Joanna Story: Charlemagne and Rome. Alcuin and the Epitaph of Pope Hadrian I. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2023 (Medieval History and Archaeology). XXIII, 403 pp., 91 ill., 1 map. £ 100.00/ $ 130.00. ISBN: 978-0-19-920634-6.

Thousands of pilgrims and tourists daily cross the threshold of the basilica of St Peter in the Vatican in order to gaze upon the tombs of the popes and see the site where St Peter is believed to have been buried after his execution in the neighbouring Circus of Nero. Groups often stop for a moment or two in the portico prior to entering, so as to look at the monumental bronze doors created in 1433–1435 by the artist Filarete (Antonio Averlino) for pope Eugenius IV. However, it is the rare visitor who dawdles to look around and focus on the epitaph of pope Hadrian I (772–795) above and to the left of those doors. Most certainly no one bothers about the Baroque equestrian statue of Charlemagne that is located to the far left just beyond that portico; the rules of contemporary tourism dictate that the space at the end of the portico be used as a work-station for the Vatican employees who rent out headsets *en masse* to visiting groups and therefore this statue languishes in oblivion. That is a pity, for this equestrian statue complements that of Constantine which is to be found to the far right likewise just beyond the portico. The equestrian statue of Constantine (1663–1670) by Gian Lorenzo Bernini is the more famous of the two, as it brilliantly evokes that emperor's celebrated vision of the Cross in the sky. The equestrian statue of Charlemagne (1720–1725) by Agostino Cornacchini, by contrast, has been much maligned. Thinking of this work the Italian art critic Leopoldo Cicognara, for instance, uncharitably described Cornacchini as "uno de' più tristi scultori che mai trattassero lo scarpello".[1] Although distancing himself from such a brutal *stroncatura*, the art historian Rudolf Wittkower has likewise observed that the sculpture shows that Cornacchini was not quite up to the task at hand.[2] Amusing though such judgements may be, they lose sight of the function and historical significance of this statue. The work of Cornac-

1 Cicognara 1823–1824: 6.236. For abbreviated references to authors and works, see the Bibliography at the end of this review (pp. 38–39).

2 Wittkower 1961: p. 464, "daß Cornacchinis eher bescheidenes Talent der ihm gestellten monumentalen Aufgabe nicht gerade gewachsen war".

chini was meant to serve as a pendant to the earlier piece by Bernini.[3] Moreover, the representation of a Roman emperor intimately associated with the Vatican basilica is redolent of the ideology of the Counter-Reformation. Rulers serve the Church, history is a handmaiden to faith.

It is to the immense credit of Joanna Story (and our good fortune) that she not only tarried for an extra moment before pope Hadrian's epitaph, but chose to dedicate an entire monograph to this elusive and often neglected monument.[4] Torn from its original location and proposed afresh to a public unable to read and appreciate its poetic language, the epitaph is now situated at a height that makes it physically difficult to read and reduces it to the level of a mute visual witness to the long history and power of the popes. Through her monograph, however, Story has managed to make the mute stone speak once more. Readers hear the voice of Charlemagne, for instance, as he addresses them, inviting them to pray, "Gentle God, be merciful" (lines 25–26; pp. 126–127). In an extended discussion that weaves back and forth between the creation of a new basilica of St Peter in the Vatican over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the creation of the epitaph in the late ninth century, Story brings together a wide variety of sources (literary, epigraphic, numismatic, and archaeological) and uses an equally wide range of methods (philology, palaeography, codicology, petrology) to recreate the genesis and subsequent history of this neglected Carolingian monument at the Vatican. Arguably as significant as the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, the epitaph of pope Hadrian I has met with a worthy publication.[5]

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The chapter-length introduction (pp. 1–27: "Charlemagne and Italy")[6] sets the stage, beginning in an indirect manner that is almost cinematic in feeling. Story commences with the *rota porphyretica* that, at least since the twelfth cen-

3 Cf. Gatz 2003: pp. 113–115; Henze/Bering/Wiedmann 1994: p. 331.

4 In the modern literature for visitors to the basilica, the reviewer notes only Macadam 1994: p. 309. Story, it is to be added, has developed what was the core of an article that she published nearly twenty years ago: Story et al. 2005.

5 Cf. Mommsen 1887: p. 385 (= 1906: p. 247), labelling the R. Gest. div. Aug. the *regina inscriptionum*.

6 For a detailed table of contents including the subheadings, readers are referred to the end of this review (pp. 40–42).

tury, legend has linked to the figure of Charlemagne and his coronation as emperor by pope Leo III at the Vatican basilica on Christmas day in 800. From there she takes the reader outside the basilica and into the portico, where we can still see to this day a monument that is securely documented testimony to the Carolingian ruler's presence in the basilica of St Peter in the Vatican: the epitaph of pope Hadrian I (772–795). Contemporaries whose reign and pontificate overlapped in large part, Charlemagne created this epitaph for a pope with whom he had collaborated for nearly a quarter of century. A mere five years later he would be crowned emperor of the Romans by Hadrian's successor Leo III. Projecting Carolingian confidence and power, the epitaph is part of a larger, long-term discourse, and its context is the assertion of Carolingian rule in Italy at the expense of the Lombard kingdom of Pavia and the Byzantine empire. As a member of the Roman aristocracy, Hadrian embodied the changing nature of the Roman clergy and managed to work with the Carolingian ruler. It had been at his invitation that Charlemagne invaded Italy in 773 and overthrew Desiderius, thereby becoming also *rex Langobardorum*.

Fast forward some eight centuries, to the definitive relocation of the epitaph of pope Hadrian I in the portico of the new basilica of St Peter in the Vatican at the height of the Counter Reformation. Story dedicates the opening chapter (pp. 29-83 = Chapter 1: "Renaissance Rome: Hadrian's Epitaph in New St Peter's") to the vicissitudes of the epitaph during the creation of a new basilica at the Vatican between the pontificate of Julius II and that of Paul V. This means tracing the involvement of the French monarchy with the Vatican basilica. Both the monuments (Chapel of St Petronilla and the Altar of the Shepherd) and contemporary history (the Concordat of Bologna in 1515) gave especial valency to the epitaph of Hadrian. From the imaginative representation of Francis I as Charlemagne in the *Stanza dell'Incendio* to the epitaph's display in the portico, the memory of the Vatican basilica's association with Charlemagne loomed large in the decisions taken regarding the epitaph's eventual destiny. The story of the epitaph in the years 1506–1619 in effect reflects in miniature the story of the Constantinian basilica. What was to be done with the memorials of the past? Story deftly reviews in detail the contemporary literature that recorded – with more or less care for precision and accuracy – the epitaph as a material object and a text. The intervention of Gregory XIII in 1574 and Giacomo Grimaldi's description reflect especial care for the past.

With the next chapter (pp. 85-108 = Chapter 2: "The 'Life' and Death of Pope Hadrian I"), Story goes back in time to the eighth century to review the life, death, and burial of Hadrian. Doing so allows her to situate the epitaph of Hadrian in its original historical milieu and thereby recover the cultural and political significance of the decision to produce this artefact. The tears that Charlemagne is said to have shed upon learning of Hadrian's death invite prolonged reflection. The account that is offered of Hadrian's life and twenty-four-year pontificate is wide-ranging, but highly compressed, and a thumbnail biography (comparable to that in "The Oxford Dictionary of Popes")[7] serves to emphasise Carolingian aspects and the nature of the sources available to the modern historian. The two most important sources emanating from the papal court are a biography in the *Liber Pontificalis* that was composed at two different moments by contemporaries and the epistolary collection known as the *Codex Carolinus*. These sources offer complementary coverage in chronological terms (772–774, 774–791), with the fall of Pavia constituting a watershed moment. However, we depend upon other sources for a clear vision of how Hadrian was commemorated in death. The verse of Theodulf, the correspondence of Alcuin, the *Lorsch Annals*, and the *Historia Regum* compiled by Symeon of Durham provide details (e. g. gold letters, verse, *platoma*) not to be found in the *Liber Pontificalis*.

The third chapter (pp. 111-140 = Chapter 3: "Alcuin and the Epitaph") analyses the text of the epitaph of pope Hadrian and explores the evidence for attributing it to the Northumbrian scholar Alcuin. The name of Alcuin is not explicitly attached to the poem in the text itself nor in surviving collections of verse. Indeed, on the basis of line 17, where the focalisation changes and Charlemagne speaks in the first person to the reader of the epitaph, late medieval and early modern readers assumed that the author was none other than Charlemagne himself. However, a study of the poem's language and a knowledge of the biography of Alcuin have enabled modern scholars, starting with the Bollandist Conrad Janning in 1717, to assign the epitaph to Alcuin with confidence. While still a young man, Alcuin accompanied Ælberht,[8] the future archbishop of York, in his travels on the Continent and to Rome *ca.* 755–765 (cf. p. 118), and he made another visit to Rome in 780 to

7 Kelly 1996: pp. 96–97.

8 This is the form used by Story, and the reviewer finds it acceptable. However, readers should be aware that the alternative form of "Æthelbert" also exists in the literature.

procure the *pallium* for Ælberht's successor. There is no evidence for a warm, close relationship between Alcuin and Hadrian, but the evidence for Alcuin's direct knowledge of Rome is unequivocal. Moreover, the linguistic evidence is overwhelming (p. 111, n. 1). Story accordingly focuses on the poem's structure and its transmission in the manuscript tradition. Intriguingly, both this epitaph and that for Ælberht (likewise by Alcuin) appear together, without attribution, in early anthologies.

Story provides Roman and Carolingian context for the epitaph as an instance of material culture in the next chapter (pp. 143-183 = Chapter 4: "Recalling Rome: Epigraphic *Syllogae* and Itineraries"). The move is logical and welcome, as it ensures that the epitaph does not remain a monument standing in splendid isolation. The inscribed verse of pope Damasus (366–384) shaped Anglo-Saxon and Frankish visitors' vision of Rome's monumental heritage as a Christian capital, and *syllogae* (i. e. *florilegia* or anthologies) made these epigrams available to a wider audience in western Europe than those who were engaged in the act of pilgrimage (and therefore desired itineraries). Their influence is visible in regional productions such as the *York Poem* of Alcuin and the poetry of Theodulf of Orléans. Copied in Francia in the 820s or early 830s, the four 'Lorsch' *syllogae* constitute a particularly rich source of information with their copies of poems and accompanying topographical information. The first Lorsch *sylloge*, indeed, focuses primarily on St Peter in the Vatican and transmits two inscriptions of especial note as regards Carolingian patronage at the Vatican. One is a poem composed by pope Hadrian himself and visible on an altar (the high altar?) in the Vatican basilica; the other is a poem that was woven into or embroidered on an altar covering that Charlemagne and his third wife Hildegard presented to the Vatican basilica.

Story next (pp. 185-224 = Chapter 5: "Writing on the Walls: Epigraphy in Italy and Francia") looks at the evidence for epigraphic practice in Christian contexts in Late Antiquity, so as to provide context for the *mise en page* and letter-forms employed in the epitaph of Hadrian. She begins, however, by furnishing a detailed physical description of Hadrian's epitaph, describing and illustrating the ornamental border, the layout, and the script as well as scrupulously signalling the stone's present-day condition. From the vine-scroll border with its alternating motifs of grape cluster and vine-leaf to the employment of *scriptura continua* and lack of punctuation, the distinctive features of this inscription are catalogued. Having described the epitaph in full,

Story then proceeds to look for precedents and parallels in the epigraphic traditions of imperial and papal Rome. The *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* might have been deemed one of the pieces to inspire Hadrian's epitaph, but Story shows that they are fundamentally different in terms of detail (e. g. rustic capitals as opposed to square Roman capitals). The script devised by Filocalus for the inscribed verse of pope Damasus offers, by contrast, the likely model. Shared traits such as "'embraced' letters" (p. 203) and ligatures point to emulation (albeit not slavish) of the Filocalian model. This model's association with the identity of Rome as a Christian capital arguably explains the choice.

Story next (pp. 227-256 = Chapter 6: "Black Stone: Materials, Methods, and Motives") focuses on the material support for Charlemagne's epitaph for Hadrian. As she demonstrates, the choice of a black stone for the epitaph was highly unusual, and the employment of black marble in ancient Rome was extraordinarily rare. Indeed, the pavement known as the *Lapis Niger*, which was visible in the *Comitium* in its Archaic form, appears to have been completely forgotten by Carolingian times. As the *Lorsch Annals* report that the epitaph was made *in Francia*, an ultramontane source is *a priori* the most likely. By good fortune, restoration work in 2002–2014 allowed for close-up petrological, palaeontological, and geo-chemical analysis. Comparison with samples from eight modern quarries and pieces from Charlemagne's chapel at Aachen identified a quarry in the Meuse valley, viz. that at Sclayn, as the likely, local source. There is a long history behind the use of black Mosan marble, as shown by its use in numerous altars to the goddess Nehalennia and other monuments. Of course, as Story notes, this stone is technically a carboniferous limestone and not a true marble, as it contains fossils still visible to the naked eye. Nevertheless, it was used as a marble. Most striking is a letter of Charlemagne to Offa, the king of the Mercians, where he not only speaks about prayers for the deceased pope but also offers the Mercian king help with the importation of *petrae nigrae*.

There follows a chapter (pp. 257-309 = Ch. 7: "Aachen and the Art of the Court") in which Story contextualises the epitaph as a poetic artefact coming out of the 'court' of Charlemagne. There was intense cultural activity at Aachen *ca.* 780–810, e. g. the *Admonitio generalis* of 789 that aimed at the reform of the Frankish church, and documents such as a set of Easter tables with contemporary notes unequivocally place Charlemagne there for important feasts, in spite of a peripatetic existence typical of rulership in Late

Antiquity. The concept of a Carolingian 'court' is problematic, as Story acknowledges, but she rightly points to a wide range of evidence that shows the importance of Aachen, revealing a situation where that site was "a luminous star in a constellation of places" in terms of prestige and the investment of resources (p. 263). Texts such as Dagulf's Psalter, which was intended for pope Hadrian and arguably was created *ca.* 793–795, offer insight into the cultural activities of the Carolingian court. Dagulf, significantly, calls himself the *famulus* ("servant") of Charlemagne and appears to be identical with the homonymous individual recipient of a letter from Alcuin, who describes him as a *scrinarius* ("notary"). Other texts such as the dedication inscription for the chapel at Aachen, an epigram which was painted, constitute the 'missing link' (especially as regards lettering) between these manuscripts and the epitaph for Hadrian.

The final chapter (pp. 311-342 = Chapter 8: "Charlemagne, St Peter's, and the Imperial Coronation") ties things together and closes the circle by resuming with a focus on *l'histoire événementielle* a little over a quarter of a century after Charlemagne's conquest of the Lombard kingdom of Pavia. The significance of Rome for Charlemagne (who visited the city on four occasions) and his collaborators (viz. Angilbert, Arn, Theodulf, and Alcuin) is teased out. So, too, through the letters of Alcuin and annalistic entries, the precarious position of Hadrian's successor Leo III is elucidated. Thus, we see the crisis of 799, Charlemagne's arrival in late 800, the month-long synod held at the Vatican, and the imperial coronation on Christmas Day. Albeit unexpectedly, Story persuasively draws attention to the likelihood that Corippus' *In laudem Iustini* not only inspired the verses that Theodulf composed in honour of the deceased pope Hadrian I, but also informed the Paderborn epic *Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa* that in its complete form ought to have concluded with a description of the coronation of Charlemagne in its fourth book (p. 322). Constantine as a model for Charlemagne is consequently discussed in detail, with attention to the triclinium mosaic at the Lateran, the decoration of the 'Vatican basilica's triumphal arch', and the inscribed version of the donation of 774. Inscriptions displayed in buildings offer enduring witness to history.

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It is axiomatic that late antique poetry for a monumental context in the city of Rome tends to be written in couplets. Alcuin's epitaph for pope Hadrian I

(772–795) is no exception. This piece consists of forty lines laid out visibly as couplets. Of these, 38 lines are verse, and therefore couplets in the technical sense. The final two lines are in prose, but their *mise en texte* nicely reinforces the idea of poetry that the viewer was meant to have. One consequence that follows from such an arrangement is that each couplet theoretically constitutes a complete and comprehensible expression in and of itself. In other words, each couplet ought to form a sentence. That reality, unfortunately, gets lost in the English translation by David R. Howlett that is elegantly presented in full (with a facing Latin text in a diplomatic edition) at the very outset of Story's magnificent monograph (pp. XXII–XXIII).[9] There is no punctuation for the Latin text. That is natural and acceptable, given the fact that the Latin is presented in capitals as a diplomatic copy. However, the punctuation of the English translation gives pause for thought. The first period (.) occurs only at the end of line 16, nearly halfway through the poem. The presence of semi-colons (;) at the ends of lines 8 and 10 mitigates the problem somewhat, but not sufficiently. The first four verses, for instance, seem to the reviewer to constitute two independent sentences. The Latin reads thus (p. XXII):

HIC PATER ECCLESIAE ROMAE DECVS INCLYTVS AVCTOR
HADRIANVS REQVIEM PAPA BEATVS HABET
VIR CVI VITA DEVS PIETAS LEX GLORIA CHRISTVS
PASTOR APOSTOLICVS PROMPTVS AD OMNE BONVM

Howlett translates these lines thus (p. XXIII):

Here the father of the Church, the glory of Rome, the renowned author,
Hadrian the blessed pope has rest,
a man for whom [there was] life, God, piety, law, glory, Christ,
an apostolic shepherd, prompt at all good,

The reviewer would suggest positing a full stop at the end of the second line after the verb *habet* and yet another full stop at the end of the fourth line after the substantival adjective *bonum*. But further revision also seems in order, as Howlett has failed to grasp the full significance of the imposing mass of nouns piled together in the third line. There are six pairings of nouns, and each pairing merits a relative clause unto itself with a copulative verb being supplied by the reader thus: *cui Deus* [*erat*] *vita*, *cui pietas* [*erat*] *lex*, *cui Christus* [*erat*] *gloria*. Just as Alcuin delighted in the alternation of word order in the

9 Howlett 2009: pp. 242–243, for the translation as it originally appeared.

first line (e. g. *pater ecclesiae* chiastically juxtaposed with *Romae decus*), so we must understand the trinity of *Deus*, *pietas*, and *Christus* to constitute the subjects of the implied verb *erat* of the relative clauses introduced by *cui*. The fourth line, of course, also has an understood *erat* linking the subject *pastor apostolicus* to the predicate adjective *promptus*. On this reading of the Latin, the text ought to be translated thus according to the reviewer:

> Here the father of the Church, the glory of Rome, [and] the illustrious founder,
> Hadrian the blessed pope has rest.
> A man for whom God [was] life, piety [was] law, [and] Christ [was] glory,
> the apostolic shepherd [was] ready for every good [deed].

More might be done to render this proper poetry in English, but the sense should now be clear, as should the way in which Alcuin composed his verse in sub-units of three or four parts that were linked together much as one strings beads on a necklace. This is a far cry from the techniques of the bards who composed epics such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but it does share something with the *Aeneid* of Vergil and offers intriguing insight into the constitution of a literate Latin society as Late Antiquity gave way to the Middle Ages proper.

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Arguably the most striking of the three distinctive elements that make up – from the material perspective – Charlemagne's epitaph for pope Hadrian (viz. stone, letters, and frame) is the *rinceau* motif that constitutes the frame (cf. p. 187: "One of the most striking features of the epitaph is the border that frames the text"). The motif with its regular undulation and the alternation of grape clusters and foliage from one scroll to the next is visually arresting, in spite of the fact that it occupies a frame that is merely seven centimeters wide (p. 189). Where did the motif come from? Story points out a Carolingian parallel in the 'Foundation Reliquary' of Hildesheim, which may easily date to the first decades of the ninth century (p. 188, n. 6). However, she does not pursue the matter in her brief discussion of this motif (p. 187–189: "The ornamental border") and her subsequent passing references to the question of a frame when discussing manuscript models and parallels for the lettering are vague or *sfuggenti* (e. g. p. 287). The issue of a model is not directly addressed, and yet it seems fundamental. Recalling having seen this motif elsewhere, the reviewer consulted what is a standard history of mediaeval art in Italy: Liana Castelfranchi Vegas's 1993 textbook. There the parallel and

likely model was readily found: the epitaph of St Cumian († 736).[10] Adorning the tomb of this Irish holy man in the Abbey of St Colombanus at Bobbio in northernmost Italy, this, like the epitaph of pope Hadrian, is a most distinctive and visually memorable monument. There can be little doubt that St Cumian's tombstone served as the model for pope Hadrian's tombstone. It is not merely a question of the layout of the text of the epitaph (pp. 190–192, focuses on the text, citing the appropriate authorities and referring readers to Howlett's admirable 2009 article), but also a question of the *mise en page* and that involves the frame or border as well as the letters themselves. Recognition of the fact that the epitaph of St Cumian was the model for the epitaph of pope Hadrian raises further interesting questions. For instance, when did Alcuin pass through Bobbio and what was his relationship with the community founded there by St Columbanus? Or, what was Charlemagne's relationship with that community and did he, too, conceivably see the tombstone of St Cumian during one of his many visits to Italy so as to deal with the affairs of the kingdom of the Lombards? We often write of 'Carolingian Rome' (to which phrase Paolo Delogu has made reasonable objections[11]), but here we are faced with what seems that expression's epitome and yet we find ourselves looking at possible Lombard and Irish influences. Of course, the realization that an artist at the Frankish court of Aachen was emulating artwork seen at the Abbey of St Columbanus at Bobbio does not close the matter. Rather, it opens it up for much more work and speculation. The motif of the *rinceau*, after all, is ancient. Thought turns to the 'peopled scrolls' so elegantly realised on the *Ara Pacis Augustae*.[12] So, thought turns to the *rinceaux* adorning the porphyry sarcophagus of the Augusta Constantina or the miniature columns on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus and the monument of the deacon Mercurius (later pope John II) from the former basilica of S. Clemente. Were there Roman models from Rome for the epitaph of St Cumian? Work remains to be done, but we must be grateful to Story for presenting this artefact and stimulating questions that may be of eventual profit.

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10 Castelfranchi Vegas 1993: fig. 61.

11 Delogu 2022: p. 275. See the review of this book in: Plekos 25, 2023, pp. 431–438, URL: https://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2023/r-delogu.pdf.

12 Toynbee/Ward-Perkins 1950: pp. 1–43, on this Hellenistic motif.

There is last, but not least, a fundamental question that remains in spite of Story's lucid, persuasive chapter dedicated to the question of the provenance of the marble employed in the epitaph of pope Hadrian. That the stone in question is an example of *marmor Mosanus* ("Belgian Black") and that it came in all likelihood from vicinity of Sclayn (*ca.* 80 km from Aachen) are things that she persuasively demonstrates. However, a basic question remains: Why choose this particular type of stone for Hadrian's epitaph? Aside from the question of prestige involved, as seems clear from the letter by Charlemagne to Offa that she cites (Alcuin, *Epistolae* 100.36–41; cited at p. 240), there were surely other cultural factors at work here. As so often, a standard method in art history and classical philology comes to the historian's assistance: compare and contrast. Comparing this epitaph with that for St Cumian, the striking nature of the choice of *petra nigra* (thus Alcuin in the letter cited above) for an epitaph is highlighted and possible answers suggest themselves. Insofar as this black stone (also termed *Blaustein*) resembled porphyry and came from a site near the capital of Charlemagne's empire, the choice was conceivably meant to visually evoke Charlemagne himself as the patron of the funeral monument. Porphyry was the colour associated with kings and emperors. Moreover, for a viewer who thought that it resembled porphyry, it may well have evoked the liturgical clothing of the pope himself. Thought turns, for instance, to the depiction of pope Honorius wearing a porphyry chlamys in the apse of the new church of S. Agnese fuori le mura.[13] Third and last, since Charlemagne and his contemporaries spoke of it as a 'black stone', the colour was culturally appropriate to mourning and deployment within a funeral monument. Charlemagne is reported to have mourned extravagantly upon learning of the news of the death of Hadrian (Einhard seems to be echoing Augustus' reaction to the loss of Varus and his legions in Germany, but this monument is unquestionably extravagant in its simple elegance and use of luxurious materials), and the ancient Romans (who served as a model for Charlemagne and contemporaries in the West) had the custom of exchanging the white *toga* for the dark *sagum* to indicate mourning.[14] All three reasons seem likely, not merely plausible, and there is no real need to choose between them. Life is complicated, and multiple causes

13 Miller 2014: fig. 2.

14 E.g. Plut. Crass. 23.1. For a global treatment of the colour black, see Pastoureau 2008 (esp. pp. 21, 35, 63–66).

arguably lay behind the decision to utilise *marmor Mosanus* for the epitaph of pope Hadrian.

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Another issue, viz. the coinage of Hadrian I, receives relatively short shrift (p. 87). A splendid reproduction of one of the two coins of Hadrian I in the possession of the Fitzwilliam Museum of Cambridge (p. 88, fig. 2.2) accompanies and illustrates Story's discussion of the two distinct types of coins that Hadrian issued during his pontificate (772–781, 781–795). However, this discussion is far too brief and there are various other problems. The minting of coins was typically the prerogative of the ruler.[15] Accordingly, papal coinage of the eighth century carried the Byzantine emperor's image until the revolutionary change effected during Hadrian's pontificate. The earliest coinage (772–781) under Hadrian, in fact, used traditional metrological standards and carried the Byzantine emperor's image. Subsequent to the death of the emperor Leo IV (780), however, the Byzantine emperor's image disappeared, and the metrological standard adopted was now that of the Frankish coinage reform of Pippin I.[16] No less significant than the changes in metrology and use (or not) of the imperial bust are those legends and images that do appear on Hadrian's later coins (781–795). They are, transcribed, as follows:[17]

Obv.: DN ADRIANVS PAPA | I B [*in field*]; bust of Hadrian I
Rev.: VICTORIA DNH | CONOB | RM [*in field*]; stepped cross

The appropriation of the honorific *D*[*ominus*] *N*[*oster*] is remarkable for its boldness. It does not occur in previous papal coinage nor does it appear in that of pope Leo III after the coronation of Charlemagne in 800. In other words, this was a transient phenomenon, restricted to the period 781–800. The honorific *D*[*ominus*] *N*[*oster*] was applied to the emperor in Late Antiquity, and its appropriation is a sign of Hadrian's pretentions subsequent to the Carolingian conquest of Pavia and the dynastic crisis being played out at

15 Cf. Noble 1984: pp. 289–290, on the *ius monetae*.

16 Grierson/Blackburn 1986: p. 638; Hartmann 2006: p. 173.

17 Grierson/Blackburn 1986: p. 560, pl. 47, nos. 1031–1032, with slight modification as noted.

Constantinople.[18] No less remarkable is the curious abbreviation I B in field, to either side of the pope's bust. This abbreviation has given rise to various suggestions and much debate (p. 87, n. 10).[19] Neither an indiction year nor a regnal year for the pontificate of Hadrian seems to make sense. Moreover, the proposed expansion as Ἰησοῦς Βασιλεύς seems odd in that no parallel for the use of Greek to render a Latin dating formula within a Western context is to be had. Far better is Florian Hartmann's brilliant and persuasive suggestion that the expansion ought to be Ἱ[ερεὺς] [καὶ] Β[ασιλεύς], which would give the Latin *s*[*acerdos*] [*et*] *r*[*ex*], with *rex* being understood as tantamount to *imperator*.[20] That would be a most appropriate accompaniment for an image that effectively replaced that of the emperor on the obverse. Within the context of the Iconoclastic controversy, Hadrian's affirmation was all the more germane and revolutionary. It is worth adding that such a use of the Greek letters I B seems to mark an intriguing development of the traditional *A*[*lpha*]-*O*[*mega*] motif accompanying the bust of Christ. Clearly, the last years of the eighth century constituted a period of remarkable experimentation and invention. It is unfortunate that Story failed to remark Hartmann's useful contribution. Similarly, it is regrettable that she has nothing to say about the "victory" to which reference is made on the reverse. Apparently, this legend refers to the assertion of papal territorial domination in Campania in the mid-780s. The catalogue of the Fitzwilliam Museum reports the abbreviation following "victory" as DNN. No one, to the reviewer's knowledge, has sought to make sense of this. Given the ambiguity of the forms N/H, witness the legend on the reverse where the letter may in fact double as N and H (on the reading of Story), it is conceivable that we should read DNH. If so, then it is possible to expand this abbreviation as *D*[*omini*] *N*[*ostri*] *H*[*adriani*]. In other words, the coin arguably refers to a "victory of our lord Hadrian" that is otherwise apparently unattested by the surviving (and spotty) written record for *l'histoire événementielle* of central-southern Italy in these years. There is, effectively, much more to be done with the coins of Hadrian,

18 Cf. Hartmann 2006: pp. 173–174, who perceptively writes of the change and links it to events at Constantinople, but fails to cite the legend or note the significance of its language; Story actually transcribes this honorific as CN, which is nonsense, and accordingly has nothing to say about it in her brief discussion.

19 It should be noted that Story there inaccurately reports Grierson and Blackburn as indicating a possible "indiction date with reference to the year 783/4"; rather, they note that a possible reference to 773/774 or 788/789 is 'too early' or 'too late'.

20 Hartmann 2006: p. 174.

and this makes a useful contribution to the narrative that Story seeks to reconstruct. It only remains to add that a reference to Josef Deér's work on the papal position *vis-à-vis* the Carolingians in this very period would have been useful.[21] Hadrian was visibly seeking to aggrandize his position, and, between diplomacy and epitaph, Karolus equally clearly put him in his proper place.

* * *

In closing, it is to be regretted that this stimulating and useful monograph that makes good a clear *lacuna* in the literature is riddled with banal errors and many missed opportunities. Inexplicably her editors have failed to help the author appear in the best possible light. On the one hand, there is abundant evidence of bad copy-editing and poor proofreading. Text and footnotes are repeatedly vitiated by minor errors that ought to have been easy to catch and correct. For instance, the title "*Epigrapfi*" ought to be '*Epigrafi*' (p. 132, n. 89), and the presence of the "p" invites ungenerous and surely unwarranted scepticism about the author's command of Italian. No less disturbing, albeit in terms of history, is the wrong date of "580" (p. 208) for the commencement of the pontificate of Gregory I when the year ought to be '590'. As a third example, there is the consistent mangling of the name of a living, contemporary scholar who works on the basilica of St Peter in the Vatican: the last name of Christof Thoenes is written "Theones" (p. 384). A lengthy list here seems uncharitable, but the fact of poor copy-editing/proofreading seems inescapable. On the other hand, editors also (apparently) failed to alert the author to numerous oversights and missed opportunities. Many of these have been remarked in the immediately preceding paragraphs. However, a final one may perhaps be worth adding: the comparison of the text of the epitaph of Hadrian († 795) with that for Ælberht († 778). These two poetic compositions were in fact transmitted together anonymously, as Story herself observes (p. 132), and readers would have benefited from seeing their texts placed side-by-side for detailed literary analysis. Compare and contrast: the methodological injunction of art history and literary criticism is salutary. Twenty years is a long time, and we can see multiple, discernible changes in Alcuin's ability as a poet working in Latin. The epitaph for Hadrian was a swan-song, as it were. Within a decade Alcuin himself would be

21 Deér 1957: pp. 30–115.

dead. Indeed, one wonders, why not also make a comparison with Alcuin's epitaph for himself?

Story offers a stimulating work that, one hopes, will serve to incite others to think more critically and at length about the epigraphic cultures of the Latin-speaking West in Late Antiquity and its relationship to book production and historical memory. Her volume is magnificently illustrated and thoughtfully arranged. It shows just how important it is for the historian to taken into account the reception history of an object (even if that object is a text as in this case) when seeking to recover the original valency of that object. Disciplines as different as palaeontology and palaeography are deployed with care and attention to detail so as to assist in what is ultimately a successful attempt at historical recovery. Photographic reproductions such as that which illustrates the presence of fossils in the stone of Hadrian's epitaph (fig. 5.1) and the geological map illustrating the morphology of the area to the west and south of Aachen (fig. 6.2) are splendid instances of visual argumentation that render comprehensible material that might otherwise be misunderstood or doubted. Similarly, the photographic reproduction of engraved ruling lines (fig. 5.4), attention to letter forms, and the photographic reproduction of things such as the opening of the Gospel of St John in the Abbeville Gospels (fig. 7.6) facilitate the argument that Story is making. One only wishes that the production of the text of her monograph had been more careful and that the text had been longer. The reviewer hopes that there will eventually be a revised version, like that of Arnold H. M. Jones's classic study of cities in the Greek-speaking East[22], and that it will, like Stephen Mitchell's classic study of Graeco-Roman Anatolia[23], be offered to readers in two volumes. Albeit neglected today, the epitaph of Charlemagne for Hadrian is an important witness to the history of Late Antiquity, and Story is to be commended for bringing it to readers' attention.

22 Jones 1971.

23 Mitchell 1993.

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