

**RELATIONS OF LYRIC AND  
DRAMA IN MEDIAEVAL  
ENGLAND; A DISSERTATION;  
MODERN PHILOLOGY, VOL. V,  
JULY, 1907, NO. I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649338788

Relations of Lyric and Drama in Mediaeval England; A Dissertation; Modern Philology, Vol. V, July, 1907, No. I by George C. Taylor

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**GEORGE C. TAYLOR**

**RELATIONS OF LYRIC AND  
DRAMA IN MEDIAEVAL  
ENGLAND; A DISSERTATION;  
MODERN PHILOLOGY, VOL. V,  
JULY, 1907, NO. I**



The University of Chicago

FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

822.9  
T24

RELATIONS OF LYRIC AND DRAMA  
IN MEDIAEVAL ENGLAND

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS  
AND LITERATURE IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE  
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH)

BY

GEORGE C. TAYLOR

Reprinted from  
MODERN PHILOLOGY, Vol. IV, No. 4, and Vol. V, No. 1, April and July, 1907  
Chicago, 1907

1000  
1000  
1000  
1000

## THE ENGLISH "PLANCTUS MARIAE"<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1874 Schönbach concluded his work on the German planctus with the words:

Ich habe mit voller absicht mich von der untersuchung der französischen und englischen Marienklagen fern gehalten, nicht als ob sie mir nicht wichtig genug erschienen und ihre untersuchung nicht lehrreich wäre, einfach deshalb, weil das vorliegende material auch nicht im entferntesten zureicht. es müssen daher die bezüglichen publicationen abgewartet und die lösung dieser für die vergleichende litterargeschichte gewiss bedeutungsvoller aufgabe muss einer späteren zeit vorbehalten werden.<sup>2</sup>

Since then E. Wechsler has made a study of the Romance planctus.<sup>3</sup> It is hoped that the present discussion of the English planctus may in the future help to make more easily possible a comparative study of the planctus as a class. It is, however, not the aim of the present discussion to establish relations between the English planctus and those of other languages, though such correspondences as I have noticed will incidentally be pointed out. Both Schönbach and Wechsler, in their treatment of the planctus in the vulgar tongues, began with the Latin as a starting-point; their work had to do largely with the discovery of the sources of the individual poems. Some work of this kind has already been done in connection with certain of the English planctus.<sup>4</sup> It is not the purpose of this paper to push forward the investigation along these lines. Nor have I attempted the still more difficult task of determining the relation of the English planctus to the earliest Greek planctus,<sup>5</sup> though certain peculiar agreements of phrase between it and some of the English planctus entice one to attempt to discover by what indirect and

<sup>1</sup> For valuable suggestions and assistance in this study I am glad to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor John M. Manly.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Marienklagen*, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Die romanischen Marienklagen* (Halle, 1893).

<sup>4</sup> See Planctus Nos. V and VI, pp. 4 and 6, of the present discussion.

<sup>5</sup> See Wechsler, *Die rom. Marienklagen*, pp. 7 ff.; A. Linder, *Plainte de la Vierge* (Upsala, 1898), Introd., pp. ciii ff.

crooked ways such phrases ever made their entrance into the English poems. The larger and more general question still, the relation of the *planctus* as a form to the drama as a whole, lies beyond the limits of our study; their relation, as a form, to the contemporaneous<sup>1</sup> English drama naturally finds treatment here. The chief purpose of this study is to discuss the several nondramatic English *planctus* in their relation to each other, and more especially to ascertain the relationships of these to those portions of the miracle-plays which contain the laments of Mary for Christ.

### SECTION I

Before proceeding to the discussion of relations, it seems advisable, in order to aid in some degree the comparative study constantly going on in the field of the *planctus*, to give a brief description of each of the English poems. They are arranged as nearly as possible in order of date.

#### A. NON-DRAMATIC PLANCTUS

I. *The Assumption of Our Lady*,<sup>2</sup> ll. 36-42 (Cambr. Univ. MS G 9. 4. 27. 2).—The lament of Mary is only a brief portion of the narrative, introductory to the *Assumption* legend proper, but its motives<sup>3</sup> stamp it as unquestionably belonging to the *planctus* genre. Among the ME non-dramatic and dramatic *planctus* it belongs by itself, and is related to the others only in so far as they all go back to a common and as yet undiscovered ultimate source. It is deserving of notice here, chiefly because it is, so far as I have been able to discover, the oldest *planctus* in English, the *Assumption* dating not later than 1250.<sup>4</sup> Heretofore, the long and better-known *planctus* of *Cursor Mundi*,

<sup>1</sup> For the more general question of the *planctus* in its relation to the development of the drama, see Schönbach, *Die Marienklagen*, especially pp. 51 f.; Creizenach, *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, Vol. I, 221, 228, 241, 242, 247, 260; Wechsalar, especially pp. 26 ff.; Milehsank, *Die Oster- und Passionsspiele*, pp. 62 ff.; Petit de Julleville, *Les mystères*, Vol. I, 52; R. Otto, *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. IV, p. 313; Meyer, *Fragmenta Burana*, pp. 57 ff.; Linder, *Platinie de la Vierge*, *Introd.*, pp. cxc ff.; Neil C. Brooks, *Journal of Germanic Philology*, Vol. III, pp. 415 ff.; Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, Vol. II, pp. 29, 75, 129; for other references see Chambers, Vol. II, p. 29, notes.

<sup>2</sup> Edited in 1866 by Rev. J. Rawson Lumby, EETS; re-edited in the same publications by G. H. McKnight, 1901. For the same version in the *Cursor Mundi*, and for other versions, see McKnight's edition, *Introd.*, pp. III, IIII.

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 3 ff.

<sup>4</sup> McKnight, *Introd.*, p. lvi.



ll. 23945-24658, has been considered the oldest<sup>1</sup> example. The date of this poem Fröhlich sets at "mithin schon ca. 1300."<sup>2</sup> The *Assumption* planctus is so brief that it may be quoted entire:

*Cambr. Univ. MS G 9. 4. 27. 2*

"Alas my sone" seide heo  
 "Hu may ihe line? hu may pis beo?  
 Hu may ihe al pis sorege iseo?  
 Ne cupe ihe neure of sorege noht,  
 Mi leue sone, wat hastu poht?  
 Hu schal ihe lyue biþute þe?  
 Leus sone, what seistu me?"

II. *The Sorrows of Mary*<sup>3</sup> (Fairfax MS).—Date, about 1300. Though in certain particulars not typical of the class of poems known sometimes as the *Dispute between St. Bernard and Mary*, this planctus must be considered as belonging to that type.<sup>4</sup>

III. "*Stond wel moder under rode.*"<sup>5</sup> (MS Harl. 2253).—Date, about 1307.<sup>6</sup> The two versions in MS Harl. and Digby vary considerably in arrangement of material. Bøddeker<sup>7</sup> merely calls attention to two additional stanzas of Harl. not contained in Digby, and concludes from this that Digby must be the earlier version. The regularity, however, of the rhyme scheme in Harl. and the blunders in the rhyme of Digby lead me to conjecture that Digby is based on Harl.

This planctus, though about the most striking of all those in English, seems to have no close and direct relation to any of the later poems, dramatic or non-dramatic. Though not directly affecting the drama, it is to be noticed that it belongs to that form of poetry which, without actually becoming drama, is highly dramatic and is closely akin to the drama as a form—it belongs among

<sup>1</sup> Walter Fröhlich, *De Lamentacione sancte Marie* (Leipzig, 1902), pp. 11 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *Introd.*, p. x.

<sup>3</sup> *Cursor Mundi*, ll. 23945-24658, ed. Morris, EETS. For the other MSS of the *Cursor* which contain this planctus, and for the discussion of their relation, dates, etc., see H. Hupe, *Cursor Mundi*, Part VII, pp. 36 ff., EETS.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 5, n. 1, below.

<sup>5</sup> MS Harl. 2253, ed. T. Wright, in *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*, No. XXVII, Percy Soc., Vol. IV; and in Bøddeker's *Altengl. Dicht.*, p. 206. MS Digby 86, ed. in *Anglia*, Vol. II, pp. 253 ff., and in *Minor Poems of Vernon MS*, Vol. II, p. 763, EETS.

<sup>6</sup> *Spec. Lyric Poetry*, Percy Soc., Vol. IV, Pref., p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Altengl. Dicht.*

the "estриф" or "debat" poems<sup>1</sup> so much in vogue at this date. Planctus Nos. V and VI belong also to this class, but *Stond wel moder* is the most typical representative of the class; in its perfectly regular apportionment of the first three lines of each stanza to Christ and the last three to Mary during the entire dialogue portion of the verse, it adheres more strictly than the other planctus to one of the conventions of the strife poems—the exact and even balance of part against part.<sup>2</sup>

IV. *The Medytacyun of the Sorrowe that oure Lady had for the wunde in her sone Syde* (MS Hari. 1701).<sup>3</sup> Date about 1315–30.<sup>4</sup> The planctus in the English *Meditations* is to be found in the following portions of the poem: ll. 789–806, 809–18, 829–34, 837–39, 846–50, 835–944, 949–52, 975, 976, 991–1008, 1014, 1015, 1019–32, 1035, 1036, 1039–42, 1047–50, 1059–60, 1073, 1074, 1090–1110, 1115, 1116. There is no definite evidence of relationship between this and the other English planctus in verse. It agrees closely, however, with the scattered prose laments of Mary found in the translations of portions of Bonaventura's *Meditations*.<sup>5</sup> Certain agreements between this prose work and the planctus of the *Hegge Plays* point to the conclusion that either it, or some other translation of the *Meditations*, or the Latin original was in part the source<sup>6</sup> of the *Hegge* planctus.

V. *The Dispute between Mary and St. Bernard*.<sup>7</sup>—The date of MS Rawlinson, from which Fröhlich prints, is "die mitte des

<sup>1</sup> *The Debate of the Body and Soul* is perhaps the best-known and most widespread example of the scores of religious poems in ME which took on this conventional form.

<sup>2</sup> For an interesting parallel see the *Dialogus between the Infant Christ and Mary*, in Balliol MS 354, *Anglia*, Vol. XXVI, p. 246, into which many planctus motives have unquestionably worked their way.

<sup>3</sup> *Meditations on the Supper of Our Lord and the Hours of the Passion*, by Bonaventura, drawn into English verse by Robert Manning of Brunne, ed. J. Cowper, EETS, pp. 25 ff. For other English translations and for the relation of the English *Meditations* to the Latin, see Cowper, *Introd.*, p. xii; Boles-Brahl, *Catalogue of MSS in Brit. Mus.*, pp. 183 ff.; see also *The Frivoly of the Passion*, ed. Horstmann, Richard Rolle of Hampole, *Library of Early English Writers*, Vol. I, pp. 126 ff. For the planctus in Bonaventura's works see Wechsler, *Die romanischen Marienklagen*, pp. 14, 21; A. Linder, *Plainte de la Vierge*, *Introd.*, p. clix; and for the entire *Meditationes Vitae Christi* as source of Arnoul Greban's *Passion Play* see Wechsler, pp. 66–76; for its relation to the Italian Laud, *Donna del paradiso*, see the same, pp. 49 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Meditations of Bonaventura*, EETS, title-page.

<sup>5</sup> *Library of Early English Writers*, Vol. I, pp. 196 ff.

<sup>6</sup> See below, p. 23 for further discussion of this.

<sup>7</sup> *De Lamentacione sancte Marie*, Walter Fröhlich, pp. 63 ff. For the discussion of authorship, editions, other English versions and their relation to Latin and French sources,

14. jahrh's."<sup>1</sup> This planctus bears no close relation to any other planctus except No. VI.<sup>2</sup>

VI. *Disputation between Mary and the Cross* (Vernon MS).<sup>3</sup>  
—Date, about 1350.<sup>4</sup>

VII. *Christ's Testament or Deed of Feoffment*<sup>5</sup> (MS Reg. 17, OXVII).—Mary speaks ll. 379–81, 387, 388, 400–412, 424–34. This planctus is especially interesting, as only in this one case does the form make its way into the *Testament of Christ*, of which there are in ME more than a hundred versions of various forms and of various lengths. It illustrates the fact that the planctus has by this time found its way into two independent forms of poetry: first into the *Assumption of Mary*,<sup>6</sup> and secondly into the *Testament of Christ*. It will not be surprising, therefore, to find that it has made its way also into the drama.

VIII. I. *Filius Regis Mortuus Est*<sup>7</sup> (Harl. MS B954).—The date of the MS is 1420.<sup>8</sup> Refrain: "Filius Regis mortuus

and for versions in other languages, see Fröhlich, pp. 1–26, 54 ff. For the discussion of the Latin and Romance planctus of this type see Wechsler, pp. 17 ff., 22 ff., 25 f., 49 ff.; A. Linder, *Placate de la Vierge*, introd., pp. dixix ff.

<sup>1</sup>Fröhlich, p. 7; for the dates of the other MSS see pp. 7 ff. Fröhlich's discussion of the relations of the versions of the planctus of this particular type in English is in the main correct, but it is in one respect misleading. His statement is as follows: "Zwar haben wir schon in dieser ältesten englischen Marienklage die Form des Dialogs; allerdings noch nicht in der ausgeprägten Form der Jüngerin, sondern entsprechend der lateinischen Quelle *erstreckt sich der Dialog nur über den Eingang des Gedichtes*, indem er hier bloss zur Einleitung ins eigentliche Thema dient: die Passion Christi, welche dann begleitet von dem erneuten Schmerzensausbrüche der Maria von dieser in ununterbrochener Folge vorgelesen wird. . . . Noch ist der Ansprechende nicht als Person wie später der St. Bernhard eingeführt sondern der Dichter richtet gleichsam von sich aus die Rede an die Jungfrau Maria." The questioning of the imaginary person or writer, as it may be, does not, as Fröhlich suggests, appear only at the beginning of the poem, but continues throughout the entire *Quæstor* version, though at less frequent intervals than in the other versions. The speeches of the questioner begin at ll. 2396f, 2407, 2421b, 2457, 2487, 2488f, 2494f.

<sup>2</sup>Wechsler, p. 22, refers to Richard Rolle's "Meditatio de Passione Domini," *Eng. Stud.*, Vol. VII, pp. 454 ff., as an English version of the same theme. I see no reason to believe, however, that Mary spoke any portion of Rolle's lament. He is possibly referring to the *Lamentation of our lady* (*Herrigs Archiv*, Vol. LXXIX, pp. 454 ff.). This belongs very evidently to the planctus class.

<sup>3</sup>*Minor Poems of the Vernon MS*, Vol. II, pp. 612 ff., EETS. For the same in Royal MS, 18 A 10, see Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood*, EETS. See Brandl, *Poësis Grundr.*, Vol. II, p. 643, for Latin source. For this type in Latin and Italian see Wechsler, pp. 13, 36. For the relation of the English version to the "mittel-niederländische" version see Holthausen, *Anglia*, Vol. XV, pp. 304 ff., and for the further relation of the English version to the Latin and Provençal versions see Holthausen, *Herrigs Archiv*, Vol. CV, pp. 22 ff.; Holthausen seems to be unfamiliar with Wechsler's contributions on this point.

<sup>4</sup>Brandl, *Poësis Grundr.*, Vol. II, p. 642.

<sup>5</sup>*Minor Poems of Vernon MS*, Vol. II, pp. 650 ff., EETS.

<sup>6</sup>See No. I.

<sup>7</sup>Edited by Furnivall, EETS, *Poët.*, *Reliq.*, and *Love Poems*, pp. 204 ff., with a companion-piece bearing the same title; re-edited by him in 1905.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 204.