

CORPUS  
INSCRIPTIONUM ET MONUMENTORUM  
RELIGIONIS MITHRIACAE

M. J. VERMASEREN

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CORPUS  
INSCRIPTIONUM  
ET  
MONUMENTORUM  
RELIGIONIS MITHRIACAE



MARTINUS NIJHOFF  
HAGAE COMITIS  
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*Francisco Cumont*

*qui vita sua exemplum dedit*

## PREFACE

The publication of this *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* is due mainly to the activities of the Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van Wetenschappen, Kunsten en Schone Letteren (The Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences) at Brussels, for this work was begun as an entry in a competition organized by their Department of Fine Arts and Literature. It was then awarded a prize by a committee elected by the Academy and consisting of the theologian Prof. J. Coppens, the orientalist Prof. G. Rijckmans and the archaeologist, the late Prof. H. van de Weerd.

Among the first who should be mentioned with respect and gratitude is my teacher Dr. F. J. de Waele, Professor in Archaeology and Ancient History at the Nijmegen University and member of the Royal Flemish Academy. This remarkable teacher inspired a deep interest in the study of Archaeology and of the Mithras cult, and his help has always been invaluable.

I am also greatly indebted to the renowned Belgian scholar Prof. Franz Cumont. He was among the first to recognize the necessity of a revision of his standard work *Textes et Monuments relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*. During the last few years before his death he showed a lively interest in the present study, supplied much material and often gave advice, devoting a great part of his leisure and his love of Classical Culture to this new publication of the Mithraic Monuments. He pointed the way to much that would otherwise have remained undiscovered, and even read through the first part of the *Corpus* himself, giving fresh inspiration to the work. In writing the second volume of this work his wisdom and enthusiasm was keenly missed.

On the whole this work has been written along the lines laid down by Franz Cumont, although some deviations were unavoidable. Asia, the continent in which Mithraism originated, has been dealt with first; the rest of the *Orbis Terrarum* has been covered province by province; for it was impossible to adhere to a consistent chronological division without marring the clarity of the work as a whole. The inscriptions have not been classified separately, but they appear with the other monuments in the geographical classification; in this way it was easier to give a survey of the propagation of the cult in each country and each place. The places where the cult occurs are shown in a map of each province separately; the doubtful monuments are underlined. The figures in the text and the plates are numbered consecutively.

In dealing with the finds of Mithraea in Dura-Europos and in Rome, where very important paintings have come to light, much greater attention was given to colour; I am convinced that a further and closer study of the symbolism of colour will be very revealing.

New photographic techniques have been of great assistance and it has proved helpful to reproduce as many photographs as possible, since in Cumont's work the drawings have always had the disadvantage of being less clear or sometimes even inaccurate. It would be highly desirable to give reproductions of the paintings in full colour, but unfortunately this was impossible in the present work.

It was necessary to bring into relief the Rome monuments which were dealt with earlier in a separate book <sup>1)</sup>. As the doctrine found its definite shape in Rome, and as the Capital also supplies us with the richest evidence of the Mithras cult, its monuments deserve our special attention. We should not forget Franz Cumont's words: "Le Mithraïsme, en un mot, est la forme romaine du mazdéisme".

Thanks are due to all those who introduced the author into the cultural setting of present-day Rome. The Nederlands Philologisch Studiefonds made a first visit to the Eternal City possible. I am indebted to Prof. G. Hoogewerff for the kind hospitality enjoyed in the Netherlands Historical Institute in Rome, while he was its Director. And I also have gratefully to acknowledge the kindness of the present Director, Dr. J. Poelhekke. The late Prof. H. M. R. Leopold, the former Director of the Archaeological Section, and Dr. C. C. van Essen, its present head, should also be thanked for their interest and encouragement.

In the Valle Giulia in Rome, Belgium and Holland are closely connected both by situation and friendship. This has been of exceptional advantage owing to the kind help of the former Director of the Belgian Academy in Rome, Prof. F. de Visscher, and its Secretary, Prof. J. Michaux.

It has been possible to illustrate the description of the monuments of Rome and Ostia with a great number of photographs through the kindness of the Directors and Keepers of the Vatican and Roman Museums, Barone Dr. Bartolomeo Nogara (†) and Dr. F. Magi, Dr. A. M. Colini, Dr. C. Pietrangeli, Prof. G. Lugli, Prof. P. Romanelli, Prof. G. Becatti, Mgr. Prof. J. de Bruyne, Dr. E. Paribeni and Prof. S. Aurigemma.

The circumstances for describing the monuments of Gallia were quite as favourable as for Italy. On account of the present and ever increasing cultural association between France and Holland the French Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences made it possible for me to continue my studies in Paris for a long period. The interest of Dr. W. E. van Wijk, former Director of the Collège Néerlandais, I remember with gratitude. Thanks are also due to Prof. Ch. Picard, Prof. A. Merlin, Dr. P. Devambe, Dr. J. Charbonneaux and Prof. A. G. Festugière, in Paris, and to Prof. A. Grenier and Prof. A. Bruhl, the former Director and Secretary of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome.

<sup>1)</sup> M. J. Vermaseren, *De Mithrasdienst in Rome (The cult of Mithras in Rome)* Nijmegen, 1951.

It so happened that the province of Britannia was visited at a moment when most collections of Antiquities were still being reorganized after the war. I am indebted to all those Keepers of Museums in Britain who, in spite of this, made it possible for me to examine the monuments I wished to see; in particular I express my deepest gratitude to Prof. B. Ashmole for this token of courtesy.

Through the good offices of the British School at Rome, and the American and Swedish Institutes, I was able to consult publications which were otherwise hard to come by. The Bibliotheca Vaticana also gave special facilities.

It was hoped that peace would bring opportunities for a more thorough study of the monuments in Germany and the Balkans, but this hope has not yet been fulfilled. A discussion in Paris with Prof. A. Alföldi revealed that a considerable number of monuments in the Hungarian area might have been rediscovered, and that the known monuments might have been recorded more accurately, had not the uncertain international situation prevented this. The other Roman provinces of the Danube Basin present the same difficulties. In many instances there was too little personal contact with colleagues in this area, and therefore only little progress in collecting the necessary photographic material could be made. Only for the provinces of Dacia, Moesia and Thracia has it been possible to collect more material, owing to the friendship and help of the Rumanian Institute in Rome. Its former Director, Prof. S. Lambrino, and my friends Dr. Dinu Adamesteanu and Prof. D. Marin have shown their interest in scientific research by their considerate and helpful attitude.

Warm thanks are due to Prof. G. van Hoorn for his devoted interest and willing help and for his introduction into the Archaeological Institute of Utrecht University. I am also indebted to Prof. C. W. Vollgraff, Prof. H. Wagenvoort, Prof. J. H. Jongkees (all of Utrecht), Mgr. Prof. K. L. Bellon (Nijmegen), Prof. R. Pettazzoni, Mgr. Prof. N. Turchi (both of Rome), and the late Prof. G. van der Leeuw. Gratitude to my parents and my wife is based on their active co-operation as well as on their loving interest.

It will be understood that the translation of this work, which called for a great deal of intricate and detailed description, caused considerable perplexity, especially because a fixed terminology was lacking so that it was sometimes necessary to coin my own terms. I am therefore greatly indebted to Mr. A. M. H. Lemmers of Nijmegen, who conscientiously assisted me in this difficult task.

January 1956

MAARTEN J. VERMASEREN

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*Monumentorum artis qui  
unum vidit nullum vidit,  
qui mille vidit unum vidit*

GERHARD