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## The transitional passage between *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and *Óláfs saga helga* in *Flateyjarbók*

### Introduction

Ideally, a text's layout will facilitate reading by indicating the coherence of successive strings of text. In manuscripts, one can find structuring elements such as rubrics (often in red), and initial letters of different sizes and with varying degrees of ornamentation and colour usage, and in some cases even further illustrations; as for initials, one can note that "[t]he more important the division and the higher the status of the manuscript, the larger and more elaborate the initials would be" (Clemens/Graham 2007, 20–25, quote at 25). Even if these elements are not found in all manuscripts, the intended structure is visible in the form of areas

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**Abstract:** In contrast to other versions of the longest *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* (both the older redaction and AM 62 fol.), the *Flateyjarbók* version shows some notable modifications of the saga's last part, which covers the period from the battle of Svölðr to Óláfr Tryggvason's death. One can, for instance, find that the chapters on Saint Óláfr and his half-brother Haraldr harðráði have been omitted. Furthermore, chapters linked to the rule of Eiríkr Hákonarson are not positioned in but after *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, thus creating a transitional passage to the introductory chapters with the genealogical content of *Óláfs saga helga*. Into this transitional passage further texts were interpolated. The text edition by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger does not account for the separate status of this passage. In this article, I will address research investigating where to set the beginning and the end of the transitional passage, and suggest a division based not only on the narrative content but also the size of the initials. For comparing different ways of combining sagas about Óláfr Tryggvason and Saint Óláfr, two manuscripts from the older redaction, AM 61 fol. and SKB perg. 1 fol. ("Bergsbók"), will also be drawn upon.

**Keywords:** versions, initials, text editions, multiple-text manuscript, Old Norse literature.

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left blank, because “[...] the scribe would first write those portions of text that were in plain ink [...]” (Clemens/Graham 2007, 20f.). However, editors of text editions can be reluctant to follow the content division in manuscripts if this division conflicts with their preconceptions of how a manuscript should be structured content-wise. This is the case with the treatment of the transitional passage between *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and *Óláfs saga helga* in the standard diplomatic text edition of the manuscript Flateyjarbók by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Carl Richard Unger (*Flb* 1860–68), the separate status of which is not accounted for in their edition. Following from acknowledgement of this transitional passage, the point of beginning of *Óláfs saga helga* in their text edition has also to be called into question. The same observations hold true for Sigurður Nordal’s edition of Flateyjarbók, with a normalised text which is based on theirs (*FlbSN* 1944, vol.1, XIX).

Flateyjarbók, also known as GKS 1005 fol., is a most unusual codex. It is the largest manuscript of its kind (with regard to size and quantity of folios) from the Icelandic Middle Ages and displays high quality of both script and illuminations (*ÓTmÓH* 2000, CXII). Furthermore, the manuscript includes information in folio 1v that it was owned by Jón Hákonarson, a wealthy Icelandic farmer (who is also assumed to have been the commissioner), and written by Jón Þórðarson and Magnús Þórhallsson, with Magnús also being responsible for its decoration. Even the period of time when Flateyjarbók was written can be established by combining information in folio 4r (1387) and the last entry in the annals (1394) included in the manuscript (*ÓTmÓH* 2000, CXVf.). Jón wrote folios 4v–134va, while Magnús continued writing from the last line of 134va onwards and also added three leaves with text before Jón’s part (*ÓTmÓH* 2000, CXIIIff.).

It is unknown where Flateyjarbók was written but the two scribes Jón and Magnús must have had access to a large number of manuscripts as, in Ólafur Halldórsson’s estimation, about 40 to 50 manuscripts were used for writing the 202 leaves Flateyjarbók originally consisted of (*ÓTmÓH* 2000, CXXV). The sagas about the Norwegian kings Óláfr Tryggvason, Óláfr Haraldsson, Sverrir Sigurðarson and Hákon Hákonarson formed the manuscript’s “basic framework” (Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 1993, 198), but the sagas of the two namesakes are by far the longest of the four. The saga about Óláfr Tryggvason is preceded by shorter texts including poems, genealogies and *Eiríks saga víðförla*, and after the saga about Hákon Hákonarson one can find further material on Óláfr Haraldsson,

*Grænlandinga þáttur*, *Helga þáttur ok Úlfs*, a saga about the English king Edward the Confessor and annals (comp. Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 2000, 99–112 and also the table of content in Zernack 1999, 95). A question that cannot be satisfactorily answered is how far Jón Þórðarson and Magnús Þórhallsson were involved in planning *Flateyjarbók*, and how far they made textual modifications in the sagas. Different views have been voiced on which texts were originally intended to be included in *Flateyjarbók*, whether it could have been meant as a present for the Norwegian king Óláfr IV Hákonarson and whether (or to what extent) the king's death in 1387 had an impact on the composition of the manuscript. Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir (2010) is highly critical of the idea that the manuscript was intended as a present for Óláfr IV, which one can find in e.g. Ólafur Halldórsson (1990a, 209f., 430), Würth (1991, 28f., 67), Zernack (1999, 97, 106–110) and Rowe (2005, 24ff., 96, 392). She has also tried to establish a narrower chronology for when the different parts were written and combines this with her interpretation of the manuscript's contents, concluding that it is much more likely that *Flateyjarbók* was from the beginning intended for Jón Hákonarson (Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 2010, 19f., 30, 45).<sup>1</sup>

The part of the manuscript that will be of interest for this article is the transitional passage between the sagas about Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson. In what follows, I will address research into where to set the beginning and the end of this transitional passage, and will supplement content-based arguments with considerations on the size of the initials. Magnús Þórhallsson illuminated *Flateyjarbók* but the part of the manuscript to be analysed was written by Jón Þórðarson, which means that it was Jón who left the space for the initials and thereby determined their size and the importance of the chapters. The transitional passage will be discussed with regard to its relationship to the sagas about the two namesakes. In particular, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* will be considered, as the version preserved in *Flateyjarbók* shows some notable modifications in the saga's last part which are connected with the creation of the transi-

<sup>1</sup> Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir (2010, 5, 45) argues that *Flateyjarbók* was written in three stages, with the greater part of the manuscript being written in 1387 and the remaining parts towards the end of 1390 and from 1391–1394. She sees no connection between the king's death and the writing of the manuscript (Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 2010, 33). However, she suggests no explanation for why from 1390 on additional material was included. A slightly different chronology for when the different parts were written has been presented by Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson (2018, 214f.); he does not refer to the question of whether the manuscript could have been intended as a present for Óláfr IV.

tional passage to *Óláfs saga helga*. For comparing different ways of combining sagas about these two kings, two other late medieval manuscripts, AM 61 fol. and SKB perg. 1 fol., will also be drawn upon.

### *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* as a text work

The term ‘text work’ was coined by Bo-A. Wendt (2006, 253) who defines it as follows: “[t]he text work is the abstract entity that by (a given group of) text users is identified as one and the same each time it occurs (even in quite heterogeneous versions)”. Wendt (2006, 258) also stresses that the understanding of a text work can differ diachronically as it depends on the specific versions (text witnesses) of a text work which circulate at a given time.<sup>2</sup> *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* displays a comprehensive textual history, comprising different stages and different versions. This is, of course, also true of a number of other sagas, including *Óláfs saga helga*. Especially in encyclopaedias, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* is used as the generic title for Old Norse biographies of this king (e.g. Ólafur Halldórsson 1993; Sverrir Tómasson 2003) and this usage, in fact, reflects the understanding of text work by Wendt. The late medieval stage of the development of the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason is represented by the comprehensive so-called *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* (“the longest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason”, henceforth *ÓTm*), which is represented in different versions, among them the version in Flateyjarbók. Using Wendt’s notion of text, *ÓTm* is a text witness of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* but *ÓTm* can also be described as an abstract entity on its own, i.e. a text work with its specific text witnesses.

The different layers of the textual history of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* are traceable in *ÓTm*. The oldest saga about Óláfr Tryggvason is assumed to be a translation from a now lost Latin *vita* which was composed by Oddr Snorrason, a monk at the Benedictine monastery of Þingeyrar in northern Iceland, probably around the year 1190 (Ólafur Halldórsson 1993, 449). For that reason, it is commonly called Oddr’s

<sup>2</sup> Wendt (2006, 253, 258f.) differentiates between ‘textverk’, ‘textvittne’ and ‘textbärare’, translated in his English abstract as ‘text work’, ‘text witness’ and ‘text carrier’. He uses ‘text carrier’ to refer to the physical appearance of a text witness of a text work, for example a manuscript or a (part of a) book, arguing that the differentiation between text witness and text carrier is less relevant if text works are transmitted in manuscripts (Wendt 2006, 258, 260). For a discussion and application of Wendt’s division, see Johansson (2010).

*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*. Text from it was included in *ÓTm* but not all text witnesses and manuscripts of *ÓTm* explicitly name Oddr Snorrason (Finnur Jónsson 1930, 121, 127–136; *ÓTmÓH* 2000, 64, 67). Oddr's saga is clearly influenced by ecclesiastical and hagiographical literature; it includes passages which resemble accounts of miracles although Óláfr Tryggvason has never been canonised (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2005, 151–171; comp. also Phelpstead 2012). An example of this is the postulate that the king did not die in the sea battle of Svǫldr in the year 999 or 1000. Around the same time as Oddr Snorrason, Gunnlaugr Leifsson, likewise a monk at Þingeyrar, also wrote a Latin *vita* about Óláfr Tryggvason parts of which have only been preserved in an Icelandic translation in *ÓTm* where Gunnlaugr is also mentioned several times (Finnur Jónsson 1930, 125; comp. index to *ÓTmÓH* 2000, 117). Oddr's saga was also used for *Heimskringla*, a collection of kings' sagas attributed to Snorri Sturluson (composed probably between 1220 and 1230; *Hkr* 2016, vii, ix). Snorri transformed Oddr's saga in such a way that, in Ólafur Halldórsson's (1993, 449) words, he “pruned the diction of all hagiographic characteristics”. Snorri's saga about Óláfr Tryggvason has been identified as the main source for *ÓTm* (Finnur Jónsson 1930, 119ff.; Ólafur Halldórsson 1990b, 48f.; *ÓTmSnorri* 2001, lv–lx), but in *ÓTm* the account of the king's life is supplemented with additional material, not only by Oddr and Gunnlaugr but also from sagas, for example *Færeyinga saga*, and with þættir (Ólafur Halldórsson 1990b, 52f.). Thus the king's biography is put in a larger historical and geographical framework which also includes events in the North Atlantic territories, in particular the conversion of the Icelanders. Looking at the manuscript evidence, one can see that different versions of the text work *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* were circulating at the same time. Oddr's saga is preserved in three Icelandic manuscripts dating from the period 1250–1300 (AM 310 4to, SKB perg. 18 4to, DG 4–7; *ONP* 1989, 354f.), and from that period dates also the oldest surviving manuscript fragment of *Heimskringla* (Lbs frag. 82 consisting of one leaf; *ONP* 1989, 273; comp. also *Hkr* 2016, xiii). Other medieval manuscripts of *Heimskringla* are from the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (*ONP* 1989, 272f.) which makes them nearly contemporary with the oldest manuscript of *ÓTm*, AM 61 fol., which is dated to around 1350–75.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The last three gatherings of AM 61 fol. (with passages from the saga about Saint Óláfr) are dated to the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (*ÓTmÓH* 2000, XXIII). All the manuscripts of *ÓTm* and their relation to each other are described in *ÓTmÓH* (2000). For dating of all manuscripts of *ÓTm* comp. also *ONP* (1989, 353f.).

AM 61 fol. is also the manuscript on which Ólafur Halldórsson's text edition of *ÓTm* is based. It includes the so-called older redaction of *ÓTm* which can also be found in AM 53 fol. and AM 54 fol. (both dated to about 1375–1400 and both defective), and SKB perg. 1 fol., also known as Bergsbók, dated to about 1400–1425 (defective but not in the part that contains *ÓTm*).<sup>4</sup> In the first rubric in Bergsbók, *ÓTm* is attributed to Bergr Sökkason who is known to have been a monk at the monastery of Þingeyrar and later, in the second quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the abbot at Munkaþverá (*ÓTm*ÓH 1958, 1n.; Ólafur Halldórsson 1990b, 47f.). Combined evidence from the dating of the script in *ÓTm* and the palimpsests (which contained another, shorter saga of Óláfr Tryggvason) seems to support the attribution of *ÓTm* to Bergr in the manuscript (Ólafur Halldórsson 1990b, 55; *ÓTm*ÓH 2000, CLXVI; see also Heans-Głogowska 2014, 123–131). Comparing *ÓTm* in the manuscripts of the older redaction one can notice, for example, a different division of chapters, but text passages were not rearranged. A rearrangement of chapters and text passages can, however, be found in the younger redaction of *ÓTm*, along with further modifications such as omissions, paraphrases and interpolations. The younger redaction is mainly represented by AM 62 fol. (which has several lacunae) and Flateyjarbók, with the latter most likely having been copied from a manuscript closely related to AM 62 fol. (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, CCCXVIII).<sup>5</sup> These two manuscripts differ more from each other in their treatment of *ÓTm* than the manuscripts of the older redaction; in Flateyjarbók, for example, a more comprehensive account was preferred where AM 62 fol. has abridged chapters (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, CCCX–CCCXXIII, comp. also Finnur Jónsson 1927, 150–169). Of the above mentioned manuscripts, AM 61 fol., Bergsbók and Flateyjarbók include both a saga about Óláfr Tryggvason and one about Saint Óláfr. Moreover, it seems probable that AM 62 fol., which today includes only *ÓTm*, originally also contained a saga about Saint Óláfr

<sup>4</sup> Other medieval manuscripts of the older redaction include fragments, among them a fragment of a copy of AM 54 fol. (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, CLV–CLXIII). For a study on the use of sources in and the authorial intention of the older redaction, see Heans-Głogowska (2014), who finds the narration of the conversion to Christianity in Iceland central to understanding the saga.

<sup>5</sup> In *ÓTm*ÓH (2000, CIII), AM 62 fol. is dated to 1350–80, in *ONP* (1989, 353) to c.1375–1400. The third manuscript belonging to the younger redaction is an addition to AM 54 fol. from c.1600, which includes most of the shorter interpolated texts in AM 62 fol. (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, LXXI, CCCXI, 1–64). Ólafur Halldórsson assumes that both Flateyjarbók and the younger part of AM 54 fol. go back to a common archetype with text of *ÓTm* (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, CCLXXXI, CCCXLIX).

(*AM* 62 fol. 1993, 18). It has been suggested that *ÓTm* may have been composed as a counterpart to the so-called separate *Óláfs saga helga* which also provides an explanation for the comprehensiveness of *ÓTm* (Ólafur Halldórsson 1990b, 48 and *ÓTm*Snorri 2011, v; Heinrichs 1994b, 116f.); in *AM* 61 fol., *Bergsbók* and *Flateyjarbók*, the saga about Óláfr Tryggvason contains more folios than the one about Óláfr Haraldsson.

## The concluding passage of *ÓTm* in *Flateyjarbók*

The central event in *ÓTm* is the sea battle at Svǫlðr which took place in the year 999 or 1000, in which the historical Óláfr Tryggvason died. In this battle, Óláfr and his men, who have been trapped by Jarl Sigvaldi Strút-Haraldsson, fight against a coalition which is led by the Danish king Sveinn tjúguskegg Haraldsson, the Swedish king Óláfr Eiríksson and the Norwegian jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson. The account of Svǫlðr ends in the older redaction and in *Flateyjarbók* (*AM* 62 fol. has a lacuna here) with the death of Óláfr's wife Þyri out of grief over the loss of her husband (A 257; comp. Flb 387).<sup>6</sup> Both redactions do not end at this point but include a concluding passage which covers the period after the battle of Svǫlðr to Óláfr Tryggvason's death several decades later in a monastery in Sýrland, news of which is brought to the English king Játvarðr Aðalráðsson (i.e. Edward the Confessor, ruled 1042–1066). The concluding passage in the younger redaction, however, differs in composition from that in the older redaction as some chapters were abridged or omitted, others were rearranged and new material was interpolated.

In the older redaction, the last part of *ÓTm* (A 258–286) is characterised by the narration of events which happen at the same time, creating a “continuous retrieval” of different strands (Clover 1982, 110f.). Thus the strands about Óláfr's survival of Svǫlðr are interlaced with the subsequent political developments in Norway under Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson, his son Hákon and Eiríkr's brother Sveinn and later Óláfr Haraldsson, Magnús Ólafsson and Haraldr Sigurðarson. In the younger redaction, especially in *Flateyjarbók* (Flb 388–406), one can see a tendency to avoid

<sup>6</sup> In the following, *AM* 61 fol. will be referred to for the older redaction by using the abbreviation ‘A’ plus chapter number (comp. *ÓTm*ÓH 1958 and 1961). *Flateyjarbók* will be referred to as ‘Flb’ plus chapter number (comp. *Flb* 1860). For *AM* 62 fol., see the variant readings in the critical apparatus in *ÓTm*ÓH (1958 and 1961) and interpolations (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, 1–66).



a repeated shift of focus to other Norwegian rulers by abridging or excluding such narrative strands. The chapters with a focus on Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson were not copied into the Flateyjarbók version of *ÓTm*.<sup>7</sup> The same holds true for chapters on Óláfr Haraldsson (in particular his tensions with Erlingr Skjálgsson, Óláfr's escape to Garðaríki and his death at the battle of Stiklastaðir) and chapters that are set during the reign of Magnús Ólafsson and Haraldr Sigurðarson, most of which were already abridged and placed earlier in *ÓTm* in AM 62 fol.<sup>8</sup> AM 61 fol. and Bergsbók included these stories about Óláfr Haraldsson twice, in *ÓTm* and in *Óláfs saga helga*, but in Flateyjarbók this repetition is avoided because they are only included in *Óláfs saga helga*. In Bergsbók (but not in AM 61 fol.) one can, however, notice that in the part of *ÓTm* on Óláfr Haraldsson only space for small initials was left, as if to minimise the visual prominence of this narrative section.<sup>9</sup> In Flateyjarbók, an effort to make a clearer thematic separation of the sagas about the two namesakes and avoidance of repetition is also visible in *Óláfs saga helga*, where passages were omitted if they had already been included in *ÓTm* (comp. *Ósb* 1941, vol.2, 1031).

Because of these modifications in the last part of *ÓTm* in Flateyjarbók, stories about Óláfr Tryggvason's survival of Svölðr are closer together and the focus on this king becomes more pronounced. The saga's last part begins with chapters on Óláfr's former skald Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld Óttarsson who learns about Óláfr's death (Flb 388–390; comp. A 264), followed by chapters in which former retainers mourn for Óláfr (Flb 391–392; comp. A 261, 265, 263), accounts of his survival (Flb 393–396; comp. A 267–269, 283) and how the English king Játvarðr has made it a habit to tell his men of Óláfr Tryggvason on the first day of Easter (Flb 397; comp. A 285–286). The sequence of the last chapters of *ÓTm* in Flateyjarbók is very similar to that in AM 62 fol.:

<sup>7</sup> For the chapters on Jarl Eiríkr, a comparison between Flateyjarbók and AM 62 fol. is only in part possible as AM 62 fol. begins again on *ÓTm*ÓH (1961, 307.9) after a lacuna, but two chapters (corresponding to A 266, 270) can be found in modified form in AM 62 fol. For an overview of the sequence of chapters and omissions in AM 62 fol. see *ÓTm*ÓH (2000, CCCXVIII).

<sup>8</sup> In contrast to Flateyjarbók, AM 62 fol. includes an interpolation on Óláfr Tryggvason's son Tryggvi entitled *Tryggva Ólafssonar hefnt* (after A 282). This can also be seen as an attempt to intensify the focus on Óláfr in the saga's last part.

<sup>9</sup> In Bergsbók, medium-sized initials are three to four lines high; the last medium-sized initial in *ÓTm* can be found at the beginning of the chapter corresponding to A 250 (on fol. 99ra; space left for it: four lines high, one third of the column wide); afterwards, only space for small initials was left (two lines high); see digitalised images of Bergsbók at <https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/m.php?p=ms&i=425> (accessed 2019-03-27).



Table 1. The sequence of the last chapters of *ÓTm* in AM 62 fol. and *Flateyjarbók* with corresponding chapters in AM 61 fol.

AM 62 fol.	Flateyjarbók
A 285 and A 286	Flb 397 (= A 285, beginning of A 286)
<i>Halldórs þátr Snorrasonar</i>	Flb 398–399 (= <i>Halldórs þátr Snorrasonar</i> )
A 284	not included
<i>Frá Sigurði byskupi</i>	Flb 400–403 (= <i>Frá Sigurði byskupi</i> ), Flb 404 (= ending of A 286)
<i>Sýn Brestis</i>	Flb 405 (= <i>Sýn Brestis</i> )
<i>Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi</i>	Flb 406 (= <i>Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi</i> )

In the older and younger redactions, one can read about Einarr þambarskelfir Eindriðason in the accounts of Óláfr's survival (Flb 396; comp. A 283). Einarr is one of Óláfr's retainers and fights with him at Svǫldr. Einarr is not the only retainer of Óláfr who survived this battle but the only one of them who features afterwards in the saga. When a man named Gautr on his journey through the Holy Land meets Óláfr (who does not reveal his identity although Gautr asks him), he has to tell him about what happened after the battle at Svǫldr, and is also requested to give information on Einarr. Óláfr asks Gautr to take a knife and belt to Einarr and later Einarr confirms that it must have been Óláfr who sent these presents. Shortly after that, we find *Halldórs þátr Snorrasonar* interpolated in the younger redaction.<sup>10</sup> Einarr holds a special place among Óláfr's retainers, and in the older redaction, too, he is mentioned more often than others. In *Flateyjarbók*, Einarr is also mentioned in, for instance, *Þorsteins þátr uxafóts*, *Orms þátr Stórolfssonar* (both narratives only in *Flateyjarbók*) and *Óláfs saga helga* (comp. index in *Flb* 1868, 598). The eponymous hero of *Halldórs þátr Snorrasonar* stays with Einarr and kills one of Einarr's men, who has derided him. Before giving his verdict, Einarr recalls an incident that happened shortly after the battle at Svǫldr, when he and two other retainers of Óláfr were captured and sold as slaves to a man who set them free under the condition that Einarr will do the same should someone once be in his power. Einarr and the two others recognise King Óláfr in this man. Fulfilling this condition, Einarr does not punish Halldórr.<sup>11</sup> *Halldórs þátr Snorrasonar* con-

<sup>10</sup> After this þátr, AM 62 fol. includes a chapter (A 284) that tells about the murderer of Einarr and his son on the orders of Haraldr harðráði. The term þátr is only used in AM 62 fol.: "Sídasti þátr Olafssaugo Trygguason[ar] Noregs konungs" (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, 47).

<sup>11</sup> The report of Einarr's captivity conflicts with *ÓTm* in both redactions, because there, Einarr is among the men who are spared punishment by Jarl Eiríkr (A 256, 262; in *Flateyjarbók*, one of these chapters is in *ÓTm*, Flb 385, the other in the transitional passage to *Óláfs saga helga* on *Flb* 1860, 549 where it is denoted as ch. 434).

tributes to and emphasises the presentation of Óláfr Tryggvason in a Christian perspective by resorting to biblical motifs such as the disciples' failure to recognise the Saviour after his resurrection (Harris 1974, 254f.).

The last seven chapters of *ÓTm* in Flateyjarbók extend this Christian dimension. *Frá Sigurði byskupi* tells about Óláfr's bishop Sigurðr ríki, with the version in Flateyjarbók including an interpolation which stresses Óláfr's missionary zest: "þesse agætr herra Ólafr konungr hefir fyrst alla rettkristna gert med byskuplig(u) fulltinge en styrkt sidan ok stiornat kristinnominn med konungligu uallde (This famous lord King Óláfr was the first who with episcopal help converted all to the true faith and has since then strengthened and ruled over Christianity)" (*Flb* 1860, 511). After *Frá Sigurði byskupi*, the news of Óláfr's death is included (*Flb* 1860, 516, in ch. 404, corresponding to the last part of A 286). In *Sýn Brestis*, a man called Brestir has a vision of Óláfr and Bishop Sigurðr during the night in which the bishop of Skálholt, Þorlákr Rúnólfsson, dies in the year 1133.<sup>12</sup> The last chapter of the saga, *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi*, follows convention by naming sources and informants (comp. McGerr 1989, 162f.). Oddr Snorrason and Gunnlaugr Leifsson are mentioned and so is Gizurr Hallsson's contribution to Gunnlaugr's vita of Óláfr. In contrast to AM 62 fol., one can see that at the end of *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi* in Flateyjarbók, a passage in the tone of a prayer has been interpolated – this too is typical of endings in medieval text works (comp. McGerr 1989, 162). The interpolation summarises Óláfr's missionary efforts and refers to the typological interpretation of the relationship of Óláfr Tryggvason and Saint Óláfr Haraldsson, who completes Norway's conversion to Christianity. The last word of *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi* and thus *ÓTm* is "A-M-E-N" (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, 66n.; comp. *Flb* 1860, 518).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Lönnroth (1963, 88) and Sveinbjörn Rafnsson (2005, 252, 257f.) have noticed similarities between *Sýn Brestis* and the dialogue between Bishop Túrpin and the demons in the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*. Lönnroth (1963, 87) also more generally sees parallels in the accounts of the bishops on Charlemagne and Óláfr Tryggvason.

<sup>13</sup> Of the manuscripts of the older redaction, the ending of *ÓTm* is explicitly referred to only in Bergsbók where one can find the Latin phrase "Explicet iste liber sit scriptor crimine liber" (on 111va; *ÓTm*ÓH 1961, 349). It cannot be established with certainty whether *ÓTm* in AM 62 fol. ended with *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi*. On the last preserved folio of this manuscript one can see that in column 53vb space is left for about two lines (AM 62 fol. 1993, 10). Ólafur Halldórsson has pointed out that the last two gatherings of the manuscript are less damaged than the gatherings at the beginning of the manuscript. According to him, this could be an indication that the outer leaves of the last two gatherings have been lost and that *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi* was possibly followed by more chapters of *ÓTm* (AM 62 fol. 1993, 10f.; *ÓTm*ÓH 2000, LXXXVII, XC).

## The ending of *ÓTm* and the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga* in the text edition by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger – earlier research and codicological evidence

In the text edition of *Flateyjarbók* by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger, *ÓTm* does not end with *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi*. Instead, both the table of contents (published in *Flb* 1868) and the running heads in *Flb* (1860) show that they assume the saga to continue for some 65 pages which include chapters on the political situation in Norway after Óláfr's defeat at Svölðr which are interwoven with interpolations (*Flb* 1860, 518–561), followed by *Hálfðanar þáttur svarta* (*Flb* 1860, 561–567), *Haralds þáttur hárfagra* (*Flb* 1860, 567–576), *Hauks þáttur hábrókar* (*Flb* 1860, 577–583), and finally a chapter with a short list of the Norwegian kings from Hálfðan svarti to Óláfr Haraldsson (*Flb* 1860, 583; not listed separately with a title in their table of contents), which also ends the first volume of their edition. The second volume begins with *Haralds þáttur grenska* (*Flb* 1862, 3–5) and *Óláfs þáttur Geirstaðaálfs* (*Flb* 1862, 6–9) which they number as chapters belonging to *Óláfs saga helga*. In their introduction to *Flateyjarbók*, published in *Flb* (1868, I–XXIV), I could find no passage in which they discuss their content division.

Finnur Jónsson (1927, 165) stressed that *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi* is the last chapter of *ÓTm* in *Flateyjarbók*: “Her er således den egenlige saga om Olaf, efter Jóns mening, sluttet. Hvad der følger, er efterslæt og supplementer”. The section referred to comprises *Flb* (1860, 518–583) and includes text passages, which in the older redaction are part of *ÓTm*. One can only speculate that this fact may have contributed to the decision of the editors of the text edition not to consider the ending of *ÓTm* in this specific text witness, the *Flateyjarbók* version. One could argue that the notion of *ÓTm* as an abstract text work is reflected in their decision, because they seem to assume that the text passages included in other versions of *ÓTm* also have to be part of *ÓTm* in *Flateyjarbók*. For Stefanie Würth (1991, 31f., 35f., 57), the passage following *ÓTm* in *Flateyjarbók* functions as a transition which should link the sagas about Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson.<sup>14</sup> For Würth, this transitional

<sup>14</sup> Verbatim Würth (1991, 32) writes: “Dadurch gelingt es dem Kompilator der *Flateyjarbók*, die beiden *Ólafssagas* zu einem großen Gesamtwerk zu verbinden.”

passage begins with the chapter rubricated “her er þátrr eir’ hakonar sunar. capitulum” (transcription following ÓTmÓH 1961, 241n.) and ends after *Óláfs þátrr Geirstaðaálfs*, just before the rubric “her hefr vpp sogu olafs konungs haralldz sunar” (transcription following Rowe 2005, 377).

Elizabeth Ashman Rowe seems more undecided about where ÓTm ends and where *Óláfs saga helga* begins, but she does not discuss the possibility of a transitional passage. Once Rowe (2005, 184) suggests that ÓTm ends after *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi*, but this has no impact on her interpretation. More often, she assumes that ÓTm ends on *Flb* (1860, 561) and that *Óláfs saga helga* begins with *Hálfðanar þátrr svarta* on the same page (Rowe 2005, 99f., 368n., 375n.). This seems to be confirmed by a rubric that Magnús Þórhallsson wrote later in the saga. There, on 96ra he denotes the narrative of Tóki as the ninth of *Óláfs saga helga*, which means that – counting the rubrics that include the term þátrr and the first section of *Fóstbræðra saga* – *Óláfs saga helga* should begin with *Hálfðanar þátrr svarta* (Rowe 2005, 121f.n.).<sup>15</sup> Although Rowe does not elaborate on this in detail, her conclusion is a consistent application of findings by Oscar Albert Johnsen and Jón Helgason, who have compared *Óláfs saga helga* in *Flateyjarbók* with other versions of this so-called separate or greatest saga about Óláfr Haraldsson. In AM 61 fol. and *Bergsbók*, both of which include a saga on both Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson, these sagas begin with a passage on the earlier Norwegian rulers from the time of Haraldr hárfagri (with *Bergsbók* also having a prologue to *Óláfs saga helga* before these chapters; Ósh 1941, vol.1, 1n.). These accounts of the earlier Norwegian rulers strongly resemble one another, in part even in wording (Ósh 1941, vol.2, 1030f.).<sup>16</sup> But: “En slik fremgangsmåte er imot prinsippene i Flat[eyjarbók]. Her utelates alle de avsnitt av Olav den helliges saga som kunde betraktes som gjentagelser av det som alt var fortalt i den store sagaen om Olav Tryggvason [...]” (Ósh 1941, vol.2, 1031, with a list of omissions). Although they then, like Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger, only mention *Haralds þátrr grenska*

<sup>15</sup> The rubric reads in Rowe’s (2005, 369) transcription “her hefr upp hinn niunda <þaatt> olafs soghu haralldzssunar capitulum”). Würth (1991, 36) also mentions this rubric, but in her study I cannot find a discussion of the implications of this rubric for where she sets the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga*.

<sup>16</sup> Compare, for example, A 1–15 (Flb 1–16) with the first nine chapters of Ósh (1941, vol.1, 6–18). For parallels between the beginning of ÓTm, the separate *Óláfs saga helga* and *Heimskringla*, see also ÓTmSnorri (2001).

and *Óláfs þáttir Geirstaðaálfs* as þættir linked to *Óláfs saga helga*, the narratives preceding them, from *Hálfðanar þáttir svarta* onwards, also display content linked to the opening chapters of *Óláfs saga helga* in manuscripts other than *Flateyjarbók*. Therefore, on the basis of content, Rowe's decision to establish the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga* with *Hálfðanar þáttir svarta* can be supported.

Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir (2010, 17) en passant mentions a transitional passage, but hers differs from Würth's: "[...] Überleitungspassage im *Hálfðanar þáttir svarta ok Haralds hárfagra* zwischen den beiden Olafs-sagas". Strictly speaking, this would comprise only the narrative of Hálfðan svarti and his son Haraldr hárfagri but it can be assumed that she also includes *Hauks þáttir hábrókar* in *Hálfðanar þáttir svarta ok Haralds hárfagra*; although Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger in the table of contents (for all volumes included in *Flb* 1868) list *Hauks þáttir hábrókar* separately, indicating that it is to be found in *Flb* (1860, 577–583), the running head on *Flb* (1860, 581) reads "þáttir Hálfðanar svarta". In an earlier article, Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir (1991, 62ff.) had suggested that the texts in *Flb* (1860, 561–583, i.e. the þættir on Hálfðan and Haraldr and the chapter *Konungatal í Nóregi*) were inserted because Jón Þórðarson wanted to create a bipartite structure with the two Óláfr-sagas; characteristic of this structure is a middle part that seems illogical, in this case the chronological break. In a more recent article, she also stresses that the chronology between the sagas on the two Óláfrs is interrupted, but this time only describes this as a "deutlich markierte [...] Grenze" between the sagas, with the border marked by an initial 11 lines high at the beginning of *Hálfðanar þáttir svarta*; she also writes that an even larger initial can be found at the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga* which is 14 lines high (Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 2016, 180f., 184, quote at 185). From this, one might conclude that she assumes that the initial at the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga* (the chapter about Óláfr's birth) is the other bordering signpost and she refers to *Haralds þáttir grenska* and *Óláfs þáttir Geirstaðaálfs* as "[...] eine Art *proemium* oder *prologus praeter rem*, d.h. eine Einführung oder Vorgeschichte [...]" to *Óláfs saga helga* (Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 2016, 185f.).

Apart from Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir's very brief reference to the size of the initials, only Rowe (2005, 360–384), in a chapter on the illuminations of Magnús Þórhallsson, includes a list of medium-sized and large initials, but she does not draw upon this information in her argumentation on the

ending of *ÓTm* and the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga*. Taking into consideration the size of the initials as indicators for the importance of the respective text passages, some of the above-mentioned content-based arguments appear more plausible than others.

As has become clear, the part of Flateyjarbók that should be looked at more closely is *Flb* (1860, 518) to *Flb* (1862, 10) which can be found on folios 69rb–79ra.<sup>17</sup> These folios can be found in the part of Flateyjarbók written by Jón Þórðarson. In order to be able to evaluate the size of the initials on these folios, the size of the initials in *ÓTm* have to be considered as well. On 5va, at the beginning of *ÓTm*, Jón left so much space that Magnús could draw an initial 10 lines high which covers half of the column. The second large initial can be found at chapter 46 on the birth of Óláfr Tryggvason on 9va, 9 lines high and covering almost half of the column. All other initials in *ÓTm* are smaller, with medium-sized initials stretching over four to six lines. On 69rb, one can find an initial 7 lines high (at the beginning of ch. 407; *Flb* 1860, 518). It could be argued that this initial is only slightly larger than the medium-sized ones in *ÓTm* but, as has been mentioned above, *Frá Gunnlaugi ok Oddi* displays typical closing signals. Therefore, one can say that the size of the initial confirms the assumption voiced by Finnur Jónsson and Stefanie Würth that *ÓTm* ends with *Gunnlaugi ok Oddi* and Würth's assumption that chapter 407 marks the beginning of the transitional passage. Moreover, one can find two references to *ÓTm* in this transition (*Flb* 1860, 518, 520).

As regards the end of the transitional passage between *ÓTm* and *Óláfs saga helga*, one cannot agree with Würth, because the beginning of a new narrative strand, on Hálfðan svarti Guðrøðarson and his son Haraldr hárfagri, is signalled by the initial on folio 75rb. Here, Jón Þórðarson left space for a large initial 11 lines high and also left half of the column empty for it.<sup>18</sup> This initial is even slightly larger than the one at the beginning of *ÓTm* and clearly indicates the beginning of new important content in the manuscript. Content-based assumptions voiced by Rowe that *Óláfs*

<sup>17</sup> Digitalised images of Flateyjarbók can be found at [https://handrit.is/is/manuscript/imaging/is/GKS02-1005#page/Fylgig%C3%B6gn+1r+\(1+af+480\)/mode/2up](https://handrit.is/is/manuscript/imaging/is/GKS02-1005#page/Fylgig%C3%B6gn+1r+(1+af+480)/mode/2up) (accessed 2019-04-01). See also the list of initials in Rowe (2005, 360–369, 373–377).

<sup>18</sup> The beginning of Haraldr's rule on 76ra is marked with an initial 8 lines high. Afterwards, medium-sized initial were planned for *Hauks þátr hábrókar* (six lines high; 77rb), *Haralds þátr grenska* (six lines high; 78ra) and *Óláfs þátr Geirstaðaálfs* (five lines high; 78va).

*saga helga* begins in *Flateyjarbók* with the narrative of Hálfðan svartí can be backed up by the manuscript's layout. At first glance, this conclusion seems to be refuted by 79ra. There, Jón Þórðarson left space for the largest initial in his part of the manuscript, 14 lines high with more than half of the column left empty for it, to highlight the chapter on the birth of Óláfr Haraldsson. However, *Flateyjarbók* is not the only manuscript in which one can see such a 'reverse' relation of size. In *Bergsbók*, one can see the same phenomenon in *ÓTm*; the initial at the beginning of the saga (on 1va with the beginning-formula in the rubric) is 8 lines high and covers half of the column, but the initial for the chapter about the birth of Óláfr Tryggvason (on 11ra) is 10 lines high and is even wider.<sup>19</sup> The other piece of evidence that seems to weaken the assumption that *Óláfs saga helga* begins on 75rb is Magnús Þórhallsson's rubric on 79ra which says that *Óláfs saga helga* begins here. This, however, could be a mistake (see above). Even if one should hesitate to see the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga* on 75rb because of the rubric and initial on 79ra, there can be no doubt that the shorter narratives on 75rb to 79ra prepare for the appearance of Óláfr Haraldsson. Therefore, both Würth's inclusion of them in her transitional passage and Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir's decision to denote the chapters on Hálfðan and his son Haraldr as the transitional passage between the sagas on the two Óláfrs do not seem to be appropriate. These chapters could, however, be described as an introduction to *Óláfs saga helga* because their function is the same Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir identified for *Haralds þáttr grenska* and *Óláfs þáttr Geirstaðaálfs*. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger's assumption that *Óláfs saga helga* begins with *Haralds þáttr grenska* (about the father of Óláfr Haraldsson), is not confirmed by the size of the initial on folio 78ra. Jón left space for an initial 6 lines high and only one third of the column in width, which means that the initial planned for is comparable to (some of) the medium-sized initials in *ÓTm*.

Combining content-based arguments and size of initials, *Flateyjarbók* is found to be structured in the following way on folios 69rb–79ra:

<sup>19</sup> AM 61 fol. cannot be drawn upon for comparison here as no rubrics were completed. One can only note that the space left for the initial on 78rb (the chapter on the birth of Óláfr Haraldsson) is larger than for the initial on 75va (beginning the narrative of Haraldr hárfagri); comp. digitalised images at [https://handrit.is/is/manuscript/imaging/da/AM02-061#page/1r++\(1+af+267\)/mode/2up](https://handrit.is/is/manuscript/imaging/da/AM02-061#page/1r++(1+af+267)/mode/2up) (accessed 2019-04-01).



Table 2. *ÓTm*, the transitional passage and the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga* in *Flb* (1860–1862)

Folio	Contents: major rubrics <sup>21</sup> and size of initials	Corresponding chapters and pages in the text edition	
5v–69r	<i>ÓTm</i> 5va: “her hefr vpp sogu olafs tryGGua sunar”, initial 10 lines high	chs. 1–406 of <i>ÓTm</i>	in <i>Flb</i> (1860, 39–518)
69r–75r	<b>Transitional passage</b> 69rb: “her er þátrr eir’ hakonar sunar. capitulum”, initial 7 lines high  <b>Introduction to <i>Óláfs saga helga</i></b> 75rb: “her hefr vpp þátrr halfdanar suarta”, initial 11 lines high	chs. 407–449 of <i>ÓTm</i>	in <i>Flb</i> (1860, 518–561)
75r–76r	<i>Hálfdanar þátrr svarta</i>	chs. 450–456 of <i>ÓTm</i>	in <i>Flb</i> (1860, 561–567)
76r–77r	<i>Haralds þátrr hárfagra</i>	chs. 457–464 of <i>ÓTm</i>	in <i>Flb</i> (1860, 567–576)
77r–78r	<i>Hauks þátrr hábrókar</i>	chs. 465–469 of <i>ÓTm</i>	in <i>Flb</i> (1860, 577–583)
78r	List of Norwegian rulers	ch. 470 of <i>ÓTm</i>	in <i>Flb</i> (1860, 583)
78r–78v	<i>Haralds þátrr grenska</i>	chs. 1–4 of <i>Óláfs saga helga</i>	in <i>Flb</i> (1862, 3–5)
78v–79r	<i>Óláfs þátrr Geirstaðaálfs</i>	chs. 5–8 of <i>Óláfs saga helga</i>	in <i>Flb</i> (1862, 6–9)
79r	<b><i>Óláfs saga helga</i>: birth of Óláfr</b> 79ra: “her hefr vpp sogu olafs konungs haralldz sunar”, initial 14 lines high	unnumbered chapter	in <i>Flb</i> (1862, 10)

## The content of the transitional passage and a brief comparison with Bergsbók

The transitional passage between *ÓTm* and *Óláfs saga helga* in Flateyjarbók comprises chapters which, partly abridged, can also be found in the older redaction of *ÓTm*.<sup>21</sup> In between these rearranged chapters, one can find additional material, namely *Orms þátrr Stórolfssonar* (FlbT 410–420) and segments of *Grœnlendinga saga* (FlbT 427–433), *Færeyinga saga* (FlbT 435–443) and *Orkneyinga saga* (FlbT 444–447).<sup>22</sup>

*ÓTm* ended with a passage on Óláfr Tryggvason’s survival of and final death several decades after the battle at Svölðr. The first chapter of the transitional passage goes even further back in time and tells of how the

<sup>20</sup> The transcription of the rubrics on 5va and 69rb follows *ÓTmÓH* (1958, 1n. and 1961, 241n.), for the rubrics on 75rb and 79ra comp. Rowe (2005, 367, 375).

<sup>21</sup> When referring to the chapters in this passage, the abbreviation ‘FlbT’ will be used, followed by the chapter number assigned in *ÓTm* by the editors of *Flb* (1860).

<sup>22</sup> For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that FlbT 422 and 423, corresponding to A 264 on Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld, for a few lines interpolate text from *Hallfreðar saga vandræðaskálds* (*ÓTmÓH* 1961, 311n.).

son of Jarl Hákon Sigurðarson, Eiríkr, flees from Norway after the defeat of his father (*FlbT* 407). The following chapters proceed chronologically and trace the fate of Eiríkr and Jarl Hákon's other son Sveinn, who defeat King Óláfr at Svǫldr and become the new rulers. It is the reign of these two jarls that forms the chronological framework for the transitional passage and its interpolated narratives. As the survival of King Óláfr has already been dealt with in *ÓTm*, the transitional passage in *Flateyjarbók* can focus on other protagonists, take up motifs or continue narrative strands from *ÓTm* some of which will be continued in *Óláfs saga helga* (in the case of *Færeyinga saga* and *Orkneyinga saga*; comp. Würth 1991, 63f., 66).<sup>23</sup>

A particularly striking example of this is *Orms þáttir Stórólfssonar*. The oldest manuscript that preserves this þáttir is *Flateyjarbók*, but it seems highly likely that this was copied from another source (Faulkes 1967, 40). The Icelander Ormr Stórólfsson can be described as a man of extraordinary physical strength, and his story was obviously modelled on elements from *Grettis saga* and *Qrvar-Odds saga* (Faulkes 1967, 25f., 32f.). The narrative of Ormr is also closely related to *Þorsteins þáttir uxafóts*, but as the dating of *Þorsteins þáttir uxafóts* is uncertain, we cannot be sure whether the story of Ormr was modelled on Þorsteinn uxafótr or vice versa (Faulkes 1967, 28f.). *Orms þáttir Stórólfssonar* is integrated into the transitional passage by Ormr coming to the court of Jarl Eiríkr. Ormr boasts that Óláfr Tryggvason's ship would not have been taken so quickly at Svǫldr had he been among the kings' retainers. Jarl Eiríkr and his men doubt that and organise a re-enactment of the battle in which Ormr fights with a pole against Eiríkr's men (*Flb* 1860, 531), as Þorsteinn had done at Svǫldr (*Flb* 1860, 491). Jarl Eiríkr quickly realises that Ormr would have defended King Óláfr's ship with such force and determination that his men would not have been able to take it. Thus, the þáttir ends with room for speculation on an alternative course of historical events.

The interpolated extracts retrieve the respective narratives at the points they were suspended in *ÓTm*.<sup>24</sup> Of *Grænlendinga saga*, we find the last

<sup>23</sup> As mentioned above, Würth assumes that the transitional passage stretches from *Flb* (1860, 518) to *Flb* (1862, 9) and she also notes that Óláfr Tryggvason does not participate in the action (Würth 1991, 109). She does not, however, comment on the modifications in this passage in *Flateyjarbók* as compared to the older redaction.

<sup>24</sup> See also Clover (1982, 81–85, 128ff.), who provides examples of discontinuously incorporated segments of þættir and sagas in *ÓTm* and *Óláfs saga helga* in *Flateyjarbók*, including also a “list of digressions”; note that she follows the content division in the edition by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger. Segments of *Færeyinga saga* and *Orkneyinga saga* are also discussed by Würth (1991, 60–67), where her focus is on the meaning of and criteria for þættir.

segment in the transitional passage. This is not the case with *Færeyinga saga* and *Orkneyinga saga*, further segments of which, for chronological reasons, can be found later in Flateyjarbók (in Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger's edition they are assumed to be part of *Óláfs saga helga*). Already in the older redaction of *ÓTm* one can find two chapters on Eiríkr rauði Þorvaldsson and his son Leifr (A 220, 221) which were also included in Flateyjarbók (Flb 340, 341; lacuna in AM 62 fol.). These chapters end with a short note that Leifr, while at Óláfr Tryggvason's court, is baptised and a few chapters later we learn that the king wants Leifr to christianise Greenland (A 231, comp. Flb 352; lacuna in AM 62 fol.). Moreover, Flateyjarbók also includes an account of how Bjarni Herjólfsson on his way to Greenland sees unknown land(s) but does not go ashore (Flb 342). This account, like its continuation in the transitional passage, is only preserved in Flateyjarbók and has been called *Grænlandinga saga* (Grænland 1978, 293). The introduction of Bjarni and the continuation of this narrative thread in the transitional passage are separated by almost one hundred pages in the text edition, the continuation starting with a brief mention of Bjarni's sojourn at Jarl Eiríkr's court, and of how Bjarni's account inspires Leifr and others to travel to those territories and (eventually unsuccessfully) to establish a settlement in the land they call Vínland.<sup>25</sup> One of the protagonists in this segment of *Grænlandinga saga* is Guðríðr Þorbjarnardóttir (FlbT 433). We learn of her devout Christian life and that Bishop Þorlákr Rúnólfsson is among her descendants – the same bishop whose death coincides with the vision in *Sýn Brestis* in the concluding passage of *ÓTm*.

*Grænlandinga saga* and *Færeyinga saga* show similarities in the way they have been preserved, because, like the former, "*Færeyinga saga* has not survived as a separate manuscript, nor as an individual saga in a larger manuscript compilation, but in disconnected sections", in this case in *Heimskringla*, the separate *Óláfs saga helga* and *ÓTm* (*Færeyinga saga* 1987, ccxl; see also ix–xvii). The segment of *Færeyinga saga* in the transitional passage is only preserved in Flateyjarbók and only rímur can be drawn upon for comparison of its content (*Færeyinga saga* 1987, cxvi; in this edition chs. 34–42). In the older redaction and in Flateyjarbók, Óláfr Tryggvason announces that a golden ring his Faroese retainer Sig-

<sup>25</sup> Ólafur Halldórsson thinks it possible that Flateyjarbók's mentioning of Jarl Eiríkr at the beginning of the second segment is a mistake for Eiríkr rauði; for his arguments, see Grænland (1978, 332–335). Mistake or not, mentioning the jarl certainly contributes to justifying the interpolation of this segment from *Grænlandinga saga* in the transitional passage.

mundr Brestisson once got from Jarl Hákon will cause Sigmundr's death and the chapter ends with a remark that Sigmundr was killed by Þorgrímr illi and his two sons "sva sem segir i Færeyingha sögu (as is said in *Færeyinga saga*)" (ÓTmÓH 1961, 124 [in A 207]; comp. *Flb* 1860, 369 [in *Flb* 300]). In AM 61 fol. and Bergsbók, the narrative thread about the Faroese is then continued by the appearance of Pránder Þorbjarnarson in *Óláfs saga helga*, who defies Óláfr Haraldsson's claim on the islands (beginning on *Ósh* 1941, vol.1, 332; comp. *Flb* 1862, 241). In contrast to the older redaction, the interpolation in the transitional passage in *Flateyjarbók* provides details concerning the circumstances leading to the treacherous murder of Sigmundr and make clear that his escape and subsequent death at the hands of the greedy Þorgrímr are related to the struggle for power between Sigmundr and Pránder. This segment starts with Sigmundr becoming a retainer of Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson and his brother (*Flb* 1860, 549 [in *FlbT* 435]), and, after the passage where Sigmundr's killers have been identified and put to justice, a chapter was added (*FlbT* 443) that praises Jarl Eiríkr. As Ólafur Halldórsson points out, this chapter had not always been included in editions of *Færeyinga saga*, but no other source can be identified for it; he thinks it was included for aesthetic reasons, to allow for a more impressive initial of the chapter to follow which begins a further segment of *Orkneyinga saga* (*Færeyinga saga* 1987, cxvif.; in *Flateyjarbók* on fol. 74vb). Be that as it may, the effect is that the references to Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson function like a frame around the chapters on how Sigmundr Brestisson lost his life.

In the case of *Orkneyinga saga*, the segment placed in the transitional passage corresponds to content that can also be found in AM 61 fol. and Bergsbók, but as part of *Óláfs saga helga* (comp. *FlbT* 444–447 with *Ósh* 1941, vol.1, 231.13–237.6; see also *Ósh* 1941, vol.2, 1031).<sup>26</sup> Chronologically, though, it belongs into the period of Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson's rule (comp. the time reference in *FlbT* 444), which means that it is more appropriately placed in *Flateyjarbók*, where only the parts of *Orkneyinga saga* set during the reign of Óláfr Haraldsson were included within *Óláfs saga helga* (comp. *Ósh* 1941, vol.2, 1031). The last two chapters of the transitional passage (*FlbT* 448, 449) complete the narrative strand on Jarl Eiríkr. His death is reported as is the fact that his brother Sveinn has become reconciled with Erlingr Skjalgsson.

*Flateyjarbók* is not the only manuscript of ÓTm that has a transition-

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the complicated transmission history of "[t]he reconstituted text conventionally known as *Orkneyinga saga*" and, resulting from that, issues of its generic affiliation and textual unity, see Jesch (2010, quote at 153).

al passage. In AM 61 fol., *ÓTm* is immediately followed by *Óláfs saga helga*, but Bergsbók includes a passage between these sagas that can be described as a transition. Yet this transition differs from Flateyjarbók in both in form and content as it consists of poems. These poems can be found on folios 111va–118va, with a lacuna between fols. 112 and 113 of maybe one or two leaves (*Ósh* 1941, vol.2, 1006f.), in the following order: *Rekstefja*, *Óláfs drápa Tryggvasonar*, lacuna, *Óláfs drápa Tryggvasonar* (unclear whether continued), *Lilja* and *Geisli*.<sup>27</sup> The material chosen for Bergsbók, in Gustaf Lindblad's words, "[...] suggests that the object of the work may ultimately have been religious and ecclesiastical", and he finds this assumption substantiated by the poems included, especially *Lilja* (*Bergsbók* 1963, 9f.). In the following, some observations on these poems and their function within the manuscript will be briefly presented.

Stanzas from the drápa *Rekstefja* are also embedded in *ÓTm*, where this encomiastic poem on Óláfr Tryggvason is attributed to Hallar-Steinn (except for Flateyjarbók, where it is attributed to Markús Skeggjason; Stavnem 2012, 894). The exact number of stanzas (some of them incomplete) in *ÓTm* differs in the respective manuscripts; in Bergsbók, twenty-five stanzas, some of them partially, were included in *ÓTm* (Stavnem 2012, 895f.). In addition, Bergsbók also includes the poem written out continuously with 35 stanzas altogether (on 111va–112va). Comparing the separate poem to the extracts in *ÓTm* in regard to selection, order and thematic focus of the quotations, Kate Heslop (2006, 385ff.) has particularly discussed references to the battle of Svǫldr, pointing out that in *ÓTm*, the modification "[...] emphasises the Norwegian Eiríkr jarl's role and downplays the importance of the Dane Sveinn tjúguskegg [...]". As for Christian themes, one can, for example, find Óláfr presented as the one who "bað heiðin goð meiða (ordered the heathen gods to be harmed)" (st. 9; quote and translation from Stavnem 2012, 906), and two stanzas additionally to be found in the separate poem refer to Óláfr as the initiator of Christianisation in five countries (sts. 10 and 11). *Rekstefja* is dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and it also parallels other poems of that time such as *Geisli* and *Óláfs drápa Tryggvasonar* (Stavnem 2012, 894; Heslop 2012, 1031). *Óláfs drápa Tryggvasonar* is only preserved in Bergsbók, where it is wrongly attributed to Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld (on the problem of

<sup>27</sup> For information on Bergsbók, see *Ósh* (1941, vol.2, 1005–1025), the introduction to the facsimile edition *Bergsbók* (1963) and *ÓTm*ÓH (2000, CLXIV–CXC VII). On the corpus of encomiastic poems on Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson, to which *Rekstefja*, *Óláfs drápa Tryggvasonar* and *Geisli* belong, see the overview by Whaley (2003).

dating this poem, see Heslop 2012, 1031). Generally, however, such a false attribution, whether by mistake or on purpose, seems understandable given the fact that Hallfreðr was Óláfr's skald and contemporary; moreover, a number of his verses on the king are quoted in the preceding *ÓTm*, not to forget that *ÓTm* includes several segments with Hallfreðr's life story. As in *Rekstefja*, the king's achievements as an advocate for the conversion to the Christian faith are stressed, in this case in several of the first 16 stanzas of the poem (on 112va–112vb, e.g. in sts. 9–13). The first leaf after the lacuna (i.e. 113r) continues with stanzas on the battle at Svǫldr. It is not possible to ascertain whether one or two leaves are missing and whether the stanzas before and after the lacuna belong to one or two different poems on Óláfr Tryggvason (see the discussion in Heslop 2012, 1032f.).

The 100 stanzas of *Lilja* direct the thematic focus onto Christian salvation history, whereby, in the words of Martin Chase (2007a, 561), “[t]he poet shows familiarity not only with standard liturgical, theological, and rhetorical texts that were known and used throughout the Middle Ages but also with [...] trends” at the time of its composition in the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, for example the image of the merciful Mary (Madonna misericordiae). In *Lilja*, the desire for salvation is also discussed from the perspective of the speaker who is aware of personal moral shortcomings (e.g. sts. 77, 78; for a summary of the poem's content see Chase 2007a, 558–561). In *Bergsbók*, no space for a rubric was left at the beginning of the poem (on fol. 113v), and as regards the next poem, *Geisli*, space for a rubric was left but the rubric was not completed (on 117r); likewise, initial letters are missing, which may suggest that *Lilja* and *Geisli* were written only after the rubricator and illuminator had completed their work (*ÓTm*ÓH 2000, CLXVI, CXCI). *Geisli*, composed in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century by the Icelandic cleric Einarr Skúlason, praises the saint Óláfr Haraldsson, and thus sets the mood for *Óláfs saga helga* which follows after it (for a brief discussion of the poem's Christian content, see Whaley 2003, 75 and Chase 2007b, 5f.). Some stanzas from the poem are also included in, for example, some manuscripts of *Óláfs saga helga* (e.g. in *Bergsbók* and *Flateyjarbók*; Chase 2007b, 6). *Geisli* was written out continuously not only in *Bergsbók* but also in *Flateyjarbók* (were it comprises fewer stanzas; Chase 2007b, 6; *Flb* 1860, 1–7).

The poems on the kings in the transitional passage relate in a condensed way what they are (or should be) mainly remembered for. In the case of Óláfr Tryggvason, this ‘summary’ follows the comprehensive saga, in the case of Óláfr Haraldsson, one might describe *Geisli* as a pro-

logue to the saga to follow (which, in Bergsbók, has another prose prologue). *Lilja* goes beyond this focus on individual kings; it can be said to offer a pause for general religious reflection, in particular in order to recall human sin and Christ's sacrifice to redeem mankind. The four poems are placed in the middle of Bergsbók (which comprises 210 folios altogether). It cannot be known where the inspiration for Bergsbók's transitional passage between the two Óláfr sagas came from. One can only note that it includes one, as does the older Flateyjarbók, although the two manuscripts apply different compositional means and thematic foci.<sup>28</sup>

### The introduction to *Óláfs saga helga* in Flateyjarbók

Above, when discussing the existence of a transitional passage, differences in the treatment of the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga* in Flateyjarbók and other manuscripts have been touched upon. Some more information on the strategy used in Flateyjarbók should be added. As the chapters at the beginning of *ÓTm* (i.e. covering the period before the birth of Óláfr Tryggvason) had introduced Hálfðan svarti, Haraldr hárfagri and Haukr hábrók, now, in the introduction to *Óláfs saga helga*, only selected episodes are included. *Hálfðanar þáttur svarta* and *Haralds þáttur hárfagra* are only preserved in Flateyjarbók but similarities to the corresponding sagas in *Heimskringla* are obvious (Berger 1980, 16f.). What sets the Flateyjarbók narratives apart is mainly the account of how Haraldr frees a thief, the giant Dofri, whom his father Hálfðan has imprisoned and plans to impose a death sentence on and how Haraldr, driven away by his father in punishment, is fostered by Dofri, who promises to support him in the battle for becoming the sole ruler over Norway (*Flb* 1860, 565f., 571); Haraldr's affinity with the giant is also expressed in the byname Dofrafóstri (*Flb* 1860, 567ff.).<sup>29</sup> In *Haralds þáttur hárfagra*, one can also find references to the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason, where more detailed accounts of Haraldr's promise to become the sole ruler over

<sup>28</sup> An interesting detail in this context is that Flateyjarbók may have been written at Þingeyrar or Hólar; for Bergsbók, Hólar has likewise been suggested (*ÓTmÓH* 2000, CXXV, CXCI–CXCV).

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of the sources of the narrative of Dofri and Haraldr and an interpretation of Dofri as Óðinn, see Bugge 1900.



Norway (in the context of wooing one of his future wives) and his sons are given (*Flb* 1860, 569, 576). This is a further example of better integration of the contents in *Flateyjarbók* – if possible, repetition is avoided. In the *þáttr*, we also learn of a dream Hálfðan has which is interpreted to mean that he is to have numerous descendants, of whom Óláfr Haraldsson will be the most prominent (*Flb* 1860, 563). In the following chapter, another prediction is made, this time that Hálfðan's son Haraldr will become the first sole ruler over Norway, and Haraldr's way to power will be the main theme of the narrative.

One of Haraldr's retainers is the title protagonist of *Hauks þáttr hábrókar*. Although the *þáttr* is only preserved in *Flateyjarbók*, Haukr himself is also known from, for example, *Heimskringla*. There he is said to be a man King Haraldr is fond of and in accordance with this, the *þáttr* begins with the king wanting to speak to “hinn kærasta mann sinn Hauk habrok (his dearest man Haukr hábrók)” (*Flb* 1860, 577). Interpolating narratives on selected retainers is a technique already used earlier in *Flateyjarbók*, in *ÓTm* (*Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*, *Sǫrla þáttr*, *Hrómundar þáttr halta* and *Þorsteins þáttr skelks*). In the case of Haukr, we learn of his journey to Holmgarðr where he buys a coat for King Haraldr that men in the service of the Swedish king Eiríkr likewise wanted to buy for their king but without success. This leads to a fight between them which Haukr wins and dissatisfaction on the Swedish side. The Swedish revenge fails, as Haukr and his companions (and therefore King Haraldr) are too strong (*Flb* 1860, 597–581).

After the list of Norwegian rulers from Hálfðan svarti to Óláfr Haraldsson (*Flb* 1860, 583), the two narratives *Haralds þáttr grenska* and *Óláfs þáttr Geirstaðaálfs* are numbered as the first eight chapters of *Óláfs saga helga* in the text edition by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C.R. Unger. Óláfr Haraldsson's father Haraldr grenski had been introduced in *ÓTm*, while the *Flateyjarbók* version also briefly mentions that Haraldr asks to marry Sigríðr stórráða “[...] en hon brendi hann inne ok enn fleire konunga er hennar hofdu bedit (but she burned him in the house and even more kings who had asked to marry her)” (*Flb* 1860, 68).<sup>30</sup> The episode about Haraldr and Sigríðr which is told in *Haralds þáttr grenska* can also be found in the separate *Óláfs saga helga* (comp. *Flb* 1862, 3ff. and *Ósb* 1941, vol.1, 21–30; on details changed, see Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 2016, 188f.). The inclusion of *Óláfs þáttr Geirstaðaálfs* adds signifi-

<sup>30</sup> This information is not included in the corresponding chapter A 38 (*ÓTm*ÓH 1958, 61f.). Later, in A 93 it is mentioned that Haraldr grenski loses his life by being burned, but it is not said on whose initiative.

cance to the birth of Óláfr Haraldsson, but this narrative is not exclusive to Flateyjarbók (on this þáttir, see Heinrichs 1994a, 44–49 and Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 2016, 189–196). Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr Guðrøðarson, a half-brother of Hálfðan svarti, had been mentioned briefly in *Hálfðanar þáttir svarta* (Flb 1860, 562) and *Haralds þáttir grenska* (Flb 1862, 3). In *Óláfs þáttir Geirstaðaálfs*, Hrani follows the instructions given to him by the dead Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr in a dream.<sup>31</sup> Hrani meets Ásta, tells her of his dream and hands over the items he had taken from the mound in which Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr had been buried (Flb 1862, 9). One of the items is a belt, which he puts around her (at the end of the þáttir on Flb 1862, 9), and she can give birth to Óláfr Haraldsson (Flb 1862, 10). The short chapter which tells of the birth announces in the rubric that *Óláfs saga helga* begins here. This chapter is left unnumbered in the text edition (Flb 1862, 10). Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr is referred to again soon afterwards when, according to his instruction, his sword Bæsingr is given to Óláfr Haraldsson. In Flb (1862, 12f.), Ásta presents the sword to her eight-year old son, who defies attempts by King Sigurðr to take it away from him (for the sources, see Finnur Jónsson 1927, 170). Much later in the saga, Óláfr Haraldsson and his retainers pass by the mound at Geirstaðir and one of the men wonders whether the king is the reincarnation of Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr. In accordance with his Christian faith, however, Óláfr Haraldsson denies this and even feels encouraged to destroy this false belief (Flb 1862, 135; for the sources, see Finnur Jónsson 1927, 174; see also Heinrichs 1994a, 46f., 50f.). This short episode also strengthens the assumption that *Óláfs þáttir Geirstaðaálfs* is a part of *Óláfs saga helga*.

## Final remarks

When the end of *ÓTm*, the beginning of *Óláfs saga helga*, or the existence of a transitional passage between them were discussed in earlier scholarship on Flateyjarbók, it was done with a focus on the content of the relevant chapters. The size of the initials can contribute to solve these issues. Würth's assumption that a transitional passage exists, beginning with FlbT 407, is confirmed by the size of the initial. This transition is, however, shorter than she assumes, because the content and layout of Flateyjarbók suggest that *Óláfs saga helga* begins with *Hálfðanar þáttir*

<sup>31</sup> Hrani had been mentioned before in *ÓTm* in connection with his foster brother Haraldr grenski (Flb 1860, 68).

*svarta*. The transitional passage comprises *Flb* (1860, 518–561) and is linked to a thematic separation of material: modifications, mainly omissions, in the concluding passage of *ÓTm* strengthen the focus on the survival of Óláfr Tryggvason, whereas the transitional passage has the rule of Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson as its point of reference and focusses on dealings in Norway and the North Atlantic territories. It seems as if this is not the only passage in *Flateyjarbók* that could benefit from an investigation into the size of the initials as a content-structuring element. This time, it concerns the ending of *Óláfs saga helga* and the question whether there could be a transitional passage to *Sverris saga* and the different scholarly opinions on where this transition begins.<sup>32</sup>

The examples discussed in this article illustrate that the content division in the text edition should be handled critically. Ideally, the content division in a manuscript should be reflected in the text edition. Only then is the prerequisite met to allow for a nuanced and comprehensive interpretation of a manuscript's composition. This is especially true if manuscripts include text works such as the sagas about Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson which can take quite different forms and thus demand a close look at the specific text witnesses.

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<sup>32</sup> The text in *Flb* (1862, 394–530) has been commented upon by e.g. Finnur Jónsson (1927, 178, 180); Ósh (1941, vol.2, 1033); Ólafur Halldórsson (1990a, 201); Würth (1991, 67); Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir (2010, 25) and (2016, 181, 184).

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