SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Of all the earlier medieval works of historiography, the *Chronicle* of Regino of Prüm is among those that have remained longest, and for students of the period most frustratingly, untranslated. This work is puzzling: the structure and function of its earlier sections (1 AD to 741, and 742–814), its author's purposes, its context, and its intended audience, are all more or less inscrutable. Now Simon MacLean has met the need and risen to the challenge of translating not just the *Chronicle's* more familiar (long-)ninth-century section (to 906) but the earlier sections too, adding into what becomes a tremendous bargain the *Continuation* by Adalbert of St-Maximin, archbishop of Magdeburg, who offers a distinctive take on events down to 967, that final entry being especially significant. Between them, these chroniclers give access to unique information; more interesting still, to particular concerns and readings of times and regions otherwise not, or hardly, documented by other writers. Ideally qualified to unravel their mysteries is Dr Simon MacLean, an expert decoder of early medieval historiography whose own research-focus has extended from the later ninth century to include the tenth. As ever with volumes in the Manchester Medieval Sources series, scholarship is put at the service of a wide readership, and the introduction and annotation supply so much invaluable background material and thought-provoking commentary that scholars engaging, as they increasingly often are these days, with the late-Carolingian and post-Carolingian periods will make this a first port-of-call. Who, we find, but Regino offers the wherewithal to deconstruct the modern paradigm of the Carolingian Empire's 'decline and fall'? Who but Regino explains the formation of a regional entity in what modern economic historians call 'the blue banana', *alias* Lotharingia? Who but Adalbert reveals the near-panoptic vision of the early Ottonian regime? Simon MacLean's translation offers an entrée to revelatory understandings by these writers of their own worlds, and hence to those worlds themselves. This is the book for students (and they include teachers) seeking enlightenment on what can never again be called the darkest phase of the Dark Ages.

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