

Of the extant textual witnesses, only the Paris codex, dated to the second quarter of the ninth century and possibly written in the vicinity of Paris, and the Vienna codex, a manuscript connected with the succession of Charles the Bald in Lotharingia after the death of Lothar II in 869 and probably written in St Amand, transmit more or less the entire ArF, that is ranging from 741 to 829. Both contain the ArF as part of a historiographical compendium. Additionally, four manuscript fragments from the ninth century have survived. Of those fragments, two transmit a substantial portion of the text. The longest text fragment, Reg. lat. 617, supposedly written in Orléans or its vicinity and dated to the first half of the ninth century, perhaps even the first quarter, contains the entries for 777 up to and including 813, with the loss of two leaves resulting in the loss of texts in the entry for 787 and the end of the entry for 791 up to the first words of the entry for 794. The other fragment preserved in the same collection, namely Reg. lat. 213, dates from the second half of the ninth century, possibly the third quarter, and may have been written in the vicinity of Reims. It transmits the entries for 791 up to and including the entry for 806, when the text breaks off in mid-sentence. There are also two shorter fragments, both unknown to Kurze when preparing his edition of the ArF. The first of these, the Cologne fragment, dated to the first third of the ninth century, may have been written at the court, although it remains uncertain where exactly the court was, in palaeographical terms at least. As it contains part of the entry for 824, this textual witness may very well have been written shortly after the text was first conceived. The Leiden fragment, which may have been written in the Rhineland or the court, dated to the second quarter of the ninth century, contains the last part of the entry for 825 and the first part of the entry for 826.

If marked on a map, it is striking that an oval-shaped area appears that encompasses the cultural centres that seem to have had access to the ArF. If these guesstimates are correct, centres that produced ArF manuscripts are mostly located between the Seine and Rhine rivers, ranging from Paris, and possibly slightly further south from Orléans, to Aachen, encompassing St Amand and Reims. As most copies were written in the Frankish heartlands, there is reason to suppose that the text may indeed have been commissioned by the ruling dynasty. A tenth-century copy of an exemplar that was offered to Charles the Bald was copied in the abbey of Saint-Médard-de-Soissons fits