

Bordesholmer Marienklage – Performance Version Medieval Mystery Cycle

St Edmund Hall, 26 April 2025, <https://www.seh.ox.ac.uk/mystery-cycle/mystery-cycle-2025>

Music and text based on *Die Bordesholmer Marienklage*, ed. by G. Kühl, in *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung*, Jahrgang 1898, XXIV (Norden und Leipzig: Diedr. Soltau's Verlag, 1899). Text and a different English translation available at the [Stanford Medieval Sourcebook](#), the full facsimile is online; [digitised by Kiel University Library](#). A previous performance took place for the [Workshop](#) 'The Sorrowful Virgin' on 24 March 2025

Translation by Monty Powell and Henrike Lähnemann

Rector sings:

Circumdederunt me viri mendaces, sine causa flagellis ceciderunt me; sed tu, domine
defensor, vindica me!
Quoniam tribulatio proxima est et non est qui adiuvet.

John the Evangelist sings:

Tristor et cuncti tristantur
De tua tristitia
Tecum lacrimantur
Eructant suspiria.
Hic rubescit oculus
Flet fidelis populus
De Cristi mestitia.
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 uns blot.

John says:

Maria, leve medder, he scholde eyn steynen herte dragen,
De dynes kyndes dot nicht kunde helpen beklagen;
Wart gy mynsche so steynen,
De nu myt uns nicht kunde weynen?
Maria, leve medder, we nu wyl rechte ouerdencken,
Vnde ok in syn herte sencken
Dyn weynent, dyn scrygent, dynes reynen herten not
Vnde dynes leuen kyndes bytter dot,
De mot myt dy trurent han
Vnde aller werlde valsche vrowde lân.

Mary Magdalen and Mary, the mother of John, sing:

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater unigeniti!
Quis est homo, qui non fleret,
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?

Mary, the mother of John, says:
Ach, ach, wo sere
lyde we grote swere
Vmme dy, o leue truten here?

The Virgin Mary sings:
We helpet klagen myn grote leyt?
Myn yamer de ys worden breyt.
Wo kan ik arme dat nu dragen,
Went yk in alle minen dagen
Ny vornam sulke swere!
Horen noch seen yk enkan;
So grot leyt ny wyf gewan,
So yk arme nu dulde,
Went he steruet ane schulde;
Dat komet van syner lere.
Trut sone myn,
De moder dyn
An desser stunt
Vt herten grunt
Dy byddet ynnichliken:
Giff my dynen dot
In desser not!
Myn herte, brich,
Went ik see dich
Hangen so yammerlyken!

Jesus sings: Ecce mater tua!

Jesus says:
Johannes, junghere ghute,
See nu an dyne leuen moter!
Ik mot nu van hynnen varen,
Dar vmme schaltu see wol vorwaren.
Ik mot nu wedder keren
Tho mynem hemmelschen vader vnde heren;
See schal nu wesen de moder dyn,
Plech erer alse myn!
Johannes, do dorch dyne gote:
Nym se an dyne hode,
Troste se leflyken in erer not,
Wan ik hebbe geleden den bytteren dot.

John says:
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 nehmen 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 got, nu gheue
Vns beyden den dot,
Wente yd ys vns warlyken not!

Ach leyder, de spegel wyl vns entgån,
 Dar alle de werlt kan by bestån!
 We kan nu syn trurent lân,
 O hemmelsche god,
 van allen luden, de hijr vmme stån?

Jesus sings:
 Pater, dimite eis!

Jesus says:
 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.

Jesus sings:
 Consummatum est.

Jesus says:
 Aller prophetet sproke synt nu vullenbracht,
 De van des mynschen sone gy worden bedacht.

Jesus sings:
 In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.

Jesus says:
 Ik bevele na de hende dyn
 Mynen geyst, o hemmelsche vader myn!

Mary sings three times: Owe, owe, nu ys he dot!

Translation

The Rector sings as Introit Response for Palm Sunday for the 9th reading at Matins from Ps 21:12: Mendacious men have surrounded me, without reason they have struck me down with whips, but you, Lord defender, vindicate me! For tribulation is near and there is none to help me.

Saint John sings: I grieve and all are grieving for your grief, with you they weep and utter sighs. Here the eye reddens, the faithful people cry for Christ's sorrow. Mary, mother and maiden pure, I am your sister's child. All who are here bewail your great crying and weeping. Here very many eyes turn red for the death of your child who hangs here naked for us.

John says: Mary, dear mother, he must carry a heart of stone who would not help to grieve the death of your child. Were ever people so stone-cold who would not weep with us now? Mary, dear mother, who now should ponder fully and also sink into their hearts your weeping, your crying, your pure heart's distress for your beloved child's bitter death, they must lament with you and leave behind the false happiness of all the world.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of John the Evangelist, sing together from the *Stabat Mater*, v. 3 and v. 6: O how sad and afflicted was that blessed mother of the only-begotten! Who would not weep on seeing the mother of Christ in such suffering?

Mary, the mother of John, says: Alas, alas, how much do we suffer great pain for you, our dear beloved Lord!

The Virgin Mary sings: Who can help to lament my great suffering? My suffering has become immense. Where can I, poor one, take my suffering since I in all my days never experienced such sorrow! I cannot bear to listen or watch; No woman has ever had so great a pain as I, poor one, now suffer, since he dies without guilt because of what he taught. My beloved son your mother at this hour from the depths of her heart asks you devoutly: Give me your death in this distress! Break, my heart for I see you hanging there so wretchedly!

Jesus sings: Behold, your mother!

Jesus says: John, my good disciple, behold now your beloved mother! I now must go from here, therefore you shall take care of her. I must now return to my heavenly father and lord; She will now be your own mother, look after her as if it were me! Johannes, do this though your goodness: Take her in your care, comfort her dearly in her distress, when I will have suffered the bitter death.

John says: Lord and master, that will be fitting for me, I will gladly take her to me and receive her as my dear mother. I will never desert her. I will gladly take her into my protection. Whatever good I can do her, that will I do from my heart all the while I live. O dear Lord God, now give death to us both, for we are in true distress! Alas, our mirror will leave us, by which all the world can endure! O heavenly God, who of all the people who stand around can now cease mourning?

Jesus sings: Father, forgive them!

Jesus says: Now shall there be an end to my great and bitter passion. O heavenly Father, I ask you to grant me this at my end: Forgive now fully those who so sorrowfully have taken away my life! The end of my life has now come.

Jesus sings: It is finished.

Jesus says: All of the words of the prophets are now fulfilled, which ever were said of the son of man.

Jesus sings: Into your hands I commend my spirit.

Jesus says: I commend now into your hands my spirit, o my heavenly father!

The Virgin Mary sings thrice: Alas, alas, now he is dead!