

Assessment 5: Transcription Exercise – By Matthew Cowley

Saxo Grammaticus: *Gesta Danorum* – Angers Fragment

Copenhagen

The Royal Library of Denmark

NKS 869 G 4^o: The Angers fragment

Located in the Royal Library of Denmark in Copenhagen, the folios presented below are collectively known as the 'Angers fragment', due to being originally discovered at the public library in Angers, France, and provides a partial copy of the *Gesta Danorum*, or *A History of the Danes*.¹ This famous text was composed by the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus sometime around the late 12th or early 13th Century, and although not much is known about Saxo himself, his *Gesta Danorum*, on the other hand, contains a wealth of information that became the basis for many of the later chronicles and histories of Denmark,² hence its importance to the country and why the Royal Library traded a valuable French manuscript for it.³ Not only is the fragment itself important to the history of Denmark, but it is believed, due to the extensive note work in the marginalia and between the lines, that this surviving text was a work-in-progress draft written by Saxo's own hand, something that is extraordinary considering the only version of the full text that is known originates from a printed copy of Saxo's work from 1514, around three hundred years after it was initially produced.⁴ Due to the significance of the text, many transcriptions have been undertaken by more qualified scholars than myself, however, I still wished to transcribe the document, as Saxo's text acts as a bridge between the Latin culture of Central Europe and the developing Norse culture of Scandinavia, the latter of which I am intrigued by.⁵

Having no Latin experience of note and only being a beginner in palaeography, transcribing the Angers fragment was a challenge, and admittedly I did struggle with aspects of the task, however, I thankfully had the help of some very useful resources. For instance, when I came across something I

¹ The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: Introduction* (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

² Bridget Sawyer and Peter Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation circa 800 – 1500*. The Nordic Series, Vol. 17. (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 221 – 228.

³ Royal Library, *Introduction* (2016) [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Ivan Boserup, 'The Angers fragment and the Archetype of *Gesta Danorum*', in *Saxo Grammaticus: A Medieval Author Between Norse and Latin Culture*, ed. By Karsten Friis-Jensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1981), pp. 9 – 26 (pp. 9 – 10).

did not recognise, I went to the *Lexicon Abbreviaturarum* by Andriano Cappelli, an especially helpful and comprehensive guide to the many abbreviations that Medieval scholars used in their texts, which also helped in deciphering what certain letters represented.⁶ Once a possible match had been identified for a letter or abbreviation, I turned my attention to the Latin Dictionary by William Whitaker to check whether the word identified was correct, and if so, it was added to the transcription.⁷ I quickly realised while undertaking this task that once a pattern of how the author formed their letters and other symbols was deciphered, it became a lot easier to understand what letters were being written, which in turn, made the whole exercise easier. For instance, there was a letter that looked like a capital 'H', but it did not work with the letters it was situated next to, so I turned my attention to the *Lexicon* and found that it was an 'N' rather than an 'H', which subsequently allowed me to go back over the transcription and fill in the correctly identified letter.⁸ Furthermore, nearing the end of the transcription, I uncovered a section from the Royal Library dedicated to Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* that included the 1514 printed version of the text, which was useful as it helped in identifying any names of individuals in the text, and the endings of words such as those broken over several lines.⁹ For example, on Folio. 1r., one line ends with 'vir' while the following line begins with 'tutis', so thanks to this resource, it was clear that this was only one word rather than two. Likewise, the following word after 'tutis' is 'q[ue]', which I originally had separated, but again, thanks to this source, it was possible to identify that this was all part of the same word, making 'virtutisq[ue]'.¹⁰ As evident, all three of the sources mentioned above have been incredibly useful during this transcription exercise, which could not have been completed without their aid.

In terms of the format of the transcription, I have tried to mimic how it is laid out in the original folios as much as possible, with each folio preceding its own dedicated transcription page and each line in the main body of the text having its own line in the transcription. This was a little harder with the additional notes found in the marginalia or in between the lines that share the same font style as the main body, which have instead been inserted into their original place if they are only a minor addition, or into the right-hand side if it is a larger one. Likewise, these additional parts of the

⁶ Adriano Cappelli, *Lexicon Abbreviaturarum*. (Leipzig: Zweite verbesserte Auflage, 1928), pp. 64 – 616.

⁷ William Whitaker, *William Whitaker's Words* (2007) <<http://archives.nd.edu/words.html>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

⁸ Cappelli, *Lexicon Abbreviaturarum*, p. 293.

⁹ The Royal Library of Denmark, *Saxo Grammaticus: Gesta Danorum* (2010) <<http://wayback-01.kb.dk/wayback/20101108105429/http://www2.kb.dk/elib/lit/dan/saxo/lat/or.dsr/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

¹⁰ The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 1 recto*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/1+recto/?var=1>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

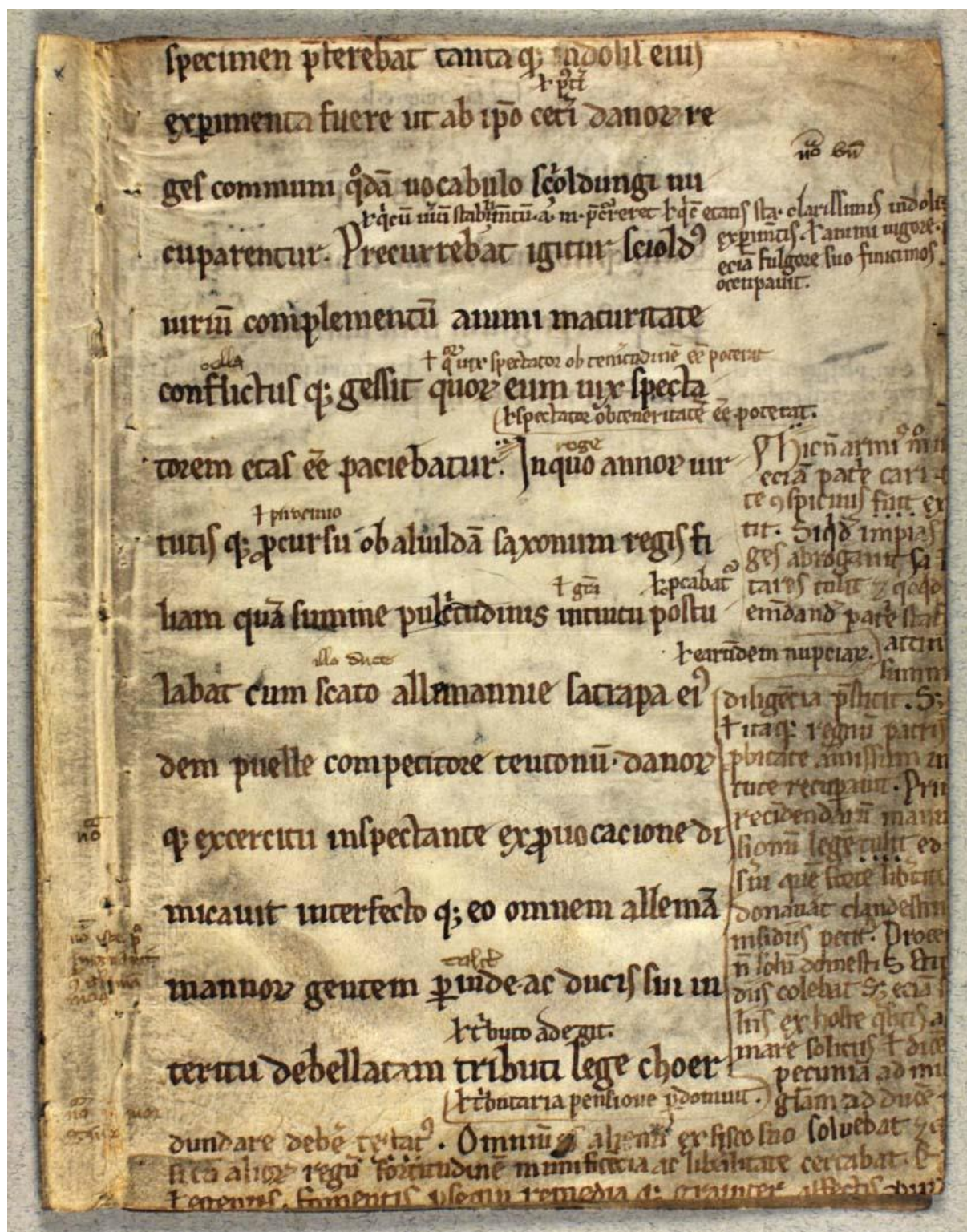
transcription are also identifiable by their different font style, size, and colour to the main body of the text.¹¹

Continuing from this, a variety of symbols have been used in the transcription to represent various aspects of the original, such as ‘//’ for where an addition in the marginalia should be inserted, or ‘-’ before a word to represent that it is a continuation of its predecessor. Similarly, due to the age of the folios, some parts of the text are illegible, either lost due to the frayed edges of the pages or stains covering up large portions of the text, so the symbol ‘~’ has been used to represent characters that are not present or were unable to be deciphered.¹² Finally, some of the words and letters remain highlighted in yellow to denote those characters I am unsure of, which mainly consists of abbreviations and letters that could not be made out, or, more commonly, a Latin word could not be identified with the letters that had been deciphered. All of this explains the format and choices that were made for this transcription of the Angers fragment.¹³

¹¹ Royal Library, *Introduction* (2016) [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

¹² The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 4 verso*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/4+verso/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

¹³ Royal Library *Saxo Grammaticus* (2010) [Accessed: 08 January 2021].



Folio. 1r.

Specimen p[rae]ferebat tantaq[ue] indolis eius

[et] p[os]tt[ere]

exp[er]imenta fuere ut ab ip[s]o cet[er]i danor[um] re

[et] q[uae]cu[m] ui[ta]u[nde] stabi[bi]m[ar]ca[tu]m[.]
a[utem]. in. p[er]c[ir]ca[reret]

[et] q[uae]c[um] etatis sta[ti]s. clarissimis indolis

exp[er]imas. [et] animi vigore. ~

-ges communi q[uo]da[m] vocabulo Sc[i]oldungi nu[n]

-eria fulgore suo finitimos

occupavit.

-cuparentur. Pr[a]ecurrebat igitur Sciold[us]

// P[er] hic n[on] armi[s] m[odo] ~

viriu[m] complementu[m] animi maturitate

etia[m] pat[ria]e carit[er] ~

-te [con]spicius fuit ex

[et] quor[um] vix spectator[um] ob teni[er]radine[m] e[ss]e poterat

-tit. Siq[ui]d[em] impias ~

conflictusq[uae] gessit quor[um] eum vix specta-

-ges abrogavit, sa ~

[et] spectator[um] ob teneritate[m] e[ss]e poterat.

-tares tulit [et] q[ui]c[ui]d

em[en]dand[um] pat[rai]e stat

torem ecas e[ss]e paciebatur. // In quo annor[um] vir

attin~

-tutisq[ue] p[ro]cursu ob Alvilda[m] Saxonum regis fi

summa

-liam qua[m] summe pulcritudinis intuitu postu

dilige[n]tia p[rae]stitit. S[ed]

[et] iraq[ue] regnu[m] patris

[et] earu[m]dem nupciar[um].

p[ro]bitate amissum vir

-labat cum Scato Allemanni[a]e satrapa ei[us]

-tute recup[er]avit. Primus

-dem puelle competitore Teutonu[m] danor[um]

reci[n]dendaru[m] manu ~

-sionu[m] lege[m] cult ed

-q[ue] exercitu inspectante ex p[ro]vocatione di

s[er]vi que[m] forte lib[er]tate

-micavit interfectorq[ue] eo omnem Allema[re]

donavat clandestine~

insidiis petit. Proce[ss]u ~

mannor[um] gentem p[er]inde ac ducis sui in

n[on] solu[m] domest[ic]is stip~

[et] t[ri]buto adegit.

-diss colebat s[ed] etia[m] s ~

-teritu debellatam tributa lege choer-

-liis ex hoste q[uae]sitis af

-mare solitus et dice

[et] t[ri]butaria pensioe p[er]domuit.

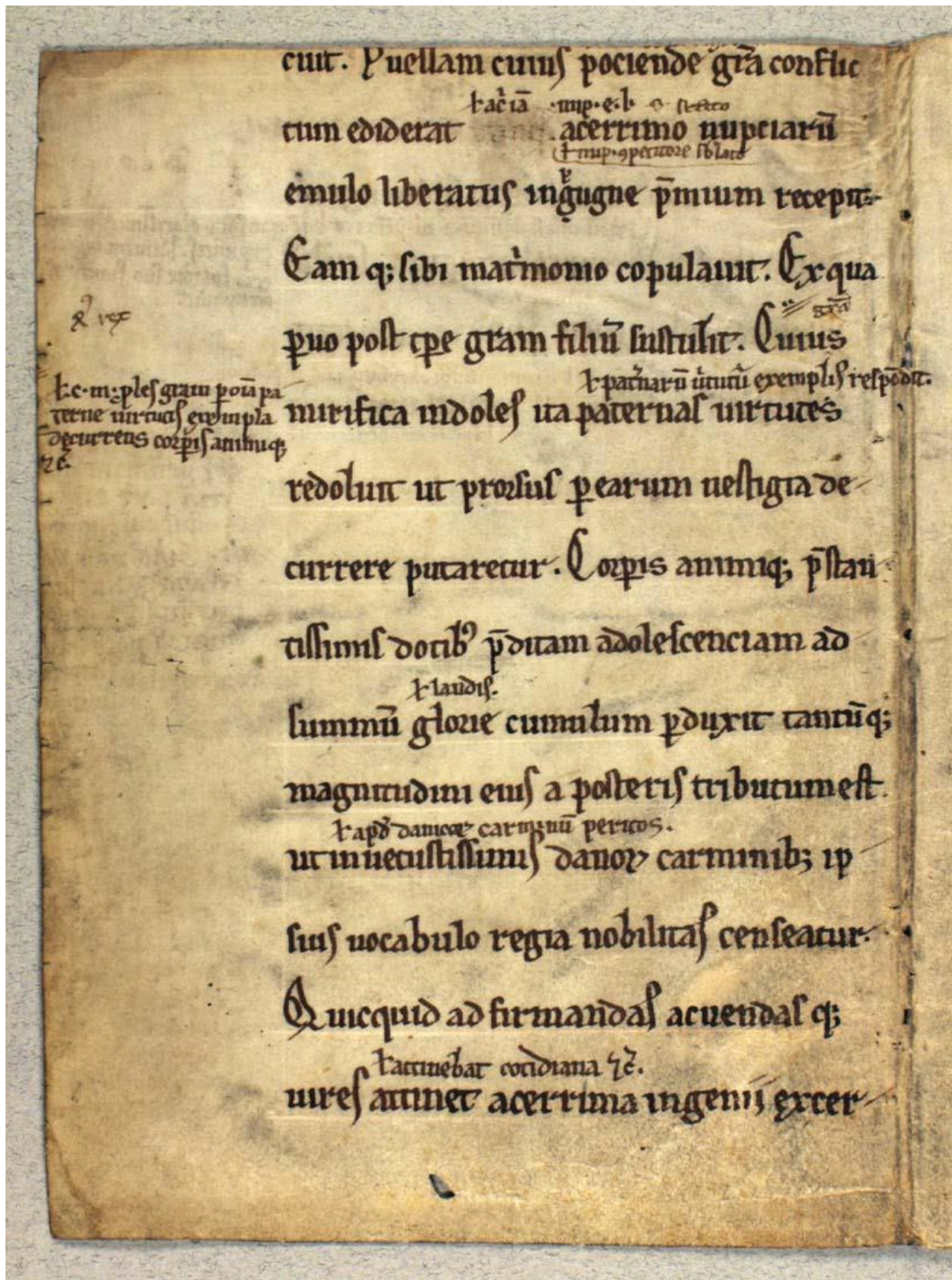
pecunia[m] ad mil~

gl[ori]am ad duce[m]

dundare debe[re] retat[us]. Omniu[m] ~~ alienu[m] ex fisco suo solvebat [et] q~

-si cu[m] alior[um] regu[m] fortitudine[m] munifice[n]tia ac lib[er]alitate certabat. ~

[et] ~~~ps. fomentis p[er]sequi remediaq[ue] graviter affectis ~~~~



-cuit. Puellam cuius pociende gra[nde] conflict-

[et] a[s]cia[m] .mip.e.l.

-tum ediderat acerrimo nuptiaru[m]

[a]emulo liberatus in pugne p[rae]mium recepit.

Eamq[ue] sibi mat[ri]monio copulavit. Ex qua

//

p[ro]vo post t[em]p[or]e Gram filiu[m] sustulit. Cuius

// [et].c.m.p[ro]les Gram p[er]ioia[m] pa

[et] pat[er]naru[m] v[ir]tutu[m] exemplis resprodit.

-tetne virtucis exempla

Decurtens corp[er]is animiq[ue]

mirifica indoles ita paternas virtutes

re[m].

redoluit ut prorsus p[er] earum vestigia de

-currere putaretur. Corp[er]is animiq[ue] p[rae]stan

-tissimis dotib[us] p[rae]ditam adolescentiam ad

[et] laudis.

summu[m] glorie cumulum p[er]duxit tantu[m]q[ue]

magnitudini eius a posteris tributum est

[et] apd[e] danicoe[um] carminu[m] peritos.

ut in vetustissimis danor[um] carminibus ip

-sius vocabulo regia nobilitas censeatur.

Quicquid ad firmandas acuendasq[ue]

[et] attinebat cotidiana re[m].

vires attinet acerrima ingenii excer

-citatione tractabat. A gladiatorib[us]

[et] **diferplioa[m]** docile animo tracs~~

vitandi inferendiq[ue] ictus consuetudine[m]

[et] doctrina[m]

[et] h[ic] pedagogi sui.po.fi

studioso exercis genere c[on]trahebat. Edu

[et] co[m]suetudinis.

[et] p[er]discebat.

-catoris sui Roari filiam co[a]evam sibi col

-lacteamq[ue] quo maiorem incunabulis

[et] in cede[m] exsolue[ere]t cinge[m] adet.

suis gra[tia]m referret uxorum advivit

quam p[ost]modem Besso cuida[m] quod eius

strenua op[er]a s[a]epenum[er]o usus fuerat

[et] quo bessicar[um] v[ir]tutum sociu~~

pl[us]. g. re[m].

mercedis loco coniugem d~~auit. Que[m]

[et] miticie [et] magnar vis re~~~~~ pl[us] glorie ei
sua an bessi v[ir]t[us] **atenletit.**

[et] **lg ic[er]t[is]u[m]**, p[ro][lapis]. gie. re[m].

cum bellicor[um] operu[m] focium haberet

plus glorie sua an Bessi virtute contraese

-rit incertum reliquit. Hic cum forte

[et] rege[m] sicragu[m]. fi. g. fraende pacis studio
giga[n]ti si festo pollicicu[m] anas

-tet. [et] cum p[er]isset tam m[en]t[i]o

viesi[us] condicione[m] p[er]o[lapis]

ma[nnus] fute cople detesta

-e[m] bellu[m] su.e.a.

-tum cuida[m] desponsam cognosset tam in

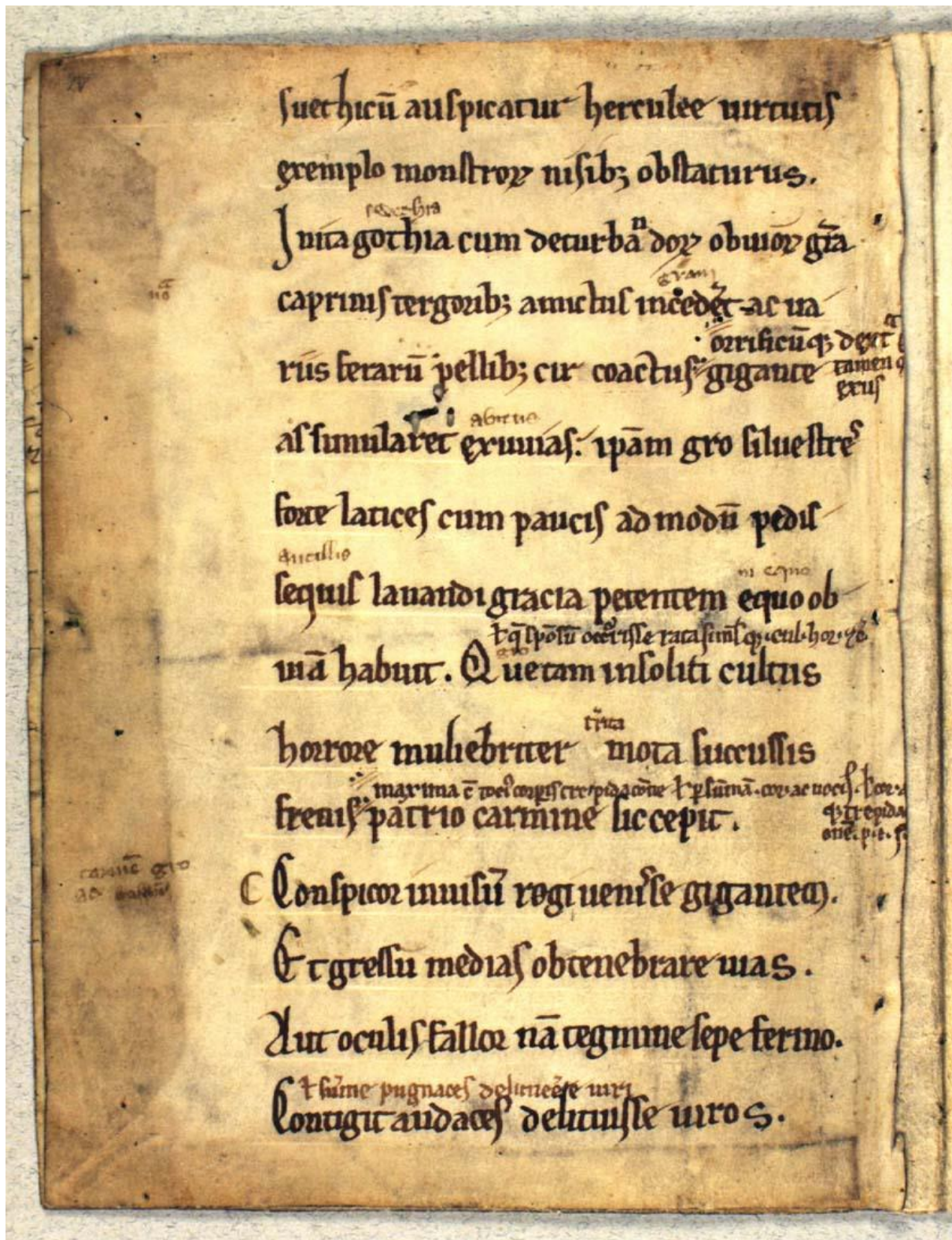
~ain execabilis cople detestacione[m]. b. s. a.

-digne condicionis vincl[ere]m execratus bellu[m]

[et] tam indigna[m] regio sanguine copulam

bello **p[rae]eutreda[m] p[ucau]~**

[et] p[rae]eurr[er]e statuit.



Folio. 2v.

Suethicu[m] auspicatur Herculee virtutis

exemplo monstror[um] nisub[us] obstaturus.

Inita gothia cum deturba[n]dor[um] obvior[um] gra[tia]

caprinis tergorib[us] amictus incede[re]t ac va

-riis feraru[m] pellig[us] circoactus // gigante

// [h]orrificu[m]q[ue] dext~

-tamen ~

-exus

-as simularet exuvias. ip[s]am Gro silvestres

forte latices cum paucis admodu[m] pedis

[et] q[ue] sp[ati]osu[m] occ~rifse rata sint[estis] q[uae]
cul.hor.ye.

-sequis lavandi gracia petentem equo ob

trita

-via[m] habuit. Que tam insoliti cultus

horrore muliebriter mota succussis

// maxima c[um] toti[us] corp[or]is trepidatione

[et] p[er]su[m]ma[n]nus cor[um]. ac vocis.[et] cor.
q[uae] trepida
-one[st].p.e.s.

frenis // patrio carmine sic cepit.

Conspicor invisu[m] regi veni[s]se gigantem.

Et gressu medias obtenebrare vias.

[in] fu[nde]ma pugnaces delitire[st]e viri

aut oculis fallor na[m] tegmine sepe ferino.

Contigit audaces delituisse viros.

[et] fu[s]ine pugnaces delitue[r]e viri

Tum bessus Sic orsus.

Promito nob[is].

Virgo caballi.

Cui bessus.

Que premis armos.

Bessus ego su[m].

Verba vicissim

Fortis in armis.

Mutua fundens.

Trux inimicis.

Quod tibi nomen.

Gentib[us] hoeror.

Qua fueris dic.

Atq[ue] alieno.

gente creata.

Sepe refunde[n]s.

Ad hec Gro.

Sanguine dextram

Gro mithi nomen.

Tum Gro.

Rex pater exstat.

Quis rogo vestru[m]

Sanguine fulgens.

Dirigit agmen.

Fulgid[us] armis.

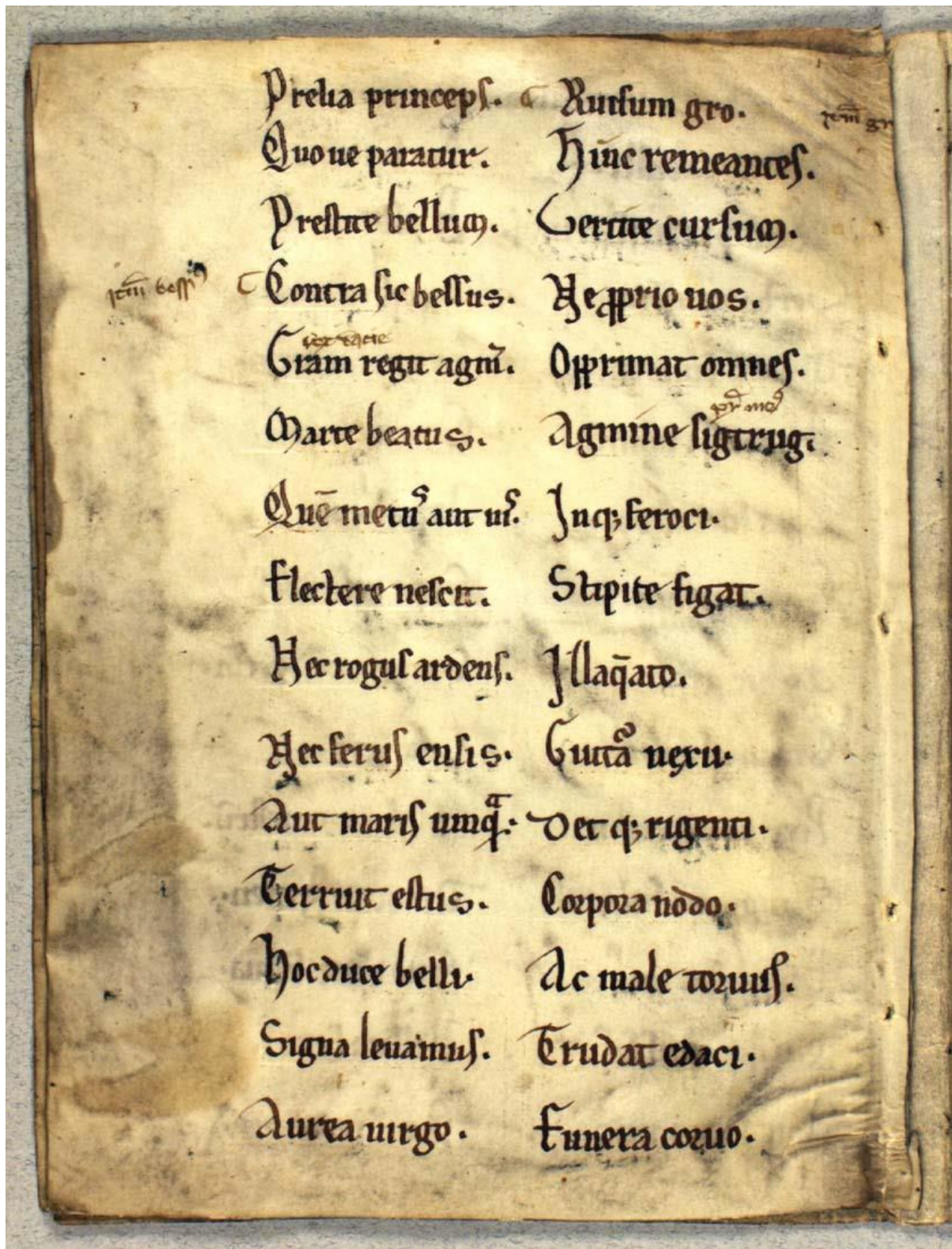
Quo duce signa.

Tu q[uo]q[ue] quis sis.

Bellica fertis

Aut satus unde.

Quis mod[er]atur.



Folio. 3v.

Prelia princeps.

Rursum Gro.

Quove paratur.

Hinc remeantes.

Pr[a]estite bellum.

Vertite cursum.

Contra sic bessus.

Ne p[ro]prio vos.

Gram regit agm[en].

Opprimat omnes.

Marte beatus.

agmine Sigtrug.

Que[m] metu[s] aut vi[s].

Inq[ue] feroci.

Flectere nescit.

Stipite figat.

Nec rogos ardens.

Il[la]q[ue]ato.

Nec ferus ensis.

Gutt[ur]a nexu.

aut maris umq[uam].

Detq[ue] rigenti.

Terruit estus.

Corpora nodo.

hoc duce belli.

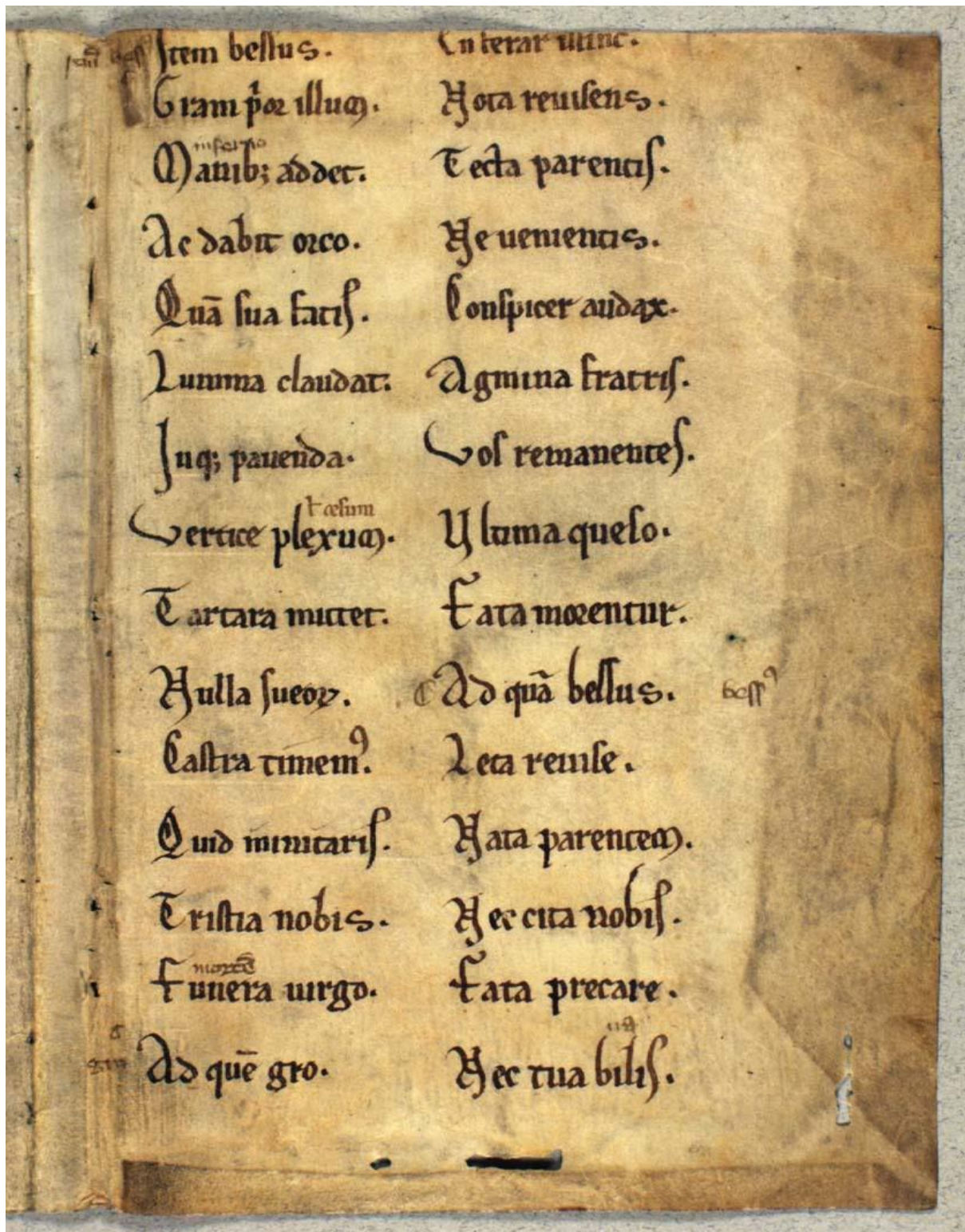
Ac male torvus.

Signa levamus.

Trudat edaci.

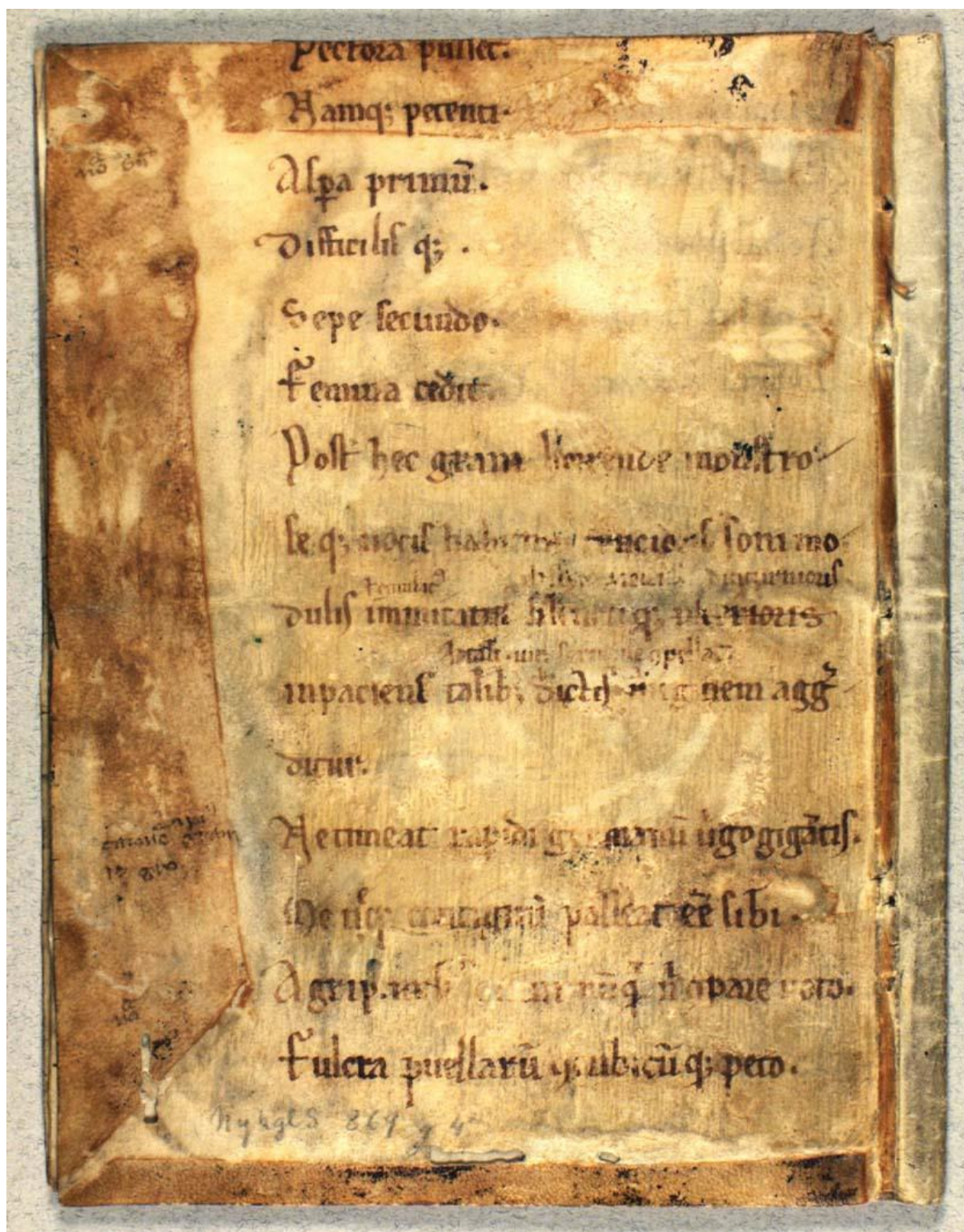
aurea virgo.

Funera corvo.



Folio. 4r.

Item Bessus.	En ferar istinc.
Gram p[ri]or illum.	Nota revisens.
Manib[us] addet.	Tecta parentis.
Ac dabit orco.	Ne venientis.
Qua[m] sua fati.	Conspicer audax.
Lumina claudat.	agmina fratris.
Inque pavenda.	Vos remanentes.
Vertice plexum.	Ultima queso.
Tartara mittet.	Fata morentur.
Nulla Sueor[um]	Ad qua[m] Bessus.
Castra timem[us].	L[a]eta revise.
Quid minitaris.	Nata parentem,
Tristia nobis.	Nec cita nobis.
Funera virgo.	Fata precare.
Ad que[m] Gro.	Nec tua bilis.



Folio. 4v.

Pectora pulset.

Namq[ue] petenti.

asp[er]a primu[m].

Difficilisq[ue].

Sepe secundo.

Femina cedit.

Post hec Gram horrende monstro

-seq[ue] vocis habi~~ ~cio~s soni mo

-dulis immitate ~~~~~q[uae] ~prioris

impatiens talib[us] dictis ~~~~nem agg[re]

-ditur.

Ne timeat rapidi germanu[m] v[ir]go giga[n]tis.

Me n{e}q[ue] contiguu[m] palleat e[ss]e sibi.

A grip. m~~~~~ enim nu[m]q[uam] n[isi] ~opare voto

fulcra puellaru[m] ~~~cubitu[m]q[ue] peto.

Bibliography

Manuscript and Archival Sources

Copenhagen

The Royal Library of Denmark

NKS 869 G 4^o: The Angers fragment

Secondary Sources

Boserup, I. 'The Angers fragment and the Archetype of Gesta Danorum', in Friis-Jensen, K. (ed.) *Saxo Grammaticus: A Medieval Author Between Norse and Latin Culture* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1981).

Cappelli, A. *Lexicon Abbreviaturarum*. (Leipzig: Zweite verbesserte Auflage, 1928).

Sawyer, B. and Sawyer, P. *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation circa 800 – 1500*. The Nordic Series, Vol. 17. (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

Electronic Sources

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 1 recto*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/1+recto/?var=1>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 1 verso*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/1+verso/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 2 recto*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/2+recto/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 2 verso*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/2+verso/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 3 recto*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/3+recto/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 3 verso*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/3+verso/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 4 recto*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/4+recto/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: 4 verso*. (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/4+verso/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark: Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, *NKS 869 g 4^o: The Angers fragment: Introduction* (2016) <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/66/eng/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

The Royal Library of Denmark, *Saxo Grammaticus: Gesta Danorum* (2010) <<http://wayback-01.kb.dk/wayback/20101108105429/http://www2.kb.dk/elib/lit/dan/saxo/lat/or.dsr/>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].

William Whitaker, *William Whitaker's Words* (2007) <<http://archives.nd.edu/words.html>> [Accessed: 08 January 2021].