

LOQUACIOUS LOGS:

The Speaking Cross in the *Gospel of Peter*
and Other Prolix Planks

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HDS 1270
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8 December 2005

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At first glance, the end of chapter 10 of the *Gospel of Peter* might seem extremely odd: three very tall figures, emerge from the tomb with a cross following close behind. A voice from the heavens asks a question, and the cross responds verbally. This response is only one word in length, but to a modern western reader its strangeness may trump the peculiarity of the fact that a man has just been resurrected, giants have emerged from a tomb, and a voice has spoken from heaven.

While a great deal of scholarship has focused on the relationship between the *Gospel of Peter* and other gospels (both canonical and noncanonical), sometimes the literary and theological implications of this passage have been overlooked. To provide a roadmap for the reader, I will first discuss the manuscript situation of our text, followed by major research done on the *Gospel of Peter*. This will be followed by a summary of the contents, paying special attention to the Speaking Cross passage. Finally, we will look at some literary parallels that may be of interest to those who wish to study the Speaking Cross passage more closely. These parallels will both ante- and post-date the *Gospel of Peter* itself so that we may see a continued use of this motif—loquacious logs and prolux planks.

The Manuscripts and Scholarship

There are two extant manuscripts of the *Gospel of Peter*. The text presented above is that of an 8th/9th century Egyptian papyrus discovered in the tomb of a monk in Ahkmîm, Egypt. Discovered

in 1887, it contains the fragments of the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, a Greek 1 Enoch, and portions of the martyrdom of St. Julian.¹ While there are different hands at work throughout the little codex, the two Petrine fragments were both written by the same hand. Joseph van Haelst lists the Petrine fragments as 7th–9th century, and the 1 Enoch fragment as 4th–6th century.² The beginning and end of the *Gospel of Peter* are decorated with crosses and other designs, indicating the copyist was probably working with only the fragment he preserved.³ Therefore, it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty what might have preceded or followed our text.

In addition to the Ahkmîm codex, there exist also two papyrus fragments that appear to be a form of the *Gospel of Peter*. Found in the Egyptian papyrological treasure that is Oxyrhynchus, P. Oxy. 2949 was published in 1972 by R. A. Coles.⁴ These two fragments preserve portions of eighteen different lines of text that appear to come from the section in which Joseph asks Pilate for the body of Jesus. In the canonical tradition, this takes place after the crucifixion.⁵ However, a distinctive feature of the *Gospel of Peter* is the placement of this story prior not only to the crucifixion, but also to the abuse of Christ. Dieter Lührmann in 1982 identified the Oxyrhynchus fragments as belonging to the *Gospel of Peter*, who rightly indicated that arranging the two fragments in conjunction with each oth-

¹ *New Testament Apocrypha* (1; ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher: Louisville: Clarke, 2003) 217. Maurer and Schneemelcher, in this treatment, do not mention the St. Julian text. By contrast, Crossan does, and even spells out what is on each page of the text. The order of texts is as follows: *Gospel of Peter*, *Apocalypse of Peter* (stitched in backwards), two fragments from 1 Enoch 1:1–32:6, and then the St. Julian text. See John Dominic Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988) 4–5.

² Joseph van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976; repr., DLC): *Gospel of Peter* (598), *Apocalypse of Peter* (617), 1 Enoch (575).

³ It is possible, I suppose, that the copyist only wished to preserve this portion of the text. However, the beginning and end are so abrupt that it is unlikely. Additionally, the codex had plenty of pages (several are blank), and therefore, lack of manuscript pages was probably not to blame. Nicklas and Kraus provide high quality photographs of the codex in the final pages of their edition.

⁴ Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha* 217.

⁵ Cf. Mark 15:42–7; Luke 23:50–5; Matthew 27:57–61; John 19:38–42.

er is tantamount to guesswork.⁶ In addition to these, P. Oxy. LX 4009⁷ and P. Vindob. G 2325⁸ (the so-called Fayyum Fragment) may also be witnesses to the *Gospel of Peter*—though, not to portions of the text found in the more extended Ahkmîm codex.

Outside of these manuscripts, there are references to the *Gospel of Peter* in various ancient sources, the most important of which is found in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 6.12.2–6.⁹ According to Eusebius, Serapion, a bishop of Antioch, wrote a work called Περὶ τοῦ λεγομένου κατὰ Πέτρον εὐαγγελίου. Serapion was compelled to write the work because of the emerging importance that this *Gospel of Peter* held for a community in Rhossus. For Serapion, the issue does not seem to revolve so much around heterodox teachings found in the *Gospel of Peter*. In fact, he admits that the majority of the text was perfectly fine.¹⁰ Rather, Serapion seems to have two major points of contention: (1) its authorship appears dubious (6.12.3), and (2) some are reading it in a docetic manner (6.12.5–6). The docetic nature of the text is asserted by Oulton in n. 1 at the bottom of p. 40 of the Loeb Classical Library edition of Eusebius:

A large fragment of this Gospel was discovered at Akhmîm in 1886, which agrees exactly with the description given by Serapion, and is *manifestly docetic in its conception of Christ*. (emphasis added)

In spite of this emphatic footnote, one is hard-pressed to find hints of docetism in the Akhmîm fragment. Certain verses sound un-docetic: “and then they pulled out the nails from the hands of the

⁶ Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke* 8; Dieter Lührmann, “POx 2949: EvPt 3–5 in einer Handschrift des 2./3. Jahrhunderts,” *ZNW* 72 (1981) 220.

⁷ Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, *Das Petrus-evangelium und die Petrusapokalypse* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004) 59–63.

⁸ Ibid. 65–8.

⁹ Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History Books VI–X* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Eusebius, *Eccl. hist.* 6.12.6: . . . τὰ μὲν πλείονα τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου τοῦ σωτῆρος, τινὰ δὲ προσδισταλμένα . . .

Lord and set him upon the earth” (6.21),¹¹ or “they brought two evil-doers and crucified the Lord between them, but he was silent as one having no pain” (4.10).¹² Both of these verses make the humanity of Jesus seem very real; notice, especially, that in 4.10 Jesus is “*as* (ὡς) one having no pain.” A more docetic version would probably use a term like *because* rather than *as*.¹³ Therefore, if the Ahkmîm text is to be identified with Serapion’s *Gospel of Peter*, we must admit that this 8th/9th century text has undoubtedly gone through some changes, probably in an effort to make it more orthodox. The existence of this textual difference is also hinted at by the little data that we can squeeze from the Oxyrhynchus fragments. While these fragments contain very little text, it is clear that they are preserving a different form. The major unit of Joseph’s request for the body is in the pre-crucifixion position, agreeing with the *Gospel of Peter* (as well as agreeing in important wording, such as Joseph and Pilate speaking of each other as “friends”), but the wording is not quite the same.

In spite of the great likelihood of redactional difference between the Ahkmîm codex and the “original” 2nd century *Gospel of Peter*, some authors, most notably Koester¹⁴ and Crossan,¹⁵ have

¹¹ *Gospel of Peter* 6.21: καὶ τότε ἀπέσπασαν τοὺς ἡλούς ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἔθηκαν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς . . .

¹² *Gospel of Peter* 4.10: καὶ ἤνεγκον δύο κακούργους καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν ἀνά μέσον αὐτῶν τὸν κύριον. αὐτὸς δὲ ἐσιώπα ὡς μηδὲνα πόνον ἔχων.

¹³ This is not a new argument, see Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke*, 12.

¹⁴ Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000) 166–68; Helmut Koester, “Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels,” *HTR* 73 (1980) 126–30.

¹⁵ Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke*, 16–30. Crossan posits a “Cross Gospel” which, more or less, does for the passion narrative what Q does for the sayings of Jesus—it provides a source from which the canonical gospels (including John) and the *Gospel of Peter* draw their narrative. This view has been opposed by several including Koester (*Ancient Christian Gospels* [Philadelphia: Trinity Press Intl, 1990]) and Raymond E. Brown (“The Gospel of Peter and Canonical Gospel Priority,” *NTS* 33 [1987]). To Crossan’s credit, in a more recent work he answers the charges of Koester and Brown and further refines his theory. See John Dominic Crossan, “The Gospel of Peter & the Canonical Gospels: Independence, Dependence, or Both?,” *Forum* n.s. 1 (1998) 7–51. This article is as much a *status quaestionis* as it is an attempt to defend himself. Because of this, the article is extremely useful for understanding the views of several different authors including Koester, Brown, Ellen Aitken, Delvin Hutton, and Benjamin Johnson, in addition to Crossan himself. My criticism of the Cross Gospel lies not only in Crossan’s over-confidence in its existence, but also, and more importantly, the way in which the Cross Gospel comes to be synonymous with the *Gospel of Peter*. While Crossan does make an effort to differentiate between the two, by the end of *The Cross That Spoke* it is very difficult to determine what is the real difference (if

sought to aggrandize the *Gospel of Peter* by emphasizing its importance for our understanding of the development of the passion narrative. In 1975, Jürgen Denker demonstrated that nearly every sentence in the passion narrative of the *Gospel of Peter* was derived from Scripture (a.k.a. the Hebrew Bible).¹⁶ According to Koester, this adherence to Scripture indicates an early form of the passion narrative which is in accordance with Paul's understanding of it expressed in 1 Corinthians 15 where Jesus "died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures."¹⁷

The very first narratives about Jesus' suffering and death would not have made the attempt to remember what actually happened. Rather, they would have found both the rationale and the content of Jesus' suffering and death in the memory of those passages in the Psalms and the Prophets which spoke about the suffering of the righteous. The passion narrative of the *Gospel of Peter* is indeed written, sentence for sentence, in the spirit of this "scriptural memory."¹⁸

This argument is tantalizingly persuasive not least of all because of its use of 1 Corinthians 15 to understand the nature of early passion narratives. If Paul's statement is indeed applicable to such an early passion narrative stream, then it is plausible to posit that the *Gospel of Peter* preserves some stratum of this early tradition based on "scriptural memory." It is important to note that the *Gospel of Peter's* allusions to Scripture are not in anyway apologetic, as in Matthew and Justin Martyr who "try to demonstrate an exact correspondence between prophecy and fulfillment."¹⁹ For Koester, this fact

any) between them.

¹⁶Jürgen Denker, *Die theologieggeschichtliche Stellung des Petrusevangeliums: ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des Doketismus* (Bern Frankfurt/M: Herbert Lang Peter Lang, 1975) 58–77; Koester, "Apocryphal," 126–27.

¹⁷1 Cor 15:3: Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς.

¹⁸Koester, "Apocryphal," 127. Crossan summarizes Koester's argument very ably. See Crossan, "Gospel of Peter," 8–11. Here, he has done an excellent job of summarizing various theories about the dependence or independence of the *Gospel of Peter* and the canonical gospels. In addition to summarizing arguments, Crossan offers his own analysis of the arguments including portions of them which he finds convincing, and portions which he does not.

¹⁹Koester, "Apocryphal," 127.

gives the narrative a particularly early feel.

Still, for my part, I feel that a bit more caution should be exercised. There is no doubt that the *Gospel of Peter* presents a passion narrative from the 2nd century that blends canonical traditions with noncanonical traditions. The aforementioned argument about “scriptural memory” and 1 Corinthians 15 sounds very plausible, but since we are confronted with a lack of manuscript evidence, judgment should be reserved.²⁰

The Contents of the Gospel of Peter

The portions of the *Gospel of Peter* that have come down to us comprise about 150 lines of text, which are divided by Kraus and Nicklas into about 60 sentences.²¹ Its 14 short chapters describe the trial of Jesus *in medias res*, the crucifixion, the burial and subsequent guarding of the tomb, the resurrection, and the empty tomb.²²

Our text opens with some kind of trial being held involving the Jews, Pilate, Herod, and “the Lord” (1.1–2).²³ Herod commands that the Lord be taken away, but Joseph, sensing that Jesus will

²⁰For a full-blown refutation of Koester and Crossan’s independence model, see Brown, “Gospel of Peter,” 321–43. I should note here that my presentation of these arguments may suffer from oversimplification. One oversimplification that is especially noteworthy is the difference between Koester’s and Crossan’s models. While they agree on much, there are some sharp disagreements. For a summary of these arguments and disagreements see Crossan, “Gospel of Peter,” 8–17.

²¹Kraus and Nicklas, *Das Petrus-evangelium*, 32–53. In the division of sentences, Kraus and Nicklas follow Harnack; in the division of chapters, they follow Robinson. This recent edition will serve as my base text. Kraus and Nicklas have provided not only an introduction to and critical text of the *Gospel of Peter* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, but also German and English translations, texts of papyrus fragments and high quality photographs of the codex. This edition will serve as my base, all numberings of verse and chapter will be derived from it.

²²J. D. Crossan divides the text into these major units: the trial, the abuse, the crucifixion, the burial, the guards, the women, and the twelve. For Crossan these literary units are based not on the *Gospel of Peter* specifically, but on a hypothetical “Cross Gospel” that he posits as a narrative source used by the canonical gospels as well as the *Gospel of Peter*. See Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke*, 31–293.

²³The text never uses the name “Jesus.” For the uses of “Lord” and its christological function in the *Gospel of Peter*, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdsman, 2003) 441–47. See also Denker, *Die theologieggeschichtliche*, 93–125.

be crucified, beseeches Pilate to allow him to take the body for burial. Pilate agrees, and sends the request to Herod who says that, in accordance with Jewish customs, the body must be buried before the sun sets (2.3–5).²⁴ Next the Lord is mocked, and crucified. Much of this section presents actions similar to those in the canonical tradition, including Jesus’ “coronation” in which he is wrapped in a purple robe, given a crown of thorns, mocked with sign labeling him the “King of Israel,” etc. (3.6–5.20). The Lord is then taken from the cross, and given to Joseph who takes the body to his own tomb called “the Garden of Joseph” (6.21–24). Various Jewish leaders begin to lament Jesus’ death. This is immediately followed by a switch to the first person—the narrator tells us that he and his companions mourn in hiding because the authorities are seeking them (7.25–27). The next portion explains why guarding the tomb was necessary. Guards are posted and a stone is rolled in front of the tomb (8.28–33). During the night a great sound is heard from heaven and two men descend from heaven to the tomb. The stone rolls itself away, and the “young men” (νεανίσκοι) enter (9.34–37). Three extremely large men are seen leaving the tomb, followed by a speaking cross (10.38–42).²⁵ Another man descends from heaven and enters the tomb (11.44). In the morning, Mary Magdalene and her friends arrive at the tomb and are greeted by a radiant man who tells them that the Lord is risen (11.50–57). The account again shifts back to the first person—the narrator identifies himself as Peter, one of the twelve disciples—and the text ends abruptly in mid-sentence.

²⁴*Gospel of Peter* 2.5: καὶ ὁ Ἡρώδης ἔφη· ἀδελφεὲ Πειλᾶτε, εἰ καὶ μὴ τις αὐτὸν ἠτήκει, ἡμεῖς αὐτὸν ἐθάπτομεν, ἐπεὶ καὶ σάββατον ἐπιφώσκει· γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, ἥλιον μὴ δύναι ἐπὶ πεφονευμένῳ. καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν τῷ λαῷ πρὸ μιᾶς τῶν ἀζύμων, τῆς ἑορτῆς αὐτῶν.

²⁵I have kept this portion of the summary very short because it will be presented more fully below.

The Speaking Cross Passage

The passage with which we are most concerned can be found in chapters 9 and 10.²⁶

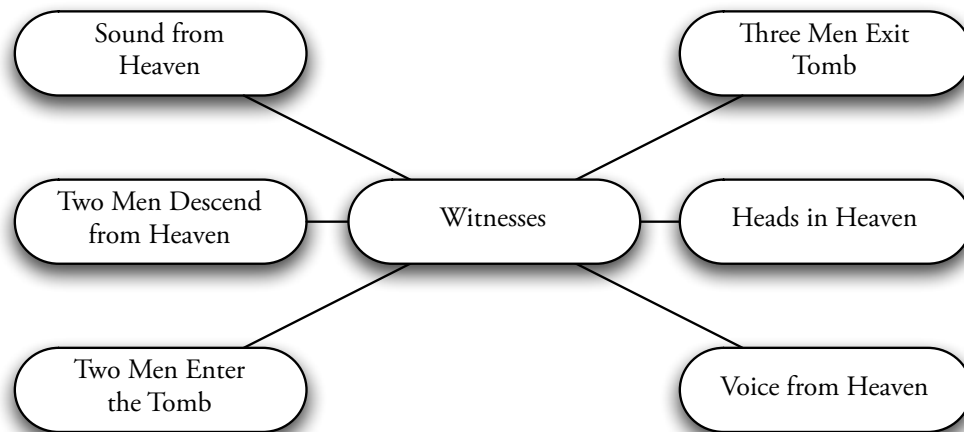
<p>³⁴ πρῶίτας δὲ ἐπιφῶσκοντος τοῦ σαββάτου ἦλθεν ὄχλος ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ τῆς περιχώρου ἵνα ἴδωσι τὸ μνημεῖον ἐσφραγιμένον.</p> <p>³⁵ τῆ(1) δὲ νυκτὶ ἦ(1) ἐπέφωσκεν ἡ κυριακὴ φυλασσόντων τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀνὰ δύο δύο κατὰ φρουράν, μεγάλη φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐν τῶ(1) οὐρανῶ(1)</p> <p>³⁶ καὶ εἶδον ἀνοιχθέντας {ανοιχθεντες} τοὺς οὐρα[ν]ους καὶ δύο ἄνδρας κατελθόντας ἐκεῖθε πολὺ φέγγος ἔχοντας καὶ ἐγγίσαντας τῷ τάφω(1)</p> <p>³⁷ ὁ δὲ λίθος {λειθοσ} ἐκεῖνος ὁ βεβλημένος ἐπὶ τῆ(1) θύρα(1) ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ κυλισθεὶς ἐπεχώρησε παρὰ μέρος καὶ ὁ τάφος ἠνοίγη {ενοιγη} καὶ ἀμφοτέροι οἱ νεανίσκοι εἰσῆλθον.</p> <p>³⁸ ἰδόντες οὖν οἱ στρατιῶται ἐκεῖνοι ἐξύπνισαν τὸν κεντυρίωνα καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους· παρῆσαν γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ φυλάσσοντες·</p> <p>³⁹ καὶ ἐξηγουμένων αὐτῶν ἃ εἶδον πάλιν ὀρώσιν {ορασιν} ἐξελθόντας {εξελθοντοσ} ἀπὸ τοῦ τάφου τρεῖς ἄνδρας {ανδρες} καὶ τοὺς δύο τὸν ἕνα ὑπορθοῦντας καὶ σταυρὸν ἀκολουθοῦντα {ακολουθουντα} αὐτοῖς</p> <p>⁴⁰ καὶ τῶν μὲν δύο τὴν κεφαλὴν χωροῦσαν μέχρι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, τοῦ δὲ χειραγωγομένου {χειρατωτουμνου} ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὑπερβαίνουσαν τοὺς οὐρανοὺς.</p> <p>⁴¹ καὶ φωνῆς {φωνη} ἤκουον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν λεγούσης· ἐκήρυξας τοῖς κοιμωμένοις {κοινωμενοις};</p> <p>⁴² καὶ ὑπακοὴ ἠκούετο ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ ὅτι ναί {τιναι?}.</p>	<p>When the early morning of the Sabbath drew near, a crowd came from Jerusalem and the surrounding country in order to see the sealed monument. But, during the night in which the Lord's day dawned, while the soldiers kept their watch, two-by-two, a great voice was produced in heaven. And they saw the heavens opened, and two men descended from there having a great light, and they approached the tomb. But that stone which had been set upon the door, from itself, rolled and yielded to one side, and the tomb opened, and both young men entered.</p> <p>Therefore, when the soldiers saw this, they awakened the centurion and the elders, for they were also there watching. As they were relating what they saw, again they saw coming out from the tomb three men, two of them supporting the other, and the cross following them; and the head of the two advanced unto heaven, and [the head] of the one who was being led by hand by them surpassed the heavens.</p> <p>And a voice was heard from the heavens saying: "Have you preached to those sleeping?"</p> <p>And an obedient response was heard from the cross: "Yes."</p>
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This passage is characterized by five supernatural events:²⁷ (1) some kind of strange sound

²⁶Kraus and Nicklas, *Das Petrusvangelium*, 40–43. This text-critical information is gleaned from Nicklas and Kraus's apparatus. I have broken the Greek out into the various verses, but have dispalyed the English in normal paragraph form for ease of reading. The curly brackets, {}, indicate the actual spellings found in the manuscript.

²⁷These supernatural events are, respectively: 9.35; 9.36; 9.37; 10.39, and 10.41–42.

from heaven, (2) two radiant men descending from heaven, (3) the stone rolling away from the tomb of its own accord, (4) the men emerging from the tomb with a third man and a cross, their heads stretching to heaven and beyond, and (5) a short dialogue between a heavenly voice and the cross. Aside from the dialogue with the cross, each of these supernatural events has a parallel in the canonical gospel tradition.²⁸ In addition, the passage takes on a chiasmic form:²⁹



This chiasm highlights two very important aspects of the passage: (1) the voices from heaven on the tail ends of the chiasm, and (2) the witnesses in the middle prove that the body of Jesus was not simply removed from the tomb (as will later be charged). Overall, then, the passage seeks to answer the question of what happened between the burial after the crucifixion and the arrival of the women—how does the tomb become empty? New information comes to light through the *Gospel of Peter* that helps us understand both how these enigmatic events fold, and why we can trust this account of these events.

The speaking cross portion is typically understood as a reference to some kind of “communal

²⁸Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke*, 335–62.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 335–62. Crossan also finds a similar chiasmic structure, but he does not follow through with it—it seems to be more of an aside for him.

resurrection” or the “reckoning of the dead”—a motif in which Jesus descends into Hell. Jean Daniélou characterized this as “a subject of central importance for Jewish Christianity.”³⁰ Daniélou notes that in some texts this comes to be associated both with Jesus’ descent from heaven (*katabasis*)³¹ and with “Christ’s combat with the evil angels.”³² Daniélou cautions that these events should be seen as originally separated, and it is only later traditions that come to combine them. Presumably, the “sleeping” in 10.41 refers to the heroes of the Hebrew Bible, at least such is the force of Matt 27:52 where the “bodies of the saints are sleeping” (σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων). The *Gospel of Peter* is anticipating the question of what will happen to those who have gone before, a problem that, as Daniélou discusses, “must have preoccupied Jewish Christians.”³³ However, it is not only Jewish Christian communities that are confronted with this problem; Christ’s descent into Hell as a sort of theodicy can be seen in many ancient Christian texts.³⁴

Therefore, we can see how the this portion of the gospel is confronting two very important questions that might have faced early Christian communities: (1) a question of theodicy: what happens to the righteous dead? (2) a question of narrative lacunae: what happened between the burial and the empty tomb?

³⁰Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (trans. John A. Baker; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 233–48.

³¹Cf. *Ascension of Isaiah* 10.8–10.

³²Cf. Colossians 2:15. Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 234.

³³Ibid. 234.

³⁴*Ascension of Isaiah* 3.15; Ignatius, *Magnesians* 9.2; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 72.4; Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* 3.20.4, 4.22.1, 4.33.1, 4.33.12, 5.31.1; Irenaeus, *Demonstration on the Apostolic Preaching*, 78; *Sibylline Oracles*, 1.376–82, 8.310–17; *Epistula Apostolorum*, 51. See Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke*, 368–81. Note that for Crossan, the “cross” in the *Gospel of Peter* is not the physical cross, but rather a symbol, a representation for the “sleeping saints.” Crossan even goes as far as to say that the cross could simply be these saints following Jesus from the tomb in a cross formation.

A Similar Motif in Other Works

When it comes to the passage about the talking cross, most modern scholarship has focused on the problems presented above—theodicy and the explanation of the empty tomb. No doubt, these are important issues, and, when properly read, they can give us hints at what questions early Christian communities were asking. However, I would like simply to draw our attention to a few parallels that might help us to become more comfortable with the notion of a speaking cross.

The Argo and the Dodonian Oak

The story of Jason and the Argonauts navigating their way to Colchis to steal the golden fleece is well known. References to Jason date as far back as Homer, and are almost always associated with this core adventure (though, some authors, such as Euripides, will come to focus on Jason's wife, Medea).³⁵ The basic core of the myth can be found in Apollodorus' *Library and Epitome*. Here, I provide the opening to the portion about Jason (I. 6.19):

<p>Ἰασῶν Ἄργον παρεκάλεσε τὸν Φρίξου, κάκεϊνος Ἀθηνᾶς ὑποθεμένης πεντηκόντορον ναῦν κατασκεύασε τὴν προσαγορευθεῖσαν ἀπὸ τοῦ κατασκευάσαντος Ἄργῳ: κατὰ δὲ τὴν πρῶραν ἐνήρμοσεν Ἀθηνᾶ φωνῆεν φηγοῦ τῆς Δωδωνίδος ξύλον.</p>	<p>Jason called upon Argos the son of Phrixos, and he, under the guidance of Athena, produced a ship of 50 oars, being called (after its builder) "the Argo." Down the prow, Athena fastened a speaking beam of Dodonian oak.</p>
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Apollodorus goes on to recount many of Jason's activities, but never really addresses the "speaking beam" again. However, this is not the case for other treatments of the Jason story.

The Alexandrian poet, Apollonius Rhodius, acting against the will of his teacher, Calli-

³⁵In addition to the works mentioned below, Pindar's "4th Pythian Ode" also provides elements of the Jason story.

machus, sought to combine Alexandrian poetic style with the grand scale of the Homeric epic. The product of this endeavor was the 3rd century BCE epic poem the *Argonautica*.³⁶ Here the story of Jason and his fellow travelers is given full treatment. First we have a the story about Athena placing the beam in the oak (*Argonautica* I. 524–27):

<p>σμερδαλέον δὲ λιμὴν Παγασήϊος ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτὴ Πηλιάς ἴαχεν Ἄργῳ ἐπισπέρχουσα νέεσθαι. ἐν γὰρ οἱ δόρυ θεῖον ἐλήλατο, τό ρ' ἀνὰ μέσσην στεῖραν Ἀθηναίη Δωδωνίδος³⁷ ἤρμοσε φηγοῦ.</p>	<p>The harbor of Pagasae shouted a terrible [cry], indeed Pelian Argo herself, urging [them] to be on their way. For in her a divine beam had been set; indeed Athena joined the beam of an oak from Dodona to the middle of the ship's keel.</p>
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In addition to the story of Athena's hand in the construction of the ship, we have an indirect reference to the prow of the shipping actually letting out a cry. In our final example from Apollonius Rhodius, the Argo becomes even more animated (*Argonautica* IV. 580–92):

<p>... αὐτίκα δ' ἄφνω ἴαχεν ἀνδρομέη ἐνοπῆ μεσσηγὺ θεόντων αὐδῆεν γλαφυρῆς νηὸς δόρυ, τό ρ' ἀνὰ μέσσην στεῖραν Ἀθηναίη Δωδωνίδος ἤρμοσε φηγοῦ. τοὺς δ' ὀλοὸν μεσσηγὺ δέος λάβεν εἰσαΐοντας φθογγὴν τε Ζηνός τε βαρὺν χόλον. οὐ γὰρ ἀλύξειν ἔννεπεν οὔτε πόρους δολιχῆς ἀλός, οὔτε θυέλλας ἀργαλέας, ὅτε μὴ Κίρκη φόνον Ἀψύρτοιο νηλέα νίψειεν· Πολυδεύκεα δ' εὐχετάασθαι Κάστορά τ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖς ἦνωγε κελεύθους Αὔσονίης ἐμπροσθε πορεῖν ἀλός, ἧ ἔνι Κίρκην δήουσιν, Πέρσης τε καὶ Ἥελίοιο θύγατρα. ᾗ ὧς Ἄργῳ ἰάχησεν ὑπὸ κνέφας . . .</p>	<p>All of a sudden, the beam of the hollow ship cried in a human cry in the midst of their course, for indeed Athena joined the beam of an oak from Dodona to the middle of the ship's keel. And deadly fear took them in the midst as thy heard the voice speak of the heavy wrath of Zeus. For it proclaimed that they shall flee neither from the long fords of the sea, nor the grievous storms, unless Kirke purge the ruthless murder of Apsyrtos. And she commanded Polydeukes and Kastor to pray to the immortal gods to furnish paths through the Ausonian sea, in which they might find Kirke, daughter of both Perses and Helios. Thus, the Argo cried into the darkness.</p>
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It is no longer simply a cry that is heard from the ship, but a prophecy and command.

³⁶Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 32–36.

³⁷The Scholiast has this to say: πιθανῶς ἐκ τῆς Δωδωνίδος φησὶ δρυὸς τὸ ξύλον εἶναι ἐν τῇ Ἄργοι τὸ φωνῆεν, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὴ ἐφθέγγετο, ὡς φησιν Ὅμηρος ὄθρα θεοῖο ἐκ δρυὸς ὑψικόμοιο Διὸς βουλὴν ἐπακούσαι. (Hom. Od. XIV. 327)

Thus, we have a popular Hellenistic epic in which a piece of wood, the prow of a ship, is known to have spoken, prophesied, and commanded. Yet, we still do not seem to have a direct account of actual utterances from the prow—only indirect accounts. This will change, however, with the 1st century CE Latin poet Valerius Flaccus.

Like Apollonius Rhodius before him, this Flavian poet offers an epic treatment of the story of Jason and the Argonauts. Marianne Bonz, in positing Flaccus's *Argonautica* as a revision of Augustan eschatology during the Flavian period, characterizes his work in this way:

Although, therefore, Valerius does follow the essential outline of the ancient legend previously poeticized in the Hellenistic epic of Apollonius Rhodius, he has completely transformed the sophisticated skepticism of his Callimachean predecessor into an edifying encomium on the struggles and rewards of heroic *virtus*.³⁸

Important to our discussion is Valerius Flaccus's characterization of the Argo. Our first hint comes in the second line of the entire epic, where Flaccus refers to the Argo as *fatidica ratis*. This prophetic notion will re-emerge later in the poem when the ship really begins to act (*Argonautica*, I. 300–308):

³⁸Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 79.

<p>mox, ubi victa gravi ceciderunt lumina somno, visa coronatae fulgens tutela³⁹ carinae vocibus hi instare duci: "Dodonida quercum Chaonique vides famulam Iovis. aequora tecum ingredior, nec fatidicis⁴⁰ avellere silvis me nisi promisso potuit Saturnia caelo. tempus adest; age rumpe moras! dumque ae- quore toto currimus, incertus si nubila duxerit aether, iam nunc mitte metus, fidens superisque mihique."</p>	<p>Soon, conquered by sleep their heavy eyes fell, the shining guardian of the crowned vessel seemed to approach the leader with these expressions: "You see a Dodonian oak-tree and a servant of Chaonian Jupiter. I advance, and the Saturnian goddess could not have plucked me from the prophetic forest lest heaven had been promised to me. "The hour is present; Go! Break your delay! While we run across the whole sea, whether the uncer- tain aether commands rain-clouds, even now re- lease your fears, trusting in both the heavens and me."</p>
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Again, the word *fatidica* is used to describe the Dodonian oak. The oak is represented as a tutelary figure, watching over Jason and the Argonauts. She provides a brief history of herself, and then commands them to go, trusting in her.

Unfortunately, Flaccus's text breaks off (presumed by some to be simply unfinished), and we do not know how he treats the end of the story. Assuming he continues to follow the outline of Apollonius Rhodius, he undoubtedly neglects the tradition where Jason is actually depicted as being killed by the *fatidicus quercus*. In this version of the story, Jason, who for various reasons has fallen out of favor with Medea, returns to the shore to be with his beloved Argo which has fallen into disrepair. Unfortunately, while sitting under it, the prow breaks and falls on his head, killing him.

The Dream of the Rood

A more obvious parallel to the speaking cross can be found in the 10th century Anglo-Saxon poem known as "The Dream of the Rood."⁴¹ The poem is found in a document known as the *Codex*

³⁹Here the oak of Dodona is represented as a tutelary figure. Later, in VIII. 203, Minerva will be represented as the ship's guardian.

⁴⁰Notice that in I. 2 Valerius Flaccus refers to the Argo as *fatidica ratis*.

⁴¹I have provided the text and my own translation at the end of this paper. In an attempt to retain some of the flavor

Vercellensis, along with many other poems and homilies in various Anglo-Saxon dialects.⁴² Prior to moving on to the poem itself, it is interesting to note its connection with the so-called “Ruthwell Cross.” This stone cross in Dumfriesshire contains a text very closely related to “The Dream of the Rood.” The cross, dating from the 7th or 8th century is inscribed with runic characters that preserve certain sections of the fuller poem in an earlier dialect. The cross was, unfortunately, torn down and defaced in 1642 by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Thankfully, much of the cross is still preserved, as are early transcriptions of the text that ante-date the destruction in 1642.⁴³ In the end, the text from the 10th-century Vercelli Codex must be regarded as a later version of this same poem. Most scholars seem to agree that the poem probably originates from the 6th or 7th century, thus its attribution to Cynewulf in early scholarship.

“The Dream of the Rood” opens with the narrator describing a vision that he has had. In this vision he sees a glorious cross. The cross then narrates the passion to him, telling not only what Jesus was going through during the crucifixion, but also what the cross itself was going through. Obviously, the fact that the cross speaks is noteworthy. In addition, it is buried with Jesus, and seems to gain some kind of magical healing powers (not to mention the power of speech) from the experience.

of the original, I have left certain words in their archaic forms—it just sounds better that way to me!

⁴²For the complete codex, see J. M. Kemble, *The Poetry of the Codex Vercellensis, with an English Translation* (London: Aelfric Society, 1843). In addition, these works are helpful: Albert S. Cook, *The Dream of the Rood: An Old English Poem Attributed to Cynewulf* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905); Paavo Rissanen, *The Dream of the Rood* (Helsinki: University Press, 1987); Michael J. Swanton, *The Dream of the Rood* (Exeter Medieval English Texts and Studies: Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996).

⁴³See *Ibid.* 9–37.

Conclusion

Whether or not the author of “The Dream of the Rood” had ever read the *Gospel of Peter* is highly speculative. I present it, however, to show that this notion of a speaking cross does not die with our monk in Ahkmîm. Rather, the motif continues in some way. There are even modern literary parallels, such as Shel Silverstein’s popular children’s book *The Giving Tree*.⁴⁴ Likewise, animated wood was not foreign to the writer of the *Gospel of Peter*. Before this text was written, at least one major epic poem was produced in Alexandria that featured an animated and prophetic ship’s prow. I am sure these are not the only parallels that we could find. However, except for a paragraph in *The Cross That Spoke* where Crossan acknowledges the existence of “The Dream of the Rood,” I had not found these parallels in discussions of the *Gospel of Peter* and its account of the cross’s strange little response. My hope is to demonstrate for those who find this speaking cross abnormal, that, while it is certainly fantastic, other literature both Christian and non-Christian, both before and after, have made use of a very similar motif.

⁴⁴Thanks to Glenn E. Snyder for reminding me of this story.

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Stephen B. Hebert
“The Dream of the Rood”

Anglo-Saxon (indiscriminate verse)

1	Hwæt! Ic swefna cyst	secgan wylle,
2	hwæt me gemætte	to midre nihte,
3	syðþan reordberend	reste wunedon!
4	þuhte me þæt ic gesawe	sylicre treow
5	on lyft lædan,	leohte bewunden,
6	beama beorhtost.	Eall þæt beacen wæs
7	begoten mid golde.	Gimmas stodon
8	fægere æt foldan sceatum,	swylce þær fife wæron
9	uppe on þam eaxlegespanne.	Beheoldon þær engel dyhtnes ealle,
10	fægere þurh forðgescaft.	Ne wæs ðær huru fracodes gealga,
11	ac hine þær beheoldon	halige gastas,
12	men ofer moldan,	ond eall þeos mære gescaft.
13	Sylic wæs se segebeam,	ond ic synnum fah,
14	forwunded mid wommum.	Geseah ic wuldres treow,
15	wædum geweorðode,	wynnum scinan,
16	gegyred mid golde;	gimmas hæfdon
17	bewrigene weorðlice	wealdendes treow.
18	Hwæðre ic þurh þæt gold	ongytan meate
19	earmra ærgewin,	þæt hit ærest ongan
20	swætān on þa swiðran healfe.	Eall ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed,
21	forht ic wæs for þære fæggran gesyhðe.	Geseah ic þæt fuse beacen

Translation

Lo! I the best of visions will say,
what met me at mid-night,
when the voice-bearers dwell in rest.
Thought me that I saw a more marvelous tree
Lifted in the air, enveloped in light,
Of beams the brightest. All that beacon was
beset with gold. Gems stood
fair at the regions of the earth, likewise there were five
upon the axle-span. All beheld there an angel of the Lord,
fair through creation. There certainly was no cross of the vile,
but there beheld it the holy ghosts,
men over the earth, and all this famous creation.
Marvelous was the victory-beam, and I stained with sins,
wounded with guilt. I saw the tree of glory,
Covered with weeds, shining with joys,
geared with gold; gems had
worthily adorned the tree of the Lord.
Whether I, through that gold, might behold
old hostilities of the wretched, that it first began
to bleed on the right half. All I was with sorrows drenched,
Frighted I was for that fair vision. Saw I that bright beacon

22	wendan wædum ond bleom;	hwilum hit wæs mid wætan bestemed,	change weeds and blooms; at times it was with wetness drenched,
23	beswyled mid swates gange,	hwilum mid since gegyrwed.	soaked with the courses of blood, while with treasure geared.
24	Hwæðre ic þær licgende	lange hwile	Whether I there lay a long while
25	beheold hreowcearig	hælendes treow,	I beheld harrowing the tree of the Savior,
26	oððæt ic gehyrde	þæt hit hleoðrode.	until I heard that it made a noise.
27	Ongan þa word spreca	wudu se lesta:	It began the words to speak—the best of wood:
28	“þæt wæs geara iu	(ic þæt gyta geman),	“That was years ago, (yet I remember that),
29	þæt ic wæs aheawen	holtes on ende,	that I was hewn from the edge of the woods,
30	astyred of stefne minum.	Genaman me ðær strange feondas,	ripped up by my roots. They seized me there, strong enemies,
31	geworhton him þær to wæfersyne,	heton me heora wergas hebban.	they made (me)for themselves there for a spectacle, they com- manded me to raise up their criminals.
32	Bærone me ðær beornas on ealrum,	oððæt hie me on beorg asetton,	Bore me there the beorns on their axles, until they on a hill set me,
33	gefæstnodon me þær feondas genoge.	Geseah ic þa frean mancynnes	Fastened me there, many enemies. I saw the Savior of mankind
34	efstan eine mycle	þæt he me wolde on gestigan.	hasten with great zeal, that he wanted on me to ascend.
35	þær ic þa ne dorste	ofer dryhtnes word	There I did not dare, over the Lord’s word
36	bugan oððe berstan,	þa ic bifian geseah	To bow or break, when I saw to tremble
37	eorðan sceatas.	Ealle ic mihte	The regions of the earth. All I might have
38	feondas gefyllan,	hwæðre ic fæste stod.	felled the enemies, whether I stood fast.
39	Ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð,	(þæt wæs god ælmihtig),	Stripped himself then, the young hero, (that was God Almighty),
40	strang on stiðmod.	Gestah he on gealgan heanne,	strong and resolute. He ascended his gallows [cross],
41	modig on manigre gesyhðe,	þa he wolde mancyn lysan.	brave in the vision of many men, so he would release mankind.
42	Bifode ic þa me se beorn ymbclypte.	Ne dorste ic hwæðre bugan eorðan	Trembled I when the beorn embraced me, I did not dare to bow to the earth,

43	feallan to foldan sceatum,	ac ic sceolde fæste standan.	to fall to the regions of the earth, but I should stand fast.
44	Rod wæs ic aræred.	Ahof ic ricne cyning,	I was erected a rood [cross]. I lifted up a rich king,
45	heofona hlaford,	hyldan me ne dorste.	the Lord of Heaven, I dare not to bend.
46	þurhdrifan hi me mid deor- can næglum.	On me syndon þa dolg gesiene,	Pierced they me with dark nails. On me are the wounds seen,
47	opene inwidhlemmas.	Ne dorste ic hira nænigum scedðan.	open malicious wounds. Dare not I any of them to scathe.
48	Bysmeredon hie unc butu æt gædere.	Eall ic wæs mid blode bestemed,	They mocked us both together. I was all soaked with blood,
49	begoten of þæs guman sidan,	siððan he hæfde his gast onsended.	drenched from that man's side after he had sent out his ghost.
50	Feala ic on þam beorge	gebiden hæbbe	Experienced I on that hill many
51	wraðra wyrda.	Geseah ic weruda god	cruel fates. Saw I the god of wards
52	þearle þenian.	þystro hæfdon	thoroughly stretched out. Darkness had
53	bewrigen mid wolcnum	wealdendes hræw,	covered with clouds the Ruler's corpse,
54	scirne sciman,	sceadu forðeode,	shining light, shadows proceeded
55	wann under wolcnum.	Weop eal gesceaft,	dark under clouds. Wept all creation,
56	cwiðdon cyninges fyll.	Crist wæs on rode.	lamenting the king's fall. Christ was on rood [cross].
57	Hwæðere þær fuse	feorran cwoman	There eager ones from afar came
58	to þam æðelinge.	Ic þæt eall beheold.	to that noble one. I that all beheld.
59	Sare ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed,	hnag ic hwæðre þam secgum to handa,	Sorely I was with sorrows drenched, yet I bowed to the hands of the men,
60	eaðmod elne mycle.	Genamon hie þær ælmihtigne god,	humble with much courage. Took they there Almighty God,
61	ahofon hine of ðam hefian wite.	Forleton me þa hilderincas	lifting him from that terrible torment. Forsook me the warriors
62	standan steame bedrifenne;	eall ic wæs mid strælum forwundod.	standing with steam drenched; all I was with arrows wounded.
63	Aledon hie ðær limwerigne,	gestodon him æt his lices heafdum,	They laid him there, the limb-weary, they stood him at his body's head,
64	bheoldon hi ðær heofenes dryhten,	ond he hine ðær hwile reste,	they beheld there heaven's Lord, and he himself there for a while rested,

65	meðe æfter ðam miclan gewinne.	Ongunnon him þa moldern wyrcan	weary after the great battle. They began to work a tomb for him
66	beornas on banan gesyhðe;	curfon hie ðæt of beorhtan stane,	beorns in the slayer's sight; carved they that from bright stone,
67	gesetton hi ðæron sigor wealdend.	Ongunnon him þa sorhleodð galan	Set they there the victorious Lord. They began to sing the sor- row-lay
68	earme on þa æfentide,	þa hie woldon eft siðian,	wretched in the even-tide, then they would again journey,
69	meðe fram þam mæran þeodne.	Reste he ðær mæte weorode.	wearry from the glorious prince. Rested he there with few wards.
70	Hwæðere we ðær greotende	gode hwile	Yet we there grieved a good while,
71	stodon on staðole,	syððan stefn up gewat	standing in position, after the voice went up from
72	hilderinca.	Hræw colode,	the warriors. The corpse became cold,
73	fæger feorgbold.	þa us man fyllan ongan	fair body. Then men began to fell us
74	ealle to eorðan.	þæt wæs egeslic wyrd!	all to the earth. That was a terrible fate!
75	Bedealf us man on deopan seape.	Hwæðre me þær dryhtnes þegnas,	Men buried us in a deep pit. Yet me there the Lord's thanes,
76	freondas gefrunon,		friends, found,
77	ond gyredon me	golde ond seolfre.	and they geared me with gold and silver.
78	Nu ðu miht gehyran,	hæleð min se leofa,	Now, you might hear, hero beloved by me,
79	þæt ic bealuwara weorc	gebiden hæbbe,	that I the evil-doer's work experienced,
80	sarra sorga.	Is nu sæl cumen	grievous sorrows. Is now the time come
81	þæt me weorðiað	wide ond side	that me they honor wide and far
82	menn ofer moldan,	ond eall þeos mære gesceaft,	men on the earth, and all this glorious creation
83	gebiddaþ him to þyssum beacne.	On me bearn godes	will pray to this beacon. On me the bearn of God
84	þrowode hwile.	Forþan ic þrymfæst nu	suffered a while. Therefore, I am glorious now
85	hlifige under heofenum,	ond ic hælan mæg	towering under heaven, and I may heal
86	æghwylcne anra,	þara þe him bið egesa to me.	each one, of those in whom there is fear of me.
87	Iu ic wæs geworden	wita heardost	Formerly, I was made the hardest torment

88	leodum laðost,	ærþan ic him lifes weg	most loathed by the people, before I to them life's way
89	rihtne gerymde,	reordberendum.	rightly opened, the voice-bearers.
90	Hwæt, me þa geweorðode	wuldres ealdor	Listen, the Lord of glory honored,
91	ofer holmwudu,	heofonrices weard!	over the forest, the guardian of heaven riches!
92	Sylce swa he his modor eac,	Marian sylfe,	Just as also he his mother, Mary herself,
93	ælmihdig god	for ealle menn	almighty God for all men
94	geweorðode	ofer eall wifa cynn.	honored over all womankind.
95	Nu ic þe hate,	hæleð min se leofa,	Now I exhort you, hero beloved by me,
96	þæt ðu þas gesyhðe	secge mannum,	that you the vision say to men,
97	onwreoh wordum	þæt hit is wulres beam,	reveal with words that it is the beam of glory,
98	se ðe ælmihdig god	on þrowode	which the almighty God suffered on
99	for mancynnes	manegum synnum	for mankind's many sins
100	ond Adomes	ealdegewyrhtum.	and Adam's old works.
101	Deað he þær byrigde,	hwæðere eft dryhten aras	Death he tasted, yet again the Lord arose
102	mid his miclan mihte	mannum to helpe.	with his much might to help men.
103	He ða on heofenas astag.	Hider eft fundað	He ascended to heaven. Hither again he will come
104	on þysne middangeard	mancynn secan	on this middle-earth mankind to seek
105	on domdæge	dryhten sylfa,	on doomsday the Lord himself,
106	ælmihdig god,	ond his englas mid,	almighty God, and his angels with [him],
107	þæt he þonne wile deman,	se ah domes geweald,	that he will then damn, he who wields doom,
108	anra gehwylcum	swa he him ærur her	each one of them for what they themselves have here
109	on þyssum lænum	life gearnaþ.	in this transitory life earned.
110	Ne mæg þær ænig	unforht wesan	Nor may any there be unafraid
111	for þam worde	þe se wealdend cwyð.	for the words which the Lord quotes.
112	Frined he for þære mænige	hwær se man sie,	He will ask there before many where the man is,
113	se ðe for dryhtnes naman	deaðes wolde	who for the Lord's name would of bitter
114	biteres onbyrgan,	swa he ær on ðam beame dyde.	death taste, as he before on the beam did.

115	Ac hie þonne forhtiað,	ond fea þencaþ	But then they will be afraid, and think a little
116	hwæt hie to Criste	cweðan onginnen.	what they to Christ will begin to say.
117	Ne þearf ðær þonne ænig	anforht wesan	There will be no need for any of those to be afraid
118	þe him ær in breostum bereð	beacna selest,	who him before in there breast bear the best beacon,
119	ac ðurh ða rode sceal	rice gesecan	but through the rood shall seek riches
120	of eorðwege	æghwylc sawl,	of the earth-way each soul,
121	seo þe mid wealdende	wunian þenceð.”	he who with the Lord thinks to dwell.”
122	Gebæd ic me þa to þan beame	bliðe mode,	I prayed for me then to the tree with a blithe spirit,
123	elne mycle,	þær ic ana wæs	with much zeal, there I was alone
124	mæte werede.	Wæs modsefa	with little company. My spirit was
125	afysed on forðwege	feala ealra gebad	inspired with longing for the way forth, it has experienced all
126	langunghwila.	Is me nu lifes hyht	for a long while. It is now my life's hope
127	þæt ic þone sigebeam	secan mote	That i the victory-beam might seek
128	ana oftor	þonne ealle men,	alone more often than all men,
129	well weorþian.	Me is willa to ðam	to honor it well. My will for that is
130	mycel on mode,	ond min mundbyrd is	great in mind, and my protection is
131	geriht to þære rode.	Nah ic ricra feala	steered toward the rood. I do not have many rich
132	freonda on foldan,	ac hie forð heonon	friends on earth, but they have gone forth
133	gewiton of worulde dreamum,	sohton him wulres cyning,	passed from the world's dreams, sought for themselves the king of glory,
134	lifiaþ nu on heofenum	mid heahfædere,	they live now in heaven with the high father,
135	wuniaþ on wuldre,	ond ic wene me	they dwell in glory, and I myself hope
136	daga gehwylce	hwænne me dryhtnes rod	each day when the Lord's rood
137	þe ic her on eorðan	ær sceawode,	which I here on earth first showed,
138	on þysson lænan	life gefetige	in this transitory life will fetch me
139	ond me þonne gebringe	þær is blis mycel,	and then bring me where there is much bliss,
140	dream on heofonum,	þær is dryhtnes folc	dreams in heaven, where there is the Lord's people
141	geseted to symle,	þær is singal blis,	set for a feast, where there is unceasing bliss

142	ond me þonne asette	þær ic syþþan mot	and me then they will set there where I afterwards might
143	wunian on wuldre,	well mid þam halgum	dwell in glory, well with the saints
144	dreames brucan.	Si me dryhten freond,	of dreams to partake. May the Lord be to me a friend,
145	se ðe her on eorþan	ær þrowode	he who here on earth previously suffered
146	on þam gealgtreowe	for guman synnum.	on the gallows-tree for man's sins.
147	He us onlȳsde	ond us lif forgeaf,	He redeemed us and to us life forgave,
148	heofonlicne ham.	Hiht wæs geniwad	a heavenly home. Hope was renewed
149	mid bledum ond mid blisse	þam þe þær bryne þolodan.	with blessings and bliss for those who there suffered burning.
150	Se sunu wæs sigorfæst	on þam siðfate,	The sun was victory-fast in that undertaking,
151	mihtig ond spedig,	þa he mid manigeo com,	mighty and successful, when he with many came,
152	gasta weorode,	on godes rice,	ghost company, to God's riches,
153	anwealda ælmihtig,	englum to blisse	one Ruler almighty, to the angel's bliss
154	ond eallum ðam halgum	þam þe on heofonum ær	and all the holy ones who were in heaven before
155	wunedon on wuldre,	þa heora wealdend cwom,	dwelling on glory, when their ruler came,
156	ælmihtig god,	þær his eðel wæs.	almighty God, to where his homeland was.