

SUSANNE MIRIAM FAHN and GOTTSKÁLK JENSSON

THE FORGOTTEN POEM:  
A LATIN PANEGYRIC  
FOR SAINT ÞORLÁKR IN AM 382 4TO

1. Introduction – Saint Þorlákr, his *cultus* and *vita*

ÞORLÁKR ÞÓRHALLSSON was born 1133 at Hlíðarendi in the south of Iceland and was bishop of Skálholt from 1178 until his death in 1193.<sup>1</sup> An Augustinian canon, he was educated in Paris (ca. 1153–59), then the intellectual center of Europe, and may also have studied in Lincoln, another centre of French learning at the time. Returning to Iceland, he was instrumental in establishing the first Augustinian monastery in Iceland at Þykkvibær, in 1168, where he soon became abbot. Þorlákr belonged to a network of Scandinavian Paris-educated Augustinians who like him had close ties to the ruling elite and at the same time held important ecclesiastical posts in Denmark, Norway, and Iceland, widely establishing new monasteries of their order. Their promotion of a Gregorian policy of ecclesiastical autonomy (*libertas ecclesie*) required them to defy royal authority or, at different times, to ally themselves with it. In 1174, Þorlákr was elected bishop of Skálholt, although he was not consecrated until 1178 by Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson of Nidaros (1161–1188), a fellow Augustinian, whom he may have known from his days in Paris. Considering their common allegiance to the Augustinian order, the special permission of early retirement for Bishop Klængur, Þorlákr's predecessor, granted by Archbishop Eysteinn, may arouse suspicions that Þorlákr's ascendancy to the office in 1178 was part of a plan orchestrated in high places. Our source-

1 For details on Þorlákr's biography, see e.g., Johannes Brønsted, Lis Rubin Jacobsen, and John Danstrup, eds., *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder fra vikingetid til reformationstid* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1956–1978), s. v. "Þorlákr helgi Þórhallsson." Kirsten Wolf, "Pride and Politics in Late-Twelfth-Century Iceland: The Sanctity of Bishop Þorlákr Þórhallsson," *Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. Thomas DuBois (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 241–270; Sigurður Sigurðarson, *Þorlákr helgi og samtíð hans* (Reykjavík: Skálholtsútgáfan, 1993).

es emphasize Klængr's bad health but they are mysteriously silent about his keeping a concubine.<sup>2</sup> We are told that the new bishop dressed like the archbishop and was considered by him to be a perfect, indeed, a saint-like candidate for the episcopacy. There are also indications that Þorlákr's sanctity was arranged in Icelandic ecclesiastical circles, clerics of both dioceses being conspicuous in reports of early miracles.<sup>3</sup> In 1198, a few weeks before Þorlákr's remains were translated from his grave to the church in Skálholt, Bishop Páll Jónsson of Skálholt (1195–1211) announced at the Alþingi that the subject of Þorlákr's sanctity had come up and that vows could be made to him. The following summer, he had St Þorlákr's written *miracula* proclaimed at the Alþingi and a new mass day (December 23) was added to the Church calendar. The recognition of Þorlákr's holiness by Páll Jónsson, his successor and highest local authority of the Catholic Church, was sufficient to confirm the saint's sanctification.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Archbishop Eiríkr Ívarsson (1189–1205), who succeeded Eysteinn, and had been present in Nidaros at Þorlákr's ordination in July 1178, sent a letter to Bishop Páll affirming Þorlákr's sanctity.<sup>5</sup> For the church in Iceland, St Þorlákr played an important role in the next two centuries as a symbol of assertive church policy. Although recognized as a saint at least in Norway in late medieval times, St Þorlákr first received papal recognition on January 14, 1984, when Pope John Paul II declared him patron saint of the Icelanders. This papal declaration marks the recognition of Þorlákr's sanctity by the modern Catholic Church.<sup>6</sup>

2 Björn Þórðarson, "Móðir Jóru biskupsdóttur," *Saga* 1 (1949): 289–346.

3 Margaret Cormack, *The Saints in Iceland. Their Veneration from the Conversion to 1400* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1994), 164.

4 Papal confirmation of sanctity was only gradually imposed, beginning with the attempts made by Pope Alexander III in a letter to King Kolr of Sweden in 1171 or 1172. The historical process is thoroughly documented by André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* [Sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge], trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13–57.

5 Gottskálk Jensson, "Nokkrar athugasemdir um latinubrotin úr *Vita sancti Thorlaci episcopi et confessoris*," *Pulvis Olympicus. Afmælisrit tileinkað Sigurði Péturssyni*, eds. Jón Ma. Ásgeirsson, Kristinn Ólason and Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2009), 98; Gottskálk Jensson, "The Lost Latin Literature of Medieval Iceland: The Fragments of the *Vita sancti Thorlaci* and Other Evidence," *Symbolae Osloenses* 79 (2004): 168.

6 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., *Þorláks saga helga. Elsta gerð Þorláks sögu helga ásamt Jarleinabók og efni úr yngri gerðum sögunnar* (Reykjavík: Þorlákssjóður, 1989), 51 *et seq.*; Gottskálk Jensson, "Nokkrar athugasemdir," 98.

Records of a *Vita et miracula Sancti Thorlaci episcopi et confessoris* have survived in four sets of fragments, the most important of which is AM 386 4to I, consisting of three separate parchment leaves (evidently reused in a book binding), containing text from the original *vita* and Latin *miracula*, and dated by Kristian Kålund to ca. 1200 on paleographic evidence. Three other Latin fragments have survived (LatII, LatIII and LatIV), which contain a compendium from the saint's *vita* and *lectiones* for his feast days, some of which have also been rescued from 16th-century book bindings, while the last one derives from a printed Norwegian breviary. At least one copy of the *Vita et miracula St. Thorlaci* existed as late as 1397 in the church at Melar in Melasveit (DI IV, 193), and there may have been at the same time another, including legends, in the church at Hólmur on Rosmhvalanes (DI IV, 105). Since even the Latin *vita* is referred to in the church inventories as "Polláks saga", or some such, it cannot be dismissed out of hand that further copies existed at this time or later. Furthermore, a Latin office for St Þorlákr, dated to the 14th century by Róbert Abraham Ottósson, survives in the manuscript AM 241 A II fol.<sup>7</sup> The composition of this office marks an important event in the history of St Þorlákr's *cultus*. Finally, we possess an Old Norse-Icelandic translation or adaptation of St Þorlákr's *vita*, which is extant in several versions (marked 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' in modern editions). Like all saints' lives in the West, Þorlákr's *vita* was originally composed in Latin, although an older generation of Old Norse scholars has sometimes been reluctant to acknowledge as much. Recently, comparison of the second Latin fragment (AM 386 4to II), a compendium of Þorlákr's *vita*, with the three vernacular versions has established that the vernacular texts, 'A', 'B', 'C', derive from the Latin *vita*.<sup>8</sup> The observation redefines the relationships of the vernacular texts to the Latin *vita* as that of translations and adaptations to an original text. The vitiated state of the vernacular texts, which occasionally mistranslate or alter the sense of the Latin original, indicates, furthermore, that they were not made by the author of the Latin text or his collaborators. The Old Norse-Icelandic versions were, therefore, written later and not in the same clerical milieu as the Latin source, which originated in

7 Róbert Abraham Ottósson, ed., *Sancti Thorlaci Episcopi Officia Rhythmica et Proprium Misse in AM 241 A fol* (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1959), 68–74.

8 Gottskálk Jónsson, "The Lost Latin Literature of Medieval Iceland," 158–163.

1199, when St Þorlákr's *miracula* were read at the Alþingi and Latin *lectiones* and a complete Latin liturgy were necessary for the new Mass of St Þorlákr.<sup>9</sup>

The earliest remains of a vernacular *Þorláks saga helga* are found in AM 645 4to, dated to around 1220, which is among the very earliest existent Icelandic manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> It contains several *acta* and *passiones* of apostles, confessors and holy men, translated from Latin (into a Latinate, almost macaronic Old Norse-Icelandic, which was purged by C. R. Unger in his editions), beginning with "Miracula nonnulla S. Thorlaci, aptanaf þorlaks Sögu" [Some miracles from the end of a *Þorláks saga*], as Árni Magnússon wrote in one of his notes.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, this oldest vernacular

9 Jakob Benediktsson, "Brot úr Þorlákslesi," *Afmálsrit Jóns Helgasonar*, eds. Jakob Benediktsson et al. (Reykjavík: Heimskringla, 1969), 106; Gottskálf Jónsson, "The Lost Latin Literature of Medieval Iceland," 150–168; Gottskálf Jónsson, "Nokkrar athugasemdir," 97–109.

10 For the date of AM 645 4to, see Harald Spehr, *Der Ursprung der isländischen Schrift und ihre Weiterbildung bis zur Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1929), 174, and Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script as Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Reykjavík: Manuscript Institute of Iceland, 1965), xx. Two other fragments of the vernacular saga have been dated to the 13th century, AM 383 4to I, from around 1250, and AM 383 4to II, from the end of the century. Neither falls neatly within the so-called 'A', 'B' or 'C-redactions', and so they have been dubbed 'D' and 'E' respectively. D is printed in Guðbrandur Vigfússon, ed., *Biskupa sögur I* (Copenhagen: S. L. Möller, 1858), 391–94. Variants from D are indicated in Jón Helgason, ed., *Byskupa sögur*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Boghandel A/S, 1978), 214–217, while E is printed in Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa sögur I*, 322–26 and Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., *Biskupa sögur II* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2002), 287–294. D has a section of Chapters 11–12 and E miracles which overlap with miracles in AM 645 4to and the A, B and C-redactions.

11 The beginning of AM 645 4to is defective and the fragment of *Þorláks saga* preserved here first opens well into a collection of St Þorlákr's miracles, which have, misleadingly, been treated as an independent *Jarteinabók* on the evidence that it is stated towards the end (28) that Bishop Páll Jónsson had these miracles read at the Alþingi ("þær er hér eru skrifaðar á þessi bók" [those which are written in this book]), clearly referring to AM 645 4to. The point of this statement is not, however, that it was specifically this written version of the miracles, which was read at the Alþingi (since the scribe of the manuscript knew that this was not so and adds miracles occurring after the event), or that what was read was an independent book of miracles. The same miracles are also found at the end of the B and C redactions of the saga, along with the reference to the reading at the Alþingi. Independent miracle collections are not attested in the tradition, and the saga almost certainly preceded the miracles in AM 645 4to, as is indicated in one of the miracles (22, "þann vetr eptir er heilagur dómr ens sæla byskups hafði verit upp tekinn ór jörðu áðr [of] sumarit ok nú hefir áðr verit mjök mart frá sagt" [the winter after the holy relics of the blessed bishop had been translated from the grave, in the summer before, of which much has now been told]).

version retains a Latin invocation to St Þorlákr: *Sancte Thorlace, ora pro nobis* (21–22). The untranslated Latin here is no doubt to be explained by the occasion (in the church at Skálholt) and medium (liturgy) of the utterance, but it is nevertheless significant for the present study, that even in vernacular context, liturgical Latin is felt to be the proper language for an invocation to St Þorlákr.<sup>12</sup>

AM 382 4to, which has the Latin panegyric to St Þorlákr on the first leaf, is dated by Jón Helgason to ca. 1350, and contains the so-called ‘B-version’ of the vernacular saga. Only one other small fragment (BL Add. 11.242), which is dated to the middle of the 16th century, and is likely to be a direct copy of AM 382 4to, preserves a section of the same version. According to the B-redactor’s prologue in AM 382 4to, which follows immediately after the Latin panegyric, on the verso side of the same leaf, this version of the saga is a revision of an older, apparently vernacular, version of the saint’s life: “En sá góði maðr sem í fyrstu hefir söguna setta byrjar svá sitt mál sem hér fylgir” [But the good man who at first made the saga begins his account as follows].<sup>13</sup> Although an older generation of scholars preferred to date this version, on historical grounds, as early as the twenties of the 13th century,<sup>14</sup> due to stylistic similarities between the redactor’s prologue and *Árna saga biskups*, a considerably later date is now

The fragments of the Latin *vita*, in AM 386 4to I, which are believed to be older than AM 645 4to by about two decades, contain texts from Latin *miracula* which are earlier in the collection than those preserved in 645, showing that the miracles were an integral part of the original Latin *vita*. The vernacular text of St Þorlákr’s miracles in this oldest fragment of the saga displays vestiges of the source language, such as the typically Latin indifference to genealogical and geographic specificity (Gottskálk Jenson, “Nokkrar athugasemdir,” 104–105). AM 645 4to was published by Ludvig Larsson, *Isländska handskriften No 645 40 i Den Arnamagnæanske Samlingen. I. Handskriftens äldre del* (Lund: Gleerupska Universitets-Bokhandeln, 1885), to which the page numbers above and in the main text refer.

12 This Latin utterance amounts to a working of St Þorlákr’s name into the Litany of the Saints (*Litania Sanctorum*), a prayer of invocation to the Trinity, including prayers for the intercession of Virgin Mary, the Angels and all martyrs and saints. Since the prayer functions as a register of the holy, applying the very same *formula* to St Þorlákr’s name carries with it an implicit affirmation of his sanctity.

13 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, 143.

14 The historical *terminus post quem* comes at the end of the so-called *Oddaverja þáttur*, which is added to the saga by the editor of the B-redaction, i.e. that Sæmundr Loptsson († 1222) is referred to in the preterit. The *þáttur* may, however, be much older than the B-redaction and it is clearly not written by the B-redactor but interpolated from another source. More on this is in footnote 30 below.

generally assumed for the B-redaction of *Þorláks saga helga*. Ásdís Egilsdóttir suggests that the revision of the saga represented by AM 382 4to was undertaken during the time of Bishop Árni Þorláksson (1269–1298), who fought for the rights and independence of the Icelandic church in the late 13th century. She assumes that by promoting the *cultus* of St Þorlákr, Bishop Árni was drawing a parallel between his own ecclesiastical program and the strife of St Þorlákr on behalf of the church a century earlier. Thus, the B-version of the saga could, according to Ásdís Egilsdóttir, have been written in support of Bishop Árni's policy and might have been 'published' when St Þorlákr's relics were enshrined in the cathedral in Skálholt in 1292.<sup>15</sup> Margaret Cormack relates the revision of earlier sagas of Icelandic saints, not only of Þorlákr Þórhallsson but also of Jón Ögmundarson and Guðmundr Arason, in the 14th century, to the promotion of their *cultus*.<sup>16</sup> An important but often neglected event in the history of St Þorlákr's *cultus* is the composition of his still extant Latin office, as was mentioned earlier.<sup>17</sup> While it is generally believed that AM 382 4to is a 14th-century copy of an earlier B-version dating to the late 13th century, it seems more likely however that AM 382 4to represents the original edition of the B-version, written to promote the worship of the saint by providing texts in the vernacular for reading on St Þorlákr's feast days, and to complement the new Latin office.<sup>18</sup>

The value of the other main redaction for the vernacular tradition, the so-called 'A-redaction', has been overestimated, on the assumption that the redactor of the B-version is referring to it, when he speaks in his prologue of the original version of the saga. The A-version is represented by one

15 For a survey of the scholarship with references to the writings of individual scholars, see Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, XXXVIII–XXXIX. See also Sverrir Tómasson, *Formálar íslenskra sagnaritara á miðöldum* (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1988), 357–359, for a brief summary of the research associated with *Þorláks saga helga* and the dating of the B-redaction.

16 Cormack, *The Saints in Iceland*, 12. – Margaret Cormack also states that the episcopal see in Hólar records twice as many saints' sagas as the one in Skálholt, even though the Northern diocese had only one third as many churches, which suggests that maybe there was a greater interest in the writing and copying of sagas in the North. She, however, advises caution as these numbers "may reflect the thoroughness of [the diocese's] bishops rather than any real difference in the number of volumes owned." *Ibid.*, 26.

17 Róbert Abraham Ottósson, *Sancti Thorlaci Episcopi Officia Rhythmica*, 68–74.

18 See section 7 for a discussion of the provenance and likely editor of AM 382 4to.

manuscript, Holm perg. 5 fol., which Stefán Karlsson has dated as late as 1350–1365,<sup>19</sup> and it contains a text that is abbreviated, both in the *vita* section and in the miracles, as well as one serious factual error.<sup>20</sup> Most importantly, the original version of the saga, which the redactor of the B-version refers to in his prologue, is not the text of Holm perg. 5 fol., because AM 382 4to cites this text verbatim, in chapter 36: “ok vil ek geta nökkurra orða, segir sá er söguna setti, þeira er hann [Gizurr Hallsson] talaði ok mér ganga sízt ór minni” [I would like to mention a few words, says he who made the saga, which were spoken by him (Gizurr Hallsson) and I will least forget].<sup>21</sup> Holm perg. 5 fol. has nothing that corresponds to these words. Since the vernacular saga is a translation or adaptation of the Latin *vita* it cannot be dated by historical references, unless these are shown to be added by the original translator or later scribes, who copied or made their own versions of the original. There might be one such reference in chapter 11 (in ABC and D versions), where King Sverrir of Norway is spoken of in the preterit,<sup>22</sup> who according to his saga by Abbot Karl Jónsson died on March 9, 1202.<sup>23</sup>

All the vernacular versions originate from a single adaptation or translation of the Latin *vita*, since the texts of the whole tradition are similar enough to be printed synthetically with variant readings in the apparatus.<sup>24</sup> The so-called ‘A-redaction’ is no more than a late and rather inferior copy of that original translation, probably at a few removes from the original. Because of AM 645 4to, we know that the earliest vernacular version is at least as old as 1220. Because of the reference to King Sverrir in the preterit, we may be able to place it later than 1202. It is possible that we can determine with even more accuracy the origin of the first vernacular *vita*. It has been suggested that the first saga was produced in Skálholt soon after the

19 Stefán Karlsson, ed., *Sagas of Icelandic Bishops. Fragments of Eight Manuscripts* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1967), 46.

20 In chapter 19, Bishop Páll is said to have been a priest, when Bishop Þorlákr died, while in LatIV, he is rightly said to have been a *diaconus* at the time. – Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, XLVII.

21 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, 190.

22 “Ok hafði Sverrir konungr þat opt uppi, er bæði var merkr í máli og spakr at mannviti” [And King Sverrir often mentioned this, and he was both notable in speech and wise in human wisdom]. – Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, 65; cf. 156.

23 Þorleifur Hauksson, ed., *Sverris saga* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2007), 280.

24 As is done by Jón Helgason, *Byskupa sögur*, 177 *et seq.*



writing of *Hungrvaka*, since the author of that saga treats it as an important novelty to have compiled an account of the bishops of Skálholt in Old Norse-Icelandic (‘á norrœnu’). The vernacular medium of *Hungrvaka* can only have been considered a novelty if there was at that time no vernacular version of a *Vita st Thorlaci*, which, as we know from LatI, contained an account (probably short) of the earlier bishops of Skálholt, and in the vernacular version still mentions Þorlákr Runólfsson, Magnús Einarsson and Klængur Þorsteinsson.<sup>25</sup> *Hungrvaka* was written by someone based in Skálholt, who wished that what “ek heyrða ... segja inn fróða mann Gizurr Hallsson” [I heard... the wise man Gizurr Hallsson say] about Skálholt and its bishops would not fall into oblivion, as is stated in the prologue. The author of *Hungrvaka* (‘Stimulation of appetite’) associates his vernacularization of the history of Skálholt not with the learned clergy, who “may ridicule this little book” (henda gaman at þessum bæklingi), but with the education of “his children” and “other young people” (unga menn; mínum börnum; öðrum ungmennum).<sup>26</sup> This is an attitude towards the vernacular which we shall meet again in the *carmen Latinum* of AM 382 4to.<sup>27</sup> The reference to Gizurr Hallsson, who according to *Páls saga byskups* died on July 27, 1206, is reminiscent of the words from the original saga, which as we saw above were cited verbatim by the B-redactor, in chapter 36. It seems therefore that we do not only have to rely on the late tradition of *Hungrvaka*, which presents this work as an introduction to the vernacular *Þorláks saga helga*, but that internal evidence as well, shows that the first vernacular version of *Þorláks saga helga* originated somewhat later than 1206, the death date of Gizurr Hallsson, and sometime before or around the date of the first preserved fragment of this saga, the so-called *Jarteinabók I*, in AM 645 4to, dated to 1220.

Arguments to the effect that the A-version of *Þorláks saga helga* may have been written by a friend of bishop Páll Jónsson,<sup>28</sup> the son of

25 Gottskálk Jensson, “Nokkrar athugasemdir,” 102–104. Even though the account of earlier bishops of Skálholt in LatI was likely much shorter than the history of the bishops in *Hungrvaka*, it is worth mentioning in this context that Árni Magnússon assumed that *Hungrvaka* may have been a kind of introduction to *Þorláks saga helga*. Sverrir Tómasson, *Formdár íslenskra sagnaritara*, 385–386.

26 Gottskálk Jensson, “Nokkrar athugasemdir,” 102–104; Sverrir Tómasson, *Formdár íslenskra sagnaritara*, 24, 101; Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur II*, 3–5.

27 See section 6.

28 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa sögur I*, XLIII.



Ragnheiður Þórhallsdóttir,<sup>29</sup> who was the sister of St Þorlákr and concubine of Jón Loptsson, the head of the Oddaverjar clan, should be taken to apply to the first vernacular translation, or better, to the Latin *vita*, and not to the A-redaction (Holm perg. 5 fol.). The view that the A-redaction was written according to Páll Jónsson's own guidelines, for the sole reason that the well-known dispute between St Þorlákr and Jón Loptsson and other important chieftains about the rights and autonomy of the Icelandic church is not discussed in detail in the A-version, is untenable. Such arguments, however, are valid if applied to the *Vita st Thorlaci* itself, where Jón Loptsson is referred to in superlative terms as *Iohannes preclarissimus huius patrie princeps* [Jón the most excellent ruler of this country]. The suppression of the dispute between St Þorlákr and Jón Loptsson is very much in evidence in the fragments of the Latin *vita*, from where it must have been transferred into the earliest vernacular text. Bishop Páll Jónsson, as a man of the church and nephew of St Þorlákr, would certainly have encouraged the idea of having his uncle's life – the life of a saint – recorded, but at the same time, he would not have wanted to include details about the disputes between Bishop Þorlákr Þórhallsson and his father Jón Loptsson, which were also about the relationship between Jón Loptsson and Ragnheiður Þórhallsdóttir, his mother, and, consequently, about his own illegitimacy. The introduction to the B-version in AM 382 4to and the introduction to the *Oddaverja þáttir* – a non hagiographic interpolation which may have its origins in a lost version of *Sturlunga saga*<sup>30</sup> – state, on the other hand, that the redactor of this version of the saga aims to describe the disputes between St Þorlákr and Jón Loptsson in more detail, since they had not

29 Gunnar Kristjánsson, ed., *Saga biskupsstólanna. Skálholt 950 ára – 2006 – Hólar 900 ára* (Hólar: Bókautgáfan Hólar, 2006), 33.

30 This origin of *Oddaverja þáttir* was suggested to us by Marteinn Helgi Sigurðsson. *Oddaverja þáttir* is written in a style very different from that of the B-redactor in the prologue. Moreover, unlike the rest of *Þorláks saga helga* it is rich in dialogue and free of biblical quotations. The style of *Oddaverja þáttir* fits well, however, in *Sturlunga*, where such material was indeed to be found in an earlier version, as is indicated in a 'prologue' before *Prests saga Guðmundar góða* ("Margar sögur verda her samtíða, oc ma þo eigi allar senn rita: saga Thorlacs biskups hins helga, oc Guðmundar enns goða Ara sonar"), although no such material is found in the extant text of *Króksfjarðarbók*. Kristian Kälund, ed., *Sturlunga saga efter membranen Króksfjarðarbók* (Copenhagen: Det kongelige nordiske oldskrift-selskab, 1906–1911), I, 119. A recent discussion of the problem of *Oddaverja þáttir*'s origin is Orri Vésteinsson, *The Christianization of Iceland. Priests, Power, and Social Change 1000–1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 115–117.

been treated sufficiently in the older version.<sup>31</sup> A characteristic of the B-version of the saga is, therefore, the harsh stand taken by the editor in his prologues and additions towards St Þorlákr's adversaries, especially towards Jón Loptsson. This is a feature the B-version has in common with the 14th-century office, where Jón Loptsson is called *m[o]echus* (fornicator, adulterer) and heads a mad crowd (*turba furens*), seemingly intending to kill St Þorlákr with his arm raised aloft to strike, only to be checked in the last moment by a divinely intervening brachial paralysis.<sup>32</sup> In the prologue to the interpolated *Oddaverja þáttr* in the B-version, moreover, it is argued that Þorlákr was one of those bishops who promoted divine law in the extreme, not even protecting their own bodies "from the sword of persecution" (*undan ofsóknar sverði*),<sup>33</sup> a phrase which if understood in the literal sense may indicate a knowledge of the office.<sup>34</sup>

The language of the ecclesiastical movement Þorlákr Þórhallsson belonged to was Latin and the canonical texts sustaining his sanctity, all of them produced and perused in Iceland, were written in that language. Although vernacular versions of these texts were made for readings, and vernacular poetry composed to honor St Þorlákr, the association of his *cultus* with ecclesiastical Latin was strong throughout the Middle Ages.

## 2. Research History of the Latin Panegyric in AM 382 4to

The different versions of *Þorláks saga helga* have been the subject of scholarly works, although much of this scholarship suffers from the flawed

31 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, 144, 163 *et seq.* See also Sverrir Tómasson, *Formálar íslenskra sagnaritara*, 140–143, who discusses the introductions to the B-redaction and *Oddaverja þáttr* in more detail.

32 Róbert Abraham Ottósson, *Sancti Thorlaci Episcopi Officia*, 79.

33 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, 163.

34 The interpolated chapters of the saga tell a different story, viz. that an axe (*øxi*) and not a sword was raised against St Þorlákr (Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, 176–178). It is doubtful, however, that the verse, *quem mucrone iusto ferit*, is to be understood as "Jón strikes Þorlákr with a upright/just sword" because of the qualification of the weapon as "upright/just". The intended sense could also be metaphoric with Þorlákr as the subject and Jón as the object: "Þorlákr strikes Jón with a just sword", or the text could be corrupt. Róbert Abraham Ottósson, *Sancti Thorlaci Episcopi Officia*, 79.

assumption that the A-version is the oldest one.<sup>35</sup> Three main editions of the B-version of *Þorláks saga helga* are in existence from the years 1858,<sup>36</sup> 1978<sup>37</sup> and 2002;<sup>38</sup> in addition, there is an edition of *Þorláks saga helga* from 1989,<sup>39</sup> which presents the A-version and sections of the B- and C-versions, as well as parts of the so-called *Jarteinabók I* and *II*.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, there are books and articles about St Þorlákr himself,<sup>41</sup> and the manuscript AM 382 4to has been referred to in a number of publications besides the editions.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, of the major editions of the B-version of *Þorláks saga helga*, only the first, the *Biskupa sögur* from 1858, mentions the Latin praise poem for St Þorlákr, which is preserved on the first recto page of AM 382 4to.<sup>43</sup>

The poem has been transcribed at least four times. Three of the transcriptions were published, while one, by Jón Sigurðsson, survives in JS 537 4to. None of the transcribers, however, offer more than a couple of

35 See e.g. Jón Böðvarsson, "Munur eldri og yngri gerðar Þorláks sögu," *Saga* 6 (1968): 81–94, and Brønsted, Jacobsen, and Danstrup, *Kulturhistorisk leksikon*, s.v. "Þorláks saga helga."

36 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa sögur* I.

37 Jón Helgason, *Byskupa sögur* I.

38 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II.

39 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Þorláks saga helga*.

40 In her introduction to the *Íslenzk Fornrit* edition (2002), Ásdís Egilsdóttir gives a detailed description of further publications and translations of the *Biskupa sögur* and *Þorláks saga helga* (Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, CXXXV et seq.).

41 See e.g., Brønsted, Jacobsen, and Danstrup, *Kulturhistorisk leksikon*, s.v. "Þorlákr helgi Þórhallsson"; Sigurður Sigurðarson, *Þorlákr helgi og samtíð hans*; Gunnar Kristjánsson, *Saga biskupsstólanna*. — See page 33 and index of names (*nafnaskrá*) 'Þorlákr Þórhallsson Skálholtsbiskup' on page 831 in last-mentioned book for further literature.

42 See e.g., Didrik Arup Seip, *Palaografi B: Norge og Island* (Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen: Albert Bonniers; H. Aschehoug & Co.; J.H. Schultz, 1943–1954); Jón Helgason, ed., *Byskupa sögur. MS Perg. fol. No. 5 in the Royal Library of Stockholm* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1950), 7–22; Jón Helgason, *Handritaspjall* (Reykjavík: Mál og Menning, 1958); Ole Widding, Hans Bekker-Nielsen and Laurence K. Shook, "The Lives of the Saints in Old Norse Prose: A Handlist," *Mediaeval Studies* 25 (1963): 294–337; Stefán Karlsson, *Sagas of Icelandic Bishops*, 9–61; Erik Eggen, *The Sequence of the Archbishopric of Nidarós*. 2 vols. (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1968); Brønsted, Jacobsen, and Danstrup, *Kulturhistorisk leksikon*, s.v. "Þorláks saga helga"; Hreinn Benediktsson, *Linguistic Studies, Historical and Comparative* (Reykjavík: Institute of Linguistics, 2002); Már Jónsson, "Fyrstu línur á blaðsíðum skinnhandrita: fyrir ofan eða neðan efsta strik?" *Gripla* 8 (2002): 217–230; Már Jónsson, "Megindlegar handritarannsóknir," *Lofræða um handritamerð*. *Hugleiðingar um bóksögu miðalda*, by Ezio Ornato, trans. Björg Birgisdóttir and Már Jónsson (Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, 2003), 7–32.

43 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa sögur* I, XLIII.

general sentences about the poem in addition to their transcriptions. The *editio princeps* belongs to Jakob Langebek and P. F. Suhm, who published the poem in 1776 towards the end of volume 4 of the multivolume, monumental *Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi* (1772–1878), only seventy-four years after Árni Magnússon received the manuscript AM 382 4to.<sup>44</sup> Suhm refers to the poem as “Carmen latinum in honorem hujus sancti manu Arnæ Magnæi descriptum inter ejus Mss. No. 382 4to.” [A Latin poem in praise of this saint, copied by the hand of Árni Magnússon, (is found) among his manuscripts, No. 382 4to.].<sup>45</sup> This note shows that Árni Magnússon himself had already produced a transcription of the Latin poem, and that the first edition in *Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi* is based on Árni Magnússon’s apograph, although the editors may be responsible for both the emendations and conjectures.<sup>46</sup> Secondly, the manuscript JS 537 4to contains a transcription of the poem by Jón Sigurðsson, one of the editors of the 1858 edition of the *Biskupa sögur*. The manuscript must be younger than the edition, since a marginal note on folio 5r, on which the poem is preserved, refers to footnotes 2–4 on page 263 of the edition. Jón Sigurðsson’s transcription is almost identical with and clearly based on

44 Jakob Langebek and P. F. Suhm, eds., *Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi, partim hactenus inediti*, vol. 4 (Copenhagen: A. H. Godiche, 1776), 631. This part of the fourth volume was published after Langebek’s death in 1775. Suhm mentions in the preface that before Langebek died he had finished the work to page 525, from where he himself had continued the edition, based on Langebek’s extensive notes. Suhm added the notes and introductions in the later part of the volume, which includes the edition of the Latin fragments on St. Þorlákr. – See *Dansk biographisk lexikon*, vol. 10 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag (F. Hegel & Søn), 1896), 57 *et seq.* and Langebek and Suhm, *Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi*, a2r, 623–624.

45 *Ibid.*, 624.

46 Árni Magnússon’s transcription is not preserved in any of his notes. Langebek and Suhm both sat in the first Arnamagnæan commission and thus had ready access to the collection. It is possible that Langebek was not able to return Árni’s notes to the collection before his own death. If this is the case, Árni Magnússon’s *apographum* may still be preserved amongst Langebek’s notes. The authors of this article attempted to determine whether this was indeed the case, but their research, so far, has not recovered Árni Magnússon’s transcription of the poem. However, in Langebeks Excerpter Nr. 237, at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, a folder with notes on saints in alphabetical order, there is a folded sheet marked “Torlacus” containing a short list of Arnamagnæan manuscripts, where one finds the following item: “+382 Thorlacs saga. Carmen Latinum – heraf udtaget 1 Blad Lat.” The last words of the note show that Árni’s transcription was written on a single sheet of paper and that it was originally stored with AM 382 4to, from where it was removed by Langebek or Suhm, never to be returned.

Langebek's and Suhm's printed text, but he does not attempt to fill the *lacunae* in the text which are caused by a defect on the first recto page of AM 382 4to.<sup>47</sup> Jón Sigurðsson writes in a marginal note on folio 5r of JS 537 4to: "Þetta kvæði stendr á fremstu síðunni í AM 382 4to (B) og er að líkindum eptir sama manninn, sem söguna hefir samið. Bragrinn er hexametrum og aðalhending í hverju vísuorði" [This poem is found on the first page of AM 382 4to (B) and likely it is by the same man who composed the saga. The meter is hexameter with rhyming syllables in each line].<sup>48</sup> The Latin poem has further been edited by Jón Þorkelsson in *Íslenzkar ártiðaskrár eða Obituaria Islandica*<sup>49</sup> and by Paul Lehmann.<sup>50</sup> These two transcriptions are identical for the most part<sup>51</sup> but differ greatly from Langebek's and Suhm's text as well as Jón Sigurðsson's version, producing a much inferior text, which clearly shows that they were not familiar with the two previous transcriptions. Prior to publishing the text of the poem, Jón Þorkelsson mentions it in *Om digtningen på Island i det 15. og 16. årh.*<sup>52</sup> He points out that the poem is in hexameter,<sup>53</sup> a statement that he amends in *Íslenzkar ártiðarskrár*, where he suggests that the meter should probably

47 JS 537 4to, <http://www.handrit.is/da/manuscript/imaging/is/JS04-0537> – There is of course a chance that the first recto page of AM 382 4to was damaged after the transcription used by Langebek and Suhm was made. However, since already Árni Magnússon comments on the many damaged sections of the manuscript, this seems unlikely. See Kristian Kålund, ed., *Arne Magnussons i AM. 435 A-B, 4to indeholdte Håndskriftfortegnelser* (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag, 1909), 62, and Susanne Fahn, "Revealing the Secrets of a Medieval Manuscript. Description and Analysis of the Manuscript AM 382 4to in the Árni Magnússon Institute in Iceland" (M.A. thesis, University of Iceland, 2006), 3–5. For a more detailed description of fol. 1r in AM 382 4to, see section 3 in this article.

48 JS 537 4to, fol. 5r. Jón Helgason also comes to the conclusion that the poem and the saga text were written by the same person. He describes the appearance of the *carmen* in his papers, a collection of loose pages intended to become his introduction to the 1978 edition of *Þorláks saga helga*. Jón Helgason, "Archive Box 12."

49 Jón Þorkelsson, *Íslenzkar ártiðaskrár eða Obituaria Islandica* (Copenhagen: Hið íslenzka bókmentafélag, 1893 – 1896), 144–145.

50 Paul Lehmann, *Skandinaviens Anteil an der lateinischen Literatur und Wissenschaft des Mittelalters*, Vol. 2 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1937), 118.

51 For a more detailed comparison between the two editions, see Fahn, "Revealing the Secrets," 108–110.

52 Jón Þorkelsson, *Om digtningen på Island i det 15. og 16. årh* (Copenhagen: Høst, 1888), 23.

53 *Ibid.*, 23.

be compared with what is called ‘samhendur’ in Icelandic.<sup>54</sup> His indecisiveness should be seen as a consequence of the corrupt text with which he was working. The term ‘samhendur’ describes a vernacular rhyme scheme with two rhyming syllables in each line, which corresponds only superficially with the meter of the *carmen Latinum* in AM 382 4to, which is the medieval Leonine hexameter, i.e. traditional Latin hexameter with the addition of rhyme in the two last syllables before the *caesura* in the third foot and the two last syllables of the line. Jón Þorkelsson also notes that while the poem is not really elaborate (‘íburðarmikið’), it is nonetheless interesting (‘merkilegt’), since it shows the extent to which St Þorlákr was worshipped.<sup>55</sup> Lehmann’s only comment on the poem is that the text is difficult to decipher “da die Buchstaben auf dem von Haus aus sehr groben Pergament durch Verbräunung und Verrußung unklar oder unsichtbar geworden sind” [because the letters have become unclear or invisible on the innately very rough vellum through darkening of the brown color and influence of soot].<sup>56</sup>

Further literature in print about the poem is scarce and, similar to the transcriptions, none of the existing publications offer more than a few sentences about the *carmen Latinum*, let alone a detailed analysis. Einar Ól. Sveinsson mentions the poem and recognizes that it is written in Leonine hexameter.<sup>57</sup> He also surmises that the praise poem was sung during the divine services on the mass days of St Þorlákr.<sup>58</sup> In his analysis and description of the Office of St Þorlákr, also called *Þorlákstiðir*, in AM 241 A II fol., Róbert Abraham Ottósson points out that AM 382 4to contains a Latin verse about St Þorlákr in Leonine hexameter, “eine Versgattung, die in den *Þorlákstiðir* vereinzelt erscheint” [a type of verse that appears isolated in the *Þorlákstiðir*].<sup>59</sup> Finally, Margaret Cormack refers to the poem as a prayer in her book about the saints in Iceland.<sup>60</sup>

54 Jón Þorkelsson, *Íslenzkar ártiðaskrár*, 144.

55 *Ibid.*, 144.

56 Lehmann, *Skandinaviens Anteil*, 118.

57 Einar Ól. Sveinsson, “Hexametrum,” *Skírnir* 123 (1949): 180.

58 *Ibid.*, 180.

59 Róbert Abraham Ottósson, *Sancti Thorlaci Episcopi Officia*, 69. Ottósson is referring to a *Responsorium* in the *Þorlákstiðir* (Nr. 48), which is also written in this meter. *Ibid.*, 87–88 and 117–118.

60 Cormack, *The Saints in Iceland*, 32, 163.

Considering the fact that only a few original Latin texts are preserved in Icelandic manuscripts, it is curious that the poem has not received more attention. While there was a definite interest in Latin texts from Iceland in the 18th century, indicated for example by Langebek's and Suhm's publication, this Latin scholarship had apparently fallen in disuse by the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. A likely explanation is that the Icelandic Romantic and Independence movements focused largely on Old Norse-Icelandic texts as the country's most important cultural heritage,<sup>61</sup> while Latin scholarship took a back seat.<sup>62</sup> Strangely enough, despite the fact that Jón Þorkelsson and Paul Lehmann were both trying to raise awareness for Icelandic-Latin texts, neither seems to have been aware of Langebek's and Suhm's earlier edition of the poem, while attempting to decipher the almost illegible manuscript, without the aid of modern photographic lighting techniques.<sup>63</sup> And apparently, only Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Róbert Abraham Ottósson, and Margaret Cormack have shown interest in the poem since 1937. This is all the more remarkable, because it is evident that this Latin panegyric to St Þorlákr is attached to the B-version of *Þorláks saga helga* for a reason, to serve as the first poetic invocation in Latin, St Þorlákr's institutional tongue, with a plea to the saint to grant the poet and editor the presence of mind to be able to praise the saint's deeds, which, as he claims, are worthy of being written in the vernacular, a rude language without the backing of schools and clerical learning, because the ensuing Old Norse-Icelandic saga contains a complete account of St Þorlákr's innumerable miraculous workings. Accordingly, the poem should have been included in the discussion and edition of this version of the saga, whose virtually only textual witness is AM 382 4to. In the following sections we print a brief codicological description of AM 382 4to, followed by our edition of the poem. In the subsequent sections we analyze the poem.

61 Stefán Einarsson, *A History of Icelandic Literature* (New York: The Johns Hopkins Press for The American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1957), 220–223.

62 However, the fact that Jón Sigurðsson produced a transcription of the Latin poem, suggests that while publications focused on the vernacular, the Latin texts were not completely forgotten in the 19th century.

63 The best images of the page are the black and white photographs taken by Arne Mann Nielsen at the Arnarnagðna Collection in 1965, two years before the hole in the leaf was repaired in Copenhagen. See figure on page 35.



### 3. Preservation, Layout, and Paleography of AM 382 4to

There are eight gatherings and eight separate fragments of at least two more gatherings preserved of the manuscript AM 382 4to, which originally contained at least 84 leaves.<sup>64</sup> In general, the parchment of AM 382 4to is rather dark, especially on the edges and margins, which are somewhat undulated and cockled and have all been trimmed to a small degree. Many pages have been damaged and show tears, slits, holes and signs of mold. The first recto page of AM 382 4to containing the Latin praise poem is very dark, suggesting that it did not have a protective cover for some time, and some of the ink is worn off and hardly legible. In addition, there is a hole in the page, and parts of the text are now missing in the middle of lines 18, 19, and 20.

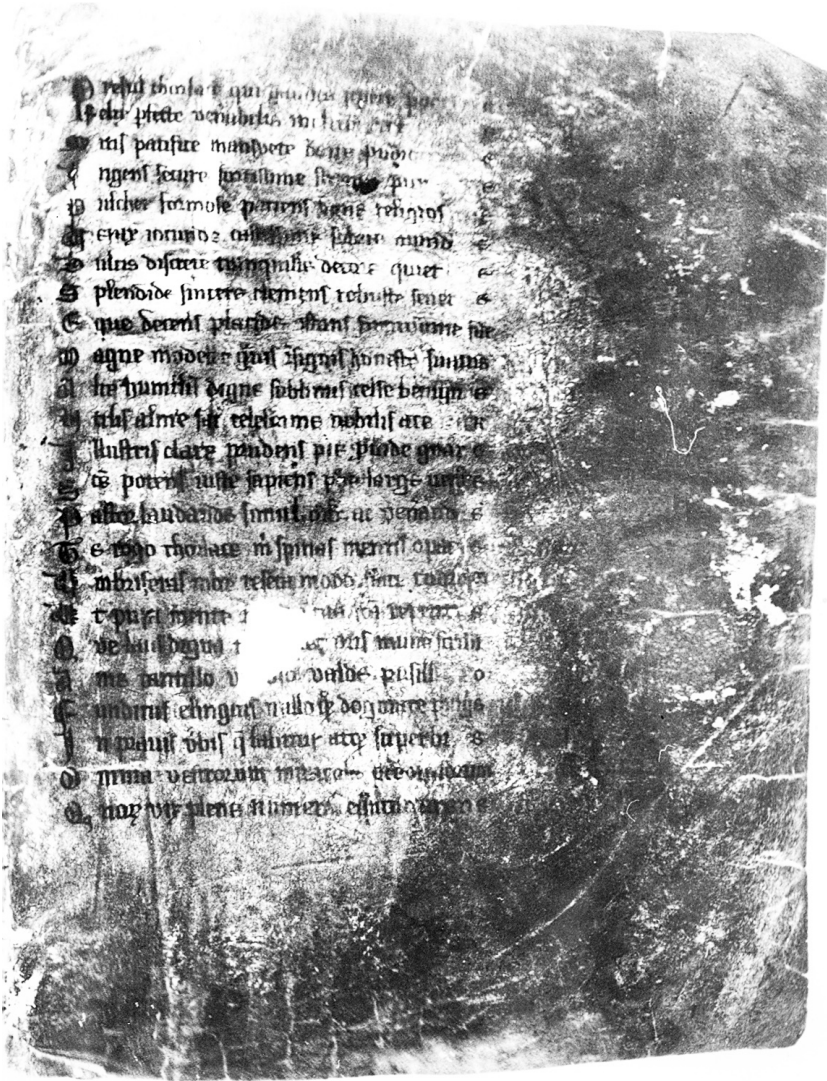
The text of AM 382 4to is not separated into columns but written in one block across the page. The number of lines per writing block is 24 lines on every page, despite the ample space for additional lines on the pages. This also holds true for the Latin praise poem. Together with the content of the *carmen Latinum*, it indicates that AM 382 4to is the original for which the poem was composed.<sup>65</sup>

The poem in AM 382 4to extends to exactly 24 lines and is written in a way so that every line stands by itself. The lines are shorter than in the prose section of the manuscript, so that the margin on the first recto page is wider than elsewhere in the manuscript. The first letter in each line is written with particular care and decorated with red ink. The rubric capitals stand slightly separated from the next letter. In order to ensure that the writing block always has the same width, the scribe quite often leaves an open space between the penultimate and last letter, which he fills with a small red ornament. This means that the last letters of every line stand vertically above each other.<sup>66</sup> The layout of the *carmen Latinum*, which we

64 For a detailed codicological description of AM 382 4to, see Fahn, "Revealing the Secrets," 11–76.

65 A unique feature of this manuscript are the black dots in the outer margins beside every fifth line on some folios, which were added after the main text was finished and the initials had been inserted. The ink appears to be the same as that of the main text of the manuscript, which suggests that they derive from the same time. These dots seem to have no other purpose than to facilitate the checking of the number of lines, 24, on each page, and thus give evidence of the careful planning of the manuscript's layout.

66 Jón Helgason, "Archive Box 12".



AM 382 4to 1r. Photo: Arne Mann Nielsen.

have attempted to imitate in our edition, is a feature of the poem that should not be overlooked as insignificant (see further section 7). What immediately stands out is the pattern of 16 lines ending with the letter e. The same layout is also found on leaf 5r in AM 732b 4to, a 14th-century copy of an illustrated encyclopedic codex originally composed in the late 12th century. The similarity of layout here to the first leaf of AM 382 4to, and the association of both manuscripts with the Hólar diocese in the first half of the 14th century may well be of significance.<sup>67</sup> Playfulness of layout and a predilection for repetitive patterns is otherwise a sure sign of 14th-century versification as may be ascertained by viewing the *carmina figurata* (pattern poetry) of *Liber de distincione metrorum* by Jacobus Nicholai of Denmark, composed in Cambridge on the subject of the plague in the middle of the 14th century, in particular in memory of a certain Adamarus, the deceased Earl of Pembroke.<sup>68</sup>

AM 382 4to is written in a Gothic bookhand, but the script shows some cursive influences, such as small hoops or a slightly lighter, more ornate style concerning letters like ‘g’, ‘y’, ‘h’, or ‘ð’. The script of the Latin praise poem is more filigree and smaller than on the remaining pages and appears even more influenced by cursive, since for example the stems of the ‘descending s’ and the ‘high-stemmed f’ reach under the imaginary line for writing, which is more common for Gothic cursive than for Gothic

67 On leaf 5r, there is a row of proverbial Latin hexameter distichs (two-liners), the first being Leonine hexameter, *Ut uer dat florem, flos fructum, fructus odorem / Sic studium morem, mos sensum, sensus honorem*, together with other distichs widely known to medieval scholars. The main hand on the first 8 leaves, containing a learned miscellany, was dated by Kristian Kålund to the first quarter of the 14th century. The manuscript contains mostly Latin but also vernacular texts, and two Latin poems, which are, curiously, composed in vernacular meters. One of these poems, on the margin of 5r, is dedicated to a certain Audoenus, or Auðunn, who Kålund identified as Bishop Auðunn rauði Þorbergsson of Hólar (1313–22). The poems have recently been edited by Jonathan Grove in Margaret Clunies Ross, ed., *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages VII. Poetry on Christian Subjects. Part 2: The Fourteenth Century* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2007), 471–475.

68 Jacobus Nicholai de Dacia, *Liber de distincione metrorum*, ed. Aage Kabell (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967). As the poet informs the reader in the prologue and colophon, the work was finished in 1363. A separate poem to The Virgin Mary, “*Salutacio beate Marie virginis gloriose*”, found in a different manuscript tradition, and counting no less than 269 stanzas, was composed around 1350, probably by the same poet, displaying an identical fondness for untiring and virtuous repetition, all but the last stanza beginning with the word *Salve*. Published by Lehmann, *Skandinaviens Anteil*, 84–104.

bookhand and which does not appear in the remainder of AM 382 4to.<sup>69</sup> Different from the main text is also that Anglo-Saxon *f* is not used in the *carmen Latinum*. This, however, cannot be used to suggest that the Latin and vernacular texts were written by two different scribes, since Icelandic scribes consistently used the ‘high stemmed *f*’ when they were writing in Latin.<sup>70</sup>

Even though the script of the Latin poem and the main text show some differences, it is highly unlikely that the two texts were written by two distinct scribes. It is far more probable that one scribe deliberately wrote both texts in slightly different scripts and gave the Latin text a more ornate style, to differentiate between the two languages. Both Jón Sigurðsson and Jón Helgason come to the conclusion that the poem and saga text were written by the same scribe<sup>71</sup> and comparison between the rubric capitals in the *carmen Latinum* with rubric capitals in the main text shows that these letters have the exact same appearance and were written by the same person.<sup>72</sup>

The fact that one scribe was responsible for writing the poem and the saga text, as well as the contents of the *carmen Latinum*, which will be presented in the next section, add to the point that both texts are closely connected and the poem should have been included in the discussion and edition of the B-redaction of *Þorláks saga helga*.

69 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, “Writing,” *The Manuscripts of Iceland*, eds. Gisli Sigurðsson and Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavík: Árni Magnússon Institute in Iceland, 2004), 65–67.

70 Stefán Karlsson, “The Development of Latin script II: In Iceland,” *The Nordic Languages. An International Handbook of the History of the North Germanic Languages*, ed. Oskar Bandle, Vol. 2 (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 836.

71 JS 537 4to, fol. 5r; Jón Helgason, “Archive Box 12”.

72 The rubric capitals in the *Þorláks saga helga* were not added later by an illuminator, since they not only appear on the margins of AM 382 4to, but also within the writing block itself, clearly in the same hand as the main text.

## 4. Carmen Latinum in laudem St. Thorlaci

	P resul thorlace, qui gaudes <i>perpete</i> pac	e,
	F elix, <i>perfecte</i> , <i>venerabilis</i> , inclite, rect	e,
	M itis, pacifice, mansvete, beate, pudic	e,
	I ngens, secure, fortissime, strenue, pur	e,
5	P ulcher, formose, patiens, bone, religios	e,
	V erax, iocunde, castissime, sobrie, mvnd	e,
	D ulcis, discrete, tranquille, decore, quiet	e,
	S plendide, sincere, clemens, robuste, seuer	e,
	E que, decens, placide, <i>constans</i> , firmissime, <i>fid</i>	e,
10	M agne, modeste, grauis, <i>insignis</i> , honeste, suavi s,	
	A lte, humilis, digne, sublimis, celse, benign	e,
	U tilis, alme, <i>sacer</i> , <i>celeberrime</i> , nobilis, ace	r,
	I llustris, clare, prudens, pie, <i>prouide</i> , gnar	e,
	S <i>ancte</i> , potens, iuste, sapiens, <i>probe</i> , large, uenuste.	
15	P astor, laudande simul <i>omnibus</i> ac venerand	e,
	T e rogo, thorlace, <i>michi</i> spinas mentis opac	e
	V mbriferas <i>morum</i> reseca modo falce tuoru	m,
	V t pura mente p[lau]dam tua <i>facta</i> repent	e,
	Q ve laus digna t[ibi f]iet oris munere scrib	i
20	A me tantillo, v[ici]oso valde pusill	o,
	F unditus elinguis nullo <i>quoque</i> dogmate <i>pingui</i>	s,
	I n prauis <i>verbis que</i> labitur atque superbi	s,
	O mnia vestrorum miracola prodigioru	m,
	Q uorum vix plene numeris equantur aren	e.

Bishop Þorlák, you who rejoice in perpetual peace,  
fortunate, perfect, venerable, famous, righteous,  
mild, pacifying, gentle, blessed, chaste,

truthful, entertaining, most chaste, sober, clean,  
sweet, discreet, tranquil, decorous, quiet,

magnificent, modest, grave, remarkable, honest, suave, 10  
exalted, humble, dignified, sublime, towering, benign,

useful, gracious, sacred, most celebrated, noble, sharp,  
illustrious, renowned, prudent, pious, provident, knowing,

holy, powerful, just, wise, upright, generous, graceful.  
Pastor, you who deserve praise by all and veneration, 15

I ask you, Þorlákr, cut with the scythe of your workings  
the thorns casting shadows in my unclear mind.

that with a pure mind I may applaud your deeds at once,  
which praise of you with the faculty of the mouth will be

worthy of being written  
by me, so limited, faulty and very weak.

(although) an utterly speechless praise and not enriched  
by any learning

which falters in deformed and rude words,  
(it has) all the miracles of your prodigious deeds

to whose numbers (the grains of) entire sands are barely equal.



## 5. The Latin Text and Meter

The correct text of the *carmen Latinum* at the beginning of AM 382 4to has never before been printed. Although the *editio princeps* of 1776 is of high quality, based as it is on a transcript made by Árni Magnússon after the manuscript came into his possession, the ungrammatical conjecture in line 18 (*possint*) and the mistaken and grammatically impossible double emendation in line 21 (*elingui* and *pingui*), possibly made by the editors and not the transcriber, sufficiently demonstrate that the editors made limited sense of the essential part of the Latin text, in lines 16-24, while Jón Þorkelsson and Paul Lehmann printed texts that were in fact meaningless nonsense. In other words, the last reader who made sense of the *carmen Latinum* lived over 300 years ago, or before the page on which it was written was pierced with a sharp instrument. In the current edition, the paleography of the poem is mimicked in the printed text as far as possible. The letters ‘u’ and ‘v’ are kept distinct. However, ‘round s’ is used for both ‘long s’ and ‘round s’, and ‘r rotunda’ is represented with a regular ‘r’. Punctuation marks have been inserted and abbreviations by the author of the poem are presented in italics. An English translation of the poem is presented on the right page over and against the Latin text.

Thirteen lines of the poem, 2-14, are composed of laudatory adjectives in the vocative case, framed in by the invocations to St Þorlákur in lines 1 and 15, which also address themselves directly to the saint, *Presul, thorlace* (1) ... *Pastor, laudande* (15). In order to represent the author’s original text as closely as possible without imposing a subjectively chosen English meaning for certain words, the authors of this article have used, when appropriate, cognate English adjectives that are derived from the Latin *verba* used by the poet. The form *perpete* in line 1 is ablative of *perpes*, and the phrase *perpete pace* is well attested in poetry. Jón Sigurðsson’s dubitation that the word might be *perpetua*,<sup>73</sup> from *perpetuus*, is therefore unfounded. The word *beate* in line 3 was presumably read by Árni Magnússon since it was printed by Langebek and Suhm.<sup>74</sup> The word is now worn and difficult to read. To Jón Helgason the middle letters e-a-t even looked like they might be ‘o’ or ‘e’ and ‘n’, although he was unsure as he indicated by a question

<sup>73</sup> JS 537 4to, fol. 5r.

<sup>74</sup> Langebek and Suhm, *Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi*, 631.



mark written on the margin of his own transcription.<sup>75</sup> Neither *bone* nor *bene* would be metrically admissible, and *bone* will be used in line 5, while *bene* would be the only adverb in this long list of adjectives in the vocative case. Last but not least *bene* would limit the force of *pudice* (chaste)! Thus, a scribal error (e.g. *bone* for *beate*) does not seem likely, though it cannot be ruled out. The *beate* of the 1776 edition could possibly be a misreading or an unmarked correction. The mistaken emendations in line 21 are not indicated in the first printed text. If we have here a scribal error, which is possible but not likely, it could have occurred when the *carmen* was transferred from wax tablet to parchment. Although the hole in lines 18-20 seems to work irreparable harm to the text of these lines, the extent of the damage is not beyond the limits of what can be repaired through patient study. First of all, no whole word is missing, and, secondly, the rhyme and meter provide useful guidelines for reconstruction. The initial *p* before the lacuna in line 18, and the final *a* on the other side (with a nasal stroke above it to signify *-am*) are still clearly visible on the black and white photographs taken in Copenhagen in 1965, before the repair of the hole. The lengthening of the final *-e* in *mente* is a standard *productio in arsi*, found also in several other lines of the poem, while the sense and remaining letters require a verb in the first person singular, present, subjunctive, ending in *-am*. Only disyllabic verbs of the 2.-4. conjugation fit the description, and of the possible candidates, *plaudo* gives a better meaning than *psallo*, considering the qualification of the action performed as *laus* in line 19. Indeed, the ascending curve of the *d* is still visible. According to *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (s.v. *plaudere*), *plaudo* as a transitive verb in the sense of *laudo* is a poetic construction from late antiquity and thus nothing out of the ordinary in medieval Latin poetry. In line 20, *tibi* is predetermined since the word must rhyme with *scribi* at the end of the line. In *fiet*, the *f* must be supplied while a fragment of the *i* is still visible on the edge of the hole, and the ending *-et* clearly visible on the black and white photograph. The conjecture is printed in the 1776 edition.<sup>76</sup> Finally the conjecture of line 20, which is also printed by Langebek and Suhm,<sup>77</sup> although with a classical *t* for the medieval *c*, suggests itself fairly easily when the lexical options

75 Jón Helgason, "Archive Box 12".

76 Langebek and Suhm, *Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi*, 631.

77 *Ibid.*, 631.

(adjectives beginning with the letter *v-* and ending in *-osus*) are considered. Because of the limited scope of these conjectures, the rhyme and metrical scheme, they may be considered an almost certain restoration of the text.

As stated above the meter of the poem is Leonine hexameter,<sup>78</sup> traditional Latin hexameter with the addition of rhyme in the two last syllables before the *caesura* in the third foot and the two last syllables of the line. Thus *thorlace* rhymes with *pace* (1), *perfecte* with *recte* (2), *pacifice* with *pu dice* (3), *secure* with *pure* (4) etc. This metrical scheme is very competently handled by the poet and completely regular throughout the 24 verses. Additional double rhyme, clearly an intentional feature, occurs in one line (10, *modeste, grauis... honeste suavis*). In lines 3, 9, 10, and 12, the short penultimate rhyming syllable before the *caesura* (*pacifice, placide, grauis, sacer*), which could not carry a stress accent, are made to rhyme against long penultimate syllables at the end of the line. This shows clearly that the principle of the meter is not stress based and rhythmic but relies on the quantity of the syllables. As for the feet, the fifth foot is always, as it should be according to the classical rules of meter, a dactyl, one long and two short syllables (– v v), and in 9 lines we have the easy pattern of a single word coinciding with the fifth foot, forming a dieresis before and after (*pérpete* [1], *incline* [2], *strénue* [4], *sóbrie* [6], *nóbilis* [12], *próuide* [13], *múnere* [19], *dógmate* [21]). The fourth foot is usually a dactyl, a spondee (– –) occurring only six times (in lines 1, 8, 9, 11, 16, 20). In the third foot, the *caesura* can fall either after the first long syllable (masculine) of the foot or between two short syllables (feminine), which however occurs only twice (in 11 and 19).<sup>79</sup> Elisions are rare, as they are in medieval Latin poetry, compared to classical poetry, there being a possible but not necessary elision between ‘Alte’ and ‘humilis’ (= ‘Alt(e h)umilis’) in line 11.

78 Paul Klopsch, *Einführung in die mittellateinische Verslehre* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 47–48; Edmond Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XIIe du XIIIe siècle. Recherches et documents sur la technique littéraire du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1958), 104–105; *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), s.v. “Leonine Rhyme, Verse.”

79 For the record, the pattern spondee-spondee-spondee occurs seven times in the first three feet (lines 1, 4, 6, 7, 13, 18, 22); spondee-spondee-dactyl occurs five times (lines 2, 5, 15, 19, 20, 24); dactyl-spondee-dactyl four times (lines 11, 14, 16, 17); dactyl-spondee-spondee thrice (line 8, 21, 23); dactyl-dactyl-spondee twice (line 9, 10); spondee-dactyl-dactyl once (line 3), dactyl-dactyl-dactyl once (line 12); and spondee-dactyl-spondee never.

In lines 2-13 the poet praises St Þorlákr's moral qualities, his character and appearance in a long list of adjectives. Although the lexicographical stylistics of this section may have limited appeal as literature in the 21st century, they make for a beautiful feature in a laudatory piece of religious music, an extended, almost breathless enumeration of the many glorious attributes of the saint – the longer the enumeration, the greater the glory of the saint. The musical notation for the poem was presumably the same as that of the *Responsorium* (Nr. 48) in Leonine hexameter found in the *Þorlákstíðir*, which Róbert Abraham Ottósson compares to the Latin poem in AM 382 4to.<sup>80</sup> It may be mentioned here that the epilogue of the so-called *Jarteinabók II*, which we connect to the B-version of *Þorláks saga helga*, also ends with alliterated prosody in Old Norse-Icelandic which uses the stylistic feature of *enumeratio*.<sup>81</sup> But there is more to this list of adjectives than music and a fashion of repetition. In the original Latin *Vita st Thorlaci* there once was a passage, which is now preserved in all the vernacular versions, even the D-redaction, a fragment from the middle of the 13th century, AM 383 4to I. In it, Archbishop Eysteinn is made to praise St Þorlákr as the perfect Christian bishop, referring especially to the Pauline letter to Titus:

Hann sagði svá at hann þóttisk øngan byskup þann hafa vígt er honum þótti jafn gørla með sér hafa alla þá mannkosti er byskupum er skylt at hafa, sem Páll postoli segir í pistli sínum, þeim er hann sendi Tito: 'Byskup hæfir at sé,' sagði hann, 'lastvarr ok lærðr vel, dramblauss ok drykkjumaðr lítill, ørr ok óágjarn, skýrr ok skapgóðr, góðgjarn ok gestrisinn, réttlátr ok ráðvandr, hreinlífr ok hagráðr, trygggr ok trúfastr, mildr ok máldjarfr, átsamr viðr alþýðu en ávítsamr viðr órækna.' Ok má sjá at þat er heilags manns at vera með þeim hætti.<sup>82</sup>

80 Róbert Abraham Ottósson, *Sancti Thorlaci Episcopi Officia*, 69, 87–88, 117–118.

81 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur II*, 250.

82 *Ibid.*, 66. It is worth noting that Bergr Sökkason adds a reference to the letter of Titus in the very same context in his translation of *Nikulás saga erkibyskups*. The epistle is here read as a checklist of twelve episcopal virtues, which Nikulás of course possesses in addition to many other virtues. – C.R. Unger, *Heilagra manna sögur: fortællinger og legender om hellige mænd og kvinder II* (Christiania [Oslo]: B.M. Bentzen, 1877), 78. See our discussion of Bergr and the saga in section 7 of this article.

If we look up the Vulgate text of the Pauline letter, to find out what is being translated, we find the following text:

Oportet enim episcopum sine crimine esse, sicut Dei dispensatorem, non superbum, non iracundum, non vinolentum, non percussorem, non turpilucris cupidum; sed hospitalem, benignum, sobrium, iustum, sanctum, continentem, amplectentem eum qui secundum doctrinam est fidelem sermonem, ut potens sit et exhortari in doctrina sana, et eos qui contradicunt arguere. sunt enim multi et inoboedientes, vaniloqui et seductores, maxime qui de circumcisione sunt: quos oportet redargui.

Out of this short passage of Tit I, 7-10, we may distill the adjectives *benigne* (11) and *sobrie* (6), and in line 14, we even find three, *sancte*, *potens*, *iuste* in a row, which could mean that the poet and editor of the B-redaction knew the Latin text of *Vita St Thorlaci* and not just the vernacular text of *Þorláks saga helga*. If we look at the remaining text of the letter to Titus, we find *munde* (6), *pudice* (3), *prudens* (13), *gravis* (10), *pie* (13), *beate* (3), *magne* (10), *eque* (9), *bone* (5), *modeste* (10), *mansuete* (3), *fide* (9), and *utilis* (12). Although we are missing quite a few of the adjectives in lines 2-13 of the poem, it may be stated that we have at least revealed the rationale behind the manner of praise, both with reference to the vernacular saga and its source text in scripture. In the office of St Þorlákr, stanza 9, we find further support for the idea that the adjectives of lines 2-13 of our poem are intended to sum up those qualities of St Þorlákr which make him the perfect bishop and holy confessor:<sup>83</sup>

Beatus esse meruit,  
pius, pudicus, humilis,  
die ac nocte studuit  
in lege dei docilis.<sup>84</sup>

83 Róbert Abraham Ottósson, *Sancti Thorlaci Episcopi Officia*, 80.

84 'He deserved to be blessed, (he was) pious, chaste, humble, studied day and night, docile in the law of god.'

All three words *pie* (13), *pudice* (3), and *humilis* (11), which occur in line 2, occur also in our *carmen Latinum* of AM 382 4to.

The remainder of the poem (lines 15–24) should be understood as an invocation by the poet and saga’s editor, a plea to St Þorlákr to grant the author the ability to re-write the saint’s saga truthfully, to make it worthy of St Þorlákr and his endeavors, and to recount all of Þorlákr’s miracles accurately.

It has been noted above that while it is not impossible that AM 382 4to is a 14th-century copy of an earlier B-version, it seems most probable that this very manuscript represents the original edition of the B-redaction.

## 6. AM 382 4to – A Complete Edition?

As noted above, AM 382 4to is heavily damaged. The manuscript originally contained at least 84 leaves, but only 56 leaves and fragments of leaves are preserved today. At least 25 leaves are missing at the end of the manuscript. It is impossible to determine the exact extent of AM 382 4to. The fragments of 14 leaves, preserved at the end of AM 382 4to, all describe miracles associated with St Þorlákr. In his 1978 edition of the *Byskupa sögur*, Jón Helgason presents transcriptions of the fragments and refers to corresponding parallel passages in the C-version of *Þorláks saga helga*.<sup>85</sup> It is evident that the B-version of *Þorláks saga helga* contained a large number of miracles<sup>86</sup> and according to the Latin praise poem, the author wanted to record “all the miracles of [Þorlákr’s] prodigious deeds.” The epilogue of *Jarteinabók II* emphasizes Þorlákr’s innumerable miracles in a similar way.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, it contains the curious term ‘málgögn’.<sup>88</sup> This term may well be a translation of the Latin phrase *orís munus* (‘the faculty of the

85 Jón Helgason, *Byskupa sögur*, 328 *et seq.*

86 Guðni Jónsson suggests that the redactor of AM 382 4to added many miracles at the end of the saga in comparison to the A-version of *Þorláks saga helga*. Guðni Jónsson, *Byskupa sögur* I, XIII.

87 Ásdís Egilsdóttir *Biskupa sögur* II, 247–50: “margar jarteinir” (247), “ótallig tákni” (247), “svá mikill fjöldi gjörðisk at um jarteinir” (247), “ótalligum jarteinum” (247), “jarteinir ótalligar” (248), “margföldum jarteinum” (248).

88 *Ibid.*, 247. According to the word collection of the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* in Copenhagen, the word ‘málgögn’ is a hapax, with the single exception of the poem *Leiðarvísan* (2) from the 12th century.

mouth') which appears in line 19 of the *carmen Latinum*. Another mental figure of the Latin poem, the scythe of Þorlákr's workings which cuts away the thorns casting shadows in the poets mind (ll. 16-17 *Te rogo, thorlace, michi spinas mentis opace / Vmbriferas morum reseca modo falce tuorum*), is repeated in the prologue in the words "En svá sem hann var byskup orðinn fágaði hann fagrliga ásjánu Skalholtensis kristni með setningu boðorða sinna, brot sníðandi lýti lastanna" [And as he had become bishop he embellished and made beautiful the sight of Christianity in Skálholt with the making of his precepts, cutting away the unsightliness of people's vices].<sup>89</sup> The epilogue of *Jarteinabók II*, furthermore, ends with extensive alliterated prosody, using the stylistic figure of *enumeratio*, similar to the Latin poem preserved in AM 382 4to.<sup>90</sup> It almost appears as if the Latin praise poem in AM 382 4to and the end of *Jarteinabók II* are reflections of each other, one in Latin, Þorlákr's institutional tongue, and one in the vernacular. Moreover, both the prologue to the B-redaction of *Þorláks saga helga* and the epilogue of *Jarteinabók II* refer to Þorlákr's 'líf ok jartegnir'/'líf og jarteinir' [life and miracles].<sup>91</sup> These two terms also appear in the poem in the forms of *facta* (line 18) and *miracula* (line 23).

*Jarteinabók II*, which is a title invented by Guðbrandur Vigfússon, the main editor of *Biskupa sögur* 1858-78, and taken up by later editors, is merely the last part of the miracle collection of AM 379 4to and its copy AM 381 4to, two manuscripts classified as belonging to the C-redaction of *Þorláks saga helga*.<sup>92</sup> AM 379 4to, which is a parchment manuscript dating to the 17th century,<sup>93</sup> was made for Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason of Hólar (1628-56). Since AM 379 4to, however, and many of the miracles in *Jarteinabók II* appear to be old, dating to around 1200,<sup>94</sup> it is unclear whether *Jarteinabók II* was originally attached to the C-version. As it does not appear in any other manuscript containing the C-redaction, Guðbrandur Vigfússon believed that Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason had found this

89 Ásdís Egilsdóttir *Biskupa sögur* II, 143.

90 *Ibid.*, 250.

91 *Ibid.*, 144, 249.

92 *Ibid.*, 225-50; Jón Helgason, *Byskupa sögur*, 283-406; Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa sögur* I, 357-71.

93 Kristian Kålund, ed., *Katalog over den Arnamagneanske håndskriftsamling*, Vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1888), 593-594.

94 Guðni Jónsson, *Byskupa sögur* I, XIII.

material elsewhere: “hefir Þorlákr biskup Skúlason fundið hann á einhverjum skinnblöðum, og látið rita hann hér inn, en þetta frumrit er nú alveg glatað” [Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason has found it on some parchment leaves and had it written in here, but this original is now completely lost].<sup>95</sup> In a footnote at the beginning of *Jarteinabók II*, Guðbrandur Vigfússon further claims that this part of Þorlákur Skúlason’s version of the saga in AM 379 4to must have been “niðurlag einhverrar annarrar Þorláks sögu” [the end of some other Þorláks saga].<sup>96</sup> From Jón Helgason’s personal notes, it is evident that he considered the possibility that *Jarteinabók II* was part of the missing arks in AM 382 4to. But he comes to the conclusion that because some of the miracles in *Jarteinabók II* appear in AM 382 4to in a different order, this cannot be the case.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, a special relationship between AM 382 4to and AM 379 4to is confirmed by the fact that 382 is the only other manuscript of the whole tradition which preserves some of the same miracles as *Jarteinabók II*, and Jón Helgason, in his detailed study of the tattered remains of AM 382 4to,<sup>98</sup> notes parallel texts in 382 for 21 of the 45 chapters in AM 379 4to.<sup>99</sup> Since AM 382 4to is mutilated towards the end, we are justified in assuming that further parallels were on the lost leaves, even the epilogue in the last chapter. As we shall see below, Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason of Hólar, the owner of AM 379 4to, seems to have had AM 382 4to, too, at his disposal, perhaps before it was mutilated. He may have taken particular interest in this part of the miracles of St Þorlákr because it contains a special section on miracles taking place “í öðru byskups ríki á Íslandi” [in another diocese in Iceland (i.e. the diocese of Hólar)], and another set containing “Vitranir þær er Guðmundr prestr er síðar var byskup sendi Gunnlaugi mú[n]k at hann skyldi dikta” [The visions which Guðmundr the priest, who later became bishop, sent to Gunnlaugr the monk for dictation (in Latin)].<sup>100</sup> The monk who is referred to is Gunnlaugr Leifsson of Þingeyrar, in the diocese of Hólar.

95 Guðbrandur Vigfússon *Biskupa sögur* I, XLIX–L.

96 *Ibid.*, 357, footnote 1.

97 Jón Helgason, “Archive Box 12”.

98 Jón Helgason, *Byskupa sögur*, 328–337.

99 *Ibid.*, 385–98.

100 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, 238, 243.



Comparison between parallel texts used to fill *lacunae* in AM 382 4to in the 2002 edition of *Biskupa sögur*, with the actual space that is missing from AM 382 4to in these sections has shown that sometimes the reconstructed text passages would not have fit in or exceeded the space available.<sup>101</sup> This suggests that the miracles in AM 382 4to were not necessarily in the same order as in other versions of *Þorláks saga helga*, *Jarteinabók I*, or *Jarteinabók II*. The place of the epilogue, however, is a given. The poet of the Latin praise poem clearly states that he wants to record all of Þorlákr's miracles. Considering the thematic connections and similar terminology of the Latin praise poem in AM 382 4to, the prologue of the B-version and the epilogue of *Jarteinabók II*, it is reasonable to assume that most or all of the miracles in the so-called *Jarteinabók II* along with the epilogue originally belonged to the B-redaction of *Þorláks saga helga*. The manuscript AM 382 4to preserved a complete edition of Þorlákr's *vita* and miracles, preceded by the *carmen Latinum* and most likely concluded with the epilogue of the so-called *Jarteinabók II*.<sup>102</sup> The correspondence between the initial poem and the concluding prosody, give the edition a framework, juxtaposing the learned Latin language with the vernacular, which even though it 'falters in deformed and rude words' according to the poet, was chosen, nonetheless, to record Þorlákr's *vita* and miracles and preach them to the public.

The status of the Latin verses at the beginning of the B-redactions seems to be comparable to the stanzas of Latin poetry commonly printed at the beginning of humanist treatises, in that it serves to guarantee the learnedness of the publication. Aware that he was reworking a vernacular translation of Þorlákr's Latin *vita*, the editor of AM 382 4to may have felt

101 Fahn, "Revealing the Secrets," 27–44, especially 33–32 and 34–36.

102 The gathering of AM 382 4to, which includes the Latin poem on fol. 1r, originally consisted of four bifolia. Only one bifolium is preserved. From this it can be concluded that three leaves preceded the Latin praise poem (Fahn, "Revealing the Secrets," 28–29). Guðbrandur Vigfússon suggests that the first leaf of the manuscript was presumably empty (Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa sögur I*, LXIII), but considering the value of vellum, it is unlikely that all three leaves would have been left blank. The complete edition, consisting of the poem, the saga and the collection of miracles, may have included a table of contents or an illustration of St Þorlákr. The drawing may have been similar to one of two seated bishops in Holm perg. fol. No. 5, containing sagas of Icelandic bishops (Jón Helgason, *Byskupa sögur. MS Perg. fol. No. 5 in the Royal Library of Stockholm*, 7; Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa sögur I*, XXX).

that some reminder was needed of the saint's close relationship with ecclesiastical Latin. While he chose the vernacular as an appropriate medium to convey Þorlákr's *vita* and miracles to an unschooled audience, he clearly felt the need to apologize for the inferiority of the vernacular and to emphasize his education and thereby the scholarly status of his edition by preceding the saga with a poem in Latin, which acknowledges the inferior state of Old Norse-Icelandic as a medium of eloquence (*elinguis*) and its implicit unschooled character (*nullo dogmate pinguis*). In his essay, *De vulgari eloquentia* (ca. 1304), Dante Alighieri shows a similar attitude towards the vernacular. He compares Latin (*gramatica*) to the vernacular by saying that the former is an exclusive language, acquired by the elite through assiduous and time consuming study, a language of rules and learning, the latter a spoken language without rules, picked up by everyone, even children from their nurses.<sup>103</sup> Comparably, many Medieval English authors, such as Chaucer, Walton, or Ashby, exhibit "linguistic and authorial modesty" as *topoi* in the prologues to their works, apologizing for the default and inadequate English language.<sup>104</sup> And an Old Norse-Icelandic example is the aforementioned prologue of *Hungrvaka*, which in 17th-century manuscripts seems to form an introduction to *Þorláks saga*.<sup>105</sup>

## 7. Provenance and Authorship of AM 382 4to

Árni Magnússon received AM 382 4to at Hlíðarendi in the south of Iceland from Guðríður Gísladóttir in 1702. From Árni Magnússon's notes we can derive that the manuscript was in the personal possession of Guðríður Gísladóttir and her husband Þórður Þorláksson (1637–1696), who was consecrated bishop at Skálholt in 1672. The manuscript either belonged

103 See Dante Alighieri, "De vulgari eloquentia." *Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, ed. Pio Rajna (Florence: Società Dantesca Italiana, 1960), Vol. 1, 2–3: *vulgarem locutionem asserimus quam sine omni regula nutricem imitantes accipimus. Est et inde alia locutio secundaria nobis, quam Romani gramaticam vocaverunt ... ad habitum vero huius pauci perveniunt, quia non nisi per spatium temporis et studii assiduitatem regulamur et doctrinamur in illa.*

104 Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others, eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280–1520* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 10. – For specific examples, see *Ibid.*, 8–10 "A Late Medieval Idea of the Vernacular: 'Rude Words and Boystous.'"

105 See page 26.

to Guðríður Gísladóttir's part of the family and was handed down to her, possibly as part of her dowry, or, more likely, it was an heirloom on Þórður Þorláksson's side of the family, who was one of six children of Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason of Hólar (1597–1656).<sup>106</sup>

Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason divided his manuscripts and printed books equally between his children.<sup>107</sup> It seems likely that Þórður Þorláksson received AM 382 4to directly from his father. This path of inheritance suggests that AM 382 4to came from the north of Iceland (Þorlákur Skúlason, Bishop of Hólar) to the south (Þórður Þorláksson, Bishop of Skálholt).

According to a marginal note on fol. 22v, AM 382 4to must have been at Reynistaður in the north of Iceland at some point during the 16th century. Furthermore, an inventory list of the nunnery at Reynistaður from 1525 mentions a *Þorláks saga helga* that belonged to the cloister (DI IX, 321). It is plausible that AM 382 4to was the manuscript mentioned in the list of the Reynistaðarklaustur.

It is possible that Þorlákur Skúlason received the manuscript directly from Reynistaður or from one of his scribes who had connections to Reynistaður.<sup>108</sup> A marginal note in AM 382 4to mentions a Björn Jónsson (fol. 13r), which is the name of one of Þorlákur's scribes, Björn Jónsson at Skarðsá, who wrote the Skarðsá version of *Landnámabók* and the *Annals*. This Björn Jónsson grew up from 1582 until 1602 – age eight to 28 – at the home of Sigurður Jónsson, who was in charge of the former nunnery at Reynistaður. Björn Jónsson then lived all his remaining life at Skarðsá in Sæmundarhlíð, which belonged to Reynistaður.<sup>109</sup> Even though the mar-

<sup>106</sup> Gunnar Kristjánsson, *Saga biskupsstólanna*, 58 and 420.

<sup>107</sup> Jakob Benediktsson, "Bókagerð Þorláks biskups Skúlasonar," *Saga og kirkja. Afmálsrit Magnúsar Mús Lárussonar. Gefið út í tilefni af sjötugsafmáli hans 2. september 1987*, eds. Gunnar Karlsson, Jón Hnefill Aðalsteinsson and Jónas Gíslason (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 1988), 193; Már Jónsson, "Þórður biskup Þorláksson og söfnun íslenskra handrita á síðari hluta 17. aldar," *Frumkvöðull vísinda og mennta. Þórður Þorláksson biskup í Skálholti*, ed. Jón Pálsson (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 1998), 189–190.

<sup>108</sup> Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason was very dedicated to book production and the copying of manuscripts. – See e.g., Jakob Benediktsson, "Bókagerð Þorláks biskups Skúlasonar," 193–197; Stefán Karlsson, *Stafkrókar* (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 2000), 384–403. – The names of five scribes who have worked for Þorlákur Skúlason are known, all from the north of Iceland (Skagafjörður and Eyjafjörður region): Björn Jónsson á Skarðsá, Þorleifur Jónsson á Grafarkoti, Jón Pálsson, Brynjólfur Jónsson and Halldór Guðmundsson. *Ibid.*, 385 *et seq.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 385–386

ginalia cannot be linked with certainty to Björn Jónsson á Skarðsá, the mentioning of this name and the name Jón Sigurðsson on folio 31v in AM 382 4to, which is the name of Sigurður Jónsson's son,<sup>110</sup> adds to the evidences that the manuscript was closely connected to the north of Iceland, especially Reynistaður.

The aforementioned manuscript BL Add. 11.242, which preserves a short passage of the B-version of *Þorláks saga helga*, is another indicator that connects AM 382 4to with Reynistaður, or at least the Skagafjörður-area in the north of Iceland. BL Add. 11.242 must have been copied from AM 382 4to or another copy of the B-redaction when it was still more complete than today<sup>111</sup> and was likely written between 1540 and 1590,<sup>112</sup> by Gottskálk Jónsson (ca. 1524-1590/91).<sup>113</sup> In the fall of 1550, Gottskálk Jónsson was ordained priest at Glaumbær,<sup>114</sup> which is about ten kilometers south of Reynistaður. Taking the inventory list of the nunnery of Reynistaður from 1525 and the marginal note about Reynistaður in AM 382 4to into account, it is not unlikely that Gottskálk Jónsson copied the text of the saga of St Þorlákr which is preserved in BL Add. 11.242 from AM 382 4to. It would only be logical that a priest would have close connections to a (former) monastery or nunnery close by and, as Jón Þorkelsson points out, Gottskálk Jónsson was a witness in a case of legacy at Reynistaður in May 1547,<sup>115</sup> giving further proof that links can be drawn between him and Reynistaður. Even though Þorlákur Þórhallsson was bishop in Skálholt in the south of Iceland, the worship of his saintliness

110 Wikipedia. Frjálsa alfræðiorðabók, "Svalbarðsætt," <http://is.wikipedia.org/wiki/svalbarðsætt> (accessed June 9, 2010).

111 Jón Helgason, *Byskupa sögur*, 271, 307; Ásdís Egilsdóttir, *Biskupa sögur* II, 181, 205.

112 Jón Helgason, *Gamall Kveðskapur* (Copenhagen: Hið íslenska fræðafélag, 1979), 7.

113 Jón Þorkelsson, "Íslandske håndskrifter i England og Skotland," *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 8. Ny följd 4 (1892): 217; Jón Helgason, "Íslensk handrit i British Museum," *Ritgerðakorn og Ræðustúfar*, ed. Jón Helgason (Reykjavík: Félag íslenskra stúdenta í Kaupmannahöfn, 1959), 115–116; Jón Helgason, *Gamall Kveðskapur*, 6–7; Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, "Gagn og gaman séra Gottskálks Jónssonar í Glaumbæ," *Greppaminni. Rit til heiðurs Vésteini Ólasyni sjötugum*, eds. Margrét Eggertsdóttir et al. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2009), 377–391.

114 Jón Þorkelsson, "Séra Gottskálk Jónsson í Glaumbæ og syrpa hans," *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 12. Ny följd 8 (1896): 49.

115 *Ibid.*, 49.

seems to have been quite widespread in the north and the wish for his sanctification emanated in the north of Iceland as well.<sup>116</sup>

We have put forth the argument that AM 382 4to represents the autograph edition of the B-version of *Þorláks saga helga*, written in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century to promote the worship of the saint by providing texts in the vernacular for reading on St Þorlákr's feast days, and to complement the new Latin office. Róbert Abraham Ottósson suggests that Arngrímur Brandsson (died 1361/2) was the author of *Þorlákstíðir*, who was both abbot of Þingeyrar and in the following of Bishop Ormur Ásláksson of Hólar (1342-1356) (*DI* II, 835). Arngrímur wrote his *Guðmundar saga*, around the time when Ormur Ásláksson had the bones of St Guðmundr Arason translated in 1344. Arngrímur's main source was a *Guðmundar saga* which was possibly written by his contemporary Bergr Sökkason, former monk at Þingeyraklaustur and now abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Munkaþverá.<sup>117</sup> About Bergr Sökkason it is said in *Laurentius saga biskups* that he was a highly learned man and had written many saints' lives in Old Norse-Icelandic.<sup>118</sup> One of these sagas is *Nikulás saga erkibyskups*, which is prefaced with a letter by Bergr containing instructions for its reading, where he specifies that he has translated the life and miracles (*lif ok jarteignir*) of the blessed Archbishop Nicholai Mirrensis rather more completely than can be found in ancient books (*helldr fullari, en adr finnz skrifud i fornum bokum*), and names his Latin source. At the end of the letter, he asks the reader to request of his audience to recite *Ave Maria* for the peace and grace of his (Bergr's) soul. Accordingly, he begs of copyists that they transcribe the letter with the saga, which has no doubt led to its unusual preservation. After writing out in full the *Hail Mary*, and immediately before his own prologue to the saga – a prologue which displays concern for reading, writing and

116 Brønsted, Jacobsen, and Danstrup, *Kulturhistorisk leksikon*, s.v. "Þorlákr helgi Þorhallsson;" Cormack, *The Saints in Iceland*, 11.

117 Stefán Karlsson, *Stafkrókar*, 143. See also Böðvar Guðmundsson and others, eds., *Íslensk bókmenntasaga*, Vol. 2 (Reykjavík: Mál og Menning, 1993), 249–263, for a detailed discussion of Bergr Sökkason's biography and works and his connection to *Guðmundar saga* (C-redaction).

118 Árni Björnsson, ed., *Laurentius saga biskups* (Reykjavík: Handritastofnun Íslands, 1969), 229. "Var hann formenntur maður umfram flesta menn þá á Íslandi <um> klerkdóm, letur, söng og málsnilld. Saman setti hann margar heilagra manna sögur í norrænu, sem birtast mun og auðsýnast meðan þetta land er byggt."

pronunciation similar to that of the B-redactor<sup>119</sup> – Bergr composes a Latin poem of eight verses in hexameters, the last of which are Leonine, and all of which are written out in the same layout as the verses of AM 382 4to, i.e. in order to ensure that the writing block everywhere has the same width, the scribe leaves an open space where necessary between the penultimate and last letter, which he fills with ornament:<sup>120</sup>

P resens huic operi sit *gracia* pneumatis alm i,  
 M e iuvet et faciat *implere quod* utile fia t,  
 A ssit principio *sancta* maria me o,  
 A ve, tumbam *sancti* dilectam dat nichula i,  
 I n fundens olei sudorem *sanctificat* i,  
 D et michi peccanti ius patris *scribere* tant i,  
 U t prosit menti *concordans* sepe legent i.  
 S *cribere* si noris fructus tibi *crescit* honori s.<sup>121</sup>

119 C.R. Unger, *Heilagra manna sögur II*, 50. – “Þat ord er i upphafi var med gudi, fyrir hvert gud skapadi alla hluti, gefi þann framburd tungu minni meðr haleitri miskunn sinni, at ek megí heyriliga boda lif ok iarteignir volldugs herra virduligs Nicholai Mirrensis erkibyskups meðr því efni ok undirstodu, sem meistari Johannes Barensis erkidiakn hefir sett ok samit i latinu. Þvi er heyrandi i fyrstu sa prologus, sem hann frammi skrifar i ondverdu briosti sinnar frasagnar, sendandi nockurum brodur Athanasio at nafni sva sem heilsanar-bref undir kærleik astarinnar.”

120 The poem is only preserved in AM 638 4to. This manuscript is a copy of a 14th-century codex belonging to the University of Copenhagen that was lost in the fire of 1728. A note that accompanies AM 638 4to in the hand of Árni Magnússon identifies the lost original (‘Nikulass Saga Mira biskups. Ex Codice Academico. in folio, Bibliothecæ Resenianæ’). C.R. Unger, *Heilagra manna sögur II*, 49, refers to it as *Codex Resenianus*. The copyist is Eyjólfur Björnsson, a reliable scribe, who worked under the instructions of Árni Magnússon himself. See Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, “Leiðbeiningar Árna Magnússonar,” *Gripla* 12 (2001): 95–124. Other manuscripts of Bergr Sokkason’s *Nikulás saga erkibyskups* leave out the poem, along with the Latin text of *Ave Maria* (only in AM 643 4to, 1r, a 14th-century ms. like the *Codex Resenianus*). On Bergr Sokkason and his *Nikulás saga erkibyskups* including ample bibliographical references, see Sverrir Tómasson, “Íslenskar Nikulás sögur,” *Helgastaðabók: Nikulás saga: Perg. 4to nr. 16 Konungsbókblöðu í Stokkhólmi*, eds. Selma Jónsdóttir, Stefán Karlsson and Sverrir Tómasson (Reykjavík: Lögberg, 1982), 25–41.

121 English trans.: May the grace of the nurturing spirit be present in this work. / May she assist me and make me fulfill what is useful. / May Saint Mary aid my beginning. / Hail (Mary), she grants the grave of St Nicholas (to be) delightful, / pouring the sweat of the blessed oil. / (May Mary) give me, the sinner, the right to write about so great a father (as St Nicholas), / in such a way that she unifies and helps a mind always reading – / if you know how to write (however), this will bring you the fruit of honor.

Although a less ambitious composition – the first three lines are commonplace incipits known from elsewhere while the rest seems to be an original composition – these verses, together with the following prologue, show such striking similarity to the beginning of the B-redaction of *Þorláks saga* in AM 382 4to, that it seems justifiable to suggest a definitive identification of the B-redactor as Bergr Sökkason. A further stylistic comparison of the sagas attributed to Bergr and the prologue and additions of AM 382 4to, as well as of the so called *Jarteinabók* II, could possibly give support to this identification but such a project would be well beyond the scope of the present paper. AM 382 4to was likely written at the Benedictine monastery of Munkaþverá in the north of Iceland around the middle of the fourteenth century, and may have been intended from the start for the Benedictine nunnery at Reynistaður, founded in 1295, to where, in any case, it found its way before 1525. There it probably remained until the seventeenth century, when it came into the possession of Þorlákur Skúlason of Hólar and was handed down to his son Þórður Þorláksson of Skálholt. Þórður Þorláksson kept the manuscript in his personal belongings and it was then brought to Hlíðarendi as part of his and his wife Guðríður Gísladóttir's property, where Árni Magnússon received it from the bishop's widow in 1702.<sup>122</sup> In a way we can say that the story of the Latin praise poem and AM 382 4to ends where *Þorláks saga helga* started, at Hlíðarendi where St Þorlák was born.<sup>123</sup>

122 Árni Magnússon states in several notes that he received the manuscript from Guðríður Gísladóttir in 1702 and that the manuscript was part of the personal belongings of the bishop's family and did not belong to the property of Skálholt. See Fahn, "Revealing the Secrets," 3–5. AM 382 4to was housed at the Arnamagnæan Collection in Copenhagen until it was returned to Iceland on May 15, 1984. It is currently at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík.

123 The authors of this article have benefited from conversations and email exchanges with a number of scholars while researching and writing this paper; they wish to thank in particular Alex Speed Kjeldsen, Annette Lassen, Jonna Louis-Jensen, Marteinn H. Sigurðsson, Martin Chase, Philip Roughton, Christopher Sanders, Sigurður Pétursson and Sverrir Tómasson for their help at various stages of the work – hoping that all the others who have been involved in one way or another will not take the omission of their names as a sign of the authors' ingratitude.



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## SUMMARY

'The Forgotten Poem: A Latin Panegyric for Saint Þorlákr in AM 382 4to.'

**Keywords:** Saint Þorlákr, Latin poetry, *Þorláks saga helga*, Bergr Sökkason.

AM 382 4to is the sole witness to the text of the B-version of *Þorláks saga helga*. The first recto page of this manuscript contains a Latin poem about St Þorlákr. This poem has previously been printed three times, but in every case the text was less than adequate. This article publishes a newly-edited Latin text of the poem, as well as an English translation and detailed analysis of the poem and its connection with the B-redaction of *Þorláks saga helga*. The authors address, moreover, the relationship between the Latin *Vita St Thorlaci* and the vernacular saga. Finally, they present evidence to suggest that Bergr Sökkason was the redactor of AM 382 4to.

## EFNISÁGRIP

AM 382 4to inniheldur B-gerð *Þorláks sögu helga*. Á fyrsta varðveitta blaði handritsins stendur kvæði á latínu um Þorlák helga, sem hefur verið gefið út þrisvar áður með ófullkomnum hætti, og aldrei lesið að neinu gagni eða greint. Í greininni er réttur texti kvæðisins prentaður, þýddur og skýrður, en jafnframt er þess freistað að upplýsa um ástæðuna fyrir staðsetningu þess fyrir framan B-gerð

*Þorláks sögu*. Einnig setja höfundarnir fram tilgátu um upphaf og varðveislu *Þorláks sögu helga* á norrænu og samband hennar við latneska frumtextann. Að lokum er lagt til að B-gerð *Þorláks sögu helga* sé verk Bergs Sökkasonar.

*Susanne M. Fahm*  
*Department of Scandinavian Studies*  
*University of Wisconsin - Madison*  
*1306 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Drive*  
*Madison, Wisconsin 53706, U.S.A.*  
*fahm@wisc.edu*

*Gottskálk Jensson*  
*Háskóla Íslands*  
*Sæmundargötu 2*  
*1S-101 Reykjavík*  
*gthj@hi.is*