



## Vorau Plaint of Sin | Vorauer Sündenklage

### Text Information

Author | Anonymous

Language | Middle High German

Period | 12th Century

Genre | Religious poem

Source | Vorau, Stiftsbibl., Cod. 276

Collection | Prayer, Spirituality, and Life after Death: Global Medieval Perspectives

URL | [http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/vorau\\_plaint\\_sin/](http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/vorau_plaint_sin/)

Transcription, translation and introduction by Sarah Bowden.

### Introduction to the Text

The *Vorau Plaint of Sin*, written in the second half of the twelfth century in the south-eastern German lands, is a substantial poem addressed to God in the voice of a sinner. The poem is conventionally counted as part of a small sub-genre of Early Middle High German religious poetry known as the '*Sündenklage*', or 'plaint of sin'. These poems – there is also the *Millstatt Plaint of Sin*, the closely related *Rheinau Paul* and the more simplistic *Uppsala Plaint of Sin* – all have at their heart a confession of sinfulness and a prayer to God for mercy, and are thought to have taken their inspiration from the more practical text-type of the German confession ('*Beichte*'). These confessions, **generalized first-person confessions in prose**, are transmitted widely from the ninth century and had a variety of liturgical and devotional functions.

Yet the *Vorau Plaint of Sin* is not simply a confession of sin, but rather a relatively complex meditation on human sinfulness and atonement more broadly. At its heart is an attempt to make sense of sin through an emphasis on its integral role in the dynamic system of redemption and salvation. The poem stresses the unavoidability of the fact of sin: the sins of man are a necessary prerequisite for the redemptive role of Christ. Yet this does not mean that the sinner should not feel contrition for what he has done, **and the poem is rich with tension between an insistence on the contrition and weakness of the self on the one hand and his metaphysical self-confidence and self-awareness on the other**. The result is a poem that will be rewarding to readers interested in attitudes towards sinfulness, and how sinfulness intersects with humanity, metaphysics and devotion.

### Introduction to the Source

The *Vorau Plaint of Sin* is found in two manuscripts. It is transmitted in complete form in a substantial, multi-text codex (Vorau, Stiftsbibliothek Cod. 276 (see below)) and in partial form in Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek Cod. 73, a twelfth-century Hrabanus Maurus manuscript.

### About this Edition

Vorau, Stiftsbibliothek Cod. 276 is a major anthology of 'Early Middle High German' verse texts. The Vorau manuscript was made in the last quarter of the twelfth century in the southern German lands, probably in Vorau itself: an abbey of Augustinian canons in the Steiermark, in the far east of what is now Austria. It has been suggested that the manuscript was made in the monastic-aristocratic nexus formed by the monastery and the family of its founder, Margrave Ottakar III, and although there is no concrete evidence for this thesis it seems plausible. Measuring 450 x 325cm, the Vorau manuscript is a substantial, high-quality object consisting of two fascicles (or independent 'booklets'), one German and one Latin. The German fascicle begins with the earliest extant witness of the *Kaiserchronik* (Chronicle of Emperors), followed by the *Vorau Books of Moses* and twelve shorter German verse works on primarily biblical and religious themes. Setting aside the *Kaiserchronik*, the manuscript is constructed along a loosely chronological path from the creation of the world to the Last Judgement, with the texts following a path from the Old Testament to Alexander the Great, finishing with the New Testament and the end of the world. The *Vorau Plaint of Sin* is positioned between the works of Frau Ava and the *Song of Ezzo*, which also deal with the life of Christ and the fate of mankind. It is unclear when the German fascicle was first bound together with the Latin fascicle, which contains Otto of Freising's chronicle of the house of Hohenstaufen, the *Gesta Friderici imperatoris*.

Spacing ->  
(too narrow)



### Further Reading

Bowden, Sarah, "Vorauer Sammlung und Zwettler Federproben: Die Vorauer Sündenklage in der literarischen Sammelpraxis des 12. Jahrhunderts", in *Sammeln als literarische Praxis im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Mark Chinca, Manfred Eikermann, Michael Stolz and Christopher Young (Tübingen: Narr, forthcoming 2021).

- *On the transmission of the Vorau Plaint of Sin.*

Haug, Walter, "Literature, allegory and salvation: theoretical positions in Early Middle High German", in Haug, *Vernacular Literary Theory in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Joanna M. Catling, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 29 (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 46–74.

- *A introduction to the content and style of German religious poetry of the twelfth century, focusing on salvation and praise.*

Schafferhoher, Gernot, and Martin Schubert, "Vorau", in *Schreiborte des deutschen Mittelalters. Skriptorien – Werke – Mäzene*, ed. by Martin Schubert (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 513–35.

- *A comprehensive introduction to the Vorau codex, with references to the extensive scholarship on this manuscript.*

Kaiserchronik digital, Elektronische Ausgabe, ed. by Mark Chinca, Helen Hunter, Jürgen Wolf, Christopher Young (Heidelberg: Universitätsbibliothek, 2018), (<https://doi.org/10.11588/edition.kcd>)

- *Online edition of all redactions of the Kaiserchronik, including a full digitization of the Vorau codex.*



## Vorau Plaint of Sin | Vorauer Sündenklage

Domine labia mea aperies  
nu gestade herre mir des  
daz ich din lop gesprechen mege  
minen munt insliuz unde phlege  
der werche miner zunge  
daz ich dich bitten kunne  
daz gib du mir heiliger crist  
Sancte Maria du da bist  
wareu muoter, reiniu maget  
zu miner helue wis geladet  
Ich han uon minen sulden  
des oberisten hulde  
uerlorn also harte  
durch willen der worte  
der dir der engel zu sprach  
do er dir die heren botschaft  
aller erist kundet uon gote  
nu wis huote ein bote  
an dinen ein bron sun  
an unseren herren  
an der waren heilant  
der allez manchunne enbant  
drut frouwe mit dire  
zu sinen hulden hilf du mir  
durch willen der geburde  
her in diser werlt geboren  
harte uorhte ich sinen zorn  
wande ich mih sculdigen weiz  
nu biuilhe ich fruowe minen geist  
zu helue wariu maget  
allez daz si dir gechlaget  
daz mir iemer gewerre  
ia gedrwe ich dir uerre  
Himelisgiu chuniginne  
wie uerre ich andich dinge  
daz heil miner sele

*Domine, labia mea aperies!*  
O Lord, grant me this,  
that I may speak your praise.  
Open my mouth and guide  
5 the works of my tongue,  
so that I may pray to you.  
Grant this to me, holy Christ!  
Holy Mary, you who are  
the true mother, the pure maiden,  
10 be invited to my aid!  
Because of my sins  
I have lost, so gravely,  
the love of the highest.  
In the name of the words  
15 that the angel spoke to you  
when he first delivered to you  
the most glorious message from God,  
you should today be a messenger  
to your only son,  
20 to our Lord,  
to the true saviour,  
who freed all mankind,  
dear Lady, with you!  
Help me gain his love  
25 in the name of his birth –  
born here in this world.  
I fear his anger greatly,  
for I know that I am guilty.  
Now, Lady, I give my spirit to you  
30 for help, O true maiden.  
Everything shall be bewailed to you  
that has ever happened to me.  
Yes, I trust you completely.  
Queen of heaven,  
35 what great hope I have in you  
for the salvation of my soul,



durch willen der eren  
der dir got des tages irbot  
do er durch aller suntære not  
in dinen reine buch cham  
zeiner muoter er dich nam  
uzzer allen wiben  
ze sele unde ze libe  
getriwe ich uil wol dir  
ein bote wis hiude mir  
an den hiligen crist  
ein teil du mirs sculdig bist  
daz du mir heluest umbe got  
wande du den ewigen lop  
durch die sundere inphienge  
unde newere nie nieman  
mit sunden beuangen  
so wær iz unergagen  
daz got mit dir getan hat  
nu suche ich armer dinen rat  
diner helue ist mir not  
durch den heiligen tot  
den der ware gotesun  
an deme heren cruce nam  
durch allez daz manneschunne  
nu uertilige mine sunde  
unde heile miner sele  
die hulde mines herren  
di hilf du mir gewinnen  
duo gotes gebererinne  
nune la mih under wegen niht  
uon dir daz ewige liht  
uber alle dise werlt ir scin  
nu hilf mir sundere heim  
uz diseme wurmgarten  
da wir ingeworfen wurden  
durh adames missetat  
der allez manne chunne hat  
ir woruen michel arbeit

in the name of the honour  
that God accorded to you on that day  
when he, for the sake of the suffering of all sinners,  
40 entered your pure womb.  
He chose you as a mother  
over all other women.  
I place both soul and body  
in your hands in great trust.  
45 Be a messenger today for me  
to the Holy Christ!  
You are partly responsible  
for helping me reach God,  
because you have received eternal praise  
50 due to sinners.  
For if no-one had ever  
been caught by sin  
then that which God has done  
with you would not have happened.  
55 Now I, poor man, seek your guidance,  
I need your help.  
In the name of the sacred death  
that the true son of God  
took on the glorious cross  
60 for all of mankind,  
cleanse me of my sins  
and heal my soul!  
Help me regain  
the love of my Lord –  
65 you, who bore God,  
do not let me go under!  
It is thanks to you that eternal light  
shines out over all the world!  
So help me, a sinner, come home  
70 from this garden of snakes  
that we were thrown into  
because of Adam's crime:  
he, who upon mankind  
has brought great suffering



mit siner chelgitechheit  
Nuo hore du urouwe minen ruof  
dich da got zuo diu gescuof  
e ich ie wurde  
daz du die burde  
di er uof sich nam  
do ir in dise werlt cham  
mit samt ime huobest  
in dinen buche duo intruogest  
maget wesende, du in geberest  
sin chint amme du werest  
zu dem uronen sale, du in brehdest  
windelline du ime gedahtest  
do du in inphienge  
mutterlichen du in begienge  
an dinen brusten du in zuoge  
in egyptum duo mit im fluohe  
do du diu werch mit im worhtest  
mit im worhtest  
wie harte du sin do uorhtest  
gedruobet du an im diche wurde  
do hulue du im die burde  
wol tragen mit uollen  
maget umbe wollen  
Uil harte truoge du die burde  
do du daz din chint  
an dem uronen cruce sahe hangen  
do weiz dir irgangen  
also der wissage sprach  
do er uil uerre hiebeur sach  
den dinen michelen lop  
unde al daz | der ware got  
mit dir tuon wolde  
er sprach daz ein sterne solde  
uon dem herren iacobe chome  
da uone wurdest duo urouwe uernomen  
dennen wurde ein chint geboren  
des ser solde durch uaren

75 through his greed.  
Lady, hear my call!  
For God created you for this purpose  
– long before I was born –  
that you might bear the burden  
80 with him  
that he took upon himself  
when he came into this world.  
You carried him in your womb,  
you bore him, still a maiden,  
85 you were his wet nurse,  
you brought him to the temple,  
you wrapped him in swaddling clothes.  
When you received him,  
you met him in a motherly way,  
90 you took him to your breast,  
you fled with him into Egypt.  
When you undertook these acts with him,  
[undertook with him]  
how frightened you were for him!  
95 You were often very worried about him,  
when you helped him  
carry his burden well and gladly,  
O immaculate maiden.  
You bore a heavy burden,  
100 when you saw your child  
hanging on the blessed cross.  
What happened to you then  
was as the prophet spoke,  
when, long before, he foresaw  
105 the great praise you would have  
and all those things that the true God  
would do with you.  
He said that a star  
would come from the blessed Jacob  
110 – this meant you, Lady –  
from which a child would be born  
which would pierce



maget dine sele	your soul, maiden.
iz solde wesen herre	It would become Lord
uber elliu diu riche	115 over all kingdoms.
er sah iz wærlichen	He saw it truly:
do daz also ir gie	when it happened to you thus,
daz man dinen sun hie	that he was called your son,
do ware mit sere	then, with pain
din heiligi sele	120 your holy soul
uil harte beuangen	was gripped most terribly.
er mahtich uon dannen	From this he was well able
zuo deme sternen wole zelen	to count you among the stars,
wande dich got selbe zu dem liehte wolde erwelen	for God himself chose you to be the light
daz uns da sol wisen	125 to show us the way
zu deme uronen paradyse	to the blessed paradise.
Also der mer sterne	You are like the star of the sea,
den scefman leuet uerre	which shows the sailor the way
uber genen breiden se	far across the wide sea;
uns tet diu uinstre da beuor we	130 the former darkness brought us pain –
do du maget do irscine	but when you, maiden, shone out
do was diu sorge hine	this suffering was gone,
do was druren gestoret	grief was banished,
vroude irhoret	joy resounded
uon den engelen hie in erde	135 here on earth from the angels.
uil salich du do wurde	It is a great blessing that you
her indise werlt geborn	were born here on earth,
wande aller der zorn	for all the anger
unde elleu diu uientschaft	and all the enmity
diu under mennicken unt under gote was	140 which existed between men and God,
mit dir zu suone hat braht	was reconciled through you.
uone diu so han ich mir gedaht	Because of this I thought
daz ich alles mines scaden	that I, with all my misdeeds,
zuo dir fluht welle haben	should flee to you.
Vrouw uber allez daz dir ist	145 Lady, greatest of all the things
dich der heilige crist	that the holy Christ
des wirdich hat bedaht	has bestowed upon you
daz du lop hast braht	is that you have brought praise
uber alle dise erde	to all the earth.
no solt du gote werde	150 Now, worthy child of God,



mine dige irhoren  
du da zu den niun choren  
michele urouwede hast gegeben  
den boten, unde den wissagen  
unde den martereren  
den bihteren, also heren  
unt patriarchen  
mit dinen starchen werchen  
die hast du gezieret  
unde hast die mandunge braht  
uil manich sele hiut hat  
gedingen in der helle  
daz in der behwelle  
uon dinen werchen werde rat  
got mit dir zebrochen hat  
di uesten helleporten  
mit gedanchen unde mit worten  
noch mit cheiner slahte dinge  
so ne chan ich uuore bringen  
di guote di an dir sint  
du bist des obristen kint  
unde bist doch sin muoter  
uone diu so tut er vrouwe  
allez daz duo wil  
nun ist miner sunden nie so uil  
siner guote nesi mere  
ich bite dich durch sine ere  
daz du ledegest [minen geist  
den du in angesten weist]  
Nuo bete ich dich gerne  
vrouwe uil uerre  
want ich wærlichen weiz  
wil du ledegen minen geist  
der mir da ist benomen  
so solt du mir zehelue chomen  
swenne ich disen lip urende  
des bite ich dich durch willen der urstende  
der der tæte uon deme grabe

hear my prayer!  
For to the nine choirs  
you have brought great joy,  
and to the apostles and to the prophets,  
155 and to the martyrs,  
to the blessed confessors  
and the patriarchs  
with you great deeds.  
You have adorned them  
160 and have brought joy.  
Now, many souls  
in hell hope  
that, in hell,  
they will be helped through your deeds.  
165 Through you, God broke down  
the mighty gates of hell.  
Neither in thoughts nor in words,  
nor in any other way,  
can I express  
170 the goodness that you have.  
You are the child of the highest  
and yet also his mother.  
Because of this, lady, he does  
all you wish.  
175 My sins are not so great  
that his goodness is not greater.  
I pray to you in the name of his honour  
to free my spirit,  
which you find in a state of fear.  
180 I reach for you gladly,  
most distant Lady,  
for I know it truly,  
that if you wish to free my spirit,  
which is shut away from me,  
185 then you will come to my aid  
when my life comes to an end.  
I ask you this in the name of resurrection  
that he carried out from his grace --



der dich da zuo gesezet habe  
zu frouwen uber elleu dinch  
dem wole kunt sint  
alle mine sorgen  
ich newas ich zu niht worden  
daz was mir ungewizzen  
got hete sich geulizzen  
wi er mohte geziehen unde geren  
mine sele unde minen lip  
unt han ich mich des selbe sit  
also harte uerstozen  
er wolde mich genozen  
den engelen in den hohen  
uber die nuon chore  
wolde er mich sezen  
daz mich des iht mege lezen  
daz bewar du chunniginne  
durch der wile willen  
daz dir got ie chunt wart  
nu offene mir die wider wart  
denn ich her uerheret si  
drut frouwe nuo stant mir bi  
alsich dir des wol getruwe  
wi ungerne ich nu buwe  
diz uinster lant  
zeinem boten wis du mir gesant  
an den der da wol mach  
mir geben den ewigen tach  
daz er mich uuore hinnen  
sciene dar bringe  
da ich habe liep an leit  
froude an arbeit  
da ich mich iemer mere mende  
ewiclichen an ende  
mit allen den die der gotes chint  
mit dinen werchen worden sint  
Vrouwe uolliu guotes  
durh willen des bludes

he, who placed you on high  
190 above all women, in all things,  
and to whom all my sorrows  
are well known.  
I had become nothing  
and was unaware.  
195 God strove  
to adorn and honour  
my soul and my body,  
but I let myself  
fall completely.  
200 He wanted me to be a companion  
of the angels on high,  
above the nine choirs  
he wanted to raise me.  
Queen, ensure  
205 that these things are still open to me,  
in the name of the moment  
when God made himself known to you.  
Open up a path of return for me  
so that I may be in glory there.  
210 Dear Lady, stand by me,  
for I trust you in this.  
How I now dislike living  
in this dark land!  
You were sent to me to be a messenger  
215 to him, who is well able  
to give me an eternal day,  
by bringing me from this place  
quickly to that place,  
where I might have love without suffering  
220 joy without travail,  
where I might rejoice for ever more,  
eternally, without end,  
with all those who have become the children of God  
through their works.  
225 Lady full of goodness,  
in the name of the blood





daz got an dem cruce uz goz  
unde durch willen des wazeris daz uon  
siner siten floz

gemisket mit drore  
nu uernim mich suntere

unde hilf mir daz ich uon deme tiuuele  
de enbunden

durch willen der uinf wunden  
der got duch unsich irliten haben  
unt durch willen aller der tage  
die er uon | dir getragen wurde  
unde durch willen diner uferte  
die du ze himele tete  
nu hilf mir uz dirre note  
uz disen ubelen woftale  
unde brinch mich zu deme uronen sale  
da got den ewigen lon git  
nu ledige chinigin inzit  
mine uil arme sele  
durch des grabes ere  
da der uil salige inne lach  
der sinen lip umbe unsich gap  
Nu hilf mir heilbringe  
wariu uogedinne  
aller der uerherten  
die diniu werch nerten  
du brehte in die wider uart  
mit dir diu uinstere wart  
zu dem liehte uerwandelot  
mit dir der ewige tot  
aller wart zestoret  
uon dir wart irhoret  
in der helle mandunge  
mit dir wart gewonnen  
an deme diuuele sin ueste  
aller magde beste  
uon rehte man dich bitten scol  
mit dir der Adames ual

that God shed on the cross,  
and in the name of the water that flowed from his side,

mixed with blood,  
230 listen to me, a sinner,  
and help me become unbound from the devil,

in the name of the five wounds  
that God suffered for our sake,  
and in the name of all the days  
235 in which he was carried by you,  
and in the name of the ascension  
that you made into heaven.

Help me out of this torment,  
out of this evil valley of pain,  
240 and bring me to the church  
where God gives eternal reward.  
Queen, free at this very moment  
my most pitiful soul,  
in the name of the honour of the grave

245 in which the most sacred man lay,  
who gave up his life for our sake.  
Help me, bringer of salvation,  
true Queen  
of all the blessed,

250 who are healed by your works.  
You brought them a path of return,  
through you was darkness  
transofrmed into light;  
through you the eternal death

255 of all men was destroyed,  
through you resounded  
joy in hell,  
through you was won  
the fortress of the devil.

260 Best of all maidens  
it is right that we should pray to you!  
Through you Adam's fall



wart braht zuo guode  
mit dir wart diu huote  
allen mennicken gegeben  
daz ir die engele sulen phlegen  
beidv naht unde tach  
uil wil du nu heizen maht  
porta paradyses  
tuore des himelriches  
muoter des heiles  
tilegerinne alles leides  
aller gute bistu uol  
din gnade diu sol  
mich ledegen, uon miner meile  
durch willen der reinen  
der ime got selbenne behielt an dir  
nu hilf trut frouwe mir  
unde habe irbarmede uber mich  
des bitte ich armer minniske dich  
durch willen der note  
der daz herze dines sunes an dem cruce hete  
do erhangende darane toute  
unde durch willen aller der werche da er  
dich ie mite fruede  
so hilf mir armen umbe got  
diu wort diu er selbe chot  
daz er diu an mir bewere  
er sprach nine wolde tot der sundare  
Scephære aller dinge  
nu uernim mine stimme  
durch sande peteres willen  
der durch dine minne  
an daz breit mere trat  
durch die liebe daz er dich gerne gesach  
so uernim herre mine gebete  
allez daz ich ie getete  
wider dinen hulden  
des wil ich mich suldigen  
zu dinen gnaden geben

was turned to good,  
through you protection  
265 was given to all mankind,  
for whom the angels must care for  
both night and day.  
It is proper that you are called  
porta paradyses,  
270 the gat of heaven,  
mother of salvation,  
banisher of all sorrow.  
You are full of goodness,  
may your mercy  
275 set me free from my pain,  
in the name of purity  
that God himself maintained in you.  
Help me, dear Lady,  
and have mercy upon me.  
280 I, a poor man, pray to you for this,  
in the name of the suffering  
of your son's heart on the cross,  
when, hanging from it, he met death,  
and in the name of all the deeds through which he ever made  
you joyful:  
285 help me, poor man, come to God,  
those words, that he himself spoke,  
let him grant them in my case:  
he said, he wished for the death of no sinners.  
Creator of all things,  
290 hear my voice!  
In the name of St. Peter,  
who, for the sake of your love,  
walked on the wide sea,  
because his love made him desire to see you,  
295 listen to my prayer, Lord.  
All that I have ever done  
contrary to your love --  
I wish to confess my guilt for these things  
and give myself to your mercy,



unde wil dir rihten unze ich lebe  
ob du nu ruochest min  
so sol ich ein riwesere sin  
unze an minen ende  
nu solt du mir senden  
dinen heiligen geist  
wande du herre uil wol weist  
daz elliu miniu dinch  
ane dine helue inwiht sint  
nu ledige herre mir diu bant  
da mide mich der ubele ualant  
hat gebunde so diche  
uon sinen manegen strichen  
moht ich mich niht behuoten  
mir newellen heluen dine guote  
Got duo solt mich alle zit bewaren  
daz ich rehte geuare  
des bit ich dich herre  
durch des ganges ere  
den du zu dem cruce gienge  
do dich di iuden hiengen  
unde durch willen der geburte  
daz du geboren wurde  
durch allez mankunne  
nu uergip mir mine unde  
du uil heiliger crist  
duo daz eine bist  
wider den ich gesundet han  
deme ich ouch in rede sol gan  
der mir ouch urteilen sol  
den minen freislichen ual  
sol bringen zerehte  
nu hilf dinem chnete  
durch dinen heiligen tot  
des ist mir durft not  
Uarre got der getruwe  
nu mich mine unde riuwen  
unde si ouch gerne buozen welle

300 and I wish to run towards you for as long as I live.  
If you grant this to me,  
I will be a contrite man  
until I die.  
Send me  
305 your Holy Spirit!  
For you know full well, Lord,  
that all of my efforts  
are nothing without your help.  
So, Lord, untie the bands  
310 with which the evil enemy  
has bound me so tightly.  
From his manifold traps  
I am unable to protect myself,  
unless your goodness helps me.  
315 God, you should care for me at all tmes,  
so that I take the right path --  
I ask this of you, Lord,  
in the name of the honour of the journey  
that you took to the cross,  
320 when the Jews hanged you,  
and in the name of your birth,  
when you were born  
for all mankind.  
So forgive me my sins,  
325 most holy Christ!  
You are the one  
against whom I have sinned,  
and to whom I must also speak,  
who will also judge me  
330 and correct  
my terrible fall.  
So help your servant  
in the name of your holy death: --  
this is my urgent need.  
335 True and faithful God,  
I repent my sins  
and desire to do penance for them.



nu habe irbarmede uber mich  
des bite ich armer menske dich  
durch aller heiligen ere  
nu hilf mir daz ich mine sele  
inphure uon deme bechen  
uber den lip solt du daz rechen  
der ist suldich wider dich  
da mit wil ich  
dir uil gerne gelten  
daz ich dir so selten  
han gelonet mir gute  
daz du mich mit dinem bluote  
chouftest uon der helle  
unde uon der heizen bechwelle  
swa ich des uergezzen han  
da han ich uerre getan  
wider [widere] mineme heile  
da wil ich mir selbe umbe irteilen  
den dinen michelen gerich  
in diseme libe uber mich  
daz mir drort zeleide solde werden  
daz irteile ich ungerne  
daz wurde | lihte zelenge  
dize genimet sciene ende  
daz du mich sin hier ingaltetest  
unde du den geist behaltest  
des sist du herre iemer gelobet  
ich was irtoret unde irtobet  
daz ich des ie uergaz  
der da scephære was  
uber himel unde uber erde  
daz er ruhte werden  
ein armer menniske durh mich  
owe war dahte ich  
daz ich niht enzit uof ensach  
disiu werlt hat mirre zeigt daz  
wi ir lon ist getan  
daz ir so uil gedienet han

So have mercy on me!  
I, a poor man, ask this of you,  
340 in the name of the honour of all saints.  
Help me to  
release my soul from torment!  
You must judge my body,  
which has sinned against you.  
345 With it, I would like  
very dearly, to pay recompense  
for having so seldom  
rewarded you with goodness  
for the fact that you, with your blood,  
350 bought me from hell  
and from the burning pit.  
Whenever I forgot to do this  
I caused great damage  
to my salvation.  
355 I therefore wish to give myself  
to your mighty judgment,  
so you may judge me in this life.  
That I might endure pain in the other place --  
I would not like to grant myself that.  
360 It would surely seem too long,  
but it would quickly come to an end  
if you were to punish me here  
and keep my spirit --  
for this, Lord, you will always be praised!  
365 I was a mindless fool  
each time I forgot you,  
you who created  
both heaven and earth.  
That you manifested yourself  
370 as a poor man for my sake --  
alas, what was I thinking,  
when I failed to consider you at all times?  
This world has shown me  
what sort of reward it offers.  
375 God must have mercy upon me



daz muoze got erbarmen  
si betruget manegen armen  
eler wanen daz riche si  
er gelit zeiungest der bi  
uil harte erbarmiclichen  
nach deme ewigen riche  
weruen nu alle die der sin  
daz ist hinen uurder der rat min  
daz ist stæte unde guot  
owi wi boslich er tuot  
der iz niene chophet é  
é, der marchet zege  
ime chumt hernach daz zit  
é sin sele begebe den lip  
ob elleu div werlt sin eigen wære  
daz er si gerne gæbe  
truwet ers iht geniezen  
daz er den lip lieze  
zebuluer uerbrennen  
iz ist enwiht denne  
den der tiuvel so betrivget  
gaz er iz dar geseubet  
dem hat er daz halmel uor gezogen  
unz er ingar hat betrogen  
Got der gewære  
nu uernim mich sundære  
nu lig ich in dirre tieffe  
an dine guote ich nu ruofe  
daz du mir bietest dine hant  
ez ist leider uil lanch  
daz ich flos dine hulde  
sich huoben mine sulde  
des tages do adam  
dir wart ungehorsam  
do viel ich in daz unreht  
daz han ich sundiger chneht  
sit uil diche giteniuwet  
des bivte ich mine riuwe

for serving the world so much.  
The world has deceived many a poor man  
who believes he is rich,  
which eventually causes him to suffer  
380 very pitifully.  
All who are in this condition  
should strive for the eternal realm,  
this is my advice from now on.  
This is steadfast and good.  
385 Alas, how badly that man behaves  
who buys none of this  
before the market to do so is gone.  
Later, the time will come,  
before his soul relinquishes his body,  
390 when, even if he owns the whole world,  
he would gladly give it away  
if he believed he might be saved.  
If he were to leave his body  
and burn to powder --  
395 then that is the end of him.  
He whom the devil deceives thus,  
making him put it [his confession] off,  
that man is denied a helmet with which to defend himself,  
until he is entirely deceived.  
400 True God,  
listen to me, a sinner!  
I lie in your depths,  
absent from your goodness, and beg you  
to offer me your hand.  
405 It was, alas, a long time ago  
that I lost your love.  
My sins began  
on the day Adam  
disobeyed you --  
410 then I fell into wrongdoing.  
I, a sinful knave,  
have been greedy ever since.  
I offer my repentance for this



zu dinen gnaden  
nu solt du mich inhaphen  
durch necheine mine missetat  
disiv werlt mich betrogen hat  
si hat mir armen getan  
also wil manegem man  
den sie hat beswichen  
ein teil han ich irite harte [ge] gehenget  
ich uorte ich habe gelenget  
die gnist miner sele  
gnedger herre  
nu mich dir erbarmen  
ia choufest du mihc armen  
mit din selbes bluote  
warre got durch dine guote  
nu uernim riuwigen mich  
ich wil mich ruogen wider dich  
ich binz der wirsiste man  
der den name ie gewan  
daz er cristen solde sin  
nu la du zorn din  
uber mich uerworhten niht dan  
dar nah unde ich daz garnet han  
so wære ich ewichlichen ulorn  
in den sunden wart ich geborn  
mit sunden mich diu muoter enphie  
die ich auer in der toufe lie  
da gehiez ich cristenlichiu dinch  
diu han ich gare erlogen sint  
Anediger herre  
nu uorhte ich mir sere  
want ich mich suldigen weiz  
aller dinge ich mich uleiz  
diu waren wider dir  
die solt du uergeben mir  
durch miner muoter willen  
mine sulde sint niht ringe  
ir ist laider so uil

to your mercy:  
415 may you take me in!  
Through no misdeed of mine  
this world has deceived me.  
It treated me, poor man,  
like many other men  
420 whom it has tricked.  
At times I clung to it too closely,  
I feared I had misguided  
the salvation of my soul.  
Merciful Lord,  
425 have pity upon me,  
for you bought me, a poor man,  
with your own blood.  
True God, in your goodness,  
listen to me, a penitent man.  
430 I wish to confess to you.  
I am the worst man  
who ever obtained the name  
of Christian.  
Do not let your anger  
435 fall upon me, a man in sin,  
as a result -- although I have deserved it --  
for then I would be lost for eternity.  
I was born in sin,  
my mother conceived me in sin,  
440 which I then set aside in baptism,  
when I committed myself to Christianity,  
which I have since completely denied.  
Merciful Lord,  
I am very frightened!  
445 For I know I am guilty.  
All things in which I was diligent  
were contrary to you --  
you should forgive me these things  
in the name of your mother's wishes.  
450 My guilt is not small,  
alas, it is so great!



ein tail ich dir nu clagen wil  
der ich nu gehugen mach  
unde sezze ich naht unde tach  
sone dorft ich niemer gedagen  
ob ich allez solde sagen  
wande ich uie dar zuo  
leider uil fruo  
do ich in der wigen lach  
done uerliez ich nie nieneiheinen tach  
ine getrupte mine muter  
ich tete ir luze guotes  
ich nete ir niwar leit  
uil manege bosheit  
han ich sit begangen  
min lip was beuangen  
mit alles achuste  
under minen brusten  
so newas niuwar zorn unde nit  
untriuwe unde uber muote  
aller unguote  
was min herze ie uol  
rehter dinge weiz hol  
Dem ich wol zu sprach  
ich neuerliez iz nie durch daz  
ich neriete ime an sine guot  
mit den gedanchen ich in sluch  
ich honde in mit der zungen  
ich nesprach mit deme munde  
nie war huoh unde spot  
so ich scolde sprechen din lop  
so was ich unmuozech  
daz hastu wol gebuozet  
des sag ich dir gande  
zechirchen ich trage  
gerne ich roupte unde stal  
daz unreht ich uerhal  
mere dan ich solde  
neheine maze ich newolde

I now bewail some of it to you,  
which I can remember at the moment.  
And even if I sat day and night,  
455 I would never fall silent  
if I were to speak all of it.  
For I took to sin  
very early, alas.  
When I lay in my cradle,  
460 there was no day when I did not fail  
to plague my mother.  
I was rarely good to her,  
I only caused her suffering.  
Since then I have committed  
465 many bad deeds:  
my body was consumed  
by all kinds of wickedness,  
and in my breast  
there was nothing other than anger and envy,  
470 disloyalty and pride.  
My heart was always full  
of all kinds of wickedness,  
it was empty of righteous things.  
Whomever I spoke to  
475 I never left alone  
until I had drawn him away from his goodness.  
I battered him with my thoughts,  
I screamed at him with my tongue,  
I spoke with my mouth  
480 nothing but spite and mockery.  
When I should have spoken in praise of you  
I was distracted.  
You have certainly wiped out that sin --  
I can say that to you, merciful one!  
485 I [was] reluctant at church,  
I liked to rob and steal,  
I said unrighteous things  
more than I should.  
I did not want to be at all moderate



mit huore began  
dem manne ich sine konen nam  
michel unreht ich begie  
nechein wip ich nelie  
ich si mit ir geuallen  
mit werchen ode mit willen  
ode mit so getanen ge | baren  
die hurlich waren  
da mich auer iehes umbe was  
vil sciere urvmet ich daz  
daz ich alzoges guot wip  
zeleibe brahte ir lip  
mit unrehten mannen  
des han ich uil begangen  
ich hab mit meineiden  
getan so uil zeleide  
miner armen sele  
ich phlac des ie herre  
daz ich ein rechere was  
der mir iht getet oder gesprach  
ich rach halt andere luote dinch  
an dinen werchen was ich blint  
tore unde stumme  
owi wi wol ich daz chunde  
mit ubele gewinnen  
div heilige minne  
diu was mir ie uerre  
nu hete ich sie gerne  
nu hore ich wol sagen  
swelh man ir nine habe  
er uerliese allez daz gut  
daz er iemer geduot  
des sorge ich mir harte  
necheineme ewarten  
chom ich niht ze behte  
nie so lutterlichen  
so ich uon rehte solde  
swenne ich auer denne wolde

490 in my dealings with whores,  
I took women from their husbands,  
I committed many bad deeds.  
I left no woman alone  
until I had fallen into sin with her,  
495 in deeds or desires,  
or in acts that  
were worthy of whores.  
But since it was not only about me,  
I frequently brought it about  
500 that a completely good woman  
brought suffering upon herself  
with unrighteous men --  
I committed this sin frequently.  
I have, through perjury,  
505 done so much harm  
to my poor soul.  
I always put much effort, Lord,  
into being vengeful.  
Whoever did or spoke something against me --  
510 I took revenge on those people.  
I was blind to your works,  
deaf and dumb.  
Alas, how easy it was for me  
to gain profit with wickedness!  
515 Sacred love  
was far away from me,  
but now I would like it dearly.  
So listen to me say this!  
Even if a man had nothing,  
520 I would cause him to lose all the wealth  
he had ever obtained.  
I am very sorry for this.  
To no priest  
did I ever go to confess  
525 as audibly and clearly  
as I should have done.  
And when, after confession,





die maz iemer iht began  
wande mir gnist dar ane scolde stan  
des ich denne da gehiez  
des negeleiste ich niht  
Swenne ich solde uasten  
so scalt ich den phaphen  
der mir die buoze gebot  
zenihte uorhte ich den tot  
ich wande iemer solde leben  
ich han uil dicke einem anderen gegeben  
deiz mir leit wære  
swer mir iz gebe  
swenne ich herre ie genam  
dinen heren lichnamen  
den behielt ich unrehte  
daz uergip du mir drehtin  
swie herre daz zit was  
ich neuerliez iz nie durch daz  
ich inbegienge minnen willen  
uber lut unde stille  
so han ich dicke uermanet  
swa ich auer iemannen uant  
der ein irrære was  
der geuiel mir aldestebaz  
den chos ich mir zegesellen  
nu mohte ich iemer zellen  
daz ich iz doh niemer uol zalte  
da mit ich mich ualte  
Des ich dir nu ueriehen han  
unde alles des des ich han getan  
mit worten ode mit willen  
mit deheiner slahte dinge  
daz uergip du mir herre  
durch drabes ere  
da du lage inne  
unde durch dines heiligen crucis willen  
da du ane neme den tot  
durch aller sundære not

I was supposed to show moderation  
because my salvation depended on it,  
530 that which I had promised  
I failed to do.  
Whenever I was supposed to fast,  
I cursed the priest  
who had given me this penance.  
535 I never feared death;  
I thought I would live for ever.  
I often passed onto others  
things that caused me trouble,  
regardless who had asked me to do these things.  
540 Whenever, Lord, I ever  
received your holy body,  
I treated it unjustly --  
Lord, forgive me for this.  
However sacred a day it was,  
545 I never paid attention  
and continued to do as I wished,  
loudly and in silence --  
in this way I often held you in contempt.  
But whenever I found someone  
550 who had been led astray,  
he pleased me all the more.  
I chose him as my companion.  
I have to say  
that I will never be able to list entirely  
555 those things through which I caused myself to fall.  
All those things that I have just said to you,  
and everything that I have done,  
in words or deeds,  
or with any kind of thing --  
560 forgive me these things, Lord,  
through the honour of the grave  
in which you lay,  
and in the name of your holy cross,  
on which you died  
565 for the suffering of sinners.



du rihtiz uber min fleisch  
daz der min arme geist  
iht uerlorn werde  
ich was ein blodiv erde  
unde bin hiute so bose  
sod solt ich mich irlosen  
dir herre gehuldigen  
aller miner sculde  
ich uil harte uersumet ware  
dem leidigen wizenære  
dem wurde sin gehalten ze uile  
ein teil ich is nu uil  
gerne hie gebuozen  
daz ich daz getun muoze  
daz gip du mir heiliger crist  
du da scephære bist  
uber himel und unde uber erde  
nu hilf mir daz ich dir noch rehter werde  
uor minem ende  
des bit ich dich durch dei gebende  
die du doltest uon den iuden  
nu ruche herre mich ze uridennen  
Uor dem ubelen hunde  
der ie zallen stunden  
wiruet mit flize  
daz er mich beswiche  
er was des leider ane mir gewis  
des auer obe got wil nie nist  
daz er mich in der hant hete  
er scol die selben mite  
die er mir da wolde geben  
uil lange ein ubele leben  
daz ich ir hie uerdienet habe  
di nim du mir hie abe  
mit ettelichen dingen  
daz ich si nine bringe  
an den urteilichen tach  
da niemen nemach

Judge my flesh,  
so that my poor spirit  
is not lost!  
I was a weak piece of earth  
570 and am today so wicked,  
that I must set myself free  
and turn to you, Lord,  
whom, in my sin,  
I have neglected so much.  
575 To the dreadful tormentor  
I have cleaved too greatly!  
For some of this wrongdoing  
I would now gladly like to do penance.  
Holy Christ, grant it to me  
580 that I might do this!  
You, who are creator  
of heaven and earth,  
help me become more righteous  
before my end.  
585 I pray for this in the name of the binding ties  
you suffered at the hands of the Jews.  
Lord, grant me peace  
from the wicked dog  
who, at all times,  
590 is assiduous in his attempts  
to deceive me.  
He was, alas, certain of me  
(although, if God wills it, it will never happen),  
certain he had me in his hands.  
595 The same torment  
that he wished to give me in hell --  
he should live with it for a long time in that evil place.  
The part of this torment that I have deserved in this world --  
release me from it  
600 with various means,  
so that I bring none of it  
to the day of judgement,  
when no-one is able



sin unreht bescirmen  
da muzen si gehirmen  
die hie ir antsage  
mit ir spehlichen rede  
da uure bietent  
ob in ieman riete  
ir sele gnist  
des tages iz alzoges ist  
chomen uz allerslahte rate  
so suftent si alze spate  
Nuo erchenne ich sundiger chnet  
uil wol min unrehte  
unde alle mine schulde  
herre dine hulde  
han ich harte uerlorn  
wol garnet dinen zorn  
du uil heiliger crist  
nu weiz ich uil wol daz du bist  
hiute also gnedich, so do  
do du deme scachære  
sine meintæte uerlieze  
unde du ime uil wol geheize  
nuo wil ich owch wider sinen  
uil gerne gewinnen  
herre dine hulde  
unde wil mich hiute sculdigen  
in dine gnade geben  
unde wil dir rihten unze ich lebe  
nvo ist ouch billich unde reht  
daz duo enphahest dinen armen chouf chnet  
Herre uber elliu dinch  
dir da wol muoglich sint  
mine schulde zeuergebenne  
nuo | uerlich mir zelebenne  
unze ich uerworuener scalh  
uon des tiuueles gewalt  
unphure mine sele  
des bitte ich dich herre

to hide their wrongdoing.  
605 Those people should desist,  
who, in this world,  
in artful speeches  
make their excuses.  
If anyone advises them on  
610 how to save their souls,  
then at that moment it completely  
fails to be advice of any kind!  
Then they sigh only too late.  
I, sinful man, acknowledge  
615 full well my wrongdoing,  
and all my guilt.  
Lord, your love  
I have lost completely,  
and have certainly earned your anger.  
620 Most holy Christ,  
I know full well that you are  
just as merciful today, as you were  
when you forgave the robber  
for his wrongdoings  
625 and granted him life.  
I, too, wish to turn back,  
and win dearly,  
Lord, your love,  
and wish to give myself, guilty man,  
630 to your grace,  
and to turn to you for as long as I live.  
So it is both good and right  
that you should receive your poor servant!  
Lord of all things,  
635 you are easily able  
to forgive my sins.  
Grant me life,  
so that I, cursed criminal,  
might from the devil's power  
640 set my soul free!  
I beg you this, Lord,



durch willen der eren  
diner heren uferte  
nuo gedenche ane mir der worte  
der du spreche dinen iungeren zu  
ane dine helue nemohte niemen niht getun  
daz ist herre uil war  
Maria diu newære nie so manich iar  
inder wuosten gewesen  
der tiere spise genese  
ane dine quote  
diu hat mir min gemuote  
gemachet uil ringe  
so getaner dinge  
di uns uon ir sint gescriben  
den du herre wil beuriden  
der ist behalden unde inneren  
ia ist uns ir daz geleren  
daz si sich so uerre uerworht hete  
daz si der luft inlieze  
zu ierusalem in daz muonster niht  
unzen riuwen gihiez  
zu buzeene ir sculde  
do gewan si dine hulden  
din gnade ir sa den wech insloz  
da zestete si gnoz  
du uil heiliger crist  
daz du so guot bist  
ouch wart si selbe so guot  
bist daz si der luft enbore druoc  
der ir daz munster e benam  
swen ich sundiger man  
denche an dine gnade  
so bin ich uro zeware  
so ist mir min gemuote uil ringe  
so getaner dinge  
begienge duo dicke uil  
ich engetar noch newil  
missetruwen diner quote

in the name of the honour  
of your glorious ascension.  
Think, in my case, about the words  
645 that you spoke to your apostles.  
Without your help **no-one** is able to do anything --  
this, Lord, is very true!  
Mary would not have lived for some many years  
in the desert,  
650 sustained by the food of animals,  
without your goodness.  
My heart was made  
light and happy  
by such things  
655 that are written about her for us.  
Whoever you want to protect, Lord,  
is cared for and kept healthy.  
Indeed, we can learn from her,  
who was so damned  
660 that the air did not allow her to enter  
the temple in Jerusalem  
until the committed to repent,  
and to do penance for her sins.  
Then she won your love,  
665 and your mercy enclosed her in its path.  
And then she rejoiced constantly,  
most Holy Christ,  
that you are so good.  
She herself also became so good  
670 that the air lifted her up,  
which had once kept her from the temple.  
Whenever I, a sinful man,  
think fo your grace,  
then I am truly happy  
675 and my heart becomes light with joy.  
Such things  
you have often performed --  
I neither dare nor desire  
to mistrust your goodness.



der ofen der da gluote  
den chuldestu den chinden  
daz in dar inne  
div hizze nine war  
dinen engel sandest du dar  
daz er da mit samet in sanch  
din lop warre heilant  
Swer sich ie zuo dir geuie  
den uerlieze du nie  
daz ist offen unde war  
daz bewarst du wold dar  
ander guoter susannen  
diu was mit noten beuagen  
ir wart erteilet der tot  
unze din gnade do gebot  
eime kindiscem manne  
daz er ir half danne  
an allen ir scaden  
di si wolden ulorn han  
mit luggeme urchunde  
uber di do urumedest  
die selben urteile  
di si ir zeleide  
heten geraten  
wande siz alle taten  
an alle ir sulde  
des uluren si dine hulde  
Gnediger herre  
du lostest danyelen  
der den lewen was gegeben  
di uil lange waren hungerige gelegen  
in einem loche  
daz si in zebrochen  
scolden haben sciene  
do gebud duo den tieren  
daz si sin nine ruorten  
iene si gar zeuorten  
di in da dar uuorten

680 The over that glowed  
you made cool for the children,  
so that inside it  
there was no heat.  
You sent your angel to that place  
685 to sing your praise with them,  
O true saviour.  
Whoever has ever reached out for you,  
you have never abandoned --  
this is apparent and true!  
690 You are well for  
good Susanna.  
She was trapped with torment,  
she was condemned to death,  
until your grace commanded  
695 a child-like man  
to help her from that situation  
she was in through no fault of her own.  
Those who wanted to condemn her  
through their false testimony --  
700 you gave them  
the same judgement  
that they, to make her suffer,  
had given her.  
For they had all acted  
705 without any guilt on her part.  
For this they lost your love.  
Merciful Lord,  
you set Daniel free,  
who had been thrown to the lions,  
710 which had you lying, hungry, for a very long time  
in a pit,  
such that they should have  
quickly torn him to pieces.  
You commanded the animals  
715 not to touch him.  
They tore to pieces the people  
who had put him there.



nu entlip minen sunden  
durch din selbes guote  
an dem wege der warheite  
nuo gip mir geleite  
heim zuo minem erbe  
daz wil mir tieuel wergen  
Du nech aller keisere  
uater aller weisen  
uoget aller armen  
nuo la mich dir erbarmen  
daz mir min erbe  
der tieuel wil wergen  
daz sol auer ich ein kanpf mit ime uehten  
des hilf du mir threhtin  
daz ich armer an im gesige  
owi gerne ich in uon mir uertribe  
daz er mit mir nehete nechein geuerte  
sin lon ist herte  
ich hore wol sagen  
daz er niht nehabe  
niemanne zegebenne  
wane bech unde swebel  
diu zwei wallen unde brinnen  
der werde niemer ende  
uon ewen unze in ewen  
so getane wewen  
giebt er zemite  
mir wære lieber daz erz ime hete  
Ich wil ime uil gerne entinnen  
einen bezzeren lon gewinnen  
umbe minen scephare  
wi durft mir nuo ware  
daz ich hete ein brust sloz  
uur sin ureislic scoz  
uur sine scerphen strale  
da mit er an twale  
uil diche ramet min  
diu brustwere darf auer niht sin

Now spare my soul  
through your own goodness  
720 and set it on the path of truth.  
Show me the way  
home to my inheritance --  
the devil wants to keep me from it in his stranglehold.  
King of Kings,  
725 father of all the wise,  
protector of all the poor,  
have mercy upon me,  
for the devil wants to keep me from my inheritance  
in his stranglehold.  
730 But if I must fight a battle with him,  
Lord, then help me,  
a poor man, have victory over him!  
Oh, how gladly I would drive him from me,  
would that he had never had anything to do with me!  
735 His reward is a hard one --  
indeed, I have heart it said  
that he has nothing  
to give to anyone  
except fire and brimstone,  
740 which both seethe and burn,  
and of which there will be no end  
for ever and ever.  
Such pains  
he gives as torment.  
745 I would rather that he kept them to himself.  
I would dearly like to escape him  
and gain a better reward  
from my creator.  
Oh, what need I have now  
750 for a breastplate  
to protect me from his terrible weapons,  
from his sharp arrows,  
which, unhesitatingly,  
he aims at me regularly!  
755 But the breastplate must not be



weder horn noch bein  
noch stal noch stein  
da wurde ich under irslagen  
rehten glouben sol ich haben  
unde die ware riuwe  
unde die guoten triuwe  
den stetigen gedingen  
unde die cristenliche minne  
dult unde demuot  
die geweffene wæren uil guot  
uor den hunt uerwazen  
so muos mir die straze  
rumen zagelichen  
unde al | lenthalben intwichen  
Duo sogetane chamf wat  
herre niemen nehat  
wane dem du sie geben wil  
nuo wære rehte daz wir dich vil  
in nerchlichen beten  
umbe alle die ir nine heten  
heten so ich sundiger nhean  
swenne ich ettewenne stan  
unde uil gerne bete dich  
niemer nemag ich  
uf guon minen munt  
so der uerwazene hunt  
newaiz wanne zuo uert  
der allez guot derne wert  
hat mir ettewaz guot braht  
da er mir die guoten andaht  
sciere mit hat entragen  
die ich zu dir scolde haben  
daz chlage ich diner guote  
dv newellest mich behuoten  
er bringet mich in not  
durch dinen heiligen tot  
gedench waz daz ware  
da duo mich sundere

horn or bone,  
or steel or stone --  
I would be killed beaneath it.  
I must have correct belief  
760 and true contrition,  
and good loyalty,  
constant hope,  
and Christian love,  
patience and humility:  
765 these weapons would be good  
in the face of the damned dog.  
Then he would have to turn his arrow  
away from me, like a coward,  
and go away entirely.  
770 Such armour  
no-one has, Lord,  
unless you give it to them.  
So it would be right for us  
to pray to you, frequently and inwardly,  
775 for all those people who do not have it,  
like I do not, a sinful man.  
Whenever I stand anywhere  
and pray to you, very keenly,  
I am never able  
780 to open my mouth,  
without the cursed dog  
knowing where to go.  
He, who likes to cleave to wealth,  
gave me some of it  
785 and, with it, in haste,  
took my good devotion,  
which I should have directed to you.  
I bewail this to your goodness:  
if you do not wish to protect me  
790 then he will bring me into trouble.  
In the name of your holy death  
think what would happen  
if you were to send me, a winner,



uz werden hieze  
la mich des geniezen  
daz uil wol west daz  
daz iz newederez was  
weder isen noch bein  
iz was ein broder leim  
da du mich [ ] uester machen  
ich nehan necheine craft  
wider die mich herehaft  
ane uehtentent, tægelichen  
und mich des ewigen riches  
uil gerne bestieze  
ob sie diu gotheit  
uon himele her in erde treip  
in einer armen magede buoch  
zu diu daz du hvlfest uf  
dem der da geuallen was  
daz du herre ie daz  
durch unsich getete  
daz riet dir din guote  
unde uil uerre din gnade  
wande wir des unwirdich waren  
Wie mohte wir daz uerdienet haben  
daz du dich lieze anslahen  
spoten unde spiwen  
daz du dich lieze triben  
an die stat da man dich hie  
under die da waren ie  
zu den scacheren gezalt  
owi din gotlich gewalt  
do wolt er sich nider neigen  
daz er des tages  
deste minner nine was  
die helle erunder diu brach  
do du in dem tode, himel unde erde  
allez erweget werden  
steine di zebrasten dar abe  
genuo | ge erstunden an dem tage

away!  
795 Therefore let me survive!  
You know full well  
that it was neither of those,  
neither iron nor bone:  
it was weak clay  
800 from which you [ ] make me stronger.  
I have no power  
with which to fight  
those who come against me, armed, every day,  
and would gladly expel me  
805 from the eternal kingdom,  
if they could [...]. Your godhead  
bore you from heaven here to earth  
into the womb of a poor maid,  
so that you could help those  
810 on earth, who had fallen.  
That thing that you, Lord,  
once did for our sake --  
your goodness advised you to do it,  
and also your grace,  
815 for we were unworthy of it.  
How could we have deserved it  
that you let yourself be beaten,  
mocked and sat upon,  
that you let yourself be driven  
820 to the place where you were  
counted amongst those who were also there,  
amongst the robbers?  
Oh, what godly power you have!  
Then he wished to bow his head  
825 so that, at that moment,  
he was not diminished.  
He broke into hell down below.  
When you, in death, set all of heaven and earth  
into motion,  
830 the stones of hell burst asunder.  
Many rose up on that day





die uor manegen iaren  
gar eruulet waren  
sich zaten diu uber elliu diu lant  
Sich uerwandelote daz lieht  
der tivuel der newesse niht  
waz er in der mennscheit was  
di er da uzen ane sach  
diu gotheit was inuerholn  
daz er da hete uerstolen  
im was sin sterchorre chomen  
daz ime ouch alle die benomen werden  
die uffe dirre erden  
sin gebildet nach dire  
daz gib in unde ouch mire  
du uil heilige gotes sun  
Qui uiuis & regnas per omnia secula seculorum.

who, for many years,  
had been rotting.  
They spread out over all the land.  
835 The light was transformed!  
The devil did not know  
who he was, clothed as a man,  
whom he saw there outside of hell --  
his godhead was hidden from him.  
840 Those who he stole away  
joined his chorus of stars.  
Let those people be kept from the devil  
who, on earth,  
follow your example --  
845 grant this to them and also to me!  
You most holy son of God,  
*qui vivis et regnas per omnia secula seculorum.*



## Critical Notes

- Line 1** 'Lord, open my lips!' This opening line, in Latin, is a quotation from Psalm 50:17.
- Line 72** i.e. eating the forbidden apple.
- Line 152** In Christian thought, the angels are typically divided into nine groups, or choirs.
- Line 157** i.e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Line 179** The passage in square brackets is inserted in the top margin of the manuscript (in the same hand).
- Line 204** i.e. the Virgin Mary.
- Line 218** i.e. from earth to heaven.
- Line 269** The poet uses Latin here, which he translates into German in the following line.
- Line 358** i.e. in hell.
- Line 498** This line is unclear and probably corrupted.
- Line 541** i.e. during the Eucharist.
- Line 588** This and future references to the 'dog' refer to the devil.
- Line 597** This line doesn't quite make sense. Waag/Schröder and Maurer render it as *vil lange im ubele haben* (which [i.e. the torment] I would have in evil circumstances for a very long time).
- Line 651** The poet refers to Mary of Egypt, a prostitute who retreats from her sins into the desert and eventually becomes a saint.
- Line 683** The story of the youths in the fiery furnace is found in the Book of Daniel. Three young men refuse to worship the image of Nebuchadnezzar and are thrown into a furnace, but are protected by God from the flames.
- Line 691** The story of Susanna is also found in the Book of Daniel. Susanna is falsely accused of adultery by two older men with whom she refuses to sleep; Daniel recognises her innocence.
- Line 713** The Book of Daniel tells how Daniel is thrown into the lions' den by Darius, King of Babylon, but miraculously saved by God.
- Line 800** This should clearly be a couplet. There is no gap in the MS; either the scribe has miscopied the source or there was an error in the source.
- Line 806** As above.
- Line 825** Christ has previously been addressed in the second person; here the address changes to the third person (before changing back again in 1.828).
- Line 837** i.e. Christ.
- Line 847** 'Who live and reign for ever and ever.'