

Ninth-century reception and reworking

Naturally, it cannot simply be stated that the extant manuscript evidence is all there is to reconsider the role the ArF played in the writing of history in the ninth century. Hence, it is appropriate to add a disclaimer here in the form of a provisional overview of the reception of the ArF throughout the Frankish realm up to and including the chronicle written by Regino, i.e. between c. 800 and c. 900.

It is commonly assumed that a copy of the ArF was present in Chelles, near Paris, where it was used in late 805 or early 806 to write the *Annales Mettenses priores*⁶⁵, quite possibly supervised by abbess Gisela, Charlemagne's sister⁶⁶. Paul Fouracre and Richard Gerberding have maintained that the author, if a woman, would have been a misogynistic one. One need not to be a misogynist, however, to criticise particular behaviour and the implicit notion that no woman would criticise another one seems rather odd. It entirely depends, moreover, on how one reads that Plectrude "decided to rule with feminine cunning more cruelly than was necessary". Does cruelty outweigh feminine cunning here? Or has the feminine cunning of Plectrude simply gone beyond the reasonable? And who was better to judge this than a woman? Furthermore, they seem to entertain the possibility that the *Annales Mettenses priores* were actually written in Metz, but ultimately conclude that "the evidence is too slight to allow us to decide for certain"⁶⁷.

Irrespective of the exact identity of the compiler, Hartmut Hoffmann has explained that the version of the ArF that was used probably

65) *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. Bernhard von Simson (MGH SS rer. Germ. [10], 1905).

66) Hartmut Hoffmann, *Untersuchungen zur karolingischen Annalistik* (Bonner historische Forschungen 10, 1958) p. 53–61; Helmut Beumann, *Nomen imperatoris. Studien zur Kaiseridee Karls d. Gr.*, in: *Historische Zs.* 185 (1958) p. 515–549, at p. 529; Irene Haselbach, *Aufstieg und Herrschaft der Karlinger in der Darstellung der sogenannten Annales Mettenses priores. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Ideen im Reiche Karls des Großen* (Historische Studien 412, 1970) p. 24, highlights the case for St Denis as well; Janet L. Nelson, *Gender and Genre in Women Historians of the Early Middle Ages*, in: *L'histoire médiévale en Europe. Actes du colloque organisé par la Fondation Européenne de la Science au Centre de Recherches Historiques et Juridiques de l'Université Paris I du 29 mars au 1^{er} avril 1989*, sous la direction de Jean-Philippe Genet (1991) p. 149–163.

67) Paul Fouracre / Richard A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France. History and Hagiography 640–720* (Manchester Medieval Sources Series, 1996) p. 338f.