye by cokke, nay by cokke some began to cry  
 some sange of Jenken and Julian, to get them selvs mede  
 full fayne I wold hadd of that mýnstralsie [95]  
 but for lacke of money I cowld not spede /
- [13] Into Cornhill anon I yode  
 where is moche stolne gere amonge  
 I saw wher henge myne owne hode  
 that I had lost in westminstar amonge þ<sup>e</sup> throng  
 then I beheld it with lokes full longe [101]  
 I kenned it as well as I dyd my crede  
 to by myne owne hode agayne, me thought it wrong  
 but for lacke of money I might not spede /  
 Then cam' þ<sup>e</sup>
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[Fol. 126a]

[11] Then went I forth by London stone  
 throughout all Canwyke streete  
 Drapers mutch cloth me offred anone  
 then (comes me) one cryed hot shepes feete [74]  
 one cryde makerell Ryshes (grene) an other gan greete  
 on bad me by a hood to cover my head  
 but for want of mony I myght not be sped /

[12] Then I hyed me Into Estchepe  
 one cryes rybbs of befe, & many a pye  
 Pewter pottes they clattered on a heape [80]  
 there was harpe, pype, and mynstralsye  
 yea by cock nay by cock some began crye  
 Som songe of Jenken and Julyan for there mede  
 But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

[13] Then Into Cornhyll anon I yode. [85]  
 where (was) mvch stolen gere amonge  
 I saw where honge myne owne hooode  
 that I had lost amonge the thronge.  
 to by my own hood I thought it wronge  
 I knew it well as I dyd my crede [90]  
 but for lack of mony I could not spede.

In l. 73 *to* has been crossed out before *me*.

In l. 74 *comes me* is written above *met I*, which is crossed out. The alteration is in the scribe's hand, apparently.

In l. 75 the scribe has inserted *grene* above, with a caret. The first 4 lines of Stanza 11 are written at the bottom of fol. 127b. Then the scribe, seeing he had not space enough, crossed them out and began the stanza again on fol. 126a. See list of later corrections.

In l. 86 *was* is written by the scribe above *is*, which he crossed out.

[Fol. 104 a]

- [14] Then came the taverner, and toke my by þ<sup>e</sup> sleve  
 and seyde ser a pint of wyn would yow assay  
 syr quod I it may not greve [107]  
 for a peny may do no more then it may  
 I drank a pint, and therefore gan pay  
 sore a hungred away I yede  
 for well london lykke peny for ones & eye  
 for lake of money I may not spede / [112]

- [15] Then I hyed me to byllingesgate  
 and cried wagge wagge yow hens  
 I praye a barge man for gods sake [115]  
 that they would spare me myn expens  
 he sayde ryse vp man, and get the hens  
 what wenist thou I will do on þ<sup>e</sup> my almes dede  
 here skapethe no man, by nethe ij. pens  
 for lacke of money I myght not spede / [120]

- [16] Them I conveyed me into Kent,  
 for of the law would I medle no more  
 by caus no man to me would take entent  
 I dight me to the plowe, even as I ded before  
 Ihūs save london, that in bethelem was bore [125]  
 and every trew man of law god graunt hym so<sup>l</sup>s med  
 and they that be othar, god theyr state restore  
 for he that lackethe money, w<sup>t</sup> them he shall not spede /

Explicit london likke peny /

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In l. 118 the *my* is crossed out, and *no* written above in a later hand.

- [14] The Taverner tooke mee by the sleve  
 S' sayth he wyll you o' wyne assay  
 I answerd, that can not mvтч me greve  
 a peny can do no more then it may [95]  
 I drank a pynt & for it dyd paye  
 yet sore a hungerd frō thence I yede  
 and wantynyng mony I cold not spede /

[Fol. 126b]

- [15] Then hyed I me to Belyngsgate  
 and one cryed hoo go we hence [100]  
 I prayd a barge man for gods sake  
 that he wold spare me my expence  
 Thou scapst not here q<sup>d</sup> he vnder ij pence  
 I lyst not yet bestow my Almes dede  
 thus lackyng mony I could not speede. [105]

- [16] Then I convayd me Into Kent  
 ffor of the law wold I meddle no more  
 be cause no man to me tooke entent  
 I dyght me to do as I dyd before  
 now Jsus that In Bethle' was bore [110]  
 Save london and send trew lawyers there mede  
 for who so wante mony w<sup>th</sup> the' shall not spede,

### Explicit London Lyckpeny

In l. 93 the word *good*, before *wyne*, is crossed out.

In l. 98 the ms. writes the second word as printed.

In l. 104, the word before *Almes* may be either *my* or *any*, more probably the former.



Corrections in the text offered by MS. Harley 367, made in a hand latter than that of the scribe of the poem.

- l. 9. *chaunce* written on margin, in pencil, in quite a modern hand, evidently, because the word in the text is almost undecipherable.
- l. 11. *to* is crossed out and *from* written above; this again is crossed out and *at* written.
- l. 24. *ought to do so* is written on margin in the later hand.
- l. 25. *coolde* is crossed out and *coïd* written.
- l. 43. On the margin, *neither rich nor yett poore*.
- l. 56. *be* is inserted, with a caret, before *speede*.
- l. 64. *began* is written above *gan*.

At the foot of 127, b., below the four lines of Stanza 1 crossed out by the scribe, is written in the later hand *Vid. fol. 126*. At the top of fol. 126. a. is similarly written *Vid. exordium folio sequendi*.

With the exception of the marginal note to l. 9, all the above emendations are apparently in the same handwriting, one later than that of the scribe, but in no sense modern.

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