

# DOWNLOAD PDF CULT OF MITHRAS IN THE ROMAN PROVINCES OF GAUL

## Chapter 1 : Mithraism - Wikipedia

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She was a protector of the throne of Egypt, perhaps in some ways the personification of Royal Power. But she had been subordinate in the official Egyptian pantheon to deities more intimately connected with the great king, like Ra and Horus. The collapse of the Old Kingdom brought about several sweeping changes in Egyptian religion. Eternal life, which had once been viewed as the sole province of the King, came to be seen as the reward for all those willing to submit to the proper cults. In this new paradigm Isis took center stage and became the central goddess in the popular religion of the Egyptian people. Myth tells how Osiris, the first god-king of Egypt, introduced laws and agriculture to humankind. He was then deceived and murdered by his scheming brother Seth, god of chaos. Isis collected the pieces and magically revived her brother-husband Osiris, who became King of the Underworld. She also magically conceived a son, Horus. Isis and her supporters warred against Seth for the throne of Egypt. A council of gods eventually decided that Horus, as son of Osiris, was the rightful ruler, and Seth was demoted to fighting nocturnal demons. A new paradigm emerged in which Osiris ruled the underworld, Horus ruled Egypt and the Pharaohs were considered the incarnation of Horus and Ra the sun god ruled the heavens. But Isis as mistress of magic resurrected Osiris, and thus was superior to him. She conceived her son Horus magically and was superior to him. With her magic, she even had power over Ra the sun god. In short, she was the real power behind the universe, which led her cult adherents to proclaim her as Mistress of Heaven. More importantly, she had the power over life and death and could resurrect her followers in the same manner that saved her husband from oblivion. As the myth of Isis and Osiris grew, Isis began displacing other deities in the loyalties of the population. In trying to find a religious cult that would unite both Egyptian and Hellenic subjects, Ptolemy Soter crafted the Isis cult as it would be introduced into Greco-Roman society. He became a god of healing and the underworld. Isis was identified with Hellenic deities such as Demeter or Aphrodite. Greek iconography was introduced to the cult which made it visually appealing to the Hellenes. Gods like Isis and Serapis were not connected with any specific town and were truly universal in scope. More importantly, the exotic Egyptian mysticism could offer the Greeks of the Hellenistic age something their own gods could not - a way to cheat fate and death. Isis and Osiris were honored by Greeks and by Egyptian emigrants as a kind of holy trinity, but always it was Isis who was the dominant member of the trio. Isis became the protector of family especially women, the protector of newborns, the goddess of fertility and good fortune, and the goddess whose magic could cheat Fate and Death. She was also thought to be a protector of sailors, and sailors sailing from the great port of Alexandria took her cult all over the Mediterranean. Backed by the Ptolemaic regime, the new cult spread throughout the Hellenistic Kingdoms. When the cult of Isis swept into Rome via Hellenistic sailors and Egyptian emigrants, it became outstandingly popular with women and the lower classes, including slaves. Fearing a religious unification of the lower strata of Roman society, and fearing the loss of piety in the traditional Roman gods of the state, the Senate repeatedly placed restrictions on the new cult. Private chapels dedicated to Isis were ordered destroyed. When a Roman Consul found that the demolition team assigned to him were all members or sympathizers of the cult and refused to destroy their chapel, he had to remove his toga of state and do the deed himself. Augustus found the cult "pornographic," though the cult was known to proscribe periods of sexual abstinence to its adherents. Cleopatra had even gone so far to declare herself Isis reincarnated. Officials and servants of the imperial household were members of the cult. It seems even his own infamous daughter was a member; whether her belief was genuine or merely another aspect of her defiance against her father cannot be determined. Tiberius, upon hearing of a sexual scandal involving the cult, had the offenders crucified and images of Isis cast into the Tiber. But much like Christianity, periodic and sporadic persecutions did nothing to stem the tide. As part of undoing the policies of Tiberius, Caligula legitimized the religion.

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Temples to Isis were permitted construction. Aspects of the Isiac festivals became public and part of the civil calendar though there were still mysteries celebrated in private. It is also known that Caligula had an Egyptian chamberlain who exerted influence on the emperor and helped him progress in the mysteries of the goddess. Whatever the truth, Isis was now part of Roman paganism for good. The emperor Vespasian became acquainted with the cult while serving in the Eastern legions, and seems to have adopted Isis and Serapis as his personal savior deities. Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius were friendly to the cult, but most likely not initiates. Commodus, on the other hand, shaved his head bald like the priests of Serapis. He used to beat those around him with a mask of Anubis that was common in the processions of the cult. The meaning was clear - the gods of the East that had once been maligned by the ruling classes of the Republic were now on equal footing with the traditional gods of the State. Among the common people, they were more important. Stoic and Neoplatonic intellectuals tried to reinterpret the cult in terms of their own highbrow philosophies, with the deities of the cult serving as metaphors for great cosmic principles. While this may have held some influence in the literate classes, its doubtful it had any impact on the vast majority of followers. To the average person Isis was not a metaphor or concept; she was as real to her followers as the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, is to billions of Christians around the world today. More to the point, she performed much the same function. Unlike most religious structures in the Roman world, the Iseum did not open to the streets or forum where public spectators could view the proceedings inside. The Iseum was walled off from the surrounding world, suggesting a space of inner sanctity. Even within its walls, there was a "sanctuary" much like modern monasteries where only clergy and the initiated could enter. In there rituals involving fire, water and incense were conducted in front of a sacred statuary of the deities concerned. This secret religious life that was set apart from the community and the State is what helped arouse the suspicions of the conservatives back in the days of the Republic. Not much is known about the details of the inner workings of the mysteries, as they were by definition secret. Prospective initiates were called to the goddess by dreams and visions. Intense preparations of purification and meditation and abstinence were followed by exotic rites designed to recreate the myth of Isis and the resurrection of Osiris. By enduring these rituals, the adherent was reconciled to the magic of Isis and effectively granted a favorable afterlife. He or she was in a sense spiritually reborn in a manner common to Greco-Oriental savior religions. The first was conducted on March 5th. In honor of Isis sailing the seas to find pieces of her lost husband, a colorful procession of costumed people, including especially sailors, marched to port and ritually blessed a boat. The second festival was held October 28th to November 3rd. This was an ancient passion play. Again, costumed enactors took to the streets, this time to reenact the death and resurrection of Serapis. Roman conservatives complained the festival was too loud and colorful. People also had private shrines to Isis and Serapis in their homes. The subject of the ethics of the cult is a complicated one. We know that Egyptian culture as a whole was free with sexuality compared to Roman culture. Isis was in fact rather popular with courtesans and other such professions, and there are speculations that Isiac cults may have promoted a kind of "positive sexuality" among a more conservative Roman population. Augustus and Tiberius took this as proof of a "pornographic" cult. Yet the Isiac cult also demanded regular periods of sexual abstinence from its adherents for purposes of ritual purification, and even apparently courtesans readily submitted to these observances. Curiously enough, the early Christians who were quick to complain about the degeneracy of pagan cults could not offer as much criticism about Isis as they could about some other cults in the Empire. Universal Religion Unlike Mithraism which was confined to a small percentage of "middle class" Roman males, the Isis cult was truly universal. Unlike Mithraism it could be practiced by both men and women, and it was women who perhaps took it up most enthusiastically. Unlike Mithraism it appealed to all classes; the lower classes and slaves were the mainstay of the cult, but as we have seen even those at the very top of the social strata were also adherents. Unlike Mithraism which was mostly confined to the Latin West, Isis was honored in both halves of the empire. Isis was long honored in the Greek East, and penetrated into the Latin West in even barely Romanized areas such as Britain or northwest Gaul. Isis was however a cult of city dwellers; we see little evidence of Isiac cults in rural areas outside of her native

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Egypt. There was little danger of the small cult of Mithras, influential though it was, stemming the tide of Christianity and taking over the world. However, the cult of Isis had the numbers and the appeal to mount a serious threat to Christianity. Some scholars assert that the Holy Trinity of Isis, Serapis and Horus were not really defeated - they were merely absorbed into the new Holy Trinity of Christianity. The reverence for Mary among high Christian churches is similar to faith in Isis. We should consider at the very least that many chapels to the Virgin were built purposely on the remains of temples to Isis, and that furthermore the iconography of the Madonna and Christ is quite similar to Isis and Horus. Today, Isiac religion is undergoing something of a revival. Among New Age crowds, Isis is a popular symbol among those seeking an alternative to "patriarchal" religions. In fact, Isis worship is part of the "goddess spirituality" movement promoted by feminist and other postmodern identity groups. However, their understanding and practices related to Isis are sometimes more conditioned by revisionist politics than by anything resembling history or archaeology. Nonetheless, alternative religious movements have coincided with periodic bursts of "Egyptomania" to open the door for a second look at the Isiac cults. The symbol of Isis in the heavens was the star Sept Sirius, which was greatly beloved because its appearance marked not only the beginning of a new year, but also announced the advance of the Inundation of the Nile, which betokened renewed wealth and prosperity of the country.

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## Chapter 2 : Mithras and mithraism

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The underground Temples and their paintings, statues and few anti-pagan documents by early Christian are all that remain. This gives us some insight into the energy of this deity before it became fused with the great mass of Graeco-Roman magical ideas. The evolution of this deity from god of the green land, wild pastures and the solar light to one of that Invincible Sun god, who moves the cosmos by slaying constellation Taurus, has been the subject of much interest to historians and magicians. Roman Mithras was perhaps the greatest rival to early Christianity for many reasons. As well as being a popular pagan religion practised by the Roman Army, Mithraism had many similarities to Christianity. Mithras was born of a virgin, remained celibate, his worship involving baptism, the partaking of bread marked with a cross and wine as sacrificial blood, held Sundays sacred and Mithras was born on 25th of December. The symbol of the father were a staff, a hooked sword, a ring and hat. These similarities frightened the early Christian leaders - that almost years before arrival of Christ all of the Christian mysteries were already known. To combat this, Christian writers said that the Devil knew of the coming of Christ in advance and had imitated them before they existed in order to denigrate them. Therefore its not surprising that he was also familiar with Mithraic Mysteries. In Gaul he was called Ogmios and was worshipped as a god of light and learning. All three titles of Ogma certainly do link in with the rites of Mithras and the inscription in Richborough also supports a link. However what is not clear is if the link derives from the original Mithra, that is with the spread of Indo-European people or from the introduction of Mithras with the Roman Empire, that is Ogma possibly gained some Mithraic characteristic during the Roman Empire as he already showed some parallels with Mithras. A special grade was created as the movement went underground at the end of 4th century AD. This was to insure the lore was not totally lost, and it is during this time we see the Mithraic lore return to the Middle East with all of its new Greco-Roman based knowledge. The spread amazingly went all the way to Korea and finally reached Japan in AD. The Invincible Sun God lived up to its title and survived all ihis adversaries. The possibility of Taliesin the Bard 6th century being a Mithraic initiate also adds weight to the way lore was preserved by fusion with local customs and remained hidden by being one with the masses. It is perhaps a romantic notion to think that as Christianity overcome paganism within Britain, the remaining pagans of different traditions gathered in the well -protected walls of the underground Mithraeums to pull together - Druids or proto-druids alongside Mithraists invoking their gods of solar lights to stop the destructions. One way of unlocking the mysteries that have been lost is perhaps by looking at the where it started, the old land of Persia. In the same way Christianity overcame Mithraic mysteries and all paganism in the west, what was left of the original Mithra was dissolved by rise of Islam in the East. However the magical current of the Invincible Sun god survived despite the rise of Christianity and Islam. The Myths of Mithras and iconography Deciphering the meaning of the paintings and statues that survived in Europe has been a challenge to many academics in the field and the works of Speidel and Ulansey have shed light to much of the iconography. The various interepretations of the iconography all point to a deep cosmology within the tradition. According to Persian traditions, the god Mithras was actually incarnated into the human form of the Saviour expected by Zarathustra. Mithras was born of Anahita, an immaculate virgin mother once worshipped as a fertility goddess before the hierarchical reformation. Anahita was said to have conceived the Saviour from the seed of Zarathustra preserved in the waters of Lake Hamun in the Persian province of Sistan. This birth took place in a cave or grotto, where shepherds attended him and regaled him with gifts, at the winter solstice. This is based on a older myth about birth of Mithra, that his magical birth at the dawn of time was from a rock from which he formed himself using his Will. He holds in his hand a dagger and a torch. A statue from Housesteads shows Mithras being born from the rock while the twelve signs of the

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zodiac surround him, showing his image as a stellar god who rules the cosmos even at his birth. After his birth he challenged other forces when the world was young. Frazer in his work *The Golden Bough: In the Julian Calendar*, the 25th of December was reckoned as the winter solstice, and was regarded as the nativity of the Sun, because the day begins to lengthen and the power of the Sun increases from that turning point of the year. Mithras was regularly identified by his worshippers with the Sun Christmas originated at a time when the cult of the Sun was particularly strong at Rome. The Hunt Some images survive with Mithras on horseback with bow and arrow in hand hunting a stag whose horn is the crescent moon. Mithras is accompanied by a lion, snake and a dog. This too might be a star map, however no one has been able to interpret it yet. Tauroctony Bull-slaying scene Mithras presides over the changing of the seasons and the movement of the heavens themselves. At the spring equinox Mithras moves the earth back into Aries, raising lots of energy and power. At the autumn equinox this position is reversed bringing Scorpio back into Libra and balancing sexual energies. The Bull Slaying was the central icon within the Western form of Mithraism and was present within every Temple. Here all the mystery of this tradition comes together, showing its Persian origins and the incorporation of Roman astrology and Greek mythology, giving rise to a esoteric path that must have had an everlasting impression on those who were prepared to follow its path. The Bull that Mithra kills is his ego, which is the aim of all followers of Mithra. Masoud Homayouri, *Origin of Persian Gnosis*. Around him there is a dog, a raven, a scorpion, a snake, a lion and a cup and an ear of wheat is growing from the tip of the bulls tail. The cloak of Mithras is the night sky with stars and the signs of the zodiac surround the whole scene. The symbols of the seven planets are present. The two torch bearers of Mithras stand at either side of the bull slaying scene. The wheat is the star Spica the brightest star in Virgo. The blood is the Milky Way. The two torchbearers Cautes and Cautopates symbolise the equinoxes; Cautes torch is pointing upward - the spring equinox, while Cautopates torch is pointing down -autumn equinox. The meaning of the this star map lies within the procession of equinoxes. At the present time the spring equinox occurs when the sun leaves the constellation of Pisces; in time, the equinox will be in the constellation of Aquarius, bringing the Age of Aquarius. In Graeco-Roman times the spring equinox was in Aries, and the autumn equinox in Libra. This also means the summer solstice was in Leo lion while the winter solstice was in Aquaries cup. That is, the constellation Persus, which is above constellation Taurus, leads to the image of Mithras killing the bull, bringing an end to Age of Taurus by moving the entire universe. In a time when magic and science was based on a geocentric cosmos, with earth fixed in space and everything going around it, the procession could only be understood as a movement of the entire cosmos rather than earth. Mithras therefore became the Kosmokrator cosmic ruler. The blood of bull is the Milky Way, the pathway which souls ascend and descend to genesis. The slaying of the constellation Taurus by the constellation Persus is perhaps one of the greatest star maps left to us. It shows the gnostic notion of overcoming of ego and uniting with the subconscious, a whole new dimension and one that can be observed in the cosmos. Mithras presides over the changing of the seasons and movement of heavens themselves. Mithras is asked by the sun to kill the Bull, but his reluctant to do this. The Raven, messenger of the Sun, comes to him again with the message. Mithras goes into the field and captures the Bull and with his strength lifts the back legs of the bull over his shoulder and drags him to the cave of his birth. The crescent moon over the bull suggests its connection to the moon. When Mithras kills the bull, from his blood comes the wine and all plants that cover the earth. The tail became wheat which gives our bread. The seed and the genitals of the bull are taken to the moon goddess and purified giving rise to all animals. By slaying the first Bull, life comes onto the earth. That Mithras looks away from the bull while slaying it is significant. Persus, too, looked away from the Gorgon when he decapitated her for whoever looked upon the Gorgon would turn to stone. That is, the ego would turn the heart and the soul into stone. In order to overcome the ego nafs one has turn the head intellect away as the intellect is unable to overcome the ego. It is only when we look with our hearts, that is Mithra is my only crown, that the battle can fought. It is only on the path of Mithra love with the guidance of the Father who has already slayed the Bull that we can decapitate our own Gorgon, before it turns us to stone. The Tauroctony demonstrate literally that Love moves the Universe. This

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is perhaps one of the greatest mystery within the Cult of Mithras. Sol and Sol Invictus The new life on earth was growing slowly due to drought and Mithras as the mediator between heaven and earth was asked to resolve this. However this meant a conflict with the sun who was burning the land. The battle between the sun and Mithras results with Mithras overcoming the sun and becoming the Invincible Sun. Sol kneels in front of Sol Invictus while Mithras holds constellation the Great Bear in one hand, emphasising his power as the stellar god who moves the cosmic pole as well being responsible for the procession of equinoxes. They then become friends and shake hands. The Miracle of the Rock Mithras was a archer god and by firing an arrow into the a rock face of a mountain, causes water to pour forth. The rock represents the clouds and the clouds the cave or the universe. The Sacred meal The remains of the bull is brought by the torchbearers of Mithras, Cautes dawn, spring equinox and Cautopates dusk, autumn equinox to a meal where sun and Mithras sit together, and this was imitated by the followers of Mithras where Pater represented Mithras, Heliodromus the sun and other initiates sat around and shared the sacred meal. Origins of Mithraic Mysteries "The oldest source of Persian Gnosis is to be found in Mithraism, an ancient Persian spiritual path, which began in Eastern Iran many thousands of years ago". Mithra is an Indo-Iranian god, worshipped at least as early as BC. In Hinduism he is praised as the binomial Mitra-Varuna. A hymn is also dedicated to him alone in Rig Veda 3. He is the Lord of Heavenly Light, protector of truth, and is invoked when a contract or oath is taken. Mithra, like the rest of the gods and goddess of the Iranian Pantheon, was stripped of his sovereignty, and all his powers and attributes were bestowed upon Ahura Mazda. He is the warrior deity carrying the hundred knotted mace from whom all demons flee in fear. In a Yashet 6 during a prayer to sun Mithra is mentioned again and referred to as a friend: I will sacrifice unto that friendship, the best of all friendships, that reigns between the moon and the sun" Mithra is also found in Chinese mythology, where he is known as The Friend. Mithra is represented as a Military General in Chinese statues, and is considered to be the friend of man in this life and his protector against evil in the next. During which it came under the influence of Greek and Roman mythologies.

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## Chapter 3 : Mithras | Hellenic Faith

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When the Persian Mysteries immigrated into Southern Europe, they were quickly assimilated by the Latin mind. The cult grew rapidly, especially among the Roman soldiery, and during the Roman wars of conquest the teachings were carried by the legionaries to nearly all parts of Europe. So powerful did the cult of Mithras become that at least one Roman Emperor was initiated into the order, which met in caverns under the city of Rome. Concerning the spread of this Mystery school through different parts of Europe, C. King, in his *Gnostics and Their Remains*, says: Mithras has a male and a female aspect, though not himself androgynous. As Mithras, he is the lord of the sun, powerful and radiant, and most magnificent of the Yazatas Izads, or Genii, of the sun. As Mithra, this deity represents the feminine principle; the mundane universe is recognized as her symbol. She represents Nature as receptive and terrestrial, and as fruitful only when bathed in the glory of the solar orb. The Mithraic cult is a simplification of the more elaborate teachings of Zarathustra Zoroaster, the Persian fire magician. According to the Persians, there coexisted in eternity two principles. From Ormuzd came forth a number of hierarchies of good and beautiful spirits angels and archangels. The second of these eternally existing principles was called Ahriman. He was also a pure and beautiful spirit, but he later rebelled against Ormuzd, being jealous of his power. This did not occur, however, until after Ormuzd had created light, for previously Ahriman had not been conscious of the existence of Ormuzd. Because of his jealousy and rebellion, Ahriman became the Spirit of Evil. From himself he individualized a host of destructive creatures to injure Ormuzd. When Ormuzd created the earth, Ahriman entered into its grosser elements. Whenever Ormuzd did a good deed, Ahriman placed the principle of evil within it. At last when Ormuzd created the human race, Ahriman became incarnate in the lower nature of man so that in each personality the Spirit of Good and the Spirit of Evil struggle for control. For 3, years Ormuzd ruled the celestial worlds with light and goodness. Then he created man. For another 3, years he ruled man with wisdom, and integrity. Then the power of Ahriman began, and the struggle for the soul of man continues through the next period of 3, years. During the fourth period of 3, years, the power of Ahriman will be destroyed. Good will return to the world again, evil and death will be vanquished, and at last the Spirit of Evil will bow humbly before the throne of Ormuzd. While Ormuzd and Ahriman are struggling for control of the human soul and for supremacy in Nature, Mithras, God of Intelligence, stands as mediator between the two. Many authors have noted the similarity between mercury and Mithras. As the chemical mercury acts as a solvent according to alchemists, so Mithras seeks to harmonize the two celestial opposites. There are many points of resemblance between Christianity and the cult of Mithras. One of the reasons for this probably is that the Persian mystics invaded Italy during the first century after Christ and the early history of both cults was closely interwoven. Porphyry, in his *Cave of the Nymphs*, states that Zarathustra Zoroaster was the first to consecrate a cave to the worship of God, because a cavern was symbolic of the earth, or the lower world of darkness. Lundy, in his *Monumental Christianity*, describes the cave of Mithras as follows: The summer and winter solstices were chiefly conspicuous, as the gates of souls descending into this life, or passing out of it in their ascent to the Gods; Cancer being the gate of descent, and Capricorn of ascent. These are the two avenues of the immortals passing up and down from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. Peter, in Rome, was believed to have been used in one of the pagan Mysteries, possibly that of Mithras, in whose subterranean grottoes the votaries of the Christian Mysteries met in the early days of their faith. In *Anacalypsis*, Godfrey Higgins writes that in, while cleaning this sacred chair of Bar-Jonas, the Twelve Labors of Hercules were discovered upon it, and that later the French discovered upon the same chair the Mohammedan confession of faith, written in Arabic. Initiation into the rites of Mithras, like initiation into many other ancient schools of philosophy, apparently consisted of three important degrees. Preparation for these degrees consisted of self-purification, the building up of the

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intellectual powers, and the control of the animal nature. Probably he was taught that the golden crown represented his own spiritual nature, which must be objectified and unfolded before he could truly glorify Mithras; for Mithras was his own soul, standing as mediator between Ormuzd, his spirit, and Ahriman, his animal nature. In the second degree he was given the armor of intelligence and purity and sent into the darkness of subterranean pits to fight the beasts of lust, passion, and degeneracy. In the third degree he was given a cape, upon which were drawn or woven the signs of the zodiac and other astronomical symbols. After his initiations were over, he was hailed as one who had risen from the dead, was instructed in the secret teachings of the Persian mystics, and became a full-fledged member of the order. Candidates who successfully passed the Mithraic initiations were called Lions and were marked upon their foreheads with the Egyptian cross. Mithras himself is often pictured with the head of a lion and two pairs of wings. Throughout the entire ritual were repeated references to the birth of Mithras as the Sun God, his sacrifice for man, his death that men might have eternal life, and lastly, his resurrection and the saving of all humanity by his intercession before the throne of Ormuzd. While the cult of Mithras did not reach the philosophic heights attained by Zarathustra, its effect upon the civilization of the Western world was far-reaching, for at one time nearly all Europe was converted to its doctrines. Rome, in her intercourse with other nations, inoculated them with her religious principles; and many later institutions have exhibited Mithraic culture. A ladder of seven rungs appears in the Mithraic initiation. Faber is of the opinion that this ladder was originally a pyramid of seven steps. It is possible that the Masonic ladder with seven rungs had its origin in this Mithraic symbol. Women were never permitted to enter the Mithraic Order, but children of the male sex were initiates long before they reached maturity. The refusal to permit women to join the Masonic Order may be based on the esoteric reason given in the secret instructions of the Mithraics. This cult is another excellent example of those secret societies whose legends are largely symbolic representations of the sun and his journey through the houses of the heavens. Mithras, rising from a stone, is merely the sun rising over the horizon, or, as the ancients supposed, out of the horizon, at the vernal equinox. In *The Night of the Gods* he writes: According to Alexander Wilder, "The Mithraic rites superseded the Mysteries of Bacchus, and became the foundation of the Gnostic system, which for many centuries prevailed in Asia, Egypt, and even the remote West.

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## Chapter 4 : Mithras and Phanes

*Mithraism, also known as the Mithraic mysteries, was a mystery religion centered on the god Mithras that was practiced in the Roman Empire from about the 1st to the 4th century AD. The religion was inspired by Iranian worship of the god Mithra, though the Greek Mithras was linked to a new and distinctive imagery, and the level of continuity.*

An often well received part of our living history displays are the demonstration and explanation of religious practices. But who is this mysterious eastern deity? The following paragraphs are aimed at explaining the mysteries of Mithras to those interested in understanding the popularity of this cult with Roman soldiers. Hopefully, it will enable readers to speak with some authority if questioned by the public and could be used to guide explanatory commentary. A prayer offered to Mithras Etymology. This particular meaning is preserved in the mithra "covenant" written in Avestan, the old Eastern Iranian liturgical language used to compose the sacred hymns and canon of the Zoroastrian sacred scripture of the Avesta. In Sanskrit, mitra literally means "friend", one of the aspects of binding and alliance. Vedic Mitra was the patron divinity of honesty, friendship, contracts and meetings. The first extant record of Indo-Aryan Mitra, in the form mi-it-ra-, is in the inscribed peace treaty of c. In the inscription Mitra appears together with four other Indo-Aryan divinities as witnesses and keepers of the pact. Iranian Mithra in Avestan Mi ra-, Mi ro. As preserver of covenants, Mithra was also protector and keeper of all aspects of interpersonal relationships, such as friendship and love. Related to his position as protector of truth, Mithra was a judge ratu , ensuring that individuals who broke promises or were not righteous artavan were not admitted to paradise. As in the Indo-Iranian tradition, Mithra was associated with the divinity of the sun but originally distinct from it. Mithra was closely associated with the feminine yazata Aredvi Sura Anahita, the hypostasis of knowledge. The name Mithras is the Greek nominative form of Mithra, the yazata that, as previously mentioned, served as mediator between Ahura Mazda and the earth, the guarantor of human contracts. It is not possible to state with certainty when "the mysteries of Mithras" developed. Moreover, the mythology surrounding the cult is not easily reassembled from the surviving enigmatic and complicated iconography. As Cumont and later scholars have noted, there are almost no texts for Roman Mithras: Celsus and Porphyry offered highly Platonised accounts that offer poor evidence for authentic Mithraic cult and doctrine. Epigraphy offers few details; instead, the mystery cult of Mithras left hundreds of reliefs and friezes each revealing tantalising glimpses of the mythology. Given the lack of textual evidence, we are left to interpret these reliefs literally, although they may represent abstract ideas and often tell contradictory stories. Apparently, the cult of Mithras did not depend, as Christianity does, on the interpretation of revealed texts considered to be divinely inspired. The surviving textual references are therefore those of Christians, who mention Mithras to deplore him, and neo-Platonists who interpreted Mithraic symbols within their own world-schemes. This sculpture, prominently displayed in the British Museum, depicts all the elements associated with the typical tauroctony. This sculpture, found at Housesteads, shows Mithras bursting from the Egg while holding in his upraised hands the Sword of Truth and Torch of Light. Around him in an egg-shaped frame is the Cosmos containing the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac. The finds suggest a large number of his worshippers were possibly low-ranking soldiers there are very few examples of offerings from higher-ranking soldiers and those may have just been to encourage their men and slaves, perhaps because a religion with a strict but straight-forward hierarchy allowed them the power they lacked in their everyday lives. Later in the third century, Mithraism filtered through to the upper classes and it was even used as a mid-ground argument against Christianity. Moreover, while being practised up to the 5th century CE, it has been suggested that much of the myth and symbolism of Mithraism was influential on the early Christian Church. Birth of a God. Some say that he was born, or reborn, from a rock the petra genetrix or a tree typically with the snake Oroboros wrapped around it. An inscription from Rome suggests that Mithras may have been seen as the Orphic creator-god Phanes who emerged from the world egg at the beginning of time, bringing the universe into existence. This view is reinforced by a bas-relief at the Estense Museum in Modena, Italy, which

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shows Phanes emerging from an egg, surrounded by the twelve signs of the zodiac, in an image very similar to that at Newcastle. Interestingly, some depictions of his birth show shepherds in attendance, while others show only two torchbearers, but regardless the stories all concur that it was Ahura Mazda who arranged for his creation. Following his birth Mithras became an ally of the Sun and Ahura Mazda, god of life and light, in the eternal war against Ahriman, the god of death and darkness. He entered a struggle with a bull, the first living creature, in which he overcame it and brought it to his cave. The bull managed to escape, but Mithras was visited by a raven, who, acting as a messenger from the Sun, told him that it was his duty to track down the bull and kill it. Following the completion of these labours, Mithras ascended to heaven in the chariot of the sun. It is difficult to reconstruct the daily workings and beliefs of Mithraism, as the rituals were highly secret and limited to initiated men only. Worship took place in a temple known to modern scholars as a "mithraeum" Latin, from Greek mithraion. As alluded to above, it is commonly believed that the cave in Mithraism imagery represents the cosmos, and the rock is the cosmos seen from the outside. Wherever possible, purpose-built mithraea were constructed within rooms inside or below an existing building, e. Mithraea were thus intended to be dark and windowless. A mithraeum may be identified by its separate entrance or vestibule, its "cave", called the spelaum or spelunca, with raised benches along the side walls for the ritual meal, and its sanctuary at the far end, often in a recess, before which the pedestal-like altar stood. Excavations in London have uncovered the remains of a Mithraic temple near the centre of the once walled Roman settlement, on the bank of the Walbrook stream. Mithraea have also been found along the Danube and Rhine river frontier, in the province of Dacia where in a temple was found in Alba-Iulia and as far afield as Numidia in North Africa. One of many mithraea discovered at Ostia Antica, the ancient port serving Rome. A tauroctony emerges from the shadowy background As would be expected, Mithraic ruins are also found in the port city of Ostia, and in Rome the capital, where as many as seven hundred mithraea may have existed a dozen have been identified. Its importance at Rome may be judged from the abundance of monumental remains: A well-preserved late 2nd century CE mithraeum, with its altar and built-in stone benches, originally built beneath a Roman house as was a common practice, survives in the crypt over which has been built the Basilica of San Clemente, Rome. In every mithraeum, the place of honour was occupied by a tauroctony, a representation of Mithras killing a sacred bull. In the Graeco-Roman myth, Ahura Mazda had sent a crow to instruct Mithras to slay the bull and release from its dying body the plants, animals and all the beneficial things of the earth. In the depiction, Mithras, wearing a Phrygian cap and pants, slays the bull from above while looking away. Typically, a raven or crow is also present, and sometimes a goblet and small lion. The torch-bearers Cautes and Cautopates, the celestial twins of light and darkness, stand on either side with their legs crossed, Cautes with his brand pointing up and Cautopates with his turned down. Above Mithras, the symbols for Sol and Luna are present in the starry night sky. It has been proposed that the tauroctony is a symbolic astrological representation of the constellations rather than an Iranian animal sacrifice scene with Iranian precedents. The torch-bearers may represent the two equinoxes, although this is less clear. Mithras himself could also be associated with Perseus, whose constellation is above that of the bull. Floor mosaic showing the emblems of the seven grades of initiation in the mithraeum of Felicissimus, Ostia.. From the structure of the mithraea it is possible to surmise that worshippers would have gathered for a common meal along the reclining couches lining the walls. It is worth noting that most temples could hold only thirty or forty individuals. Archaeological evidence suggests that initiations involved three ordeals to be endured: All members were expected to progress through the first four ranks, while only a few would proceed to the three higher ranks. The first four ranks represent spiritual progress - the new initiate became a Corax, while the Leo was an adept - the other three would have been specialised offices. Through their association with Jupiter, Lions were aligned with fire and so it would have been inappropriate for them to be cleansed at their initiation with water. Reliefs on a cup found in Mainz appear to depict a Mithraic initiation. On the cup, the initiate is depicted as led into a location where a Pater would be seated in the guise of Mithras with a drawn bow. Accompanying the initiate is a mystagogue, who explains the symbolism and theology to the initiate. Expansion throughout the Empire. Eventually, this new

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cult was taken to Rome around the 1st century BCE and was subsequently dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. Material evidence for the Mithraic worship in the 1st century CE is provided by soldiers from the military garrison at Carnuntum in the Roman province of Upper Pannonia near the Danube River in modern Austria, near the Hungarian border. Likewise, Mithraic dedications, probably in the year 71 CE or 72 CE, were made by legionaries returning home after the conflict against the Parthians and the suppression of the revolts in Jerusalem from 60 CE to about 70 CE. When Mithraism was introduced by the Roman legions at Dura-Europos after CE, the god had assumed his familiar Hellenistic iconic formula as represented by the tauroctony. By the 3rd century CE, Mithraism was officially sanctioned by the Emperors. For example, according to the 4th century *Historia Augusta*, the Emperor Commodus participated in its mysteries: There is very little information about the decline of Mithraism, which seemingly disappeared from overt practice after the edict of Theodosius I in CE banned all pagan rites. While official recognition of Mithras in the army effectively stopped at this time, there is little information on what other effects the edict had. It is possible that Mithraism may have survived in certain remote cantons of the Alps and Vosges into the fifth century CE. Loeb, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae: The Mysteries of Mithra*, Chicago:

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## Chapter 5 : Mithraic Community - Nemetes (Caesar in Gaul) - Total War: Rome II - Royal Military Academy

*The Cult of Mithras in the Roman Provinces of Gaul (Etudes Preliminaires Aux Religions Orientales Dans L'Empire)*  
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He is a guardian Solar Deity who presides over a path for the perfection of the Soul, and is the companion of Zeus-Helios. Some ancient philosophers and historians, such as Porphyry and Pseudo-Plutarch, did write of myths regarding Mithras to some extent, and a lot of iconography found in Mithraea, temples of Mithras, show a sequence of events that can be made sense of. Special thanks to Ceisiwr Seith! Burning of the Cosmos The lion-headed Ariomanus has a specific role. In iconography Ariomanus stands on a globe and outside the boundaries of the zodiac – the symbolism connects the deity to the cosmos outside the zodiac. Bounded by the serpent, Ariomanus represents a Platonic world-soul and marked the ultimate boundaries of the cosmos. Ariomanus keeps all souls bound to this world which He rules over, however it is Ariomanus who is seen to hold the keys to heaven. Ariomanus is not an evil entity- Ariomanus is a servant of divine will. It is through Ariomanus can humans escape the material and reach the spiritual realm. Ariomanus, as prisoner of the spiritual, is himself the means by which the soul of the initiate can find henosis. Through the agency of Ariomanus the world cave is cleansed by fire through Mithras. The entire cosmos is destroyed in a great conflagration. Time and space are burned up and then reconstituted into a new universe. The stone He births from is aflame, the serpent that bounded Ariomanus unable to bind Mithras. The torch that Mithras holds is that of Ariomanus. The old cosmos have been burned down, and Mithras and His servants have escaped into the divine realm. It is said that when heaven was darkened the light fell on the rock and shortly after, on December 25th, the great Mithras was born from stone, nude except for His sacred Phrygian cap, His legs together. He bursted forth with a torch in one hand and dagger in another. With the torch of Ariomanus, He creates light and starts anew. With the dagger He will bring life by slaying the bull. His subordinates, Cautes who holds his torch up, representing sunrise and Cautopates who holds his torch down, representing sunset , torchbearers who bear witness to this miraculous birth, also provide assistance, helping by lifting the Stone-Born God as He rises from stone. The rock He springs from not only represent the cosmos, but the Earth itself; and He is born out of the boundaries of the cosmos. He is the God of light; bursting forth from the vault of the heavens behind the rocky mountains. This rock is the world cave, within the zodiac, and it is from fire; for He is escaping from the old universe into the new. Already at birth He is ruler of the world, kosmokrator. Promised by Mithras to His two torch-bearers, the Invincible one sat on a stone as one of His loyal followers eagerly stood by. Aiming a flexed bow at a rockface, the great God shot an arrow. Mithras is the ever-flowing spring and bestower of water, and from this rock He struck sprung flowers. This miracle scene may be a reaffirmation of Mithras being able to bring forth Spirit within Matter. Hunting the Bull To redeem Himself, Mithras goes before and hunts for a bull to sacrifice, which aims to bring about rebirth through death. Hunting the bull, a great struggle breaks out. The bull tries to flee; but is found again by the great God who hangs onto its neck as it gallops at lightning speed. Mithras, who in a large display of strength, holds on and actually rides the bull, managing to get the beast to tire itself. The Bull can obviously be identified with Taurus, which is assigned to Venus. As a creator and lord of genesis, Mithras is placed in the region of the celestial equator. Slaying the Bull Here the most triumphant action of Mithras is done. From here, life springs forth to suckle from the bulls wounds. The bull is sacrificed so new life may be produced; life brought through Mithras, the almighty God of light. Mithras has provided salvation. The story is interpreted by Porphyry and Lactantius Placidus. The bull itself can be thought as representative of Selene, the Goddess of the Moon. Selene is also depicted as much as King Helios is in Mithraic imagery, often taking up the top-right hand corner as King Helios takes the top-left. Another further point is that Mithras Himself may be symbolic of Mars and tied to the constellation of Aries, as Porphyry writes. The bull would be tied to Taurus, and associated with the planet Venus. This action symbolizes death needing the power of the bull to

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find new life, which is represented by his brother Cautes. Cautopates and Cautes are thought to represent constellations. This gives the impression that only constellations that overlapped the equatorial line were important enough to be included in Mithraic imagery. Thought to be representative of a constellation. A snake suckles from the bull as well. The snake is thought to be in the same position as Hydra. Sometimes a lion may be depicted, which is thought to represent the constellation, Leo. This handshake is incredibly sacred: King Helios crowns Mithras with a crown like His own, and they sit to dine together. A ritual meal is then had where the bull is eaten and the skin of the bull is stretched out over a table, and Cautes and Cautopates join the banquet from below. Ascension to Heaven Mithras has completed his earthly duties and King Helios grants him a chariot to return to the heavens. Lord of this Age Mithras is reborn, emerging from an egg, rising naked from the lower part of an eggshell while the upper half of the shell caps his head; surrounding him is are zodiac symbols representing the cosmos. He is reborn with the torch of Ariomanus, which he uses to give new light to the cosmos He gave life to. He is reborn not only with the knife that he will use to kill the bull, but the tools he did use to kill the cosmic bull. He becomes in that world the preeminent ruler, equal to the sun in ours. He is Phanes, arising from the cosmic egg. He is creator of the universe and father. Worship Evidence shows that water was widely used in worshipping Mithras, which represents the myth where Mithras produces his followers sacred water by striking a rock. Further, ritual feasts are also commonly had, where bread and wine is thought to give rebirth and nourishment to the soul. The slaughter of sacrificial animals are also common. Further, Mithras and His temples often appear with depictions of astrological symbolism such as 12 Zodiac signs, implying that He has a strong astrological importance. These grades are said to be connected to planetary deities:

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## Chapter 6 : Mithras & Zarathustra - signpoststotruth

Vivienne J. Walters, *The cult of Mithras in the Roman provinces of Gaul*, p. item 39 with bibliography, "A stone relief from Trier (Augusta Treverorum), now in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Trier, Inventory no. S.T See plate XVIII.

Name[ edit ] The term "Mithraism" is a modern convention. Writers of the Roman era referred to it by phrases such as "Mithraic mysteries", "mysteries of Mithras" or "mysteries of the Persians". Mithras name Bas-relief of the tauroctony of the Mithraic mysteries, Metz , France. Much about the cult of Mithras is only known from reliefs and sculptures. There have been many attempts to interpret this material. Mithras-worship in the Roman Empire was characterized by images of the god slaughtering a bull. Other images of Mithras are found in the Roman temples, for instance Mithras banqueting with Sol, and depictions of the birth of Mithras from a rock. But the image of bull-slaying tauroctony is always in the central niche. The practice of depicting the god slaying a bull seems to be specific to Roman Mithraism. According to David Ulansey, this is "perhaps the most important example" of evident difference between Iranian and Roman traditions: Tauroctony In every Mithraeum the centrepiece was a representation of Mithras killing a sacred bull, an act called the tauroctony. The centre-piece is Mithras clothed in Anatolian costume and wearing a Phrygian cap ; who is kneeling on the exhausted [32] bull, holding it by the nostrils [32] with his left hand, and stabbing it with his right. As he does so, he looks over his shoulder towards the figure of Sol. A dog and a snake reach up towards the blood. A raven is flying around or is sitting on the bull. The bull was often white. Outside the cavern, top left, is Sol the sun, with his flaming crown, often driving a quadriga. A ray of light often reaches down to touch Mithras. At the top right is Luna , with her crescent moon, who may be depicted driving a biga. On the back side was another, more elaborate feasting scene. This indicates that the bull killing scene was used in the first part of the celebration, then the relief was turned, and the second scene was used in the second part of the celebration. Robert Turcan has argued that since the caduceus is an attribute of Mercury , and in mythology Mercury is depicted as a psychopomp , the eliciting of flames in this scene is referring to the dispatch of human souls and expressing the Mithraic doctrine on this matter. He is shown as emerging from a rock, already in his youth, with a dagger in one hand and a torch in the other. He is nude, standing with his legs together, and is wearing a Phrygian cap. Sometimes he is shown as coming out of the rock as a child, and in one instance he has a globe in one hand; sometimes a thunderbolt is seen. One statue had its base perforated so that it could serve as a fountain, and the base of another has the mask of the water god. Sometimes Mithras also has other weapons such as bows and arrows, and there are also animals such as dogs, serpents, dolphins , eagles, other birds, lion, crocodiles, lobsters and snails around. On some reliefs, there is a bearded figure identified as Oceanus , the water god, and on some there are the gods of the four winds. In these reliefs, the four elements could be invoked together. Sometimes Victoria, Luna , Sol and Saturn also seem to play a role. Saturn in particular is often seen handing over the dagger to Mithras so that he can perform his mighty deeds. Some interpretations show that the birth of Mithras was celebrated by lighting torches or candles. He is usually represented as having four wings, two keys sometimes a single key , and a scepter in his hand. Sometimes the figure is standing on a globe inscribed with a diagonal cross. A variation of the same figure, but with a human head instead of the lion-mask, is also found, but is rare. An example of such a catechism, apparently pertaining to the Leo grade, was discovered in a fragmentary Egyptian papyrus P. Berolinensis , [58] [59] and reads:

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## Chapter 7 : Download [PDF] The Roman Mithras Cult Free Online | New Books in Politics

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Part 2 is going to cover the Roman Cult of Mithras by looking at its history, mythos, symbolism, and what is known about its initiations. There is a great deal of misinformation out there concerning the Cult of Mithras by anti-Christians seeking to revise the history of Christianity and by fanatical Christians spreading an agenda against anything pagan. Due to its secretive nature and no existing documentation, the study of the Cult of Mithras is done primarily from archaeological research done on the surviving temples around Europe and Middle East. The Cult of Mithras was one of several mystery cults practiced within the Roman Empire. Worshipers of the Cult of Mithras, or sometimes known as the Mithraic Mysteries, were all male and particularly popular among soldiers. It is not surprising to see why the Cult of Mithras was popular among soldiers. The Cult of Mithras, with its warlike imagery and promise of salvation, must have been a natural fit with an occupation where soldiers were sent to the far ends of the empire far from home and where death was almost a certainty. Initiates referred to themselves as "syndexioi" which means "united by the handshake. The initiations and meetings often included meals which took place in their temples called "mithraeum. The Mithraic mysteries center on the Persian god Mithra Mithras being the Greco-Roman spelling , but scholars debate whether or not this Mithras was the same as the Mithra found in Zoroastrianism. Some argue that the Cult of Mithras was merely inspired by the Persians, but the Roman Mithras may be a different god from the Persian Mithra as the former was a sun god while the latter was not; the Persian Mithra was a judicial deity and guardian of cattle, the harvest, and the waters. However, I will go further into the god Mithras and let the reader decide for himself. Some believe that it was through the conquest of Armenia where the Cult of Mithras was introduced to the Roman legions and it should be noted that Armenia was the last holdout of the cult during its decline. It is said that the Mithraic Mysteries reached the height of the popularity in the 3rd century AD leading into the 4th century AD. Along with the mithraea, there are also many altars and shrines that were dedicated by Roman Emperors. However, during the reign of Theodosius I, all pagan worship was outlawed. Some sources believe that he was the son of Ormuzd, a god of light, and Anahita, a virgin fertility goddess. Mithras himself was a god over contracts "contract" being the etymological root of his name. Mithras is said to have been born out of a rock on the Winter Solstice. Some legends of the birth of Mithras state that the rock from which he came from contained both light and fire, making him a god of light and fire; although this may have been later changes to keep in sync with the newer adaptations of this god. Myth states that he was born wearing a Phrygian cap holding a dagger and a torch of light; Phrygia was a kingdom in what is modern Turkey, around the Sakarya River. Mithras is said to have remained celibate throughout his life and represented a system of ethics, temperance, and self-control. The first mention of Mithras is in the Vedic Hindu Scriptures dating back to around BC, and over the years spread to Persia where the worship of Mithras spread. The Magus Zarathustra or Zoroaster reformed the Persian religion now referred to as Zoroastrianism which placed Mithras as a lesser deity beneath Ahura Mazda. According to the Avesta, Ahura Mazda created Mithras in order to guarantee the authority of contracts and promises. Some believe that it is the association with the Babylonian god Shamash, their god of justice and a sun god, that Mithras was later seen as a sun god. With the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great, Persian religions spread into the Hellenistic world. Mithraeum The initiates of the Mithraic Mysteries met in temples called "mithraeum" plural: Mithraeum were often natural caves or small rooms beneath existing structures. They are typically found near sources of fresh water such as streams. One mithraeum was discovered beneath the Basilica of San Clemente in Rome. At its height of popularity, it is said that there may have been around mithraea just in Rome. It is not known exactly how many there were around the Roman Empire, but today there still exists one in Bosnia, five in France,

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seventeen in Germany, three in Hungary, two in Israel, two in Romania, two in Spain, one in Switzerland, one in Syria, four in England, one in Armenia, and eight in Rome. Mithraea were typically m long and m wide with raised benches called klinai on the sides where the initiates would eat their meals with a narrow aisle in between. From this commonly used floor plan seen with existing mithraea, that each mithraeum could only hold individuals. If the mithraeum was beneath a building, there would be holes in the ceiling to allow light in. The ceiling of the mithraeum was also often painted with a star-decked heaven. The mithraeum served as an area for initiation and where the ritualistic meals were held. Meals were particularly important to the initiates of the Mithraic Mysteries as it pertained to Mithras and the killing of the bull. The Catholic Encyclopedia states that a sacred fire was kept burning in the mithraea. Mithraea were decorated with a variety of iconography. In every mithraeum there was a representation of Mithras killing a bull, often referred to as the "tauroctony. In some sculptures Mithras is depicted carrying a rock on his back. Others show him wearing a cape with the stars in the inside lining while others show him emerging from a zodiac ring as some myths of Mithras believe he helped create the physical world. Other representations show Mithras attended by two torch-bearers, Cautes and Cautopates, who were present at his birth. Symbolically, the mithraeum had several meanings: Many mithraea were later converted to crypts and tombs after the rise of Christianity. The Tauroctony, from the Greek word "tauroktonos" meaning "bull killing," concerns the myth where the god Mithras sacrifices a sacred bull. Ahura Mazda is said to have sent a crow, an animal traditionally used a messenger of the gods, to Mithras and ordered him to kill the bull in a cave in order to create plants and animals. There are other differences seen on a variety of reliefs still existing in uncovered mithraea around Europe and these differences are thought to be the result of the differing native cultures being fused with Roman religion and the Cult of Mithras. As mentioned above, Cautes and Cautopates are sometimes shown in depictions of Mithras. In the Tauroctony, Cautes is to the right of Mithras and below the sun in his chariot while Cautopates is to the left of Mithras and below the moon. Some have interpreted that Mithras and his two attendants represent three phases of the sun during the day time: Myth states that after Mithras killed the bull that he kneels before the sun god, Sol Invictus the unconquered sun, and both then dine on the slain bull. They are said to have ate the bull on a table draped in the hide of the slain bull. Initiates are said to eat a meal together in a mithraeum. It is speculated that in some instances to imitate and revere the gods Mithras and Sol Invictus in order to maintain a personal relationship. From paintings and reliefs, it is believed that initiates in lower grades, Raven through Lion, act as attendants of higher grades and serve food during the meal. While some believe that the killing of a bull was purely figurative and not actually killed by the cult members, archaeological evidence shows that bulls were killed and eaten, but when bulls were not available they would dine on other domesticated animals. Some believe that the Tauroctony has an astrological meaning behind it. Some have speculated that the killing of the bull coincided with the end of the Age of Taurus and the beginning of the Age of Aries which occurred around BC when some think that the Mithraic Mysteries originated. The Initiatic Grades Initiates referred to themselves as "syndexioi" and while they were united in this sense they were still divided into seven grades: Handshakes are seen as a commitment to a contract and as Mithras was a god of contracts the use of a handshake is very appropriate for those who worshiped him. Handshakes are also a gesture of friendship. From the archaeological evidence, members were expected to progress through the first four grades, but few would go beyond to the last three grades. Neophytes were said to have gone through some kind of trial or preparation before going through the initiation. The severity of these trials vary depending on the sources, though the reliability of some is questionable. The purpose of these trials though would be to ensure that the individual would be prepared to go through the initiation and be worthy of the secrets of the mystery cult. The initiations would include some kind of oath to never reveal any of the secrets of the Mithraic Mysteries, ablutions, purification rites, admonishments, and marking the initiate on the hand from the frescoes it could be done by fire brand or tattooing. The initiation was conferred by one who had attained the grade of Pater, or Father. Most initiates were said to not advance beyond the grade of Lion. These in the lower grades attended to those in the higher grades, but could still participate in the

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privileges of the cult such as the sacred meal. It is possible that lower initiates took turns serving and other times were served. The grades of initiation for the Cult of Mithras are extremely fascinating though we have limited resources to study them. The existing symbolism though is rich and provides us with an insight into each grade. While there is no existing literature on the specificity of each of the seven grades, here is some information on each of them: While Mercury is the messenger of the gods in Roman mythology, the raven has replaced him as a symbol, but Mercury is still associated with the Raven in this context. On a cup found in Ostia near Rome there is an inscription of "Nama Coracibus tutela Mercurii" meaning "Hail to the Ravens under the protection of Mercury". Birds often serve that role in a variety of other mythologies. Huginn and Muninn, ravens in Norse mythology, served as messengers of Odin. In Hinduism, crows are messengers of the dead to living. In Roman mythology were associated with good luck. In Celtic mythology, ravens were associated with warfare and death. In several Native American mythoi, the raven is involved in the creation of the world, but is also considered a trickster god. In Japanese mythology, the raven is seen as a guide. In Christianity Ravens are used as description, sometimes for good and sometimes for bad. Along with being messengers, birds are associated with knowledge and enlightenment. In Egyptian mythology, Thoth represented by an Ibis is the god of magic, writing, and numerous sciences. In Roman mythology, Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was accompanied by an owl. Birds were also used in various mythologies to bring life the stork and to represent the soul in the afterlife. It should be noted that pagan gods and goddesses would also take the form of birds for a variety of reasons. The Raven would naturally be associated with the element of Air, but some have said that a water baptism is a part of this initiation to symbolize the purification of the soul. From frescoes and mosaics, initiates of this grade as said to wear a raven mask. Being the first degree and entrance into the Mithraic Mysteries, the Raven is meant to represent the death of neophyte and rebirth into mysteries, and his new spiritual life. Other symbols associated with this grade are the beaker and caduceus staff of Mercury. Nymphus or Bride With this degree it is important to remember that mystery cults were about becoming closer with a particular deity. While this degree is named "Bride" it should be noted that it meant not a literal wedding, but establishing a bond with Mithras and does not preclude civil marriages. Some Christian fundamentalists have attempted to denigrate this degree as being homoerotic, but scholars, even Christians, agree that there was no evidence that sexual rites were involved with the Mithraic Mysteries. A mural depicting this grade shows an initiate wearing a veil and is under the protection of the goddess Venus.

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## Chapter 8 : BBC - History - Ancient History in depth: Roman Religion Gallery

*The Roman cult of Mithras was the most widely-dispersed and densely-distributed cult throughout the expanse of the Roman Empire from the end of the first until the fourth century AD, rivaling the early growth and development of Christianity during the same period.*

This network was centered around the House of Herod, and included an important Armenian bloodline. The importance of this Armenian bloodline figures both in their supposed descent from the Lost Tribe, and their mixed Alexandrian and Persian heritage, a hereditary Syrian priesthood of Baal, and the family of Julius Caesar. It was the coalescence of these families, at the turn of the first Millennium BC, that effectively inceptioned the conspiracy. And, while the trail of these familial relationships is complicated and detailed, it is essential to examine them, in order to properly understand the origin, direction and beliefs of their successors, the Illuminati. Essentially, these families were responsible for the formation and spread of the Mithraism, the most popular cult of the Roman Empire. It was this cult that remained the core doctrine of the Illuminati for centuries to come. Initially, the formation of Mithraism served a conspiracy to supplant the Christian Church. It was ultimately successful, when one of their descendants, Constantine the Great, implemented Catholicism, which was but an assimilation of Mithraism, associating Jesus with the cult of the dying-god. The cult eventually penetrated to the Islamic world to produce the heresy of the Ismailis, from which emerged the first terrorist network, the Assassins. It was the legend of contact with the Assassins with the notorious Knights Templars, during the Crusades, which became the basis of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. Initially, the cult of the heretical Magi was most prevalent in that part of Asia Minor, that is, of Armenia, Cappadocia and Pontus. Pontus was founded following the death of Alexander the Great, shortly after BC. Therefore, this cult of the Magi, which worshipped the dying-god in the form of Mithras, was most prevalent in that part of Asia Minor to which the so-called Lost Tribes had been relocated, to be later absorbed by Scythians and Medes. Commagene Cappadocia Commagene was a small kingdom, located in modern south-central Turkey, in what had once been part of greater Cappadocia, with its capital city as Samosata, or modern Samsat, near the Euphrates. Commagene was ruled by a dynasty known as the Orontids. The combined heritage found in Antiochus led to the assimilation of Mithras with the Greek Hercules, which marked the first early form of the Mithraic cult. Together, they took the early symbolism of the Mithra worship of the heretical Magi, and combined it with the emerging Kabbalistic mysticism, to form the Mysteries of Mithras. Essentially, the Mithraic mysteries adapted the ancient king-worship of the Babylonians, to the worship of the emperor, as a personification of their god the Sun. Through the influence of the Commagenian dynasty, this cult retained its Persian themes, but represented its god Mithras with the physical form of their progenitor, Alexander the Great. The person through which the House of Commagene was able to enter into contact with that of Herod, in addition to the family of Julius Caesar, to produce the Mithraic bloodline, which went on to produce the leading conspiratorial families of Europe, was Antiochus IV. After submitting to Greek rule under the Seleucids, the Persian Empire eventually re-emerged under the Parthians, a semi-nomadic people who, in the second century BC, arose from an area southeast of the Caspian Sea. This state of affairs signaled the beginning of the relationships that led to the transference of the Mithraic cult to Rome. The dynasty is so named because its members were drawn from the Julia and the Claudius family. Julia derive their name from Iulus, or Julus, also known as Ascanius, who, according to Greek and Roman mythology, was a son of Aeneas, himself the son of Aphrodite, the Greek Venus, and the cousin of Priam. The founder of the dynasty, Caesar Augustus, was a Julian through his adoption by his great-uncle, Julius Caesar. And, although Caligula deposed him shortly after, he was again restored by Claudius in in 41 AD. In 52 AD, Antiochus VI campaigned against some wild tribes there which had been harrowing the coastal cities. In addition, reflecting the characteristics of his occult leanings, Caligula was described, by H. He was the grandson of Herod the Great, rebuilder of the Temple. Herod the Great arose from a wealthy, influential Idumaeon family. The

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Idumaeans were successors to the Edomites, who had settled in Edom in southern Judea, but between BC, were required to convert to Judaism. According to Josephus, after the murder of his father, young Agrippa was sent by Herod the Great to the imperial court in Rome. There, Tiberius conceived a great affection for him, and he eventually became a close friend of Caligula. The Emesa Dynasty Along with Commagene and the Julio-Claudian families, a third would be introduced into this mix, which would feature in not only the creation of Mithraism, but its continued preservation through the centuries, culminating in the Illuminati families of Europe. That family was the hereditary priest-kings of Emesa. Emesa was renowned for the Temple of the Sun, known as Elagabalus, a derivation of Baal, adored in a shape of a black stone. Around 64 BC, Pompey the Great had reorganized Syria and the surrounding countries into Roman Provinces, and had installed client kings, who would be allies to Rome. One of those client kings, would be Sampsiceramus, the founding member of the Priest-King dynasty of Emesa. Paul and Mithraism Paul seems to have been part of a conspiracy on the part of the House of Herod, to subvert the emerging Christian movement, by conforming it to their occult doctrines. Paul was from Tarsus, the capitol city of Cilicia, the very hub of the intrigues that produced the Mithraic religion. More importantly, the descendants of the Merovingians eventually intermarried with the family of Charlemagne, founder of the Holy Roman Empire, and supposedly, that of an Exilarch, or claimant to the Davidic throne, named Rabbi Makhir. It is from this lineage that all the leading lines of European aristocracy descend, a bloodline featured as the central secret of Grail lore. The Merovingians, again, came originally from Scythia, where they were known as the Sicambrians, taking their name from Cambra, a tribal queen of about BC. Then, in the early fifth century AD, the invasion of the Huns provoked large-scale migrations of almost all European tribes. It was at this time that the Sicambrians, a tribe of the Germanic people collectively known as the Franks, crossed the Rhine and moved into Gaul, establishing themselves in what is now Belgium and northern France. The Merovingians are believed in occult circles to have originally been Jewish, and descended from the Tribe of Benjamin, who had entered Greece known as Cadmus and Danaus. Fredegar, who died in AD, was a Burgundian scribe, and his Chronicle covered the period from the earliest days of the Hebrew patriarchs to the era of the Merovingian kings. The city of Paris, established by the sixth century Merovingians, likewise bears the name of Paris, the son of King Priam of Troy, whose liaison with Helen of Sparta sparked the Trojan War. Gaul was the richest and largest area of the western empire, but the Frankish tribes had not succeeded in organizing a single state, until Clovis defeated the surviving Roman forces in AD. During his reign and that of his sons, Frankish power was extended over nearly all of Gaul and far into Germany. The Frankish kingdom eventually became the strongest and most extensive of the new German states, and it was the only one that truly survived into later centuries, and from it were descended the modern states of both Germany and France. The descendants of Clovis are called Merovingians. They occupied the throne of the Franks for nearly two hundred and fifty years. The annals of their reigns form an unpleasant catalogue of bloody wars, horrible murders, and deeds of treachery without number. Nevertheless, the earlier Merovingians were strong men, under whose direction the Frankish territory continued to expand, until it included nearly all of what is now France, Belgium, and Holland, besides a considerable part of Germany - Hutton Webster Early European History Charlemagne the Merovingian It is frequently claimed by genealogists that all of European aristocracy can claim descent from Charlemagne. This was the important union, infusing European aristocracy with Davidic lineage, by which occult societies, and books like the Holy Blood, Holy Grail, have claimed represented the secret of the Holy Grail. There are numerous confusing genealogies provided as to the descent of this Makhir, or Natronai. Their sons were Makhir and Gilbert of Rouergue. Makhir married Alda, the daughter of Charles Martel. According to Zuckerman, Makhir would have assumed the Christian name of Theodoric, or Thierry, and assumed the title of King of the Jews, and ruled over the independent state of Septimania in southern France, with the city of Narbonne as its capital. In the Mediaeval, romances Thierry is called Aymery, and he was the father of Guillaume de Gellone, about whom there were at least six major epic poems composed before the era of the crusades. The device of his shield was the Lion of Judah. At the height of his power, he included as part of his

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dominion, northeastern Spain, the Pyrenees, along with the region of Septimania. Clair, and there made him Duke of Normandy. The Sinclairs soon multiplied to such an extent that they could not all stay at the castle of St. Clair, and were given various other castles around France. However, they all went to England with the Conqueror. One Sinclair, named William, did not like the Conqueror, his cousin, so with some other discontented barons he went to Scotland. From them were descended all subsequent Stewart, or Stuart, kings of Scotland. Rosslyn Chapel There are hundreds of stone carvings in the walls and in the ceiling of the Rosslyn Chapel, which represent biblical scenes, Masonic symbols, and examples of Templar iconography. In addition to the Jewish and occult symbolism, there are also some traces of Islam and pagan serpents, dragons, and woodland trees. The fertility figure of the Green Man, a European version of the dying-god Dionysus, is to be found everywhere on the pillars and arches, together with fruits, herbs, leaves, spices, flowers, vines and the plants of the garden paradise. The remains of William St Clair, great-grandfather of the founder of Rosslyn Chapel, are said to be buried in Rosslyn, in the style of the Templars, in a grave marked by a skull and crossbones. But Edward II initially refused to implement the papal order enforced by his father-in-law. Between October 13, and January 8, , the Templars went unmolested in England. During this period many fugitive Templars, seeking to escape torture and execution, fled to apparent safety there. Only handfuls of Templars were duly arrested however. But most Templars in England, as well as elsewhere outside France, altogether escaped arrest, let alone torture and execution. As the Scots Guard continued through the years, two of the prominent families involved in its history were the Sinclairs and the Stuarts. This marriage is significant, as it is an exception in the marriage practices of the Rothschilds. The founder of the dynasty, Mayer Amschel Rothschild, had ordered his sons to marry only their first cousins. The first exception was Hannah, daughter of Nathan Rothschild, who married the Rt. Clair-Erskine, 5th Earl of Rosslyn. The Erskine family were the hereditary Earls of Mar. Jacob is chairman of Yad Hanadiv, the Rothschild foundation, which chairs the Jewish Policy Research, dedicated to promoting issues affecting Jews worldwide. Yad Hanadiv was also responsible for building and granting the Knesset government buildings, and the Supreme Court of Israel, which prominently features Masonic symbolism and the pyramid and all-seeing eye of the Illuminati. Jacob was a close personal friend of Princess Diana, and maintains strong personal and business links with Henry Kissinger. His country estate has been a regular venue for visiting heads of state including Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. He knows Rupert Murdoch well, having been friends since the Australian newspaper magnate first came to the UK in the 60s.

### Chapter 9 : Traveling Templar: The Mithraic Mysteries, Part 2

*In ancient Roman religion, Fontus or Fons (plural Fontes, "Font" or "Source") was a god of wells and springs. A religious festival called the Fontinalia was held on October 13 in his honor. Throughout the city, fountains and wellheads were adorned with garlands.*