

Pilgrims and Patronage at Santa Maria Antiqua at the end of the Eighth Century

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By the second half of the eighth century, Santa Maria Antiqua was a well-established part of Rome's increasingly ecclesiasticized landscape. It was a *diaconia* dispensing welfare to the poor and needy, a *statio* (station) on some of the liturgical processions that regularly traversed Rome's streets, and a place of interest for pilgrims, recorded on two of the pilgrim itineraries preserved in Codex Einsiedelnsis 326. These facts prompt consideration of the extent to which Santa Maria Antiqua's liturgical and social functions conditioned the additions made to the church's decoration by patrons in the later part of the eighth century. Among the latter, Pope Hadrian I (772-795) claims a special place, not only because he is himself portrayed in one of Santa Maria Antiqua's murals of the period, but also because he was the nephew and heir of the church's most prominent patron, Theodotus. This paper examines Hadrian's relationship with the church, as one way of considering the roles it had come to fulfil in Rome's ecclesiastical life by the end of the eighth century.