

IN THE PLACE OF MITHRAS: LEADERSHIP IN THE MITHRAIC MYSTERIES

Israel Campos Méndez, Ph.D.

Dr. Campos is a Professor of Ancient History in the Department of Historical Sciences at the University of Las Palmas of Gran Canaria (Spain). His doctoral dissertation was a study of the cult of the god Mithras in ancient Persia, and he has published several books about that subject. He has participated in international congresses presenting several papers about various aspects related to the cult of this Deity. His research has focused on the history of religions, particularly in the mystery cults of the Roman Empire and the religions of ancient India and Iran. He organizes an annual seminar on ancient religions and advises museums on issues related to the cult of Mithras. He is a member of the Spanish Society of Sciences of Religions and the Spanish Society of Iranology, and tracks Neo-Mithraic movements emerging on the Internet.

Introduction

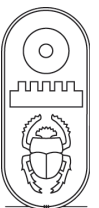
The mystery of the practice of Mithraism during the Roman Empire from the first century CE onward is still an open question today, for the most part, because there are still many questions that remain unanswered. These questions relate not only to the origin of these Mysteries, but also concern the nature of the organization, practices, rituals, and initiations of this path. Some of these unanswered questions have arisen because of the Mithraic Mysteries' own mysterious characteristics within the definition of this spiritual model developed during the height of its activity. This is because much of its theological and

liturgical praxis is founded in the Arcane Secret.¹ The fragmentary knowledge on other questions is a result of an absence of a wide literary corpus that has a direct link with this religious practice, beyond the references in Christian and classical authors who mention aspects of the Mithraic cult only sparingly. Therefore, in the process of reconstruction of Mithraism, it has been necessary to combine partial information from literary sources, with what we can discover from the archaeological aspects of the places where the Mithraic cult was practiced (Mithraea), including inscriptions related to Mithras and iconographic and statuary representations.

The Degrees in Mithraism

One of the specific points that attracted the attention of classical authors very early on, and still represents an interesting point regarding Mithraism, is the internal organization of the Mithraic followers, defined as the Initiatic degrees. The point of departure for this question is the statement that appears in a letter from Saint Jerome, in which he refers to an intervention from a newly-converted Christian, who, while serving as Roman prefect, took part in the destruction of a Mithraeum:

Did not your own kinsman Gracchus, whose name betokens his patrician origin, when a few years back he held the prefecture of the City, overthrow, break in pieces, and shake to pieces the grotto of Mithras, and all the dreadful images



Mithraic Banquet Scene. Second to third century CE. Found at Fiano Romano, near Rome in 1926. This (reverse) face of the monument depicts a banquet scene. In the middle, is a bull's hide, of which the head and one hind leg are visible. Sol and Mithras recline on it side by side. Mithras holds a torch in his left hand and extends his right hand behind Sol. Sol is dressed only in a cape, fastened on his right shoulder with a *fibula*. Around Sol's head is a crown of eleven rays. He holds a whip in his left hand and extends the right towards a torchbearer who offers him a *rhyton*. In the lower right is another torchbearer, with a raised torch in his left hand. In his right hand, a *caduceus* is held into the water emerging from the ground. In the middle, is an altar in the coils of a crested snake. In the upper left corner, Luna is in a cloud, looking away. Traces of red paint remain on the attire of Sol, Mithras, and the torchbearers. The obverse face of this monument is a tauroctony scene. Photo by Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia Commons.



Mithraic Banquet Scene. Second to third century CE. Found at Fiano Romano, near Rome in 1926. This (reverse) face of the monument depicts a banquet scene. In the middle, is a bull's hide, of which the head and one hind leg are visible. Sol and Mithras recline on it side by side. Mithras holds a torch in his left hand and extends his right hand behind Sol. Sol is dressed only in a cape, fastened on his right shoulder with a *fibula*. Around Sol's head is a crown of eleven rays. He holds a whip in his left hand and extends the right towards a torchbearer who offers him a *rhyton*. In the lower right is another torchbearer, with a raised torch in his left hand. In his right hand, a *caduceus* is held into the water emerging from the ground. In the middle, is an altar in the coils of a crested snake. In the upper left corner, Luna is in a cloud, looking away. Traces of red paint remain on the attire of Sol, Mithras, and the torchbearers. The obverse face of this monument is a tauroctony scene. Photo by Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia Commons.

therein? Those I mean by which the worshippers were initiated as Raven, Bridegroom, Soldier, Lion, Perseus, Sun, Crab, and Father? Did he not, I repeat, destroy these and then, sending them before him as hostages, obtain for himself Christian baptism? ²

In this passage, Jerome names the seven degrees that are used by the Mithraists themselves, ones that are corroborated by the iconographic testimony in the mosaic of the Mithraeum of Felicissimus in Ostia, and by the following testimony of Celsus, who connect each one of the degrees with the protection or the patronage of a planet:

Celsus, too, agreeably to the opinion of Plato, asserts that souls can make their way to and from Earth through the planets...These things are obscurely hinted at in the accounts of the Persians, and especially in the Mysteries of Mithras, which are celebrated amongst them. For in the latter there is a representation of the two heavenly revolutions, of the movement, viz., of the fixed

stars, and of that which takes place among the planets, and of the passage of the soul through these. The representation is of the following nature: There is a ladder with lofty gates and on the top of it an eighth gate. ³

From lower to higher importance we have: "Crow" (*Corax*) linked to Mercury; "Groom" (*Nymphus*) with Venus as its patron planet; "Soldier" (*Miles*) united to Mars; "Lion" (*Leo*) under the patronage of Jupiter; "Persian" (*Perses*) related to the Moon; "Sun Runner" (*Heliodromus*) identified as the Sun; and finally "Father" (*Pater*) connected to Saturn. ⁴

The origin of this Initiatic structure around seven degrees seems to correspond to a progressive evolution as the mysteries arrived from Asia Minor. Some of the degrees can bring us to even older concepts, especially in the direct relationship that is manifested in regards to the tauroctony scene (for example, the crows and the lions). ⁵ Other degrees could correspond to aspects of organization of the community or to symbolic elements related to its own

myth or Mithraic theology.⁶ In this way, it makes sense that the initial division is usually established between the first group of degrees dedicated primarily to the labor of service (*hyperetontes*), and those that are officially participants (*metechontes*).

If we have been able to discover from the epigraphic information that along with the general basic order around the initiatic scale—which is the particular and specific way that Mithraism overcomes the arena of mere organizational religious categories to represent connections of social and economic character—a series of functions were able to be created in relation to the degree or titles that were bestowed, the same that would determine the particular moment of advancement. The use of terms as *sacrati*, *consacrati*, *cultores*, *cryphii*, or *frates* has been documented in reference to the initiated,⁷ while special terms were used to define the intermediate processes between the degrees (*petitor* or *melodeon*).⁸

One of the most recent controversies in Mithraic historiography emerged from a thesis proposed by M. Clauss, who stated in 1990 that the degrees were in fact ranks within the priesthood and that the majority of the members of the Mithraic Mysteries were not part of the degrees.⁹ Clauss arrived at his conclusion from an analysis of the inscriptions, noticing that there was a high percentage of members with no reference to their initiatic degree. He therefore concluded that these members never rose to that estate in the Mysteries.

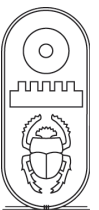
However, as R. Gordon, J. Alvar and others have pointed out, as it can be justifiably assumed that since the initiatic scale was an ascending path of degrees, it is possible that the participants in the Mysteries felt no need to record their first steps on the path of the initiatory scale. Only when the higher and final degrees were achieved would this be recorded, and only if this had any recognizable value.¹⁰

In Jerome's testimony and other classical references, only the system of degrees is mentioned, and not the existence of a separate sacerdotal body in the Mithraic Mysteries. Moreover, when the same epigraphic information is brought together, the sacerdotal function within the Mysteries of one of the degrees appears, the one who presides at the completion of the initiatic ladder: the Father.

Fathers: Vicars of Mithras

Traditionally, the view of the Pater figure in Mithraic studies differed little from its part in the set of the seven initiatic degrees. This was considered no more than a sign of higher authority within the organization and a purely superficial indication of its functions and attributes. However, from analysis of new documents such as the *Album* of Virunum¹¹ or the Crater of Mainz¹² more elements have now come to light, so that we can provide a more complete study of ancient epigraphic and pictorial documents related to this degree. With these, not only can we reaffirm the already established idea that the Pater was the highest possible level achievable on the initiatic scale; we can also affirm that this figure exercised functions that went far beyond the liturgical aspect, and that even transcended the spheres of the mere organizational aspects of Mithraism.

The Mithraic Pater played an internal role in relationship to the function and development of each Mithraic cell. This apparently represented the mundane level of the Pater's tasks. Within the ritualistic and liturgical context, we can confirm that the Pater appeared to be at certain times an earthly representative of the deity, acting as a vicar of Mithras. Through his authority, rank, and a series of symbolic elements that we will analyze next, the Pater conferred validity on the ceremonies and at the same time strengthened the bonds between the



members of a Mithraic community within and without.

In a mosaic found at the Mithraeum known as Felicissimus in Ostia, the initiatic scale that we have discussed is depicted. In this representation, the reference to the degrees is made in symbolic form with the depiction of every attribute with its own degree. In the case of the Patres, four elements are depicted to symbolize the authority that they exercise within the Mithraic community: the wooden scythe, related to agriculture, also recognized as Saturn's scythe,¹³ a pedagogical stick, and a ring that refers directly to the authority of the one who displays such symbols, and finally, one element full of symbolism, the Phrygian cap, identical with the one the god Mithras wears in all of his iconography. Within the Eastern context, it is associated with the power of the monarch.¹⁴ Another external element that differentiates the Patres from the rest of the initiated is a red robe with yellow bindings. This information

is extracted from some of the initiatic representations found in certain Mithraea, and so it is not possible to establish if this was part of a habitual ritual garment or just part of a particular ceremony. The meaning of these objects was probably to emphasize the Pater figure within the Mithraic community, establishing this as a leadership function, developing the role model for the religious impulse in the Mithraeum and as keepers or guardians of the Mithraic cell. Each Pater was expected to be truly a benefactor attending to all the material needs for maintaining the community and the temple *sua pecunia*, at his own expense.¹⁵

Due to the rigid character of the degree system, there is a possibility that the connections that were made between the Pater, the community leader, and the other initiates were far deeper than the merely religious Mystery School bonds. We can simply compare the model of patronage practiced in contemporary Roman society.



Mosaic Panel from the Mithraeum of Felicissimus with symbols of the Pater. Second century CE. Photo © 2008 by Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia Commons.

In fact, the intervention of the Pater was fundamental when it was time to determine the suitability of a candidate. This is due to his responsibility in relation to the number of members that could be part of the Mithraic cell, since the Mithraeum generally was not meant to have a great capacity.¹⁶ Scrutiny had to be made regarding the formation, the capabilities, and disposition of the candidate.¹⁷ Proceeding from this fact, it will not seem strange to find the numerous votive inscriptions that many members dedicated to their Patres, not only as a sign of recognition of the authority of the Pater in the community, but particularly in gratitude because their actual situation as members was due to the intervention of the Pater.

We can sketch some of the general aspects of the types of individuals who were able to reach this ultimate initiatic degree. Some of the inscriptions point out, since the Mithraic Mysteries were presumably of a sophisticated level, that each Pater had to be of at least a moderately high intellectual ability. The Pater would at least need to be able to read and comprehend the eschatological message of Mithraism, and at the same time, Neo-Platonist philosophy and the astrological references with which the Mysteries were thoroughly impregnated.

It is possible that the simple aspiration of many initiates to advance in the knowledge of these secrets of divine wisdom was the motivation that made it possible to achieve this higher degree, since at least at one time it appears that no barriers of an economic or social character existed for the initiated. The epigraphic evidence demonstrates that up to the fourth century CE there was not much interest from the Roman aristocratic authorities in monopolizing the higher



Mithraic relief dedicated by two imperial slaves, with a tauroctony. Pio-Clementine Museum, Rome. Photo © 2009 by Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia Commons.

Mithraic degrees, since we can find slaves and legionaries holding these positions.¹⁸ This does not indicate, however, that the Mithraea were simple meeting places for anyone, as Cumont affirmed at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁹

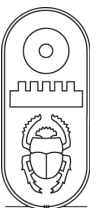
On the contrary, it seems that the general tendency was to create communities where the members were part of symmetrical social, economic, and cultural levels.²⁰ The truth is that at least in those cases where the Pater manifested a high level of formation it was considered worthy of mention as it appears in the inscriptions that make reference to the Pater of a new community as *sophistes* or as a student of astrology.²¹ There are names related to the Patres that are worthy of our attention:

Aristes:

“The Best,” refers once again to a position of authority in the community.²²

Sacerdos:

“Priest” underlines the liturgical character of the position.²³ The fact that in many inscriptions a distinction is made between Pater



and *sacerdos*, or that this title appears linked only to some Patres, suggests that we may assume that not necessarily all the Patres were to undertake the functions of a Mithraic priest, although it seems that it was necessary to belong to the highest degree in order to be able to exercise such tasks.

Hieroceryx:

“Sacred Herald.” It has not been clearly identified. However, considering its literal meaning, this title refers to the character of the Pater as a spokesperson within the community and one capable of transmitting the Mithraic religious message to the rest of the initiated.²⁴

Pater Sacrorum:

“Father of the Holy” seems to correspond to the role played by the Pater as a guardian of the sacred character residing in the Mithraeum.²⁵

Pater Patrum:

“Father of Fathers” is an original title that is interpreted as a recognition that some of the Patres held due to the existence of more than one Pater, or as an additional title outside one Mithraic community that would tell us about certain types of horizontal relationships between the Mithraic cells established in a city or region.

These elements describe, in summary, the general characteristics of those who were the Patres of Mithraism, and what functions they were able to perform in relation to the organization of the community.

We will now attempt to briefly discover what the role of the Pater was in the liturgical and ritual activities performed in the Mithraeum. In order to do this in the absence of other kinds of sources that would describe the meaning of the Mithraic



Bust of Roman Mithras, from the Roman colony at Arles, France, late second/early third century. Photo © 2009 by Michel Wal / Wikimedia Commons.

ceremonies in a more complete way, it is fundamental to examine the information that we have been able to obtain from the pictorial representations that were found on the walls of many Mithraea such as the ones in Santa Maria in Capua and Santa Prisca in Rome, or on the previously mentioned Crater of Mainz. These provide living testimony to the leading role of the Pater in many ceremonies.

Among the well known occasions, one of them called the Ritual Banquet, frequently represented in the Mithraea, recalls the meal that Mithras and the Sun enjoyed after the sacrifice of the bull. In the relief with this theme found at the Mithraeum in Konjica, Bosnia, we can see how certain animals are represented by initiates wearing masks, while the places that should be occupied by Mithras and the Sun are taken respectively by the Pater and the *Heliodromus*.

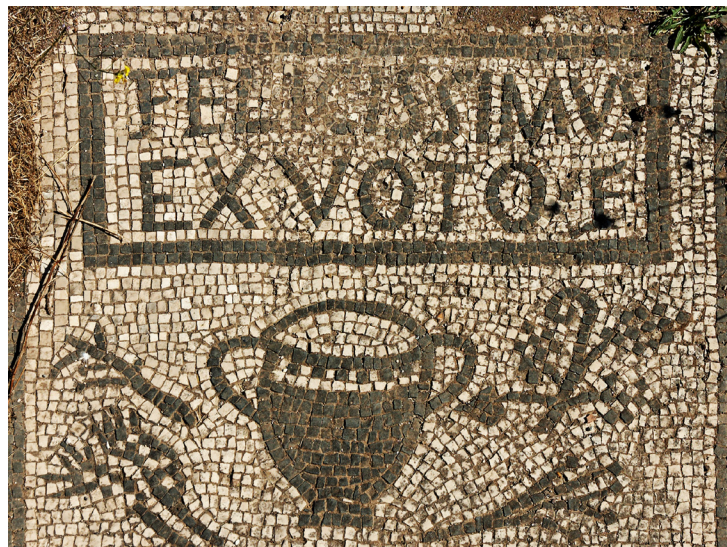
Even more interesting is the data provided by the representations that we find in certain rituals known as “humiliation and abasement”²⁶ identified from the Mithraic frescos in Capua. In these frescos, it appears that a figure plays a privileged role in the ceremonies and due to the attributes that this figure bears, it has been identified as a Pater. The identification of the Pater in what appears to be an initiatic ceremony is evident because the Pater performs the function of Mystagogue (initiating master). He is accompanied by the initiate who is portrayed as completely naked. In other scenes, the Pater is presented as a representative of the community, performing the duty of receptor.

In consonance with the function as Vicar that we have established, it is obvious that the Pater is also acting as an earthly representation of Mithras himself, and by this means, a manifestation of the reception of the newly initiated into the bosom of the god’s Mysteries. Much more evident is the description of a ceremony known through analysis of a Crater from Mainz, which R. Beck called the “drawn bow of Mithras.”²⁷ In this piece, we can discern in the relief a depiction of a person dressed in the vesture of Mithras, preparing to shoot an arrow. Naturally, the possibility that this represents the god himself has been considered, and who would be his representative in this way but the Pater, in the process of reenacting a ritual scene which commemorates an action of Mithras. On the Crater, all this is observed by two figures watching the scene from a second level.

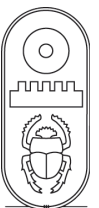
Conclusion

The attribution of Vicarship that we have given to all the Mithraic Patres brings us to ask the question that will allow us to proceed to the conclusion of this investigation. The sense of the term that we have used and the interpretation that we have made from all the sources of documentation leads to the conclusion that all the functions of the highest Mithraic initiatic degree should be understood as a representation of the Divine on the local level. This is because there was no single authority recognized among Mithraists.

The external symbols held the potential to be an idea of divine mediation, together with the ritualistic ceremonies that we have referred to. However, we must ask ourselves what was the image that practitioners of the Mysteries had about their Patres as persons, because it is evident that it is impossible to actually impose divine attributes on superior initiates. This is why the concept of Vicar has been proposed for the role of the Mithraic Fathers. They were solely evoking the deity, without becoming a substitute for Mithras. By being a Vicar of Mithras, the



Mosaic with the inscription “Felicissimus ex voto f(ecit)” (Felicissimus made this ex-voto) and a krater, second century CE. Mithraeum of Felicissimus, Ostia Antiqua, (harbor city of ancient Rome) second century CE. Photo © 2008 by Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia Commons.



Pater was taking the deity's place himself as if Mithras was actually present, although this did not necessarily mean that the other initiates would view the Patres as being the human incarnations of Mithras; nevertheless this would endow the series of manifestations of connections between the initiated and the initiator with a much more religious component.

Nevertheless, as we have already addressed, the evidence related to the personal bond manifested between the initiated and the Patres, reflected the profane mechanism of the model of patronage that was present in contemporaneous Roman society.

ENDNOTES

¹ The Arcane Secret is the formula that Apuleius uses to avoid describing the Mysteries in his novel, *The Golden Ass (The Metamorphoses)*, the conglomerate of practices linked to initiation of the Isis Mysteries: "Quaeras forsitan satis anxie, studiose lector, quid deinde dictum, quid factum; dicerem, si dicere liceret, cognosceres, si liceret audire. Sed parem noxam contraherent et aures et lingua, <ista impiae loquacitatis>, illae temerariae curiositatis." "Devoted Reader, perhaps you seek with great urgency, what was said and done there; I would tell you if it were lawful for me to do so, and you would know if it were permitted that you to hear it; however, both your ears, and my tongue, if such despicable impious speech took place, would incur the same punishment of rash curiosity." (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 11, 23). Latin text available at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/apuleius/apuleius11.shtml#23>.

² Jerome, "Letter 107, 2," Bruce Metzger, "St. Jerome's Testimony concerning the Second Grade of Mithraic Initiation," *American Journal of Philology* 66 No. 3 (1945): 225-233. Concerning the primary difficulties surrounding the clarification of these initiatic degrees, see William Phytian-Adams, "The Problem of the Mithraic Grades," *Journal of Roman Studies* 2 (1912): 53-64. Text from: Jerome, "Letter CVII, To Laeta," *Christian Classics Etherial Library*,

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf206.v.CVII.html>. ³ Celsus, *The True Word*, 72, cited in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, Chapter 21-22, <http://www.clerus.org/bibliacelusonline/en/esv.htm>.

⁴ Ugo Bianchi, "Prolegomena I. The Religio-Historical Question of the Mysteries of Mithra," Ugo Bianchi, ed., *Proceedings of the International Seminar on the Religio-Historical Character of Roman Mithraism, with Particular Reference to Roman and Ostian Sources. Mystera Mithrae* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 3-29.

⁵ Porphyry, *De Abstinencia*, 4, 16 speaks of the use of a mask by the representatives of these degrees, used in specific initiatic ceremonies: <http://www.animalrightshistory.org/animal-rights-library/porphyry/animal-food-bk4.htm>. These masks are also observed in relief at Konjica, Bosnia: cf. Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra* (New York: Dover, 1956), 159.

⁶ Robert Turcan, *Mithra et le mithriacisme* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993), 82. Turcan leans towards understanding the formation of this structure in seven parts. Hideo Ogawa, "Mithraic Ladder Symbols," Martin De-Boer, ed., *Hommages à M.J. Vermaseren II* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 857. De-Boer theorizes about the origin of the seven degrees, relating them to the symbology of the celestial staircase, looking for elements of Persian origin. As such, he concludes: "it is possible that the Mithraic Platonists in Syria combined Platonic psychology with Persian symbolism into a Mithraic soteriology of the seven gates."

⁷ Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* (CIMRM) 2 vv. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956-1960), Vol 1, 876 (*consacranei*); 325, 367, 412, 501; 566-567 (*sacрати*); 162 (*cultores*); 1722 (*collegium*); 510 (*frates*).

⁸ Richard Gordon, "Ritual and Hierarchy in the Mysteries of Mithras," *Arys* 4 (2001): 251.

⁹ Manfred Clauss, "Die sieben Grade des Mithras-Kultes," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 82 (1990): 275-276.

¹⁰ Jaime Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods: Myth, Salvation and Ethics in the Cults of Cybele, Isis and Mithras* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 134ff.

¹¹ Gernot Piccotine, *Mithrastempel in Virunum* (Klagenfurt: R. Habelt, 1994); Richard Gordon, "Two Mithraic Albums from Virunum, Noricum," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 9 (1996): 424-426.

- ¹² Heinz Horn, "Das Mainzer Mithrasgefäß," *Mainzer archäologischen Zeitschrift* 1 (1994): 21-66; Roger Beck, "Ritual, Myth, Doctrine, and Initiation in the Mysteries of Mithras: New Evidence from a Cult Vessel," *Journal of Roman Studies* 90 (2000): 145-180.
- ¹³ Richard Gordon, "Mithraism and Roman Society," *Religion* 2 (1972): 101.
- ¹⁴ John Young, "Commagenian Tiaras: Royal and Divine," *American Journal of Archaeology* 68, No. 1 (1964): 29-34.
- ¹⁵ There are frequent graphic inscriptions with references to the construction of an altar in a Mithraeum whose expenses were covered by one of these *Patres*, i.e.,: M. Lollianus Callinicus Pater aram deo do(no) de(dit); in honores domus divinae deo invicto Marceus Marianus de suo posuit. (Father M. Lollianus Callinicus gave this altar as a gift to the Deity; In honor of the Divine house of the unconquered Deity, Marceus Marianus himself placed this here.) See Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* Vol 1 (CIMRM), 233, 626.
- ¹⁶ Marquita Volken, "The Development of the Cult of Mithras in the Western Roman Empire: a Socio-Archaeological Perspective," *Electronic Journal of Mithraic Studies* 4 (2004), <http://www.uhu.es/ejms/Papers/Volume4Papers/Volken.Mithras%20socio-archaeological.2004.doc>.
- ¹⁷ Tertulian, *Apology*, 8,7, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/ecf/003/index.htm>; *Adversus Gentiles (Ad Nationes)* 1, 7, 23, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/ecf/003/index.htm>.
- ¹⁸ Alyson Griffith, "Mithraism in the Private and Public Lives of 4th-c. Senators in Rome," *Electronic Journal of Mithraic Studies* 1 (2000), <http://www.uhu.es/ejms/Papers/Volume1Papers/ABGMS.DOC>.
- ¹⁹ Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover, 1956), 132.
- ²⁰ Rebeca Rubio, "Jerarquías religiosas y jerarquía social en el mitraísmo," Jaime Alvar, ed, *Jerarquías religiosas y control social en el mundo antiguo* (Valladolid: University of Valladolid, Department of Publications and Editorial Exchange, 2004), 294-312.
- ²¹ *Sacerdos dei Solis invicti Mithrae studiosus astrologiae. A Priest of the Deity Mithras, the Unconquered Sun, devoted to astrology.* See Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* (CIMRM), 708, 315.
- ²² Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae Vol 1* (CIMRM), 315.
- ²³ Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae Vol 1* (CIMRM), 511, 311, 313.
- ²⁴ Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae Vol 1* (CIMRM), 513, 514 no. 35, 515, 206. The fact that many of these testimonies belong to late dating, leads us to believe that this could be a later introduction, perhaps proceeding from other religious uses in other mystery religions.
- ²⁵ Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae Vol 1* (CIMRM), 215, 522, 523, 524, 815; *Vol. 2*: 1243, 1438, 2250.
- ²⁶ Martin Jozef Vermaseren, *Mithraica I: The Mithraeum at S. Maria Capua Vetere* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 28-34, Plate 2, 22.
- ²⁷ Roger Beck, "Ritual, Myth, Doctrine, and Initiation in the Mysteries of Mithras: New Evidence from a Cult Vessel," *Journal of Roman Studies* 90 (2000): 145-180.

