

An Attempt to Decipher the Meaning of a Mithraic Motif

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Abstract : The subject of this research is an element of Mithras' iconography. It is a new element in the series of research begun with the study of the Bull in the Boat motif. The stylized altars represented by the seven adjacent rectangles appear on only a small group of Mithraic reliefs, which may explain why they have received less attention and fewer attempts at decipherment than other motifs. Using Vermaseren's database, CIMRM (Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae), one collected all the cases containing the motif under investigation, created a database of them grouped by location, then used a comparative method to compare the different forms of the motif and to isolate these cases, and finally evaluated the results. The aim of this research is to interpret the iconographic element in question and attempt to determine its place of origin. The study may provide an interpretation of a Mithraic representation that, to the best of the author's knowledge, has not been explained so far, and the question may generate scientific discourses.

Keywords : roman history, religion, Mithras, iconography

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