



THE ANGERS FRAGMENT AND THE ARCHETYPE OF THE *COMPENDIUM* *SAXONIS*

Af Ivan Boserup

In 1920, Emil Rathsach argued that the autograph manuscript of Saxo's Gesta Danorum, of which the so-called Angers fragment is a part, served as archetype of the fourteenth-century Compendium Saxonis, and that the author/abbreviator can be identified as the so-called "third hand" of the Angers fragment, responsible for nearly fifty short annotations. Rathsach was challenged in 1989 by Anders Leegaard Knudsen, followed by Karsten Friis-Jensen in his 2005 Saxo edition. It is argued in the present paper that only Rathsach's identification of the "third hand" as the editor/abbreviator himself has yet been challenged, not, however, the relationship between the Angers manuscript and the textual tradition of the Compendium. In this author's view, this implies that Thomas Riis' research (1977 and 2006) regarding the original book division of the Compendium (and, hence, that of the Angers manuscript) must be positively reconsidered, while Riis' further theories concerning medieval or renaissance manipulations with the book division of the Saxo vulgate (Paris 1514) have - with good reason - been bypassed in silence by Friis-Jensen.

The two-volume edition of *Gesta Danorum* edited by Karsten Friis-Jensen, including the Danish translation of Peter Zeeberg (Saxo 2005), is a turning point in Saxo Grammaticus scholarship. It closes the era initiated in 1879 when the four quarto leaves of the so-called Angers fragment of Saxo's autograph draft of his chronicle were published (Bruun 1879a). Far from challenging this new critical recension of Saxo's work, the aim of the present discussion is merely to question one of the arguments (related to the *Compendium Saxonis*) on which Friis-Jensen has based his (correct) decision to reduce the importance of the Angers fragment as witness to the transmitted text of *Gesta Danorum*. Thus, the following pages deal primarily with the relationship between two more or less marginal sources to the text of Saxo 2005, but it will be argued that this issue nevertheless is key to achieving a long overdue scholarly consensus regarding the medieval transmission of Saxo's work.

1. 1879-2005

In spite of Bruun's masterly introduction and thoroughly commented transcription and in spite of the simultaneously published photolithographic facsimile (Bruun 1879b), the many tantalizing features of the Angers fragment soon fostered far-fetched speculations among foreign scholars unacquainted with the remainder of the available sources on Saxo's work. Later, in the early twentieth century, new, detailed investigations of the Angers fragment and its text led to doubts regarding the reliability of the version of the *Gesta Danorum* given by Christiern Pedersen's *editio princeps*, Paris 1514. This distrust became particularly acute after Sofus Larsen had convincingly demonstrated that Bruun's identification of two main hands in the Angers fragment could not be sustained, and that both the "first hand" and the "second hand" should be attributed to Saxo himself (Larsen 1925, 44).

Bruun had strongly warned against taking the Angers fragment as a point of departure for applying hypercriticism to the text of the Paris edition (1879a, xxv, note 3), but Jørgen Olrik and Hans Ræder (Saxo 1931) did not listen, and the criticism subsequently levelled from many quarters against their Saxo edition was "deserved", as Friis-Jensen squarely states in the *Introduction* to Saxo 2005 (37). However, the widespread distrust of the text represented by the Paris edition, which in Saxo 1931 manifested itself through unbridled conjectural criticism, was echoed many decades later by the renowned paleographer Erik Kroman. He stated that Christiern Pedersen as editor had taken "great liberties" regarding orthography "and other matters" (Kroman 1971, 73). A few years later, Thomas Riis assigned to Christiern Pedersen a number of alterations of the division into books of Saxo's work (Riis 1977, 14-30; restated in Riis 2006 with some modifications), while Michael Linton suggested that Christiern Pedersen - or rather his printer, the illustrious humanist Josse Bade (*Jodocus Badius Ascensius*) - had rewritten Saxo's unpolished work into exquisitely classicized Latin phrases which were then passed through his press under Saxo's name (Linton 1983).¹

In contrast, Saxo 2005 is based on the assumption that the text of the Paris edition loyally reproduces a medieval vulgate that represents as faithfully as possible (through an unknown but probably small number of intermediary copies) Saxo's final version of his work. In Saxo 2005, the Angers fragment has no privileged position because of its status as a unique autograph draft that allows us to contemplate Saxo "working in his study", and it

¹ Friis-Jensen (1989, 323 f.) has called attention to the somewhat similar theory of the Swedish theologian and bishop of Härnösand Carl Gustaf Nordin (1749-1812), renowned as a "critic in absurdum", according to *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*.

has not been allowed to vouch for textual transpositions and hosts of unnecessary conjectural corrections of the Paris edition, as had occurred in the case of Saxo 1931. After nearly a century and a half during which the Angers fragment has dominated the scene, directly or indirectly, the spectre of the “Angers manuscript” (or the “Angers version”) of *Gesta Danorum* is in Saxo 2005 at last considered throughout as a separate entity which a modern editor should not endeavour - at any cost - to bring into harmony with the medieval Saxo vulgate (see fig. 1).² In contrast, the medieval Saxo vulgate is in Saxo 2005 rehabilitated as no less original or authentic than the version of the manuscript of the Angers fragment, and much work has been invested by Friis-Jensen into documenting its text as thoroughly as possible with the help of direct and indirect witnesses, that is, respectively, the surviving fragments of medieval Saxo manuscripts and quotations by medieval authors, particularly Albert Krantz.³

Friis-Jensen has convincingly demonstrated that it is possible to argue cogently for the authenticity of the text of the Paris edition, and he has carried out successfully the painstaking editorial work that confirms the adequacy of the assumptions on which his pathbreaking edition is based.

2. An Open Issue?

As a long-time friend and Saxo co-militant, I should like to express my respect and gratitude towards the honoree of the present *Festschrift* by taking up a codicological issue of the transmission of Saxo’s text, prompted by the publication, a few months after the appearance of Saxo 2005, of Thomas Riis’ *Einführung in die Gesta Danorum des Saxo Grammaticus* (Riis 2006).

In the second chapter, entitled “Die Komposition der Gesta Danorum” (21-39), Riis has revamped the theory which he ventilated for the first time

² In consequence, the *Introduction* to Saxo 2005 wastes no time on a detailed historiography of the Angers fragment, and states on p. 39 (augmented by my explicative additions in square brackets): “... the critical apparatus of [Saxo 2005] does not register all the numerous divergences in [the Angers fragment] compared with [the Paris edition], but only variant readings which may have belonged to [Saxo’s final version] or may shed light on doubtful readings in [the Paris edition].”

³ The typology of sources in Saxo 2005, though helpful, seems not entirely satisfactory with regard to the Angers fragment and the *Compendium*. The latter is listed and discussed as an item of “The direct textual tradition” (38-43), but as the quotation in the preceding footnote seems to indicate, and as will further be argued below, the Angers fragment is in Saxo 2005 treated in the same way as texts that belong to “The indirect textual tradition” (43-46), such as the *Compendium* and Albert Krantz’s Saxo paraphrases. However, within the framework of Saxo 2005, the Angers fragment falls instead within a third category of textual sources, which one could call “Drafts and earlier versions”. It is argued below that the *Compendium* - as witness to the “Angers manuscript” - would belong to the same category.

in 1977 concerning an original book division of Saxo's work allegedly documented in the anonymous *Compendium Saxonis*, a fourteenth-century Latin abridgment of Saxo. As Riis has convincingly demonstrated, the layout of the modern edition of the *Compendium* (Gertz 1918) gives an inadequate impression of the degree to which a book division corresponding to that of the Paris edition is documented by the manuscripts of the *Compendium*.⁴ Based on a meticulous comparison of the structuring elements of the four medieval *Compendium* manuscripts, Riis has reconstructed and interpreted a book division of the archetype of the *Compendium* that differs substantially from that of the Paris edition, and which, according to him, reflects Saxo's own and original book division. Insofar as the book division of the Paris edition is concerned, Riis considers it to be the result of manipulations of either Christiern Pedersen in the early sixteenth century (so, Riis 1977, 30) or of an anonymous editor of Saxo's work sometime in the thirteenth century (so, Riis 2006, 37).

In order to understand why Riis can consider the book division of the *Compendium*, composed more than one hundred years after Saxo's death, to be "original", one must take into account that although Emil Rathsach's paper from 1920 remains unmentioned by Riis both in 1977 and in 2006, he takes for granted - as many other scholars have done - that Rathsach was right in suggesting that the *Compendium* is derived directly from the manuscript to which the Angers fragment once belonged.⁵ Rathsach's theory implies that the Angers manuscript probably encompassed all of the *Gesta Danorum*.⁶ An important but not decisive element in Rathsach's argumentation is the demonstration that the nearly fifty annotations in the Angers fragment penned by the so-called "third hand" consist of notes-to-self by a reader that could well have been the author/abbreviator of the *Compendium*, because some of them do seem to be picked up by expressions used in the abbreviated paraphrasing of the *Compendium*.

The standpoint of Riis 2006 concerning the status of the text of the Paris edition differs so much from that of Friis-Jensen in Saxo 2005 that it would seem that there is still a very long way to consensus among Saxo scholars regarding fundamental questions of the textual transmission of the *Gesta*

⁴ Riis 1977, 14, introduces his investigation with the following words (my emphasis): "L'Abbreviatio (ou *Compendium*) *Saxonis* semble avoir la même division en livres que l'édition princeps ...".

⁵ In Riis 2006, 30 and 35, the derivation of the *Compendium* from the Angers manuscript is expressed by referring to the *stemma* in Boserup 1981, 10, where reference is made to Rathsach.

⁶ Rathsach 1920, 123 f., adduces circumstantial evidence to the effect that the Angers manuscript continued "at least into Saxo's book 8".

Danorum. Is it still a matter of serious discussion whether the Paris edition reproduces Saxo’s authentic work? Considered from a post-Saxo 2005 perspective, and without going into the minute details and hermeneutic challenges of the book division of the *Compendium*, there seem to be two disputed issues: First, what is the place of the *Compendium* in the textual tradition of Saxo? Is the *Compendium* derived from the Angers manuscript, as Riis assumes, or should it be considered, as the *Introduction* to Saxo 2005 suggests, as simply another witness to the medieval Saxo vulgate? Second, if the *Compendium* does derive from the Angers manuscript, what should be the default assumption regarding the authenticity of the latter and of the medieval vulgate, respectively, in cases where it can be documented that the tradition of *Compendium*-cum-Angers manuscript deviates from that of the Paris edition? Must the latter be rejected as inauthentic?

3. The “long insert” of the Angers Fragment

In Saxo 2005, as mentioned, the *Compendium* is a representative of the same tradition (the medieval Saxo vulgate) as the *editio princeps*. All textual witnesses here derive from one lost hyparchetype, [y], itself derived - through [x] - from the Angers manuscript, which in turn is devoid of any known direct descendent other than [x], “Saxo’s own manuscript of the final version of his work” (Saxo 2005, 38)

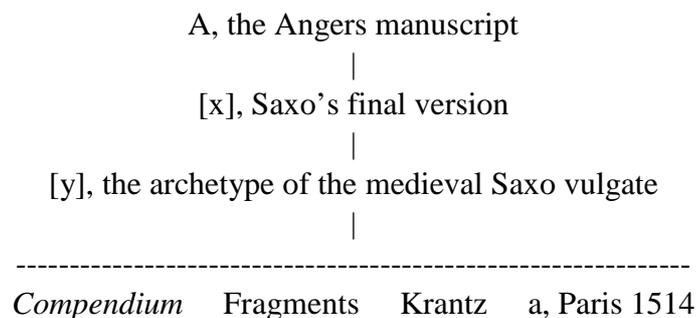


Fig. 1. Stemma of Saxo 2005, 17 (abbreviated and simplified).

This *stemma* matches the annotation in the critical apparatus of Saxo 2005 concerning the overall sequence of the clauses of the description of King Scioldus found in and around the famous so-called “long insert” in the right margin of the first page (fol. 1r, called “1a”) of the Angers fragment (see fig. 2, and fig. 3, cols. 1 and 2). The text as published in Saxo 2005 follows the sequence given by the Paris edition (fig. 3, col. 4), accompanied by the following critical annotation:

3,3(2) 1 Hic - 8 debere uerba hoc loco praeb. a, sicut sine dubio exemplaria Compendii et Krantzii; in A margini ascripta sunt et post 1,3,1,9 inserenda, ut nota indicat, quare illuc transposuerunt Olrik/Ræder⁷

In other words, if we had at our disposal the manuscripts which the author/abbreviator of the *Compendium* and Albert Krantz, respectively, had at their disposal, they would confirm the sequence displayed by the Paris edition; only the Angers fragment, according to Saxo 2005, goes against this mutually-supportive triad of witnesses regarding the location of the “long insert” (none of the other Saxo fragments overlaps with the passage covered by the Angers fragment).

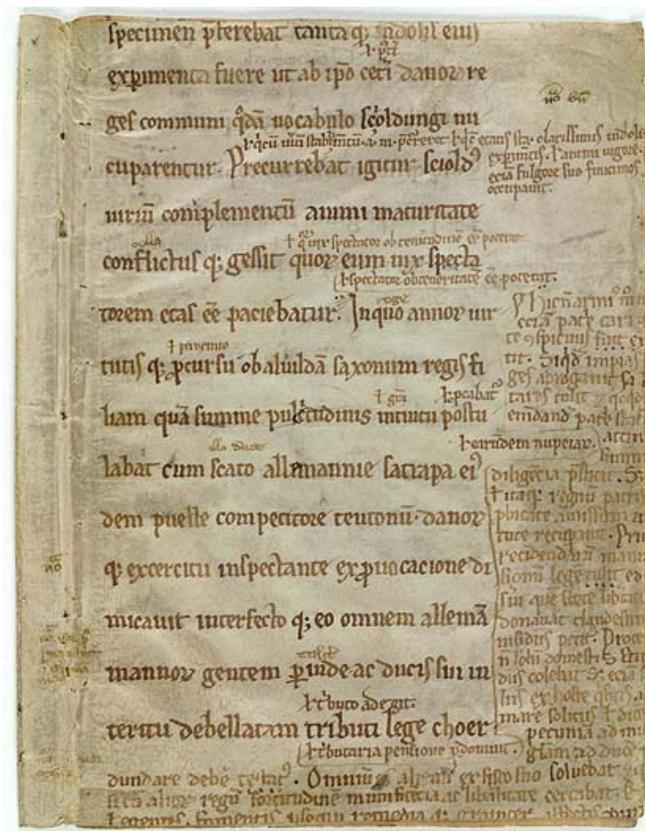


Fig. 2. The Angers fragment, fol. 1r (“1a”).
 The Royal Library,
 Ny Kongelig Samling
 869g 4°.
 Courtesy of The Royal
 Library, Copenhagen.

⁷ Translated (with my square-bracketed expansions): “The passage 1,3,3(2),1 Hic - 8 debere appears in this location [following 1,3,2(3)] in the Paris edition, as they undoubtedly did in the exemplars of the author of the *Compendium* and of Krantz; in the Angers fragment, this passage is added in the margin, and it should be inserted after 1,3,1,9, as indicated by a reference mark, and it was therefore transposed to that location by Olrik and Ræder [Saxo 1931].”

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Ivan Boserup: The Angers Fragment

<i>Angers fragment, main text (fair copy)</i>	<i>Angers fragment, interlinear and marginal additions</i>	<i>Compendium Saxonis</i>	<i>Saxo, Paris 1514 (full text)</i>	<i>Saxo, Krantz (abbreviation and paraphrase)</i>
(line nos. on fol. 1a)	(line nos. in the "long insert")	(line nos. in Gertz' edition, p. 221)	(clause nos. in Saxo 2005, p. 88)	(lines in Strasbourg 1546 edition)
I = 1-4 ... specimen præferabat ... nuncu- parentur.		I = 16 [specimen] preferabat ...	I = 3,1,7 ... specimen præferabat ... nuncu- parentur.	I = 7,32-35 ... spe- cimen præferabat ... nuncuparentur.
			II = 3,1,8 Idem ... excitabat.	
III = 4-7 Præcurre- bat ... uix spectato- rem ætas esse patie- batur.	[interlinear variant:] ... esse poterat. [interlinear refer- ence:] ://	III = 16-17 ... uix inspector esse poterat.	III = 3,1,9 Præcurre- bat ... uix spetator ob teneritudinem esse poterat.	III = 7,35-37 Præcur- rebat ... uix spectator ob teneritudinem ætatis esse poterat.
	IV A (1-4) [mar- ginal addition:] :// Hic non armis modo ... extitit.	IV A = 17-18 Nec minus uirtutibus quam uiribus ...		
	B (4-10) Siquidem impias leges ... præstitit.	B = 18-19 Nam impias leges ...		
	C (10--13) Sed et uel itaque regnum ... recuperauit.			
	D (13-15) Primus rescindendarum ... edidit.			
	E (16-18) Serui quem forte libertate ... par esset.			
	F (18-25) Proceres non solum ...			
	G (25-26) Omnium æs alienum ... certabat.			
	H (26-[28]) Ægros uel egentes fomen- tis ... [suscepisse testatus.]	H = 19-22 de infir- mis et pauperibus ... dicens ... suscepisse.		
V = 7-15 In quo annorum ... Aluul- dam ... tributi lege choercuit.	[interlinear variant:] ... tributaria pen- sione perdomuit.	V = 22-25 Hic ob amorem ... Alwilde ... tributariam fecit.	V = 3,2 In quo an- norum ...tributaria ditione perdomuit.	V = 7,38-8,2 In quo annorum ... tributaria ditione perdomuit.
			IV A = 3,3,1 Hic non armis modo ... extitit.	IV A = 8,2-3 Hic non annorum ... extitit.
			B 3,3,2 Siquidem impias leges ... præstitit.	B 8,3-5 Siquidem impias leges ... præstitit.
			C 3,3,3 Sed et regnum ... recu- perauit.	C 8,5-6 Set et ditio- nem ... recuperauit.
			D 3,3,4 Primus rescindendarum ... edidit.	
			E 3,3,5 Serui quem libertate ... par esset.	
			G 3,3,6 Omnium æs alienum ... certabat.	
			H 3,3,7 Ægros fo- mentis ... suscepisse testatus.	
			F 3,4,8 Proceres non solum ... ad ducem redundare debere.	F 8,6-8 Proceres non solum ... ad ducem pertinere.

Fig. 3. [Previous page] The sequence of the clauses of part of the biography of King Scioldus. In addition to showing the two different placements of the “long insert” (III-IV-V and III-V-IV), columns 2 and 4 show the diverging sequences of clauses (IV F-G-H, and IV G-H-F) within the text of the “long insert”, as well as the solitary addition (clause II) attested in the medieval vulgate but omitted by Krantz, like IV D-E-G-H.

However, it appears from fig. 3 that while it is correct that Krantz’s manuscript had the same sequence of the clauses of the Scioldus biography as the Paris edition, the *Compendium* brings the clauses IV A-B-H in the same sequence as that explicitly suggested by the Angers fragment. As quoted above from the annotation *ad loc.* of Saxo 2005, the intended point of insertion of the marginal addition is clearly indicated in the Angers fragment by reference marks.⁸ Thus, if it was not Saxo but rather a scribe or “editor” who was responsible for the archetype of the medieval Saxo vulgate, he must have overseen the reference mark and included the marginal addition in his copy or his new edited version, respectively, at the location where it has been argued that the general layout of the page in the Angers fragment (not the reference marks) suggests that it should be inserted, that is, after the clause denoted “V” in fig. 3.⁹ On the other hand, if we follow the codicological model of Saxo 2005, and the person responsible for [x] was none other than Saxo himself, he must have decided to overrule his own earlier reference mark because he found that an arrangement could be achieved (III-V-IV

⁸ Crucial in this context is the issue (not raised in Saxo 2005) of the authorship of the reference marks (“:/”, repeated in-text and where the insert starts), since no modern ink analysis has yet been carried out on the Angers fragment. However, it seems clear enough that it must be the author of the interlinear and marginal variants and additions, that is, Saxo himself, since in two other cases, similar reference marks appear in the Angers fragment, in situations that are comparable to that of the “long insert”. In one case (1b, line 5), they link a variant inscribed in the margin to the appropriate place in the main text; in the other (2b, line 5), they link not a variant but a true textual addition to the main text, like the reference marks related to the “long insert”. Additionally, in the case of the “long insert”, there are in fact two “reference marks”, since the insert is introduced by an oversize “S”, which Sofus Larsen (76) expands as *supplenda* or *supplementum*, while Bruun (1879a, 2) had interpreted it as a paragraph sign (“et større Tegn som et Paragraftegn”). On balance, it seems that both sets of “reference marks” that designate the correct location of the “long insert”, although one of them is redundant, are imputable to Saxo.

⁹ Rathsach 1920, 120, follows a suggestion of Holder-Egger 1889, 150, to the effect that a scribe copying the first page of the Angers fragment could well have interpreted the curving lines that separate the long marginal addition from the main text and from the interlinear variant below the last line of the main text, as an invitation to insert the marginal addition after the last line of text on the page, in this way achieving the sequence of clauses of the medieval Saxo vulgate, see fig. 3. Sofus Larsen (78) has objected that such a scenario implies that the scribe had a very low IQ (“maatte være meget ringe begavet”).

and IV G-H-F) that was preferable to the one that had come out of his initial and hasty composition of the marginal addition (III-IV-V and IV F-G-H).¹⁰

If one derives the *Compendium* from [y] (the descendent of [x]), as done in Saxo 2005, one must conceptualize in [y] (or a descendent of [y]) a codicological situation of the Scioldus biography that was analogous to that of the Angers fragment insofar as it resulted in two different insertion points of the “long insert”, but with inverted default values: the insertion point reproduced by the common tradition of Krantz and the Paris edition (the medieval vulgate, [x]) must in [y] have been the straightforward one, reproducing [x]’s final choices and changes, while the author/abbreviator of the *Compendium*, when confronted with [y] (or a descendent of [y]), must have chosen to recompose the Scioldus biography. But in so doing, according to this hypothetical and highly improbable scenario, the author of the *Compendium* recreated the same sequence of clauses as that which Saxo had clearly suggested in the manuscript of the Angers fragment – yet to which the author of the *Compendium* had no access, according to the *stemma* of Saxo 2005.¹¹

4. The “third hand”

It seems hazardous to posit that the author/abbreviator of the *Compendium* reinvented a sequence that had been clearly recommended in the Angers fragment but was later discarded by Saxo and hence by the tradition to which his exemplar belonged. The reason given in Saxo 2005 for assigning the exemplar of the *Compendium* to the medieval vulgate [y] is the following (Saxo 2005, 44, with my expansions in square brackets):

There is no reason to believe that the copy of Saxo used by the author [of the *Compendium*] was the manuscript to which [the Angers fragment] belonged, a claim that has actually been made [by Rathsach 1920] (see Leegaard Knudsen 1989).

¹⁰ Saxo, considered as the author of [x], deviated in many instances from his own Angers draft. Besides stylistic and linguistic changes, and in addition to the overall sequence of the “long insert”, fig. 3 displays the reshuffling of the sequence of the last three clauses (IV G-H-F) of the “long insert”, and the addition of clause II. Regarding the latter, Sofus Larsen has suggested (1925, 80-83) that it was present in the Angers fragment, in that part of the long insert that has been cut away, and that later in the tradition it was by error transposed to its present location. However, if one considers Saxo’s way of composing portraits of kings and heroes, as evidenced by the Angers fragment, it seems unnecessary in this passage to restore so strict a logic as that implied by Larsen’s undocumented scenario.

¹¹ To the general improbability of such an event can be added (as pointed out by Sofus Larsen, 1925, 77) that the sequence of clauses suggested in the Angers fragment and attested in the *Compendium* is less logical than the sequence that is found in the medieval vulgate (Krantz and the Paris edition). The point should not be pressed, as mentioned in the previous footnote.

It is true that Leegaard Knudsen 1989 has questioned the circumstantial evidence that Rathsach in 1920 adduced to the effect that the annotations of the “third hand” of the Angers fragment should be attributed to none other than the author/abbreviator of the *Compendium*, but the identity of the “third hand” is only one aspect of the issue at stake, and a minor one. The context of Leegaard Knudsen’s investigation of the identity of the “third hand” was a study of Saxo’s medieval readership or *Nachleben*, not a study of the textual history of Saxo, and the result of his critical review of Rathsach’s paper concerning the “third hand” was that its annotation in the Angers fragment is not linked to unique or remarkable expressions in the *Compendium*, and that it therefore does not match what one would expect an abbreviator like the author of the *Compendium* to annotate: the notes of the “third hand” are simply typical of any ordinary medieval reader, according to Leegaard Knudsen. Whether one finds Leegaard Knudsen’s rebuttal of this part of Rathsach’s paper convincing or not, it is clear that Leegaard Knudsen did not challenge the general premise underlying Rathsach’s investigation of the identity of the “third hand”, that is, that the *Compendium* (its tradition) derives from the Angers manuscript. This point was made in 2006 by Riis, whose 1977 theory had been rejected by Leegaard Knudsen (1994, 42) with reference to his earlier paper (Leegaard Knudsen 1989). Riis writes: “Leegaard Knudsen hat Anhaltspunkte für die Hypothese anführen können, dass die “dritte Hand” im Angers Fragment nicht die Hand des Epitomators ist. Dadurch ist aber nicht bewiesen, dass das *Compendium Saxonis* nicht auf die durch das Angers Fragment vertretenen Fassung zurückgeht.” (Riis 2006, 38, note 40).

Riis’s reply only establishes the possibility that the *Compendium* derives from the manuscript of which the Angers fragment is a part. However, Riis could have gone a step further and mentioned the positive arguments for a direct connection Angers-*Compendium*. They have been stated by Rathsach but were by-passed by Leegaard Knudsen 1989, for the reason stated above. As a matter of fact, besides the issue that has been dealt with above (the identical sequence of the clauses of the biography of King Scioldus), Rathsach adduces three other pieces of evidence, likewise unrelated to any actions of the “third hand”. Twice, Rathsach has observed, a sign which in the Angers fragment should obviously mean “or” (Latin *uel*, introducing inter-linear variants, see fig. 3, *passim*) has become “*et*” in the *Compendium*, mistaken for an abbreviation of “and”, and ruining the Latin as well as the sense of the passage (Rathsach 1920, 120-122).¹² Furthermore, the prepositional

¹² Saxo, GD 1,3,3(2),7 *egros uel egentes* (the Angers fragment) has become *de infirmis et pauperibus* (*Comp.*), while the Paris edition has *ægros* (not in Krantz); 1,3,1,9 *uel quo-*

expression (*per omnia ... exempla*) found in a stylistic variant to a sentence that is differently worded in both the fair copied main text of the Angers fragment and in the Paris edition seems to have triggered the adverbial expression *per omnia* found in the *Compendium*.¹³

To summarize and formalize, the *Compendium* represents a separate branch of the tradition of the Angers manuscript:¹⁴

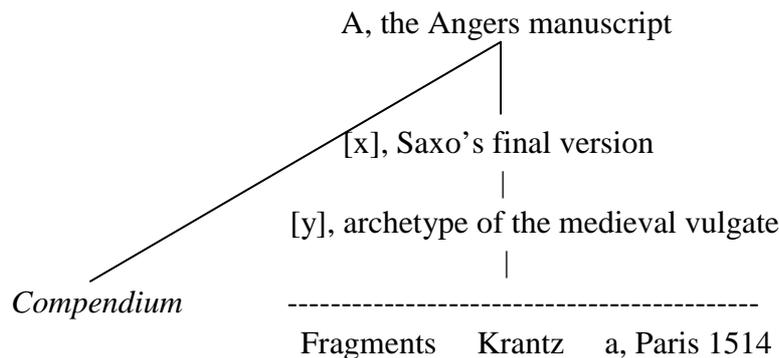


Fig. 4. Suggested modification of the stemma of Saxo 2005.

This codicological adjustment probably has no immediate consequence for the text established in Saxo 2005, that is, the text of [x]. But it follows that it is quite legitimate to do what Riis has endeavoured to do in 1977 and again in 2006, that is, to try to reconstruct certain aspects of the lost parts of the Angers manuscript by analyzing the manuscript tradition of the *Compendium*, and to compare the outcome of such an investigation with the medieval Saxo vulgate attested by the Paris edition. It is clear that insofar as there are cases where the *Compendium* and the medieval Saxo vulgate have readings that differ but - *ceteris paribus* - are equally “saxonian” and acceptable, such cases can confirm the assumption that the author/abbreviator of the *Compendium* did not, at some point, switch over to a manuscript belonging to the medieval Saxo vulgate ([y]). No matter whether such data concerns textual passages or the book division, they may have an impact on our understanding of Saxo.

rum uix spectator ... esse poterat (the Angers fragment, an interlinear variant) has become *et quorum ... uix inspector esse poterat* (Comp.), while the Paris edition has *quorum uix spectator ... esse poterat*.

¹³ Saxo, GD 1,4,1,3 *ita paternas virtutes redoluit* (the Angers fragment and the Paris edition). The Angers fragment’s marginal variant reads ... *per omnia virtutis paternae exempla decurrens ...*, and the *Compendium* has *per omnia patrem in virtutibus imitabatur*. This is of course only circumstantial evidence: adverbial “*per omnia*” is not an uncommon expression.

¹⁴ See the stemma in Boserup 1981, 10, reproduced by Riis 2006, 35.

5. Saxo: One or Many?

The second issue mentioned above is of a different nature than the codicological one discussed up to this point. How should one interpret the textual and macro-structural differences between the *Compendium* tradition and the medieval Saxo vulgate? In this matter, it seems that it is Riis who jumps to unwarranted conclusions. Paraphrasing his own rebuttal of Leegaard Knudsen cited above, one can say that Riis has put forward arguments to the effect that the book division found in the Paris edition can be related to what he calls a “kirchenfreundlichere Betrachtungsweise”, assigned in 1977 to Christiern Pedersen in the early sixteenth century, but in 2006 to a thirteenth century editor who did not understand the “hochideologische ursprüngliche Bucheinteilung” of the real Saxo. Nevertheless, he has not thereby proved that Saxo himself, around the year 1200, could not under any circumstances have devised the book division of the *Gesta Danorum* that is attested in the Paris edition, no matter how “hochideologisch” a macro-structure he may previously (in the Angers manuscript) have managed to infuse into the overall structure of his work. Leegaard Knudsen (1994, 43) has maintained that the book division of the Paris edition “makes sense”, and Riis (2006, 39) agrees that it does helpfully subdivide Saxo’s narrative.

It is time to abandon the idea that Saxo necessarily conceived only one master plan for his *Gesta Danorum*. The most salient aspect of the Angers fragment, when viewed as an author’s autograph draft, is openness, experimentation, and indecision. It is clear that on the micro-level (embellishment of single sentences and enhancement of biographical traits) Saxo reworked his book, again and again. The “long insert” of the Angers fragment shows how the character and mission of any of Saxo’s protagonists (here King Scioldus) can change fundamentally through the simple addition of a series of commonplaces about good government and patriotism. Why should Saxo not also have redrawn a number of times the borders between some of his books, as they gradually expanded and partially changed character, before finally settling on the book division transmitted by the medieval vulgate?

To conclude, it should be possible, after the publication of Saxo 2005, to achieve a substantial consensus among current Saxo scholars concerning the basic issues of Saxo’s textual transmission. All that is required is that Riis give the Paris edition the benefit of the doubt as non-manipulated Saxo, and that Leegaard Knudsen and Friis-Jensen reconsider the arguments advanced by Rathsach regarding the relationship between the Angers fragment and the archetype of the *Compendium Saxonis*.

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