



The Bordesholm Virgin Mary's Lament | Bordesholmer Marienklage

Text Information

Author | Anonymous

Language | German

Period | 15th Century

Genre | Play

Source | Kiel, UB, cod. Bord. mscr. 53

URL | sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/virgin_mary_lament_bordesholm/

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Introduction to the Text

Dramatic presentations of the Passion of Christ were a widespread and popular genre of medieval religious theater. Rooted in the tropes of the Easter liturgy (the religious texts and rituals performed during church services at Eastertime), Passion plays and Easter dramas became an established part of devotional culture in Western Europe by the High Middle Ages.

The fifteenth-century *Bordesholm Virgin Mary's Lament* translated here is part of this tradition of liturgical drama. It belongs to a popular subgenre of religious plays that focus on the Virgin Mary's grief during the sacrifice of her son on the Cross. Such plays are probably better understood as devotional aids than as a form of artistic expression equivalent to modern theater. They present Mary as a devotional role model whose perspective on the Passion the audience can adopt and whose sorrow and compassion the audience is prompted to emulate in their own meditations on the sufferings of Christ.

The play starts with a summary of the events of Good Friday given by John the Evangelist, who directly addresses the audience and asks for their devotion and prayer (vv. 1–131). After this introduction, the plot starts with a scene of John meeting Mary and ascending to Calvary, where they find the crucified Christ (vv. 131–196). At the foot of the cross, they are joined by Mary Magdalene and Mary's sister, the mother of John the Evangelist. Inspired by the account of the crucifixion given in John 19:25 as well as contemporary visual depictions of the crucifixion group, they mourn together and lament the sufferings of Christ (vv. 197–488). After Christ has entrusted Mary to John and uttered his seven last words, he dies hanging on the cross (vv. 488–596). Struck by grief, Mary laments her child's death, which cuts through her soul in fulfilment of the prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:25–35). John and the other women join her in grieving (vv. 597–843). A final monologue by John (vv. 844–855) and a communal prayer spoken by the actors together with the audience conclude the play.

As the initial stage directions outline, the *Virgin Mary's Lament* is meant to be staged in a church setting as part of the celebrations for Good Friday. Embedded in the liturgy for this feast, the play is framed by hymns sung by the rector, who leads the celebration. The five stage roles (Jesus, Mary, Mary Magdalene, John the Evangelist, the mother of John the Evangelist) are to be played by male members of the clergy equipped with appropriate costumes and stage props.

In addition to stage acting and spoken text, the *Virgin Mary's Lament* also includes numerous songs. While many of these musical inserts come from a standardized repertoire of liturgical chant, a few others were specifically written and arranged for this play, sometimes repurposing melodies known from other contemporary contexts. Musical notation for some of these more unusual songs is given in the manuscript and in Kühl's edition, which served as the basis of our translation. A 1992 recording by the ensemble *Sequentia* (see Further Reading) gives an impression of how a late medieval staging of this play would have sounded.



Introduction to the Source

This short play, which consists of 855 rhymed vernacular verses as well as some Latin additions, is transmitted in a single manuscript now held by the University Library in Kiel, Germany (Kiel, UB, cod. Bord. mscr. 53). The manuscript was written around 1476 by Johannes Reborch, who was provost of an Augustinian monastery at Bordesholm in Holstein. Reborch likely did not author the play himself but copied or adapted it from an unknown source. While the spoken parts of the play are in a Low German dialect, the accompanying stage directions as well as many of the hymns and chants in the play are in Latin or in a mix of Latin and Low German verses. The digitized manuscript can be viewed online here: <https://dibiki.ub.uni-kiel.de/viewer/resolver?urn=urn:nbn:de:gbv:8:2-1222542>.

About this Edition

Parts of this text are in prose, while other parts are in verse. To aid the reader in navigating this complex text, all lines following the initial prose statement have been numbered. This includes stage directions. Stage directions and names of speakers are indicated in bold font. Lines which are intended to be sung are indicated in italics.

Further Reading

C. Clifford Flanigan. "Medieval Latin music-drama." *The Theatre of Medieval Europe: New Research in Early Drama*, edited by Eckehard Simon, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 21–41.

- *A short introduction to liturgical drama, focused on its place in the history of theater.*

Gustav Kühl. "Die Bordesholmer Marienklage." *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Niederdeutsche Sprachforschung*, 24, 1898, pp. 1-74.

- *The edition of the text which served as the basis for this translation.*

Michael L. Norton. *Liturgical Drama and the Reimagining of Medieval Theater*. 2017.

- *A recent study of liturgical drama as a genre.*

Dunbar H Ogden. *The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2002.

- *A major investigation of how medieval liturgical dramas would have been performed.*

Nils Holger Petersen. "Devotion and Dramaticity in the Bordesholmer Marienklage (1476)." *Dies est leticie: Essays on chant in honour of Janka Szendrei*, edited by David Hiley and Gábor Kiss, Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 2008, pp. 413-428.

- *A recent article reevaluating how the dramatic aspects of this work should be understood.*

Susan Rankin. "Liturgical Drama." *The Early Middle Ages to 1300*, edited by Richard Crocker and David Hiley, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 310–356.

- *A short introduction to liturgical drama, focusing on its music.*

Sequentia. *Bordesholmer Marienklage*, BMG Classics/deutsche harmonia mundi, 1993.

- *An audio recording of the play.*



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Marienklage

Planctum istum facit beata virgo Maria cum quattor personis deuotis deuotissime bona sexta feria ante prandium in ecclesia ante chorum in loco aliquantaum eleuato vel extra ecclesiam, si bona est aura. Planctus iste non est ludus nec ludibrium, sed est planctus et fletus et pia compassio Marie virginis gloriose. Et cuandocunque fit a bonis et deuotis hominibus, in genere siue in specie valde prouocat homines circumstantes ad pium fletum et ad compassionem, sicut facit sermo deuotus bona sexta feria de passione domini nostri Jhesu Cristi.

Si non potest fieri bona sexta feria commodose propter sermonem de passione domini, tunc beata virgo faciat istum planctum antea cum suis, sicut feria secunda post dominicam palmarum ante prandium. Iste planctus fit commodose in duabus horis et media. Et omnia, que tunc fiunt ab illis quinque personis, non debent fieri cum festinacione nec nimia mora, sed medio et bono modo. Ille, qui est Jhesus, est deuotus sacerdos. Maria iuuenis. Johannes ewangelista sacerdos. Maria Magdalena et mater Johannes ewangelista iuuenis. Jhesus debet se preparare cum casula rubra. Johannes simili modo. Jhesus et Johannes debent habere dyademata de papiro; dyadema Jhesu habeat rubram crucem ante et retro.

Maria debet se preparare cum vestibis, sicut Maria Magdalena in nocte pasche. Johannes habeat gladium de ligno cum vagina, quem tenet in manu, quum exit cum rigmo suo. Et Johannes debet sepius tangere cor Marie vel pectus eius. Et quum facit actum suum, statim deponit gladium. Iuuenis quidam bene vestitus potest postea lumbos crucifigi. Dominus Jhesus cum primo exit cum alijs quattuor personis, deuote portat crucem in manibus suis. Et quum cantauit versum "Quoniam tribulacio proxima est", statim deponit crucem. Et quum faciunt planctum, dominus Jhesus debet habere crucifixum ante se. Et cuandocunque facit actum, tunc crucem deponit et intrudit crucifixum. Beata virgo stat a dextris Jhesu Cristi cum Maria Magdalena. Johannes a sinistris cum matre sua.

The Virgin Mary's Lament

Here begins the most devout lamentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in a compassionate and devout exposition¹. This lamentation is performed faithfully and very devoutly by the Blessed Virgin Mary together with four other characters before lunch on Good Friday, in the church in front of the choir or, if the² light is good, in a moderately raised place outside of the church. This lamentation is neither a play nor a funny joke, but is a lamenting and a wailing and devout compassion for the glorious Virgin Mary. And in general or in particular, whenever it is performed by good and devout people it will³ strongly provoke the gathered people to piously cry and feel compassion, just as a devout Good Friday sermon on the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ does.

If, because of the sermon on the Lord's passion, it is not possible to perform on Good Friday, at the time when the Blessed Virgin together with her confidantes once broke out into this lamentation, [it shall be performed] on the Monday of the Holy Week before lunch. This lamentation can be conveniently performed in two and a half hours. And everything which was once done by these five persons shall not be performed in a hurry or exaggeratedly slow, but medium-fast and in a good way. The actor playing Jesus is a devout priest. Mary is a young man. John the Evangelist is a priest. Mary Magdalene and the mother of John are young men. Jesus must wear a red vestment. John must do the same. Jesus and John are wearing crowns made of paper; Jesus' crown shows a red cross at the front and the back.

Mary must wear a garment like that of Mary Magdalene for the Easter vigil. John has a wooden sword with a sheath which he holds in his hand and with⁴ during his rhymed monologue. And John has to touch Mary's heart or⁵ chest seven times. And when he has performed his part, he immediately lays down the sword⁶. And when he has performed his part, he immediately lays down the sword. Well-costumed young men may take away the sword together with the cloth of silk with which the Blessed Virgin before had covered the loins of the Crucified. In the beginning, the Lord Jesus enters the stage with the four other characters, devoutly carrying the cross in his hands. And when he has sung the verse "For tribulation is near," he immediately lays down the cross. And when they perform the lamentation, the Lord Jesus must hold the cross in front of him. And as soon as he has performed this act, he puts down the cross and rams the crucifix into the ground. Together with Mary Magdalene, the Blessed Virgin stands on the right side of Jesus. John and his mother stand on the left.



Virgo Maria quum facit actum suum, vadit ad medium et aliquando vertit se ad filium ad orientum, aliquando ad occidentem, aliquando ad aquilones, aliquando ad meridiem cum gladio Symeonis, quem tenet beatus Johannes ante pectus eius. Aliquando beata virgo expandit brachia sua, aliquando leuat manus suas ad filium cum oculis: omnia cum moderamine. Quandocunque fecit actum suum, vadit at locum suum et stat a dextris. Simili modo faciunt alij.

Quum exeunt et quum intrant, faciunt tria paria: primo exit dominus Jhesus cum cruce cum Johanne ewangelista, post hos beata virgo cum Maria Magdalena, vltimo mater Johannes cum rectore, et ille incipit psalmum "Circumdederunt me viri mendaces" vsque ad locum preparatum. Ffinito psalmo dominus Jhesus cantat solus versum "Quoniam tribulacio proxima est" et vertit faciem ad occidentem semper. Vnusquisque dicat rigmum suum cum deuocione plangendo in eadem et nota et dono discreto. Quum Jhesus finiuit versum "Quoniam tribulacio", Johannes ewangelista statim dicit ad omnem populum plangendo

Johannes ewangelista

Horet, gij salighen lude,
 Vnde latet juw beduden,
 Wo vnse leue here Jhesu Crist,
 De eyn schepper hemmels vnde eerden ist, 5
 Huden vmme vnser wyllen heft geleden de marter grot,
 Dar tho ok den bytteren dot!
 Horet ersten, wo vnse leue here an der tijt to completen
 Vmme vnser wyllen blodich sweet wolde sweten;
 Dat he alwylynges ok wolde gân, 10
 Dar en syne vygende wolden vån;
 Dat he Judam, synen valschen vrund,
 Kussen wolde vor syne munt
 Vnde valsklyken wolde vorraden werden,
 Also gy eyn mynsche vp dusser erden. 15

When the Virgin Mary performs her part, she steps into the center and at one point turns east towards her son, at one point to the west, at another point to the north, and at one point to the south and towards the sword of Simeon, which St. John holds to her chest. At one point, the Blessed Virgin reaches out her arms⁷, at another point she raises her hands and eyes to her son: all with moderation. As soon as she has performed her part, she steps back to her place and stands on the right. The others do the same.

When they enter and exit the stage, they make up three pairs: first of all, the Lord Jesus⁸ enters with the cross and John the Evangelist, after them the Blessed Virgin and Mary Magdalene, finally the mother of John with the rector, who strikes up the psalm "Lying men surrounded me", until [he reaches] a prepared place. After the end of the psalm, Jesus alone sings the verse "For tribulation is near," turns his face westwards and stays this way. Everyone recites his rhymed¹⁰ monologue mourning with devotion, in the same character and in a discreet tone of voice¹¹. When Jesus has finished the verse "For tribulation is near," John the Evangelist immediately turns to all the people and sorrowfully says: When Jesus has finished the verse "For tribulation is near," John the Evangelist immediately turns to all the people and sorrowfully says:

John the Evangelist:

Listen, you blessed people,
 and let it be shown to you
 how our dear Lord Jesus Christ,
 Creator of Heaven and Earth,
 today suffered great torture for our sake,
 and, in addition to that, bitter death!
 Hear, first of all, how our dear Lord at the time of Compline
 sweated bloody sweat for our sake,
 and how he also went voluntarily
 to where his enemies caught him,
 and how he kissed Judas, his disloyal friend,
 on the mouth,
 when he was about to be betrayed as treacherously
 as any man who ever walked the earth.



De yoden, de he hadde van herten leeff,
Venghen ene alse eynen morder vnde deeff.
He wart ok in den suluen stunden
Vor Annas ghetoghen vnde gebunden;
De beghunde en vmme syne lere tho vragen.
Do wart he in syne hilgen wanghen geslagen.
Horet, wo vnse leue here in der nachtstunde
Vmme vnsen wyllen wart gevangen vnde gebunden
Vnde wort vor byschop Cayphas getoghen!
Dar wart he so rechte ouele beloghen:
Syne vygende, de yoden, dar to rade gynghen,
Wo se ene mochten to deme dode bryngen.
Dar horde vnse leue here mennich smelyk word:
Se staffeden syne werden hylgen bord,
Se seden, dat he nicht were godes kynd,
Also deger weren se vorblynd.
Syne gotlyken ogen see vorbunden;
Alumme en de grymmighen yoden stunden
Vnde hadden en vor enen doren
Vnde slogen en to synen gotlyken oren.
Se spreken smelyken: bystu Crist,
So entrade, van weme du geslagen byst!
Se bespygeden syn gotlyke antlat,
Se makeden dat vul vnreyne vnde nat, -
O leuen vrundes, wat groter smaheyt was em dat!
Horet, wo vnse leue here wart vor Pylatum gebracht!
Dar wart he so rechte ouele bedacht:
Se seden, dat vnse here were eyn droghenere
Vnde lerede deme volke ok valsche lere.
Pylatus sende vnsen heren hen to herodes;
De wart sere gevrowet des:
He mēde, dat he were eyn tōuerer
Vnde ok der lude gokeler.
Herodes hadde gerne wonder van em geseen;
Des enmochte em doch nicht bescheen.

The Jews, whom he loved with all his heart,
took him captive as if he were a murderer or a thief.
In the same hour,
he was also dragged before Annas and bound;
20 he [Annas] began to question him about his teachings
There he was struck on his holy cheeks.
Hear how our dear Lord on that night
was taken captive and bound for our sake
and was dragged before bishop Cayphas!
25 There he truly was basely slandered:
his enemies, the Jews, took counsel
there about how they might put him to death.
There our dear Lord heard many scornful words:
they insulted his worthy, holy birth,
30 they said that he wasn't the son of God;
that is how very blind they were.
They bound his godly eyes;
all around him stood the grim Jews
who took him for a fool
35 and struck him around his godly ears.
They spoke mockingly: if you are Christ
then tell us who hit you!¹²
They spat on his godly countenance,
they sullied and drenched it completely -
40 O dear friends, what a terrible offence this was to him!
Hear, how our dear Lord was brought before Pilot!
There he was truly mistreated:
they said that our Lord was a deceiver
and also that he taught the people false teachings.
45 Pilot sent our Lord to Herod
who was very pleased about this:
he thought that he [our Lord] was a conjurer
and also a misleader of the people.
Herod would have gladly seen some of his miracles;
50 but that was not to happen for him.



He began vnsen heren vele to vraghen,
Vnde de yoden begunden ouer em sere to klaghen:
Vnse here sweech al stille vnde wolde em nicht berichten,
Do bespottede Herodes Jhesum Cristum myt alle synen knechten,
He tōch em eyn dōren kleyt an
Vnde let en also wedder to Pylatum gan.
Dat lêet vnse leue here myt groder dult
Vor vnse sundychlyken schult.
Horet, wo vnse leue here vmme vnse sunde
Yamerliken vmme eyne zule wart gebunden!
Also mortlyken sere
Wart do geslagen vnse werde truten here,
Lat an al synem lychamme nicht heles enbleeff
Vnde syn dure blōd ouer alle syn leuent dreff.
Se vlecheden eyne scharpe dōrne krone;
De druckeden se an syn houet schone,
Dat syn hylge dure blōt
Ouer syn hilge antlat vlōt.
Dar worpen se vort ere vule spekelen an,
Dat he wart gestalt also eyn spyttels man.
Se slogen syn hilge houet myt enem rore
Vnde belacheden Marien kynt also enen doren;
Se togen em eyn purpuren kleyt an vnde vyllen vp ere knee
Ghegrutet systu, der yoden koningh! hōnlyken spreken see.
Dar negest wart vnse leue here vor gherichte getogen
Vnde menniger hande wijs valschlyken beloghen.
Eyn valsch ordel wart ouer em gedān,
Dat me ene scholde an eyn krutze slān.
He droch synes sulues crutze vth der stat;
Tho groter smaheyt schach em dat.
Se hangeden en daran lyk enem mysdedegen deue.
Do bewysede he vns syne groten leue,
In deme dat he vor syne vygende bat,
Dar he af geleden hadde pyne vnde groten hat.
Syner drofnysse was noch vele mere:

He began to ask our Lord many questions
and the Jews began to complain greatly about him;
and our Lord kept completely silent and would not tell him anything;
then Herod, with all his men, mocked Jesus Christ.
55 He dressed him in a fool's costume
and sent him back to Pilot like that.
Our dear Lord endured this with great patience
for our guilty sins.
Hear, how our beloved Lord was pitifully bound
60 to a column for the sake of our sins!
Thus was our dear,
worthy Lord murderously beaten.
No part of his body was left intact
and his precious blood ran all over his living body.
65 They wove a sharp crown of thorns
and pressed it down upon his fair head
so that his holy, precious blood
flowed down over his blessed countenance.
They spat foully [upon him]¹³
70 so that he looked like he was made of spit.
They beat his blessed head with a rod
and laughed at Mary's child as if he were a fool.
They dressed him in purple and fell to their knees:
"Hail to you, King of the Jews!", they said disdainfully.
75 After that our dear Lord was dragged before the court
and was treacherously slandered in many different ways.
A false verdict was passed on him so
that they crucified an innocent man.
He dragged his cross of beams out of the city.
80 It was a great disgrace that this happened to him.
They hanged him on it like a scurrilous thief.
There he showed us his great love
by praying for his enemies;
there he had cast off pain and great hatred.
85 His suffering was yet even greater:



He leyt bynnenwendych alto grot herte swere,
Do he syne werden moder Marien
Horde bytterlyken sere wenen vnde scrygen.
Dar weren ok twe mōordere gevangen;
Dar wart he smelyken twyschen gehanghen.
Deme enen vorgaff he in der latesten stunde
Vmme eyne korte ruwe al syne sunde.
Vnse leue here rep ok eynen yamerlyken schrey:
Hely, hely, lamazbathani!
Dat ys: myn got, myn got, worvmme hestu my vorgeten?
Do bespotteden en de yoden vnde dar entyegen repen:
Kum hijr nedder van deme crutze, bystu Crist,
So wyl wij louen, dattu godes sone byst!
Dar negest eschede vnse leue here drynken;
Do leten se em etyk vnde gallen schenken.
Dar neghest sprak he: consummatum est!
Vnde ok: in dyne hende bevole ik, vader, mynen geyst!
Also leyt do den bytteren dot vnse leue here.
Ok wart syne hilghe syde doresteken myt enem spere;
Dar vlōt vth water vnde blot.
Dar sach me do an den creaturen yammer grot:
De harden steyne toreten van synen pynen,
Der sune let van groter drōfnisse ere schynent,
De erde began van grotem yammer to beuen,
De doden in den grauen begunden ok wedder to leuen. -
Leue vrunde, gy hebben hort, wat leden het Jhesus Cristus vnse
Nu wyl ik juw lesen noch vuste mere:
Dat lydent sunte Marien, dat wyl wij hijr nu anheuen.
God late juw so lange leuen,
Dat dij syne hulde vordenen, -
Vnde helpet huden sunte Marien wenen!
Betrachtet hutē myt vlyte ere byttercheyt,
De se so swarlyken leyt
Vmme eres leuen kyndes dot,
Dar he vns mede geloset heft vth aller not!
Hijr vmme, gij vrowen vnde ok gij man,
Latet juw ere lydent to herten gān!

inside, he suffered great and unbearable anguish
when he heard his worthy mother Mary
very bitterly weeping and crying.
Two murderers had also been caught; disgracefully,
90 he was hung between them.
He forgave one of them in his final hour
after he had done brief penance for all his sins.
Our beloved Lord let out a woeful cry:
"Hely, hely, lamazbathani!"
95 That is to say: "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"¹⁴
Then the Jews mocked him and shouted back at him:
"Come down here from the cross if you are Christ
then we will believe that you are God's son!"
Thereafter our beloved Lord asked for a drink;
100 then they had vinegar and gall brought to him.
Thereafter he spoke: "it is finished!"¹⁵
And also: "In your hands father, I command my spirit!"
Thus our lord suffered bitter death.
Thus his holy side was pierced with a lance;
105 water and blood flowed out of it.
Then the creatures were seen to suffer great sorrow:
The hard stones shattered for his pain,
The sun stopped shining for great distress,
The earth began to quake for great sorrow,
110 The dead in the graves came back to life again.
Dear friends, you have heard what our dear Lord Jesus Christ has
suffered.
Now I want to read much more to you:
We now want to start telling what St. Mary suffered.
May God let you live so long
115 that you earn his grace,
and, today, help to mourn St. Mary!
Consider carefully today her bitterness
that she suffered so deeply
for the death of her beloved child,
120 by which he delivered us from all our misery!
For that reason, all you women and men,
let her suffering enter your heart!



Bewenet dat van herten ynnichliken,
Dat gij mogen myt vrowden ewychlyken
Myt gode vnde myt Marien wesen
Vnde vor der ewygen helle genesen!

Dat vns dat allen beschee,
So gat sytten vp juwe knee,
Spreket eyn Pater noster myt ynnicheyt
Vnde ok Aue Maria to juwer selen salycheyt!

Johannes post Pater noster dicit ad omnem populum

Ghat sytten, gy leuen kynder, an dessen guden daghe,
Horet der reynen junckfrowen Marien weynent vnde klaghe!

Beata virgo Maria iucipit hic planctum suum dolorosissimum deuotissime. Psalmus:

Anxiatus est in me spiritus meus,

In me turbatum est cor meum!

Nu bedrouet sik myn geyst an mynem herten sere,

Noch mer wen gy wyf gewan dorch mynes kyndes ere.

Sancta Maria dicit et vertit se ad populum

O aller barmhertigeste god,
Wo grot ys myne klaghe vnde myn not
Vmme Jhesus Cristum, den leuen sone myn!
Ik vruchte, he mot in groten noden syn.
Ach woste yk, wor yk mochte
Ghan, dar yk ene sochte!
Dar gynge yk myt wyllen gerne hyn,
Scholdet ok kosten dat leuent myn.

Beata virgo cautat hoc

Conturbata sunt omnia ossa mea, et anima mea turbata est valde.

Sancta Maria statim dicit ad Johannem:

Johannes, myn leue ôm, wat mach dat beduden?
Ghynnert synt gesammelt vele lude,
Se ropen lude und beren swar.
Eya nu gha myt my aldâr
Lât vns beseen, wat see bedryuen!

Sanctus Johannes respondet

Neen, Maria leue medder wij moget leuer blyuen!
De yoden synt eres ouermodes also vil,
Vor war ik dy dat saghen wyl.

Lament this profoundly from the heart,
so that you can be joyfully and eternally
125 with God and with Mary
and be saved from eternal Hell!
For this, which is happening to all of us,
go down on your knees,
say a heart-felt pater noster
130 and an Ave Maria for the salvation of your soul!

Following the paternoster, John says to all of the people:

Be seated, dear children on this fine day,
hear the weeping and lament of the pure virgin Mary!

St. Virgin Mary here piously begins her most sorrowful lamentation. Psalm:

135 *My spirit is afraid,*

My heart is restless!

*Now the spirit in my heart becomes very sad,
exceeding even what you, women, gained through my child's honor.*

St. Mary speaks and turns toward the audience.

140 Oh most merciful God,
how great is my lament and my suffering
because of Jesus Christ, my beloved son!
I fear he may be in great peril.
Alas, if I only knew where I could
145 go to search for him!
Gladly and willingly I'd go there
even if it would cost my life.

The blessed virgin sings this:

All my bones are disquieted, and my soul is in great turmoil.

150 **St. Mary immediately says to John:**

John, my dear nephew, what may that mean?
Many people have gathered,
they are grieving loudly and behaving sadly.
Come on, go there with me,
155 let us have a look at what they are doing!

St. John responds:

No, dear mother Mary, we would rather stay here!
The Jews are so full of arrogance,
in truth I want to tell you this!



Se brochten sunte Peter darto in desser nacht,
Dat he synes heren vorsôk vnde syner macht;
Schege my armen manne ok also,
Des worde yk nummer vro.

Sancta Maria respondit

Johannes, myn vil leue vrund,
Twyde my an desser stund,
Vnde ga myt my aldar,
Wente yd ys dar mennich var!
Lat vns beseen, wat se bedryuen!
Ik wyl stede by dy blyuen;
Myt der warheyt schaltu dat beseen:
Ik wyl vaste stân vnde ok nicht van dy vleen
Sume nicht! wij mogen nu nicht lenger stan.

Sanctus Johannes respondet

Maria, leue medder, yk wyl gerne myt dy gân.
Scholde yk ok darvme lyn den bytteren dot,
Ik vorlate dy nicht in desser groten not.

Valde modicum transeunt, silicet, si est opus, usque ad medium circuli. Et sancta Maria statim incipit cantare

*Owe des ghandes, des yk gha
Myt yamer vnde myt ruwen!
Myn kynt an deme crutze steyt,
Myn leyt wil sik vornuwen.*

(Hic imponit gladium)

*Owe, owe, owe
Des gandes, des yk nu ghe!
Ik mot scrygen yummermer:
Owe, owe, owe!
Bedrouet synt de synne myn,
Went de heylant ys in pyn,
De myn kynt ys vnde ok myn god
Vnde der enghel sabaoth.
Owy, owe!*

*Owe, leyder wat ik nu vynde
An mynem herten truwen kynde!*

(Hic deponit gladium)

Wor schal ik arme maget blyuen?

160 They made St. Peter this night,
forsake his lord and his power;
if the same thing happened to me, a mere man,
I would never be happy again.

St. Mary responds:

165 John, my very dear friend,
listen to me at this hour
and go with me there,
because there are many dangers!
Let us see what they are doing!

170 I will remain ever by your side;
in truth, you shall see this:
I will remain steadfast and not leave your side.
Don't delay! Let's not stay here any longer.

St. John responds:

175 Mary, dear mother, I will gladly go with you.
Even if I suffer a bitter death,
I will not abandon you in this great peril.

Quickly they move over, if necessary; namely, up into middle of the circle. And St. Mary immediately begins to sing:

Alas that I walk

180 *With pain and sorrow!
My child is standing with the cross,
My suffering begins again.*

(Here she picks up the sword)

Alas, alas, alas

185 *That I must walk this path!
I must wait now and forever:
Alas, alas, alas!*

*My senses are defeated,
because the Saviour is in pain*

190 *who is my child and also my God,
and the lord of angels.¹⁶
Alas, alas!*

*Alas, more painful still is what I see
in the child dear to my heart!*

195 **(Here she puts down the sword.)**
Where shall I, poor maiden remain?



Dot, kum her vnde my vorswynde!

Sancta Maria extendit manum ad filium hic et dicit ad sanctum Johannes

See, Johannes leue ôm,

Wat ys gehanget vor vns an den bôm,

Ys yd eyn mynsche edder eyn worm?

Id wyndet sik in den neghelen vnde drift groten storm;

Id mot in groten bytteren pynen syn.

Sanctus Johannes respondet plangendo

Owe, Maria, dat ys dat leue kynt dyn!

See, wo yd gevyllet stât

Vnde ok vp synem hilgen houede hât

Van scharpen dôrne eyne krone!

Dat hilge blot vlut ouer syn antlat schone,

Ok ouer syne ogen bet in syne munt.

O Maria, see, wo yd steyt gewund:

Dat mochte eynem stene entfarmen!

O leuen kyndere, helpet dat altomale bekarmen!

Sancta Maria respondet:

Owe, ys dat myn leue truten sone?

Ik wolde, dat syne scharpen dornekrone

Vp mynem houede sete an dessen stunden,

Vnde syne mennichualdigen depen wunden

Vor em weren an mynem lyue,

Vppe dat he mochte leuendich blyuen.

Et cantat:

Owe, yamer vnde not!

Owe, mynes leuen kyndes dot,

Den ik an herten drage

Vnde so yamerliken klaghe!

Yo gha ik wedder vnde dort,

Noch entret hijr nemant vort,

De desse martere beweynede!

Owe, elende!

(Hic plangit cum manibus.)

Owy, owe my hutten vnde jummermer

Vmme mynes kyndes dôt!

**Myn kummer ys so rechte grot.*

Death, come here and claim me!

Here St. Mary extends her hand to her son and says to St. John:

See, John, dear nephew,

200 what is hanging before us on the tree,

is it a man or a serpent?

It twists itself on the nails and is in the great throes of death;

it must be in great and bitter pain.

St. John responds, mourning:

205 Alas Mary, that is your beloved child!

See, how he hangs there tormented

and around his holy head

he has a crown of sharp thorns!

Holy blood flows over his lovely face

210 Tand over his eyes and into his mouth.

O Mary, see how he hangs there tortured:

that even a stone could be moved by it!

O dear children, now all help to lament him!

Saint Mary responds:

215 Alas, is that my dear beloved son?

I wish that his sharp crown of thorns

sat on my head in this hour,

and his many deep wounds

were on my body

220 instead of his so that he could stay alive.

And she sings:

Alas, pain and misery!

Alas, the death of my dear child

that I carry in my heart

225 and lament so sorrowfully!

Now I go here and there,

and still no one here steps forward

to mourn this suffering!

Alas, miserable ones!

230 **(Now she gestures mournfully with her hands.)**

Alas, woe is me today and forevermore

because of my child's death!

My sorrow is so very great.



Owy, owe!

Et dicit vterius

Eya, moderlyke herte,

Wat lydestu pyne vnde smerte!

Dominus Jhesus dicit habens crucifixum ante se

Myn volk, wo seer hestu dy an my gewraken!

Ik hebbe dy doch nicht to leyde gedan edder gesproken?

Myn volk, yk vorede dy ouer dat wylde meer

Vnde vordruckede Pharaonis heer;

Ik reghende dy enghelsch brod

Yn der wôstenyge to dyner nôt:

Darvmme hestu my ghevanghen

Vnde darto an dat crutze gehanghen!

De vosse hebben ere kulen,

Dar se ynne schulen,

De vogele hebben ere neste,

De heren hebben ere gheveste, -

Des mynschen sone leyder nicht enhât,

Dar syn kranke houet ane stât.

Owy vnde we, wart doch ny mynschen so we!

Sancta Maria cantat post hoc

Ik horede enen rôp:

Dat ys mynt kynt Jhesus, de myr geschop

Vnde al de werlt gemeyne;

Des mot yk arme schrygen vnde weynen.

Van Jherusalem gy vrowen,

Nu helpet huden schowen

Mynes leuen kyndes dot,

Dat hyr hanget naket vnde blot!

Owy, owe!

Sancta Maria dicit post hoc ricmum

Ach wo grote pyne vnde smerte

Lydet myn arm bedrouede herte

Vmme mynes leuen kyndes byttercheyt,

Dat in so groter not an deme hilgen crutze steyt!

Weren vnse herte ok van steynen,

Se mosten doch nu mede weynen.

Alas, woe is me!

235 **And continues:**

Oh, motherly heart,

how you are suffering misery and pain!

Holding the cross in front of him, Lord Jesus says:

My people, how much you have tormented me!

240 I didn't do or say anything to harm you.

My people, I lead you over the wild sea

and I swallowed Faroah's army;

I made the angels' bread rain down

in the desert to relieve your hardship:

245 this is why you captured me

and hung me on the cross!

Foxes have their dens

where they hide,

birds have their nests,

250 lords have their strongholds,

-- the son of man sadly doesn't have any place

where his poor head may rest.

Alas and alas, never did anyone suffer so much!

Then St. Mary sings:

255 *I heard a cry:*

that is my child Jesus, who created me

and all the world together;

because of that I must weep and cry.

You women of Jerusalem,

260 *now join me in watching*

the death of my beloved child,

who hangs here naked and stripped.

Alas, alas!

After these rhymes, St. Mary says:

265 Oh, what great pain and sorrow

my poor afflicted heart suffers

Because of the torment of my dear child,

who hangs on the holt cross in such great misery!

Even if our hearts were of stone,

270 They would still have to weep with us.



Sancta Maria vertit se ad filias Jerusalem dicens vel cantans

Weynet gij truwen susteren myn,

Helpet my armen drouych syn

Vnde klagen mynen not!

Myn kummer ys worden grot

Vmme mynes kyndes dōt.

Et dicit vltra ad filias Jherusalem

Gij leuen sustere, latet juw entbarmen

Huden ouer my vyl armen!

Seet an myne smerte vnde grote byttercheyt,

De yk an mynem herten drage vmme mynes kyndes leyt!

Sancta Maria Magdalena

O quantus luctus

Nobis est inductus

Pre hac tristitia!

Owe vns armen!

Got late sik irbarmen

Ouer vnse grote leyt!

Sancta Maria Magdalena vadit ad medium et dicit ricum

Owe, wo grote yamercheyt

Vns armen vrowen nu besteyt

Dorch de bytteren martere vnse leuen heren,

Den huden de yoden myt groten vneren

Vnde myt vnschult hebben to deme dode bracht!

Eya, dyt ys wol eyn bedrouet dach,

Dat wij ene vor vns hanghen seen!

Wo mochte vns groter leyt bescheen!

O leue here Jhesu Criste, wo gherne stouere yk vmme dy,

Wente van groten sunden hestu ghelosest my.

Et cantat vltorius pro gratiarum actione

Ghelauet systu, here Jhesu Crist,

Went du also barmehertich byst,

Dattu dy yo wult irbarmen

Ouer my vyl armen!

Du hest gelosest my,

Des wyl yk jummer lauen dy.

St. Mary turns to the daughters of Jerusalem, saying, or rather singing:

Weep you loyal sisters of mine,

join me in my sadness

and lament my misery!

275 *My grief has grown and grown
at the death of my child.*

And she says, continuing, to the daughters of Jerusalem:

You dear sisters,

have pity today for poor me!

280 Look at my pain and my great torment,
that I carry in my heart because of my child's suffering!

St. Mary Magdalene:

Oh, what great grief

is laid upon us

285 by this sadness!

Alas, poor us!

God have mercy

on our suffering!

St. Mary Magdalene goes to the center and says in rhyme:

290 Alas, how great sorrow
affects us poor women now
because of the bitter martyrdom of our dear Lord,
whom today the Jews, with great dishonor,
put to death, an innocent man!

295 Oh, this is indeed a sorrowful day,
on which we see him hanging before us!
How could any greater sorrow befall us!
O, beloved lord Jesus Christ, how gladly I would die in your place,
because you have delivered me from great sins.

300 **And she continues in song, as an act of gratitude:**

Praise be unto you, lord Jesus Christ

because you are so merciful,

that you show mercy

to poor me!

305 *you have saved me;
for that I will always praise you.*



Maria Magdalena dicit statim ad beatam virginem

O Maria, eddele, reyne maghet,
Dyn grote lydent sij deme leuen gode gheklaghet.

Mater Johannis ewangeliste cantat post hoc

*Jam auctor lucis
Nunc in ligno crucis
Stat in angustia.
Nu sy wij myt sorgen
Huten gar vorborgen
Vnde in der yamercheyt.*

Mater Johannis dicit

O wo grote not vnde smerte
Lyden nu vnse bedroueden herte,
Wente wij Jhesum Cristum, der waren sunnen schyn,
In groter yamercheyt vor vns hangen seen!
O leuen kyndere, bewenet nu vnse heren dot,
Vppe dat he vns mote losen vth aller nôt!
O leue here Jhesu Criste, mochte yk nu myt dy steruen
Vnde also dyne hulde vorweruen,
Ik sumede nicht bet tho morghen
Vnde wolde dar ok nicht vore sorghen.
Maria, leue suster, dyn grote lydent vnde weynen
Mochte vntfarmen deme harden steyne.

Sancta Maria vertit se ad populum et dicit

Ach wo grote pyne vnde smerte
Lydet myn arme bedrouede herte
Vmme mynes leuen kyndes byttercheyt,
De in so groter not an deme hilgen crutze steyt!
Weren vnse herte ok van steynen,
See mosten doch nu mede weynen.

Maria cantat

*Vrunt Johannes, neue gute,
Help my armen godes moter
Klagen mynes kyndes leuent,
Dat deme dode ys gegeuen!
O wat Cristus duldet
Vnde an deme crutze sweuet
Gar al vnuorschuldt!*

Mary Magdalene immediately says to the Blessed Virgin:

Oh Mary, noble and pure maiden,
your great suffering shall be mourned before God.

310 **Then the mother of John the Evangelist sings:**

*Now the creator of light
hangs constrained
on the wood of a cross.
Now, today, we are
laden with troubles
and in sorrow.*

The mother of John says:

Oh what great misery and pain
our saddened hearts suffer now
because we see Jesus Christ, the true light of the sun,
hanging in front of us in great sorrow!
Oh dear children, now weep for our lord's death
so that he might deliver us from all hardship!
O dear lord Jesus Christ, if I could die with you now,
and with that procure your grace,
I would not wait until tomorrow
and also would not think twice about it.
Mary, dear sister, your great suffering and weeping
would move a hard stone to pity.

330 **St. Mary turns to the audience and says:**

Oh, what great pain and sorrow
my poor afflicted heart suffers
Because of the torment of my dear child,
ho hangs on the holy cross in such great misery!
Even if our hearts were of stone,
they would still have to weep with us.

Mary sings:

*Friend John, dear nephew,
help me, poor mother of God
to lament the life of my child
who has been put to death!
Oh what Christ suffers,
hanging on the cross,
free of guilt!*



Sancta Maria ad filium suum benedictum dicit hoc et ad sanctum Johannem ewangelistam

O wy vnde we, wo grot herteleyt

Ys my armen bedroueden moder nu bereyt,

O leue kynt, vmme de bytteren marter dyn!

Hijr vmme, Johannes, leue neue myn,

Help my armen moder beklagen vnde beweynen

Jhesum Cristum den vyl reynen,

Den de yoden hebben gevanghen

Vnde ok an dat hilge crutze ghehangen!

Leue ôm, lat dy dit to herten gân,

Wente he dy alle gud heft gedân!

anctus Johannes cantat et vertit se ad populum

Tristor et cuncti tristantur

De tua tristicia;

[Omnes] Tecum lacrimantur,

Eructant suspiria.

Hic rubescit oculus,

Flet fidelis populus

De Cristi mesticia.

Maria, moder vnde maget reyne,

Yk byn dyner suster kynt.

Dyn grote scrygent vnde dyn weynent

Klagen alle, de hijr synt.

Hijr wert vyl mennich oge rot

Vmme dynes kyndes dot,

Dat hijr hanget ver vns blot.

Johannes vltra dicit ad Mariam, matrem Cristi

Maria, leue medder, he scholde eyn steynen herte dragen,

De dynes kyndes dot nicht kunde helpen beklagen;

Wart gy mynsche so steynen,

De nu myt vns nicht kunde weynen?

Maria, leue medder, we nu wyl rechte ouerdencken

Vnde ok in syn herte sencken

Dyn weynent, den scrygent, dynes reynen herten not

Vnde dynes leuen kyndes bytter dot,

De mot myt dy trurent han

Vnde aller werlde valsche vrowde lân.

345 St. Mary says this to her blessed son and to St. John the Evangelist:

Oh, alas and alack, what great heartache

now afflicts me, a poor wretched mother,

O dear child, because of your bitter torment!

Therefore John, my dear nephew,

350 help this poor mother to lament and bewail

Jesus Christ, in his purity

whom the Jews took captive

and hanged on that holy cross!

Dear nephew, let this enter your heart,

355 because he has only done good things for you!

Saint John sings and turns to the people:

I am saddened and all are saddened

because of your misery;

all are crying with you,

360 *they are breaking out in loud sighs.*

These eyes are becoming red,

the faithful people cry

over Christ's torments.

Mary, mother and pure virgin,

365 *I am your sister's child.*

Your great crying and wailing

is lamented by all who are present.

Here many eyes are turning red

because of the death of your child

370 *who hangs here in front of us naked.*

John then says to Mary, mother of Christ:

Mary, dear mother, he would have to have a heart of stone,

who could refrain from helping lament the death of your child.

Are you people made of stone

375 that you cannot cry with us?

Mary, dear mother, the one who will now rightly consider

and take into his heart your crying,

your wailing, the grief of your pure heart

and the bitter death of your dead child,

380 can share your sorrow

and relinquish the false joy of all the world.



Sancta Maria Magdalena et mater Johannis ewangeliste simul cantat

O quam tristis et afflicta

Fuit illa benedicta

Mater vnigeniti!

Quis est homo, qui non fleret,

Matrem Cristi si videret

In tanto supplicio?

Mater Johannis dicit ricmum

Ach, ach, wo sere lyde wy grote swere

Vmme dy, o leue truten here!

Sancta Maria cantat et vertit se ad occidentem

We helpet klagen myn grote leyt?

Myn yamer de ys worden breyt.

Wo kan ik arme dat nu dragen,

Went yk in alle mynen dagen

Ny vornam sulke swere!

Horen noch seen yk enkan;

So grot leyt ny wyf gewan,

So yk arme nu dulce,

Went he steruet ane schulde;

Dat komet van syner lere.

Hic Maria virgo inspicit filium et eleuat manus ita cantans:

Trut sone myn,

De moder dyn

An desser stunt

Vt herten grunt

(Hic subtrahit manus.)

Dy byddet ynnichliken:

Giff my dynen dot

In desser not!

(Hic tangit pectus.)

Myn herte, brich,

Went ik see dich

Hangen so yamerlyken!

Hertenkynt, sprych,

Myn not ys so bytterlich!

St. Mary Magdalene and the mother of John the Evangelist sing together:

Oh, how sad and afflicted

was the blessed

385 *mother of the incarnated!*

Who is the man who does not cry,

when he sees the mother of Christ

in such great anguish?

The mother of John says in rhyme:

390 *Alas, alas, how greatly we bear an immense burden*

for your sake, oh dear beloved lord!

St. Mary sings and turns to the west:

Who will help lament my great pain?

My sorrow has become immense.

395 *How can I, poor me, now bear that*

when, in all of my days,

I have never experienced such a burden!

I can neither hear nor see:

such great suffering no woman has ever endured

400 *as I - poor me - now do,*

since he dies without guilt:

that results from his teaching.

Here the Virgin Mary looks at her son and raises her hands, singing thus:

My beloved son,

405 *your mother*

at this hour

from the bottom of her heart

(She lowers her hands.)

prays fervently:

410 *Grant me death*

in my peril!

(She strikes her chest.)

Break my heart,

for I see you

415 *hanging so wretchedly!*

Child of my heart, speak,

my sorrow is so bitter!



Hic Johannes capit gladium ambabus manibus, cum eo tangens virginis pectus genibus flexis. Et Maria cantat vteriu

Trut sone wert,

My geyt eyn swert

Van yamer dorch myn herte!

(Hic vertit se ad occidentem et tangit pectus)

Do vp dyne ogen, see my an,

Lose myner sorgen bant!

Trut sone, kynt,

Blodich dyne lede synt,

Dat gift my grote smerte!

(Hic vertit se ad occidentum et tangit pectus.)

Brich, herte myn, brich,

Went yk hijr sta so bytterlich!

So enmach nemant trosten mych,

Men de dot alleyn.

Ik bydde dy, dot,

Kum, lose my vth desser not!

My ys worden myn herte dot,

Ik enmach nicht mer weynen.

Eya valsche yodenkynt,

(Hic vertit se ad aquilonem.)

Wo synt gy myt synnen blynt,

Dat gy myn trut leue kynt

Aldus ane schult vorderuen!

Wat han ik arme ju gedan,

Dat gy myn leuent lan

In so groter swere stan?

Yk wunsche myt em to steruen.

Hic Maria Magdalena et mater Johannis cantant secundo simul sicut prius canticum "O quam tristis et afflicta" s. et mater Johannis dicit ricium "Ach ach, wo sere" vt prius Post hoc statim beata virgo Maria, si potest hoc commodose fieri. incipit secundo cum omni deuocione canticum "We helpet klagen myn grot leyt? Myn yamer de ys worden breyt" vt prius. Et cantat ex integro cum omnibus gestibus sicut prius. Sancta Maria quando finiat canticum istud secundo dicit ricium

Here John grasps the sword with both hands and with it touches the chest of the kneeling Virgin. Mary continues, singing:

Beloved worthy son,

420 *a sword of misery*

pierces my heart!

(Here she raises her eyes to her son.)

Raise your eyes, look at me,

release the binds of my suffering!

425 *Beloved son, child,*

your limbs are bloody,

that causes me great pain.

(Here she turns her head and beats her breast.)

Break my heart, break,

430 *since I stand her so wretchedly!*

Nothing may console me

but death alone

I beg you, death,

come, release me from this grief!

435 *My heart has died,*

I cannot cry anymore.

Alas, duplicitous Jew-children,

(Here she turns to the north.)

How could you be so senseless

440 *as to destroy my dear beloved,*

innocent child thus!

What have I, so wretched, done to you,

that you let my life continue

in such great misery?

445 *I wish to die with him.*

Here Mary Magdalene and the mother of John sing together for the second time the earlier song "How sad and afflicted". The mother of John says the rhyme "Alas, alas how greatly" Immediately after this, the Blessed Virgin Mary, if it can be done conveniently, begins for the second time with great devotion "Who will help to lament my great pain? My sorrow has become so immense" as before and she sings with all her heart with all the gestures just as before. When Saint Mary finishes this song for the second time, she says this rhyme:



Eya schone bouen alle schone
Eya herteleue sone,
Wor ys dyne schone hengevaren?
Du werest de allerschoneste gebaren,
De gy van moderlyue gebaren wart,
Also wunnichlyck vnde tzart!
Dy weren dyne wanghen,
Oft se myt rosen weren behanghen;
Dyn antlat scheen also de sunne,
Dyn ogenblyk was also eyn vrolyk wunne.
O leue sone Jhesu Crist,
Wo sere du nu gewundet byst!
Dy synt dyne lede van blode rot,
Wentu an deme crutze lydest grote not.
Eya, du valsche yoden deyt,
Du werest dar sere to bereyt
Dattu myn leue kynt mochtest bevlecken!
Ik wyl dat wedder bedecken:
Id schal nicht lengher naket stan,
Mynen dôk wyl yk em vmme slân,
Wente yk arme moder Marie
Eynen anderen doek wedder lye.
**Sancta Maria accipit hic pannum de serico album, cum quo
tegit lumbos crucifixi, quem iuuenis quidam tenet cum gal-
dio Symeonis et statim subdit.**
Leuen kyndere, my ys grot not, day yk weyne.
O Maria Magdalene,
O wat lydet nu dat leue kynd myn
Vnde ok de werde truten meyster dyn!
Maria Magdalena respondet
Maria, aller junckfrowen eyn ere,
Ik bekenne wol, wat myn leue truten here
Nu lydet vor vns allen;
Ik mot van ruwen nedder vallen
Vnde beweynen syne grot herteleyt.
O, wo he nu an deme crutze steyt!

380 Alas, beauty above all beauty,
alas, son, dear to my heart,
where has your beauty disappeared to?
You were the most beautiful child
ever born of a mother's womb,
385 so delightful and tender!
Your cheeks were
as if they were garlanded with roses,
your face shone like the sun,
your gaze was joyful bliss.
390 Oh, beloved son Jesus Christ,
how terribly you are wounded now!
Your limbs are red with blood
since you are suffering great anguish on the cross.
Oh you false deed of the Jews,
395 which was well built
to stain my beloved child!
I want to cover him again:
He shall not remain naked any longer,
wrap my shawl around around him.
400 and I, poor mother Mary,
will borrow another shawl later.
**Saint Mary takes a shawl of white silk and with it covers the loins
of the Crucified, the young man takes it with the sword of Simeon
and immediately pulls it down again.**
Dear children, my suffering is so great that I cry!
Oh Mary Magdalene,
Oh how my dear child is now suffering,
and also your beloved and worthy master.
405 Mary Magdalene replies:
Mary, glory of all virgins,
I understand well what my dear beloved Lord suffers
now before us all;
I cannot help but fall to the ground in pain
and lament his great and heartfelt sorrow.
410 Oh, how he now hangs on the cross!



(Eleuat oculus)

Eya Maria, neen mynslik herte

Kan begrypen syn lydent vnde grote smerte!

O du valsche yodendeyt,

Du makest, dat yk mot syngen eyn klagheleyt!

**Maria plangit in medio circulo (Maria scilicet Magdalena)
cantando vt sequitur**

Maria, moder, reyne schryn,

Dyn klagent wundet sere myn,

Darto de pyn

Des leuen truten heren myn!

Here, wo grot ys nu dyn not!

Beweynen mot yk dynen dot.

Der gnaden sot

Lyt den starken, swaren stot.

Ik laue dy, leue here,

An mynem herten sere

Nu vnde jummermere;

Wo gud was dyne lere!

Des lyde yk grote swere,

Wor yk my henne kere,

O koningk aller eren!

Maria Magdalena dicit

O du arme yodenkynt,

Wo sere bystu nu vorblynt,

Dattu mynem leuen truten heren

Myt so groten vneren

Ghebunden hefst vnde ghevanghen,

Dar tho in dat crutze ghehanghen!

O Maria, syn lydent heft vnse herte dôrgesteken,

Also dat wij alle nicht vele mer konen spreken!

Alle gij leuen vrunde, de gij hijr nu vmme stân,

Latet juw vnse heren lydent to herten gân!

Wylle gij na dessem leuende myt vrowden syn,

So danket em vor desse grote sware pyn!

**Sancta Maria planctum istum cantat bis et eleuat brachia et
plangit cum manibus et hoc quando pausat et tacet.**

(she raises her eyes)

Oh Mary, no human heart

can understand his suffering and great pain!

415 Oh, you false deed of the Jews,

it is your fault, that I must sing a lament!

**Mary, that is to say, Mary Magdalene, mourns with song in the
middle of the stage and continues:**

Mary, mother, shrine of purity,

your lamenting wounds me sorely,

as does the pain

420 *of my dear beloved Lord!*

Lord, how great your misery is now!

I must mourn your death.

The fountain of grace

is dealt a strong and heavy blow.

425 *I praise you greatly, dear Lord,*

in my heart,

now and forever more.

How great were your teachings!

For this I endure great anguish,

430 *wherever I turn,*

o king of honour.

Mary Magdalene says:

Oh you poor Jew child,

how blind you are now,

that you bound and captured

435 *with such great dishonour*

my dear beloved Lord

and hung him on the Cross!

Oh Mary, his suffering has pierced our hearts,

so that all of us can hardly speak anymore!

440 *All you dear friends, who now are gathered here,*

let the suffering of our Lord enter your hearts.

If you want to be joyful after this life,

then be thankful to him for this great and heavy pain!

**St. Mary sings the following lament twice and raises her arms
and mourns with her hands and then stops speaking and is silent:**



Owy, owe, wat lydet nu myn herte?

Owy, owe, dat lydet grote smerte!

Owy, owe, myr ys rechte, so en swert

(Hic expandit manus.)

Dorch myne zele vnde ok dorch myn herte vert!

O, owe, dat ys my nu beschert!

O, owe, schach my ny so leyde!

Virgo Maria dicit vlterius ad populum:

Nu schowet, gij salygen lude,

Desse groten martere hude!

Van yamer vnde van smerte

Dorchghesneden ys myn herte.

Hic tangit cor eius cum gladio dicens sic

Schowet, wo Symeonis grymmige douendige swert

Dorch myne sele vnde ok dorch myn herte vert!

Gy saligen vrowen vnde man,

Latet juw dat seer to herten gan

Vnde byddet den ryken got,

Dat he juw behode vor alsodane not,

Dat gij an juwen kynden

Nummer alsulken yamer vynden!

Mater Johannis ewangeliste cantat post hoc

Ach, wo sere

Lydestu, here,

Grote pyne

Vmme de dynen,

Borne der barmeherticheyt!

Ik wyl lauen

Allen bauen

Dyne gnade

Vro vnde spade

Alle tyt myt ynnicheyt.

Et dicit vlterius

Jhesu Criste, dyn grote herteleyt

Vnde Marien, de so drouich hijr vor vns steyt,

Maket mennighem syne oghen rot.

Help vns, leue here, vth aller not!

Troste myne leuen susteren Marien

Vnde ok, de nu vmme dy weynen vnde scrygen.

Alas, alas, what is my heart now suffering?

Alas, alas, it suffers great pain!

445 *Alas, alas, I feel as if a sword,*

(Here she extends her hands.)

were piercing my soul and my heart!

Oh woe, that this has befallen me!

Oh woe, nothing so painful ever happened to me!

The Virgin Mary speaks further to the audience:

Now behold, you blessed people,

450 *the great torment happening today!*

My heart has been cut into pieces

by sorrow and by pain.

Here she touches his heart with the sword, saying:

Behold how the grim and gruesome sword of Simeon

pierces my soul and pierces my heart!

455 *You blessed women and men,*

let this deeply enter your hearts

and ask mighty God

to protect you from this peril

with your own children!

460 *so that you never know such pain*

The mother of John the Evangelist then sings:

Oh, how much

you suffer, Lord,

great pain

for your people,

465 *fountain of charity!*

I want to praise

above all,

your grace

morning and night,

470 *all the time with devotion.*

And she continues to speak:

Jesus Christ, your great and heartfelt suffering,

and Mary, who stands so bereft before us,

make many eyes red with tears.

Deliver us, Lord, from all peril!

475 *Comfort my dear sister Mary*

and also those who are crying and wailing for your sake.



Hic vertit se ad populum beata virgo Maria

Groter klage ys myr not;
Owe, leghe yk vor en dot!
Schypper, vader ys he myn,
Vnde yk syn gebarerin.
Syne wunden dot myr we;
Myner klage ys noch mer,
Dattu herteleue trut
Wedder my nicht machst werden lut!

(Vertit se ad filium.)

Hertenkynt, nu troste mych,
See my nu and vnde sprich,
Wente ik in den sweren sta
Vnde ok nicht weyt, wor yk gha!

Hic Maria virgo leuat oculos ad filium et dicit

Eya, herteleue kynt, mochtestu my doch tospreken!
Myn herte mot anders mydden entwey breken.

Inspicit filium cantans

*Spryk, leue kynt myn, an desser stund
Vth dyner gotliken munt:
We schall myn trost werden
Hijr vppe desser erden?*

Et dicit

Eya moderlyke herte,
Wat lydestu pyne vnde smerte!
Ik see mynen leuen sone weynen:
Ja were myn herte ok steynen,
Id moste doch nu tobreken.
Eya leue sone, kondestu spreken!

(Inspicit filium.)

Spryk my doch nu eyn wort to,
Dat my jummer wol do
De wyle dat yk na dy leue!
Hijr steyt Johannes, myn leue neue,
De ys gar eyn drouich man;
O leue kynt, sprik, wat schole wij beyde angan?

Now the Blessed Virgin Mary turns to the audience:

I must lament greatly:
If only I could die in his place!
He is my creator and my father,
and I gave birth to him.

480 His wounds cause me pain;
my lament is even greater,
because you, love of my heart,
cannot speak a word to me!

(She turns to her son.)

Child of my heart, now console me,
485 look at me and speak
because I am in peril
and I also don't know where to turn!

Here the Virgin Mary raises her gaze to her son and says:

Alas, beloved child, if only you could speak to me!
Otherwise my heart may break in two.

490 She looks at her son and sings:

*Speak, o dear child, in this hour
from your divine mouth:
who shall be my consolation
here upon this earth?*

And she speaks:

Alas motherly heart,
495 how you are suffering pain and anguish!
I see my dear son cry:
well, even if I had a heart of stone,
it would break now.

Alas dear son, if you could speak!

500 (she looks at her son.)

Speak but one word to me now
now and that will sustain me
however long I live after you're gone!
Here stands John, my dear nephew,
who is in complete despair;

505 O beloved child, speak, what shall the two of us do?



Dominus Jhesus dicit hic ad matrem suam

Vrowes name, do na myner lere:

Weyne vnde scryge nicht so sere!

Dyn grot weynent vnde scrygent

Myne bytter marter vornyet.

Allent, dat an my nu wert gewraken,

Dat hebben de propheten van my gesproken.

Et cantat sic

Hely,

Hely,

Lamazabathani?

Dominus Jhesus dicit ricmum

Myn god, myn hemmelsche vader, see an myr!

Wes hestu my vorlaten hijr

In so bytterlyker swere,

Meer den sandes heft dat mere?

Seet altomale an myk:

Wart gy martere des ghelyk,

De yk vor den sunder nu lyde?

My aller werlde wyde

Ys nu worden alto enghe.

Ach, myn not ys nu alto strenghe!

Ik byn eyn worm vnde nenem mynschen gelijk,

Eyn spot der werlde bekenne yk myk.

Hemmelsche vader, my nicht vorlate,

Wente alle dynck stān an dynem rate!

Maria virgo respondet

Nu hebbe ik volaren allent, dat yk hān,

Vnde ok allent, dat yk gy gewan.

My deyt not, dat yk drouich byn:

O leue sone, wor schal dyne arme moder hin?

We helpet my, vnde we gift my rād

Van alle den luden, de hijr vmme stāt?

O leue kynt, schal ik nicht myt dy steruen,

Men aldus yamerlyken vorderuen,

So bedenke, leue sone, myn arme elende leuent!

Myn lijf vnde myne zele hebbe yk dy ghegheuen.

Lord Jesus speaks to his mother:

Lady, follow my instruction:

Do not weep and wail so much!

Your great weeping and wailing

510 causes my bitter suffering to begin anew.

All the punishment that has been brought upon me

was predicted by the prophets.

And he sings thus:

Father,

Father

why have you forsaken me?

Lord Jesus says in rhyme:

My God, my heavenly father, look at me!

Why have you forsaken me here

515 in more pain,

than the sea has sand?

All of you look at me once more:

were you, o my pain,

the fate that I must now endure for the sinners?

520 My whole world

has now become so narrow.

Alas my suffering is now so severe!

I am a worm and unlike any man,

I confess that I am an object of derision for all the world.

525 Heavenly father, do not forsake me,

for all things happen according to your will!

The Virgin Mary responds:

Now I have lost everything that I had

and also everything that I ever gained.

It hurts me that I am sad:

530 O dear son, where shall your poor mother turn?

Who will help me and who will give me counsel

of all the people who are gathered here?

Oh, dear child, if I am not able to die with you,

but must fall into bitter ruin,

535 consider, dear son, my poor, miserable life!

My body and my soul I have given to you.



Jhesus cantat et post hoc dicit ad matrem

Mulier, ecce filius tuus!

Werde magetvnde moder myn,

Johannes schal dyn hoder syn,

Hebbe ene tho eneme kynde

-- Id wyl sik nu anders nicht vynden --

Vnde lat dyn grote weynent syn:

Dyn lydent ys my also grote pyn!

Dar vmme byn yk van dy gebaren,

Dat myne vrunde nicht werden loren.

**(Sancta Maria plangit semel cum manibus, et Johannes ap-
ponit gladium Symeonis)**

Owy, owe der wesselingen schicht,

De huten schut an mych!

Seed, wo dyt scharpe swerd

Dorch myne zeke verd!

Et dicit eleuata facie ad filium

Leue kynt, mynem herten ys so banghe,

Vnde dat mot waren noch so lange, --

Och mochte yk myt dy lyden den bytteren dot!

Myn lydent ys nu mer wen to grot.

O alder leueste, yk mot nu van dy scheyden,

Sprek, leue kynt, we trostet nu vns beyden?

Johannes, leue om myn,

Ik wyl dy gerne horsam syn.

Johannes, wij vorlesen an desser stund

Jhesum Cristum, vnser hertenallerleuesten vrund.

**Nota: Maria Magdalena et mater Johannis cantant vt prius
planctum "O quam tristis et afflicta" sq. Mater Johannis dicit
"Ach, ach wo sere" vt prius --**

Dominus Jhesus cantat et dicit ad Johannem

Ecce mater tua!

Et dicit ad Johannem ricum

Johannes, junghere ghute,

See nu an dyne leuen moter!

Ik mot nu van hynnen varen,

Dar vmme schaltu see wol vorwaren.

Jesus sings and afterwards speaks to his mother:

Woman, behold your son!

Worthy maid and mother of mine,

John shall be your guardian,

accept him as a child

540 *-- there is no other way --*

and stop your excessive weeping:

your suffering also brings me great pain!

For that reason I am born of you,

that my friends will not be lost.

**(St. Mary gestures once with her hands in mourning and John
picks up the sword of Simeon.)**

545 *Alas, alas, the evil deeds*

which are being done to me today by the moneylenders!

See how this sharp sword

pierces my soul!

And she speaks to her son with her face raised to look at him:

Dear child, there is so much fear in my heart,

550 *and it will endure,*

oh, if only I could suffer bitter death with you!

My suffering has now become too great.

Oh, most beloved, I must now leave you;

speak, dear child, who will now console us both?

555 *John, my dear nephew,*

I will gladly obey you.

John, I must now leave

Jesus Christ, the friend dearest to our hearts.

**Note: Mary Magdalene and the mother of John sing the lamen-
tation "Oh, how sad and afflicted", etc. as they did before. The
mother of John recites "Alas, alas, how greatly" as before.**

Lord Jesus sings and speaks to John:

Behold your mother!

And he says to John in rhymes:

John, good man,

behold your dear mother!

560 *I must now depart from here,*

therefore, you shall take good care of her.



Ik mot nu wedder keren
 Tho mynem hemmelschen vader vnde heren;
 See schal nu wesen de moder dyn,
 Plech erer else myn!
 Johannes, do dorch dyne gote:
 Nym se an dyne hode,
 Troste se leflyken in erer not,
 Wan ik hebbe geleden den bytteren dot.

Johannes respondet

Here vnde meyster, dat schal my ghetemen,
 Ik wyl se gerne to my nemen
 Vnde vor myne leuen moder vntfân;
 Ik wyl se nummermer vorlân.
 Gherne wyl yk se nemen an myne hute.
 Wat yk er ok kan dôn to gute,
 Dat wil ik van herten gerne don de wyle dat ik leue.
 O leue here god, nu gheue
 Vns beyden den dot,
 Wente yd ys vns warlyken not!
 Ach leyder, de spiegel wyl vns entgân,
 Dar alle de werlt kan by bestân!
 We kan nu syn trurent lân,
 O hemmelsche god, van allen luden, de hijr vmme
 stân?

Jhesus cantat post hoc

Pater, dimitte eis!
Nu schal ok eyn ende syn
Der groten, bytter marter myn.
O hemmelsche vader, yk bydde dy,
An mynem ende twyde my:
Vorgiff nu ghanslyk
Den, de my so yamerlyk
Myn leuent hebben ghenomen!
Dat ende mynes leuendes ys nu ghekomen.

Jhesus cantat post hoc

Consummatum est.
Aller proheten sproke synt nu vullenbracht,
De van des mynschen sone gy worden bedacht.

I must now return
 to my heavenly father and lord.
 565 She shall now be your mother.
 Care for her as you did for me!
 John, for the sake of your god,
 take her into your care,
 console her lovingly in her misery,
 570 because I have suffered bitter death¹⁷.
John responds:
 Lord and master, that is fitting for me;
 I'll happily take her with me
 and accept her as my dear mother;
 I will never leave her again.
 575 Gladly I will take her into my care.
 Whatever good I can do for her,
 I will do it with an eager heart as long as I live.
 O beloved Lord God, now give
 death to both of us
 580 because we are truly in peril!
 O woe, the mirror is escaping us¹⁸,
 and through this the whole world may continue.
 Who can forget his suffering?
 O heavenly God, who of all the people who are gathered here can stop
 mourning now?

Jesus then sings:

Father, forgive them!
 585 *Now there will be an end*
to my great bitter torment.
O heavenly father, I bid you,
grant me this in my final hour:
completely forgive
 590 *those who so wretchedly*
took my life!
The end of my life has now come.

Jesus then sings:

It is finished.
All the prophesies about the son of man
that were ever conceived by the prophets have now been fulfilled.



Dominus Jhesus clamat valida voceicens

In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.

Ik bevele an de hende dyn

Mynen geyst, o hemmelsche vader myn!

Sancta Maria audiens hoc cantat valida et lacrimabili voce prosternendo se ad terram, plangendo manibus

Owy, owe, nu ys he dot!

Maria Magdalena statim leuat eam

Sta vp, junckfrowe Maria, vnde wende dynen môt!

Dynes kyndes martere schal mennighen wesen gûd.

Sancta Maria cantat secundo prosternendo se ad terram, plangendo

Owy, owe, nu ys he dot!

Mater Johannis statim leuat eam dicens

Maria, leue suster myn,

Sta vp vnde lat dyngrote weynent syn!

Dyn scrygent vnde ok dyn weynent

Vntfarmen mach den harden steynen.

Sancta Maria cantat tercio prosternendo se et plangendo manibus

Owy, owe, nu ys he dot!

Johannes ewangelista dicit leuando eam

Maria, new moder vnde leue medder myn,

Sta vp vnde lat dyn frote weynent syn!

Yd mach nu nicht anders wesen, --

Is he dot, he mach wol wedder genesen.

Sancta Maria plangit post hoc et vertit se ad populum

Nu vornuwet sik myn not,

Den ik yamerlyken drage

Vnde so klegeliken klage.

Owe, wat heft he gedan?

Hedde gij em dat leuent lân

Vnde genomen myr dat lijff!

Wat schal yk vyl arme wyff?

Ik byn syner worden anych!

Johannes dicit

Maria, nuwe moder vnde leue medder myn,

Och lat dyn grote weynent syn!

Id mochte anders nicht wesen:

Lord Jesus cries out with a loud voice:

Into your hands I commend my spirit.

595 I commend into your hands

my spirit, O my heavenly father!

St. Mary, listening to this, sings with a strong and tearful voice, while prostrating herself on the ground and making gestures of grief with her hands:

Alas, alas, now he is dead.

Mary Magdalene immediately helps her up.

Stand up, Virgin Mary and take heart!

The torment of your child will benefit many.

St. Mary sings, prostrating herself on the ground a second time, lamenting:

Alas, alas, now he is dead!

600 **The Mother of John immediately helps her up, saying:**

Mary, my dear sister,

stand up and stop your excessing crying!

Your wailing and your lamenting

could draw pity from the hardest stones.

St. Mary sings and prostrates herself and makes gestures of grief with her hands:

605 *Alas, alas, now he is dead!*

John the Evangelist says, helping her up:

Mary, my new mother and dear aunt,

get up and stop your excessive crying!

There is no other path,

— if he is dead, he will surely rise again.

Then St. Mary laments and turns to the audience:

610 *Now my misery begins again*

that I bear so bitterly

and lament so deplorably.

Alas, what has he done?

If only you had let him live

615 *and taken my life!*

what shall I, a poor woman, do?

I have lost him!

John speaks:

Mary, my new mother and dear aunt,

oh, stop your excessive crying!

620 It could not be any different!



Sancta Maria cantat post hoc

Owe, weer

Heft syn speer

Dar to bereydet,

Dat he dich

Vnde mych

So yamerlyken scheydet?

Johannes dicit ad hoc, tenens gladium in manibus

O Maria, dyn lydent ys alto grot,

Id maket mennigem mynschen syne oghen rot.

Johannes cantat post sicut prius "Maria, moder vnde maget reyne."

Sancta Maria cantat post hoc

Nu ys ok weynent myr beschen,

Went yk synen dot moet sên,

Den ik ane swere gâr

Moder vnde maget gebâr.

Jhesu Criste, leue kynt, ware mynsche vnde ware god,

Du bekennest, wo grot nu ys myner zelen not

Vmme dat grote lydent dyn

Vnde dat yk dyner môt anych syn.

Maria Magdalena deuote plangit post hoc

De sune de lyt,

De steyn toryt,

Dat laken splyt, --

Wo we ys myk,

God, vmme dyk!

De yoden bekeren sik.

De erde beuet,

De doden leuet.

Myt herten vnde mund

An desser stund,

O werde here,

Wij dy danken nu so sere!

Jhesu Criste, Marien kynt, o ryke god,

Wat lyde wij nu vumme dynen bytteren dot!

O allerleueste, troste de armen kyndere dyn,

Sunderges Marien, de leuen truten moder dyn!

St. Mary then sings:

Oh, woe, who

readied his lance,

in order to part

625 *you*

and me

so wretchedly?

John responds to this, holding the sword in his hands:

Oh, Mary, your suffering is so great

that it makes many eyes red with tears.

Then John sings as before "Mary, mother and pure virgin".

St. Mary then sings:

630 *Now I must cry again,*

because I must watch the death of him

whom I, mother and virgin,

bore without any pain.

Jesus Christ, dear child, true man and true God,

635 *you know how great is the anguish of my soul*

because of your great suffering

and because I had to lose you.

Mary Magdalene then laments piously:

The sun suffers, sun

the stones crack, stone

640 *the curtain tears, --the temple curtain*

How sad I am,

God for you!

The Jews convert, they change their hearts

The earth shakes,

645 *the dead live again.*

With heart and mouth,

in this hour,

my dear Lord,

we thank you greatly!

650 *Jesus Christ, child of Mary, o abundant God,*

how much we suffer now because of your bitter death!

O most beloved, now console your poor children,

especially Mary, your dear beloved mother!



Sancta Maria plangit vterius cantans

Owe, dot

Dessen not

Mochtestu wol wenden,

Woldestu van dyr

Hijr to myr

Dynen baden senden!

Maria dicit

Eya, eya moderlyke herte,

Wat lydestu pyne vnde smerte

Vmme Jhesum Cristum, den leuen sonen myn,

Wente yk mot nu syner anych syn!

Nota. Planctum sequentem beata virgo cantat bis, quia deuotissimus est, si fieri potest commodose. In isto cantico, eciam in ricmo sequenti, sanctus Johannes tenet gladium Symeonis deuotissime flexis genibus in manibus suis directe ante beatam virginem, cum quo tribus vicibus tangit pectus euis deuote.

Symeonis grymmige swert,

(Hic tangit primo.)

Du byst my vnvorborghen,

Du byst my lange vorbescherd,

Des mot ik sere sorgen.

(Hic tangit cor eius cum gladio dicens sic)

De sunne vorlust eren schyn,

Alder werld gemeyne,

De erde beuet, dar se licht,

Ok klouen syk de steyne.

Dot, kum, nym vns beyden,

Dat ik nicht eyne

Van em enscheyde

So yamerliken!

Syn blot my nu rodet,

(Tangit secundo.)

Syn dot my nu dodet,

Syn not my nu nodet

Myt em ghelyke.

St. Mary continues her lament, singing:

Alas, death

you might be able to avert

655 *his suffering*

if you would send

your messenger

here to me!

[St.] Mary speaks:

Alas, alas, motherly heart,

660 *how you are suffering pain and sorrow*

for the sake of Jesus Christ, my dear son,

because I now much be without him!

Note: If it is possible, the Blessed Virgin sings the following lament twice because it is most pious. During this song, and also during the following rhymes, St. John holds the sword of Simeon in his hands, kneeling most piously directly before the Blessed Virgin, and piously strikes his chest with it three times.

Grim sword of Simeon,

(Here he strikes himself for the first time.)

you are revealed to me;

665 *you have long been my destiny;*

I am distressed about that.

(Here he takes it [the sword] away.)

The sun stops shining

all over the world;

the earth shakes in its place

670 *and the stones break apart.*

Death, come, take both of us,

so that I don't

part from him, alone

and in such misery.

675 *His blood reddens me*

(He strikes himself another time.)

his death deadens me

his sadness saddens me,

as is my fate.



Maria dicit vterius ad populum

O gij saligen lute,
Schowet dessen groten yamer hute
An moder vnde an kynde!
Seet, wo rechte swynde
(Hic tangit tercio.)
Symeonis scharpe douendyge swert
Dorch myne sele henne verd
Vnde ok dorch myn bedrouede herte!
Desse bytterlyke smerte
Propheterede my her Symeon,
Do yk Jhesum Cristum mynen leuen sôn
In den tempel godes brachte;
He sprak: o maget, nu wachte!
Du byst dynes modes nu so vro --
Id schal noch komen also,
Dat eyn scharp swert schal treden
695Dorch dyne sele vnde dyn kynd dar mede!

Maria Johannis ewangeliste plangit post hoc et cantat

*O godes kynt,
Wo blodich synt
Alle de hilgen lede dyn!
Dat gift myneme herten pyn.
O du aller hogeste gud,
Ik nu sere beweynen mod
Dynen groten swaren dot!
Owy vnde owe ouer vnsen not!
Gheleden heft den swaren dot
Jhesus Cristus, vnse leue here.
Leuen kyndere, helpet vns mede weynen sere!
Beter were wij vngeboren,
Worde syn hilge lydent an vns verloren.*

Sancta Maria cantat post hoc

*Fflecte ramos, arbor alta,
Densa laxa viscera,
Et rigor lentescat ille,
Quem dedit natiuitas,
Vt superni membra regis
Miti tendas stipite!*

Mary then speaks further to the audience:

680 Oh, you blessed people,
behold today this great misery
of mother and of child!
See, how quickly
(He strikes himself a third time.)
Simeon's sharp, grim sword
685 cuts through my soul
and also through my grieving heart!
The prophecy of this bitter pain
was revealed to me by Simeon,
when I brought my dear son
690 Jesus Christ into God's temple.
He spoke: "Oh, virgin, take heed!
You are now so joyful --
it will come to pass
that a sharp sword will cut
695 through your soul and your child with it!

Mary, mother of John the Evangelist, then laments and sings:

*oh, child of God,
how bloody are
all your holy limbs!
That makes my heart ache.*
700 *Oh, you highest goodness,
I must now weep for
your cruel and terrible death!
Alas and alack for our peril!
Jesus Christ, our dear Lord,
705 has suffered a cruel death.
Dear children, help us to weep!
TIt would be better if we had never been born,
than that his suffering be wasted on us.*

Then St. Mary sings:

*Bend your branches, tall tree
relax your broad limbs,
and may your native
stiffness relax,
so that you may spread the limbs of the highest king
with a gentle trunk!*



Sancta Maria dicit et inspicit crucem

O du eddele bōm van hoger werde,
 Boghe dy eyn kleyne to der erde,
 Dat yk kussen moge den leuen sone myn!
 O wo drouych mot ik lange syn,
 Dat ik synes nicht kan aflangen!
 O leue kynt, wo hoge bystu nu ghehangen!
 Ny quam creature in so grote not,
 Alse du, Jhesu Criste, o hemmelsche got!
 We kan dy des danken, o ryke godes kynt?
 Troste my vnde alle, de nu vmme dy bedrouet synt!

Johannes respondet

O eddele junckfrowe Maria vnde reyne maget,
 Dyn herteleyt sy gode van hemmelryke geklaget!
 Vnse metelydent wyl sik nu ersten vornynen;
 Ik mot myt luder stempnen vth mynem herten scrygen
 Vnde ropen myt dy in den hemmel, o Marie!
 Leuen vrundes, besuchtet vnde beweynet nu mede vnser
 heren dot,
 Dat he juw behode vnde beware vor der ewygen helle nōt!

Johannes cantat et vertit se ad Mariam virginem

*Maria, moder bystu myn,
 Jo byn ik de sone dyn.
 Cristus myn meyster dy my bevalen hat,
 Went dyn heyl nu an myr stat.
 So lat, trud moder, dyn weynent!*

(Hic apprehendit manum beate virginis)

Wo grot ys myn herteleyt,

(Hic subtrahit.)

*Went ik see des yamers kleyt
 An der werden junckfrowen schynen
 Myt so bytterlyken pynen!
 Wultu doden my enen?
 God, here, meyster ys he myn,
 Jo byn ik de junger syn.
 He gaf dy to ener moder my,
 Do toch he my to sone dy,
 De wyle he leuede an deme crutze.*

St. Mary speaks and looks at the cross:

O noble and worthy tree,
 710 bow down to earth a little
 so that I can kiss my beloved son!
 Oh, how sad I will be for a long time
 since I can't reach him!
 O dear child, how high you are hung now!
 715 No creature was ever in such great peril
 as you, Jesus Christ, o Heavenly God!
 How can I thank you, child of the Almighty God?
 Console me and everyone who is waiting for you!

John responds:

O noble and pure Virgin Mary,
 720 your heart's sorrow shall be lamented to God in Heaven!
 Our communal suffering will now truly reveal itself;
 with a loud voice from my heart
 I will cry with you into Heaven, o Mary!
 Dear friends, now consider and bewail with us our Lord's death
 so that he might save and deliver you from the threat of eternal
 hell!

John sings and turns to the Virgin Mary:

*Mary, you are my mother
 and thus I am your son.
 Christ, my master, has given you into my care
 so that your wellbeing is now responsibility.*

730 *Therefore, dear mother, stop your wailing!*
(Here he takes the hand of the Virgin Mary)

How great is my heart's suffering

(Here he lets go of it.):

*when I see the noble virgin
 wearing a veil of sorrow
 with such bitter pains!
 735 Do you want to kill me?
 To me he is God, lord and master,
 thus I am his disciple.
 He gave you to me as my mother
 and hence chose me to be your son
 740 while he was still alive on the cross.*



*Vp synen brusten yk vntsleep,
Myn herte syne gotheyt grep:
Ik weyt, he ys van wyllen dot,
Myt wyllen let he de marter grot.
Dat nym an dyn herte, sute!
Sulken trost han nu van myr:
Ik wyl wesen eyn hoder dyn,
Wente my bevalen bist,
Vnde dyn heyl vorstoruen ist.
750De prophecie ys vullenbracht:
He heft vorvullet des dodes macht.
(Hic apprehendit iterum manus)
Myt truwen yk dy meyne,
So lat, trut moder, dyn weynent!
Maria, medder vnde moder myn,
Och lat dyn grote weynent syn!
Herteleue benedygede maget,
Hebbe eyn herte vnvorsaghet,
Wente yd mochte nicht anders syn:
Dyn leue kynt moste lyden pyn
760Vor alle mynslyken kunne;
Dar na schal yd myt wunne
Vpstan van dode vnde myt vrowden dy schynen
Vnde alle den leuen jungeren synen;
Dat schût an deme drudden dage.
-- Lat, moder maget, dyne klage! --
Dar negest schal he ok to hemmel varen
Myn synen groten hemmelschen scharen;
In synes hemmelschen vaders trone
Blyuet he ewychliken schone.
Sancta Maria respondet
O Johannes, dat grote vnschuldige lydent syn
Wundet so sere lijff vnde sele myn,
Dat yk mot weynen vnde scrygen
Vnde kan des ok nicht vortygen.*

*fell asleep on his chest,
my heart yearned for his godhead.
I know that he dies willingly;
willingly he suffered great torment.
745 Take that to heart, sweet one!
Take such consolation from me:
I will be your protector
because that is what I was ordered to do,
and your happiness has died.
750 750The prophecy is fulfilled,
he has embraced the power of death.
(Here he takes her hand again.)
And faithfully, I have to bid you,
dear mother, to stop crying.
Mary, my aunt and mother,
755 stop your excessive crying!
Beloved of my heart, Blessed Virgin,
be courageous in heart
because it could not have been any other way:
your dear child had to suffer pain
760 760beyond all human understanding;
afterward he shall rise blissfully
from the dead and appear to you
and all the disciples in joy.
That will happen on the third day.
765 Stop your lamentation, mother!
After that, he shall ascend to Heaven
together with his great heavenly host;
on his heavenly father's throne
he blossoms in eternal beauty.
St. Mary responds:
770 Oh, John, his great and innocent suffering
deeply wounds my body and soul,
so that I must cry and wail
and cannot refrain from it.*



Planctus vltimus beate Marie, quem facit bina vice

Johannes, nuwer sone myn,
Ik medder vnde moder dyn
Bydde: help my weynen,
Vnde klagen Cristum den reynen,
Synt weynent ys nu worden tijd!
Dorch aller werlde myssedaet
De hemmel an drofnissen stat,
Steyne, erde van vruchten stoten syk
Vmme Cristus dôt so bytterlyk.
Grote swere an mynem herten lyt.

Maria post hoc dicit lacrimabiliter, vt sequitur

O wy vnde we, dat ik gy wart gheboren!
Ik hebbe myn herteleue truten kynt verloren!
Dat ys my afgemordet gâr,
Dat hanget hijr bleek vnde dôtvâr!
Leuen kyndere, ik byn van jammer also krank,
Dat my benomen ys de ganck!
Ik mach nu nicht mer gân,
Ok nicht vp mynen voten stân.
Myn herte wyl van yammer tobreken,
Myn munt mach ok nicht mer spreken.
Johannes, lose nu af den dôk doch,
Den yk em vmme synen hylgen syden slôch!
Dar ys ynne dat hilge dure blot,
Dat vte synen depen wunden vlot.
Dat mochte noch vp desser erden
Mennigen mynschen to troste werden.

Hic Maria cadit ad terram præ nimio dolore, et Johannes soluit pannum leuansque matrem domini et dicit amicabiliter et consolatorie

Sta vp, Maria, mynes herten allerleueste trut,
Vnde troste doch dynen gar drouigen mot!
Dat ys des mynschen salicheyt eyn grot deyl,
Dat gestoruen ys Jhesus Cristus, vnse gantze heyl.
De mynsche moste syn verloren,
Were vnse leue here van dy nicht geboren;
Vmme vns armen wolde he mynsche werden:

The last lamentation of Mary, which she does twice:

John, my new son,
775 I am both your aunt and your mother,
please, help me bewail
and lament the pure Christ,
since the time for lamentation has now come!
On account of all the world's misdeeds,
780 Heaven is in a state of sorrow.
Stones and earth tremble in misery
because of Christ's bitter death.
Great anguish befalls my heart.

After that, Mary speaks tearfully as follows:

Alas and alack that I ever was born!
785 I have lost my dear beloved child!
He has been taken away from me by murder,
so that he hangs here bleak and deathly pale.
Dear children, I am so sick from anguish
that I cannot move anymore.
790 I cannot walk
nor stand on my feet anymore.
My heart wants to break from misery
and my mouth is no longer able to speak.
John, now loosen the cloth
795 that I bound around his hips!
It is stained with the holy blood
that flowed from his deep wounds.
That will become a consolation to
many people in this world.

Here, Mary falls to the ground in unbearable pain, and John unties the cloth and, helping up the Mother of God, speaks sympathetically and consolingly:

Get up, Mary, dearest friend of my heart,
800 and find comfort for your despair!
It is of great importance to mankind's salvation
that Jesus Christ, our saviour, has died.
Mankind would have been lost,
if our beloved Lord had not been born of you.
805 For the sake of us poor ones he desired to become human:



Dar to quam he vp erden
 Nach der propheten sroke allermeyst,
 Alse du suluen alderbest weyst.
 He wolde den mynschen losen
 Vmme syne gude van der walt der bosen;
 Vnde ok vmme syne groten barmherticheyt
 Heft he vordreuen vnse ôlde leyt,
 Dat van vnsen ersten elderen quam,
 Alse vns de scrift secht, van Euen vnde van Adam.
 Dat he den dot ok gy gewan,
 Des scholen en louen sere vrowen vnde man.
 Reyne junckfrowe Maria, lat dyne klaghe!
 He wârlîk wyl vpstân in deme drudden daghe:
 So schaltu en myt groten vrowden seen,
 Mêr den mynslik herte kan denken vnde gheen.
 Dar an denke, o moder gute
 Vnde ga myt my an myne hute!
 Du schalt wesen de leue moter myn,
 Ik wyl dy alle tijd vnderdanich vnde horsam syn;
 De junghere vnses heren scholen dat merken,
 Dat ik dat bewysen wyl myt wyllen, myt worden vnde ok myt werken.

Sancta Maria respondet voce lamcrimabili vltimo dicens

Yohannes, myner leuen suster kynt,
 Wij altomale sere bedrouet synd,
 Alse du wol west, vmme vnses leuen heren, mynes leue
 kyndes dôt.
 Yk weyt dat wol, dat he desse marter grot
 Gheleden heft vor alle de werld gemeyne.

Hic vertit se ad filium

O leue here Jhesu Criste, ik beuele my dy alleyne
 Vnde sunte Johanse, deme leuen junghere dyn;
 He mot nu vor dy myn kynt syn.
 Van weynende vnde van suchtende kan ik nicht mer spreken,
 Myn arme herte wyl mydden entwey breken.
 O Jhesu Criste, mynes herten allerleueste kynt,
 Troste vns vnde alle, de nu vmme dy bedrouet synt!

for this he came to earth,
 in perfect accordance with the prophet's teachings,
 as you know well yourself.
 810 Because of his benevolence, he wanted to deliver
 mankind from the power of evil
 and because of his great munificence
 he ended our old sorrow
 that was handed down to us by our first ancestors;
 815 as scripture tells us, it came from Eve and Adam.
 Because he has died for this
 he shall be praised by women and men.
 Pure Virgin Mary, end your lamentation!
 He will truly rise on the third day;
 820 thus you shall see him with joy greater
 than a human heart can think of or desire.
 Think of this, o good mother,
 and go with me, in my care!
 You shall be my dear mother;
 825 I will be obedient and loyal to you for ever.
 The disciples of our Lord shall know it:
 I will prove it with my intention, words, and deeds.
St. Mary finally responds, speaking in a tearful voice:
 John, my dear sister's child,
 all of us are very sad,
 830 as you well know, because of our dear Lord's and my dear child's
 death.
 I well know that he has suffer.
 his torment for all the world
Here she turns to her son:
 O dear Lord Jesus Christ, I commend myself to you alone
 and to St. John, your dear disciple;
 835 he will now be my child in your place.
 From wailing and from suffering I can no longer speak;
 my poor heart wants to break in half.
 O Jesus Christ, dearest child of my heart,
 comfort us and everyone who is grieving for you!



Dyn hilge lydent mote vns syn to vromen,
Dat wij altomale moten in dat ewyge leuent komen!
Johannes, leue truten sone myn,
Ik wyl dy to allen tyden horsam vnde vnderdanich syn.

Sanctus Johannes concludit post hoc planctum beate Marie virginis deuotissimum, dicens

O leuen vrundes, gij hebben gehort an dessem guden dage
Vnses heren lydent vnde vnser leuen vrowen klage!
Ere hilge lydent mote vns allen syn to vromen,
Dat wij altomale moten in dat ewyge leuent komen
Vnde myt Marien mogen in deme hemmelryke
Beschowen Jhesum Cristum vnser leuen heren ewychlyken.
Dat vns dat altomale beschee,
So stat vp vnde gat sytten vppe juwe beyde knee,
Spreket eyn pater noster myt ynnicheyt
Vnde ok aue Maria to juwer selen zalicheyt.
Ik beuele juw gode vnde sunte Marien.
Dar mede wylle wij vnse klagent vortygen.

Post hoc vnusquisque ponit se ad genua cum omnibus circumstantibus deuote, et sanctus Johannes dicit collectam sequentem alta voce pro omnibus: Oremus!

Interueniat pro nobis quesumus, domine Jhesu Criste, nunc et in hora mortis nostre apud tuam immensam clemenciam beatissima virgo Maria, cuius felicissimam animam in hora amare passionis tue gladius doloris pertransiuit!

Coniunctim

Beati Johannis apostoli tui et ewangeliste nos quesumus tibi votiuua commendat oracio. cui moriens in cruce matrem virginem virgini commendasti. Qui viuis et regnas cum deo patre in vnitate spiritus sancti, dues per omnia secula seculorum.

Omnes dicunt

Amen.

Johannes ewangelista statim extendit manum suam et benedicens omnem populum cum eadem benedictione quam dicit sacerdos finito sermone.

Vltimo rector incipit psalmum "Tenebre face sunt", cum quo vadunt usque ad summum altare ordinate et deuote et simul omnes cantant vsque ad versum. Quo finito omnes inclinant se ad gloriosissimum sacramentum humiliter. Post hoc vnusquisque vadit vias cum gratiarum actione.

Nota: Quando exeunt primo, cantant psalmum sequens

840 Your holy suffering might help us
so that we, together, can gain eternal life
John, dear beloved son,
I will be loyal and obedient to you forever.

St John then concludes this very pious lamentation of the Blessed Virgin, saying:

O dear friends, on this good day you have heard
845 our Lord's suffering and the lamentation of our dear lady!
Her holy suffering may help us all,
so that we may all gain eternal life
and, together with Mary, we may behold in Heaven
our dear and eternal Lord Jesus Christ.
850 In order for that to happen for us all
stand up and kneel down,
say the Lord's prayer piously
and also an ave Maria for your salvation.
I commend you to God and St. Mary.
855 With this we want to end our lamentations.

After this, everyone, together with all the bystanders, devoutly kneels, and in a loud voice, St. John recites the following offertory for everyone: Let us pray!

O Lord Jesus Christ, we beseech you that the blessed Virgin Mary, your mother, whose most holy soul was pierced by the sword of sorrow in the hour of your passion, may appeal for us to your clemency, now and at the hour of our death¹⁹.

Together:

We beseech St. John, your apostle and our evangelist, to whom you, dying on the cross, have entrusted your mother, the virgin of virgins, to commit the offered prayer to you, who lives and reigns with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for all eternity.

All say:

Amen

John the Evangelist immediately reaches out his hand and blesses all the people with the same benediction that the priest says at the end of a sermon.

Finally, the rector strikes up the psalm "Darkness fell," to which all proceed in an orderly and devout manner to the high altar and sing together up until the verse. When this has ended, they all bow humbly to the glorious Sacrament. After this, everyone exits with displays of gratitude.

Note: When they first enter the stage, they sing the following psalm:



*Circumdederunt me viri mendaces, sine causa flagellis ceciderunt me.
Sed tu, domine defensor, vindica me!*

Dominus Jhesus solus cantat versum

Quoniam tribulatio proxima est et non est, qui adiuvet.

Quando intrant, cantant responsorium sequens

Tenebre facte sunt, dum crucifixissent Jhesum Judei.

*Et circa horam nonam exclamavit Jhesus voce magna: Deus meus,
Deus meus, vt quid me dereliquisti?*

Et inclinato capite tradidit spiritum.

Et sic est finis huius planctus.

*Lying men surrounded me: without reason they beat me with whips;
But you Lord, my defender, avenge me.*

The Lord Jesus Christ alone sings the verse:

For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me.

When they exit the stage, they sing the following responsory:

Darkness fell when the Jews crucified Jesus

*And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice: "My God,
my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*

And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

And this is the end of this lamentation.

Critical Notes

- 1 Here, the Latin "nota" is not easy to translate. Alternatively, it could be understood to mean "depiction" or "style".
- 2 In medieval monastic contexts, the "prandium" was, according to the Benedictine Rule, the principal meal of the day which the whole community gathered for around noon.
- 3 The Latin expression "in genere sive in specie" is a formulaic idiom. Here, it expresses that the described qualities and effects of the play do not only apply to this particular Middle Low German version, but to the genre of Marian lamentations in general.
- 4 This reference points to a non-extant Easter play that the Augustinian monks of Bordesholm seem to have performed regularly. It shows how late medieval liturgical drama was far from being a singular event and in fact was deeply embedded into the rhythm of monastic life.
- 5 Latin "rigmus" is a technical term in medieval drama, denoting a rhymed and spoken (not sung) monologue.
- 6 Gramatically, the Latin „sepius“ makes no sense here. We assume that it is a scribal mistake or an abbreviation for „septimus“, referring to the seven sorrows of the Virgin Mary.
- 7 Medieval churches are generally oriented to the east: Therefore, the altar, cross and choir are behind Mary (east), the nave with the audience is in front of her (west), John the Evangelist stands to her left (south) and north means right of her.
- 8 Here, the use of Latin words is counterintuitive to English speakers: „exire“ means entering, „intrare“ exiting the stage.
- 9 The rector is the priest who leads the liturgical singing and recitations that take place during the play.
- 10 Jesus is facing the audience.
- 11 Here, the sonorization typical for Middle Low German is reflected in the Latin spelling of the manuscript: „dono“ does not derive from „donum“ (meaning „gift“), but from „tonus“ (meaning „tone of voice,“ „note,“ „inflection“).
- 12 The literal meaning of "entrade" is "guess correctly".
- 13 Literally: they threw off their foul spit
- 14 Matthew 27:46
- 15 "consummatum est", John 19:30
- 16 According to Lexer, "sabaoth" means king of kings.



Anonymous. "The Virgin Mary's Lament | Marienklage". Trans. Björn Buschbeck, Kathryn Starkey, Mae Velloso-Lyons, Robert Forke, Christopher Hutchinson, and Mareike Reisch. *Global Medieval Sourcebook*. 2021. sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/virgin_mary_lament_bordesholm/.

- 17 Jesus is both dead and speaking as if he is alive. This is typical for medieval depictions of the passion where Jesus regularly appears in death but points to his wounds as if he were alive.
- 18 i.e. Jesus Christ.
- 19 Prayer taken from the Officium parvum de septem Doloribus B.V.M.