

Life of St. Christopher
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... mines Dryhtnes hælendes Cristes, ac þu eart dysig ond unnotor, þu ðe ne ondrætst Dryhten, se ys ealra þinga scyppend.

Se cyningc þa yrre geworden wæs ond het gebindan his handa ond hys fet tosomne, ond he hyne het swingan mid isernum gyrðum, ond he het settan on his heafde þry weras. Þa cempan, þa ðe hyne swungan, gecwædon to ðam cyninge, “Eadig wære ðu, Dagnus, gyf þu næfre geboren nære, þu ðe þus wæl-hreowlice hetst tintregian þillicne godes cempan.” Se cyningc þa yrre geworden wæs, ond he het þære ylcan tide þa weras acwellan.

5 Se halga Cristoforus cigde to þæm cynige ond cwæð, “Gyf þu hwylce maran witu be me geþoht hæbbe, hrædlice do ðu þa, forðon þine tintrego me synt swettran þonne huniges beo-bread.” Se cyningc þa het bringan isenne scamol, se wæs emn-heah þæs mannes up-wæstmæ, þæt wæs twelf fæðma lang, ond he hyne het asettan on middan þa ceastre, ond þone halgan Cristoforus he het þær to gebindan, ond he het beneoðan him þæt unmætoste fyr onælan, ond myt ty þe þæs fyres lig on þære mæstan hæto wæs, he þær ofer þæt het geotan tyn orcas fulle eles, þæt he wolde þæt þæs fyres hæto þe reðre wære ond þe ablæstre on þone halgan man.

... of my Lord the savior Christ, but you are deluded and unwise, you who do not fear the Lord, who is the creator of all things.”

The king by then had become angry and ordered that his hands and his feet be bound together, and he directed that he be beaten with iron rods, and he commanded that three men be set on his head. The soldiers who beat him said to the king, “You would be fortunate, Dagnus, if you had never been born, you who thus bloodthirstily order that such a soldier of God be tortured.” The king by then had grown angry, and he ordered that those men be executed that very hour.

Saint Christopher cried out to the king and said, “If you 5 have any greater torments planned for me, apply them quickly, since your tortures are sweeter to me than honeycomb with honey.” The king then directed that an iron bench be brought that was equal in height to the man’s stature—it was twelve fathoms tall—and he commanded that it be set in the midst of the town, and he ordained that Saint Christopher be bound to it, and he directed that beneath it the most immense fire be kindled; and as soon as the flame of that fire was at its hottest, he ordered that ten pitchers full of oil be poured over it, inasmuch as he wanted the heat of the fire to be the fiercer and the more furious against the saintly man.

Se halga Cristoforus þa, on middum þam reðestan ond þam unmætostan liges bæle he cigde to Drihtne beorhtre stefne, ond he cwæð to ðam cyninge, “Þas tintrego þe ðu on me bringan hehst to þinre gescyndnesse ond to þinre forwyrde becumað. Ond ic me næfre þine tintrego ne on-dræde ne þin yrre.”

Ond mit ty þe he þis cwæð, se halga on middes þæs fyres mænigo, se scamull him wæs geworden eallswa geþywed
10 weax. Þa geseah Dagnus se cyningc þone halgan Cristoforus on middum þam fyre standende, ond he geseah þæt his an-syn wæs swylce rosan blostma. Myt ty þe he þæt geseah, he wæs on micelre modes wafunga, ond for þæs eges fyrhto he wæs swa abreged þæt he gefeol on eorðan ond þær læg fram þære ærestan tide þæs dæges oð ða nigoban tide. Þa þæt ge-seah se halga Cristoforus, he hyne het up arisan, ond myt ty þe he up aras, he him to cwæð, “Þu wyrresta wild-deor, hu lange dyrstlæcest þu þæt ðu þis folc fram me tyhtest, swa þæt him nis alyfed þæt hi minum godum onsecgen?”

Se halga Cristoforus him andswarode ond cwæð, “Nu git micel folces mænio þurh me gelyfað on minne Drihten hælend Crist, ond æfter þon þu selfa.”

Se cyningc þa him andswarode bysmerigende ond him to cwæð, “Is þæs wen þæt ðu me swa beswican mæge þæt ic
15 þinne god gebidde ond minum wiðsace? Wite þu, þonne, þæt ðys mergenlican dæge æt þisse sylfan tide ic wrece minne teonan on þe, ond ic gedo þæt ðu byst forloren ond þin nama of þys gemynde ond of þyssum life adilgod, ond þu scealt wesan ealra bysen þara þe ðurh þe on ðinne god gelyfað.”

Oðre dæge þa se cyningc het þone halgan Cristoforus to

Then Saint Christopher, in the midst of the fiercest and most immense burning of the flame, called out to the Lord with a clear voice, and he said to the king, “These torments that you commanded be inflicted on me will result in your disgrace and your perdition. And I shall never be intimidated by your tortures or your anger.”

And as soon as the saint had said this in the midst of the multitude of flames, the bench became for him just like
10 pressed wax. King Dagnus then saw Saint Christopher standing in the midst of the fire, and he perceived that his countenance was like the bloom of a rose. When he saw that, he was greatly astonished, and in the fright of that panic he was so alarmed that he fell to the earth and lay there from the first hour of the day until the ninth hour. When Saint Christopher saw that, he told him to get up, and as soon as he had risen, the king said to him, “You vilest brute, how long will you presume to entice this populace away from me, so that they are not allowed to offer sacrifice to my gods?”

Saint Christopher answered him and said, “Already by means of me a great host of people believe in my Lord and savior Christ, and after this, you yourself.”

The king then answered him, mocking him, and said to him, “Is it to be expected that you can so delude me that I should pray to your god and forsake mine? Take heed, then,
15 that tomorrow at this very hour I shall exact satisfaction on you for my injury, and I shall arrange it that you will be destroyed and your name blotted out of memory and out of existence, and you will be made an example of all those who by means of you believe in your god.”

The next day, then, the king ordered that Saint Christo-

him gelædan ond him to cwæð, "Ongit min word ond on-saga minum godum, þæt ðu on swa manegum tintregum ne forweorðe swa ðe gegearwode synt."

Se halga him andswarode ond cwæð, "Symbles þine goda ic laðette ond him teonan do, forþon þe minne geleafan ic unwemne geheold, þone þe ic on fulwihte onfeng."

Se cyningc þyder þa het bringan unmætre micelnesse treow þæt wæs efn-heah þæs halgan mannes lengo, ond he hit het asettan beforan þære healle, ond he hyne het þær on gefæstnian ond bebead þæt ðry cempa hyne scotedon mid hyra strælum oð þæt he wære acweald. Þa cempa hyne þa
 20 scotedon fram þære ærestan tide þæs dæges oð æfen. Se cyningc þa wende þæt ealle þa strælas on his lic-haman gefæstnode wæron, ac ne furþon an his lic-haman ne gehran, ac Godes mægen wæs on ðam winde hangigende æt þæs halgan mannes swyðran healfe. Ond se cyningc þa, æfter sunnan setl-gange, he sende to ðam cempum, ond he bead þæt hi hyne swa gebundenne geornlice heoldon, forðon he wende þæt þæt cristene folc hyne wolde onlysan þy mergenlican dæge.

Þa se cyningc wæs ut gangende to þam halgan Cristoforus ond him to cwæþ, "Hwær ys þin god? For hwon ne com he ond þe gefreolsode of minum handum ond of þyssum egeslican strælum?"

Hraðe þa myt ty þe he þas word gecwæð, twa flana of þam strælum scuton on þas cyninges eagan, ond he þurh þæt wæs
 25 ablend. Þæt þa geseah se halga Cristoforus; he him to cwæð, "Þu wæl-grimma ond þu dysega, wite þu þæt ðis mergenlican dæge æt þære eahtoðan tide þæs dæges ic onfo minne sigor, ond ðurh dryhten sylfne me wæs ætywed þæt Cristene men cumað ond onfoð mines lic-haman ond hyne gesettaþ

pher be brought to him and said to him, "Understand what I said and offer sacrifice to my gods, lest you perish from as many tortures as are prepared for you."

The saint answered him and said, "I shall always despise your gods and do them injury, because I have held unblemished my faith, which I received at baptism."

The king then commanded that there be brought a piece of timber of immense size that was as tall as the man's stature, and he ordered that it be set before the hall, and he had him affixed to it and directed that three soldiers should shoot at him with their arrows until he was killed. The soldiers then assailed him from the first hour of the day until evening. The king then supposed that all the arrows were
 20 fixed in his body, but not even one touched his body; rather, the might of God was hanging on the wind to the right-hand side of the saintly man. And the king then, after the setting of the sun, sent for the soldiers and requested that they carefully guard him, bound thus, since he supposed that the Christian community wished to release him the next day.

Then the king was out on a walk to Saint Christopher, and he said to him, "Where is your god? Why did he not come and liberate you from my hands, and from these horrid arrows?"

At once, then, upon his speaking those words, two barbs from those arrows darted into the king's eyes, and by that he was blinded. Saint Christopher saw that then; he said to
 25 him, "You bloodthirsty fool, take heed that tomorrow at the eighth hour of the day I shall receive my victory, and by the Lord himself it was revealed to me that Christian people will come and take my body and deposit it in the place that

on þa stowe þe him fram Drihtne ætywed wæs. Cum þonne to minum lic-haman ond nym þære eorðan lam þe ic on gemartyrod wæs ond meng wið min blod ond sete on þine eagan. Þonne gif þu gelyfst on God of ealre heortan, þære sylfan tide þu bist gehæled fram þinra eagen blindnesse. Wite þu þæt seo tid nealæceð þæt Cristforus, Godes se gecorena, onfehð his gewinna mede and gelif-fæsted ferð to Drihtne."

By mergenlican dæge, ær þam þe he fram þam cempum acweald wære, þyssum wordum he ongan gebiddan ond cweþan: "Drihten ælmihtig, þu ðe me of gedwolan gehwyrdest ond godne wisdom gelærdest, þæt ic þin þeow nu on þysse tide þe bidde gearwa, hyt unne þætte on swa hwylcere stowe swa mines lic-haman ænig dæl sy, ne sy þær ne wædl
30 ne fyres broga. Ond gif þær neah syn untrume men and hig cumon to þinum þam halgan temple, ond hig ðær gebiddon to þe of ealre heortan, ond for þinum naman hi ciggen minne naman, gehæl þu þone, Drihten, fram swa hwylcere untrumnesse swa hie forhæfde."

Ond on ðære ylcan tide stefn wæs gehyredu to him cweþendu, "Cristoforus min þeow, þin gebed ys gehyred. Þeah þin lic-hama ne sy on þære stowe, swa hwyllice geleaf-fulle men swa þines naman myndgien on heora gebedum, beoð gehælede fram hyra synnum, ond swa hwæs swa hie rihtlice biddaþ for þinum naman ond for þinum gearnigum, hig hyt onfoð."

Mit ty þe þeos wuldorlice spræc of heofenum wæs gehyredu ond gefylledu, hraðe fram þam cempum he wæs slegen, ond he on þære mæstan blisse ond unasegendlican wuldre he ferde to Criste. Ond þæt wæs wundor þæs folces þe se halga Cristoforus þurh his lare Gode gestrynde: þæt wæs eaht ond feowertig þusenda manna and hundteontig and fiftyne.

was manifested to them by the Lord. Come then to my body and take the soil of the earth on which I was martyred, and mix it with my blood and set it on your eyes. Then if you believe in God with all your heart, that very hour you will be healed of the blindness of your eyes. Take heed that the time approaches when Christopher, God's chosen, will receive the reward of his labors and, ever-living, will go to meet the Lord."

The next day, before he was to be killed by the soldiers, with these words he began to pray and speak: "Lord almighty, you who converted me from error and taught me good wisdom, I your servant now at this time earnestly request it, grant it that in whatever place any part of my body may be, let there not be want there or the danger of fire. And if there are any infirm people there by, and they come
30 to your holy temple, and they pray to you there with all their heart, and in your name they invoke my name, heal them, Lord, from whatever infirmity has afflicted them."

And at that same hour a voice was heard saying to him, "Christopher my servant, your prayer is heard. Even if your body is not at that place, whichever people of faith make mention of your name in their prayers, they will be healed of their sins, and whatever they reasonably request in your name and on your merits, they will receive it."

As soon as this miraculous speech from heaven was heard and completed, immediately he was killed by the soldiers, and in the greatest happiness and inexpressible glory he journeyed to Christ. And that was a wonder, the people Saint Christopher acquired for God through his teaching: that was forty-eight thousand one hundred fifteen.

35 Opre dæge þa se cyningc cwæð to his þegnum, "Uton gangan ond geseon hwær þa cempan hyne gesett habbon." Ond mit ty þe hie becomon to þære stowe þær se halga lichama wæs, se cyningc cigde micelre stemne ond cwæð, "Cristoforus, ætyw me nu þines godes soð-fæstnesse, ond ic gelyfe on hyne." Ond he genam dæl þære eorðan þær þæs Cristes martyr wæs on þrowigende ond medmicel þæs blo- des ond mengde tosomne ond sette on his eagan, ond he cwæð, "On naman Cristoforus godes ic þis dom." Ond hraðe on ðære ylcan tide his eagan wæron ontynde, ond gesihþe he onfeng, ond he cigde micelre stemne, ond he cwæð beforan eallum þam folce, "Wuldorfæst ys ond micel Cristenra manna God, þæs wuldor-geworces nane mennisce searwa ofercuman ne magon. Ic þonne nu fram þyssum dægenlican dæge ic sende mine bebodu geond eall min rice þætte nan mon þe to mines rices anwealde belimpe ne gedyrstlæce nan-wuht do ongean þæs heofonlican Godes willan þe Cristoforus
40 beeode. Gif þonne ænig man þurh deofles searwa to þon beswicen sy þæt hyt gedyrstlæce, on þære ylcan tide sy he mid swyrde witnod, forþon ic nu soðlice wat þæt nan eorðlic anweald ne nan gebrosnodlic nys noht, butan his anes."

Ond swa þa wæs geworden þurh Godes miht ond þurh gearnunga þæs eadigan Cristoforus þætte se cyningc gelyfde se wæs ær deofles willan full. Þæs eadigan Cristoforus wuldor-geworc synd nu lang to asecgane þe Dryhten þurh hyne geworhte to herennesse his naman ond nu oð þyssne dæg wyrcoð, forþon þe þær nu blowað ond growað his þa halgan gebedu, ond þær ys Drihtnes hyrnes mid ealre sybbe ond gefean, ond þær ys gebletsod Crist, Godes sunu lyfigendes,

The next day, then, the king said to his retinue, "Let's go 35 and see where the soldiers have set him." And upon their coming to the place where the holy body was, the king called out in a loud voice and said, "Christopher, show me now the righteousness of your god, and I shall believe in him." And he took some of the earth where Christ's martyr had suffered and a bit of the blood and mixed them together and put it on his eyes, and he said, "In the name of Christopher's god I do this." And immediately at that very hour his eyes were opened, and he recovered his sight, and he called out in a loud voice, and before all the people he said, "Glorious and great is the God of Christian peoples, whose wondrous work no human stratagem can overcome. Now then from this very day I shall send my orders throughout all my realm that no one who is subject to the jurisdiction of my rule do anything in opposition to the will of the heavenly God which Christopher served. Then if anyone is so deluded 40 through the devil's wiles that he attempt that, in that same hour let him be punished with the sword, since I now know it for a truth that there is no earthly and no perishable authority at all, but his alone."

And so it came to pass through the power of God and through the merit of the blessed Christopher that the king who had been full of the devil's will became a believer. The wondrous works of the saintly Christopher which the Lord performed and still to this day performs through him to the praise of his name are now too long to relate, for now his holy prayers blossom and grow there, and there is obedience to the Lord with all love and contentment, and there Christ

THE PASSION OF SAINT CHRISTOPHER

se rixað mid Fæder ond mid Suna ond mid þam Halgan Gaste a butan ende.

Þyses eac bæd se halga Cristoforus of þære nihstan tide ær he his gast onsende ond cwæð, "Drihten min God, syle gode mede þam þe mine þrowunga awrite, ond þa ecean edlean þam þe hie mid tearum ræde."

THE PASSION OF SAINT CHRISTOPHER

is blessed, son of the living God, who reigns with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.

Saint Christopher also prayed for this from the last hour before he gave up his spirit, and said, "My Lord God, give good reward to whoever writes about my passion, and eternal recompense to whoever reads it with tears."