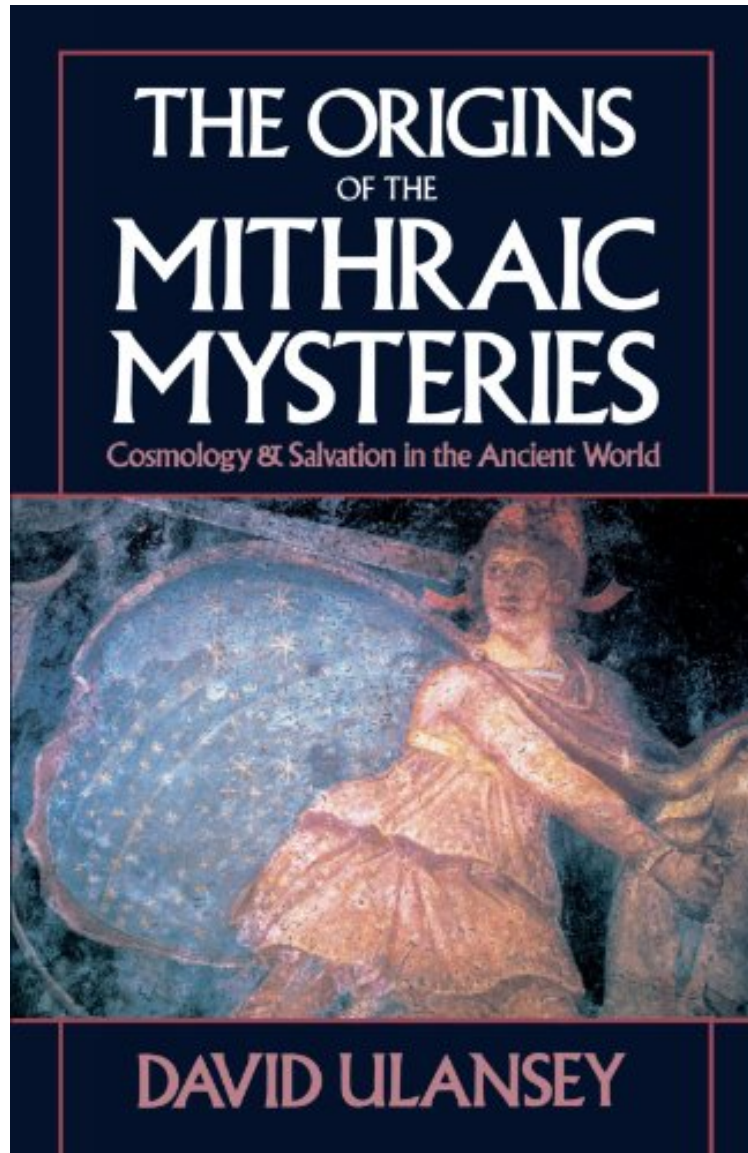


[PDF] The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries: Cosmology and Salvation in the Ancient World

# The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries: Cosmology and Salvation in the Ancient World

*David Ulansey*

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#448069 in Books David Ulansey 1991-03-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 5.50 x .44 x 8.251, .50 #File Name: 0195067886168 pages The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries Cosmology and Salvation in the Ancient World | File size: 51.Mb

**David Ulansey : The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries: Cosmology and Salvation in the Ancient World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries: Cosmology and Salvation in the Ancient World:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Great, if Speculative, Contribution By Christopher R. Travers First, this book is quite speculative and necessarily so (there is no other way to interpret religious artifacts without substantial textual sources). The author lays out the problems in investigation early on, as well as various views on the origins of Mithraism. He then follows one of those traditions (the astronomical theory) in the hopes of making his own contribution--- a comprehensive theory as to the origins of Mithraism. Personally, I don't expect that Ulansey's theory will be exactly right. It is pioneering, and consequently introduces a large number of new contributions to the field, some of which we can expect not to hold up to further investigation. Even if his theories survive in their overall outlines, some of the details could be radically different. Indeed there are a few notable omissions in avenues of investigation which could be used to check (and perhaps confirm or deny) some parts of Ulansey's theories. Additionally I am not certain that many of the theories of the origins of Mithraism are mutually exclusive. Just as we can see complex sources for early Christianity, it seems unlikely to me a religion as complex as Mithraism has a single source in astronomy and astrology. However, the book makes a number of fairly well-argued, and carefully connections that are new, such as the Perseus/Mithras connection. Additionally on the whole it is quite thought-provoking, and therefore represents in my view a major contribution to the study of Mithraism specifically, and even to Hellenistic religion more generally. Recommended.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Engaging Read By Zach David Ulansey has laid out interesting discussion about Mithraic Mysteries in this little book, which he documented his sources with care and made no assumptions anywhere. It is very enlightening and sobering read about the origins of this little-known mysteries (or cult) and how Stoicism is connected to it as well as the celestial interpretations. One doesn't have to be a scholar or academic to read this little work, as it is intended for a lay reader who is interested in the subject. The book is well-read and sobering as I read it in one sitting. It's to be recommended for those who's starting out in reading about this "mystery cult."

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This guy spent YEARS doing the research. By C. Hintz This book is a brief review of years of research and the findings. The academic version is in the 700 to 800 page range and beyond the scope of most 'casual readers.' This book is concise and to-the-point. I read it in an afternoon and then reread it the following day. I have theories about what Mitra evolved into - but that is not the point. This is a readable book for the general audience and I think every (public and private) high school library should have a couple of copies.

In the centuries following the conquests of Alexander the Great the dramatic unification of the Mediterranean world created exceptionally fertile soil for the growth of new religions. Christianity, for example, was one of the innovative religious movements that arose during this time. However, Christianity had many competitors, and one of the most remarkable of these was the ancient Roman "mystery religion" of Mithraism. Like the other "mystery cults" of antiquity, Mithraism kept its beliefs strictly secret, revealing them only to initiates. As a result, the cult's teachings were never written down. However, the Mithraists filled their temples with an enigmatic iconography, an abundance of which has been unearthed by archaeologists. Until now, all attempts to decipher this iconography have proven fruitless. Most experts have been content with a vague hypothesis that the iconography somehow derived from ancient Iranian religion. In this groundbreaking work, David Ulansey offers a radically different theory. He argues that Mithraic iconography was actually an astronomical code, and that the cult began as a religious response to a startling scientific discovery. As his investigation proceeds, Ulansey penetrates step by step the mysteries concealed in Mithraic iconography, until finally he is able to reveal the central secret of the cult: a secret consisting of an ancient vision of the ultimate nature of the universe. Brimming with the excitement of discovery--and reading like an intellectual detective story--Ulansey's compelling book will intrigue scholars and general readers alike.

"Ulansey's style is highly readable and I would unhesitatingly recommend it as reading for students who want to learn about this fascinating religion. Ulansey has demystified the mysteries marvelously and with admirable lucidity."-- Nicholas D. Humez, Montclair State University "An excellent, well-researched, comprehensive analysis of the origins of a tradition popular throughout Europe and the Near East for hundreds of years."--Antonia Tripolitis, Rutgers Univ. "The illustrations and diagrams play a useful part in this clear and lively exposition concerning the origin of a major religion which for a time rivalled Christianity."--Shadow "...sets a new standard for both scholarly and popular works on Mithras."--Timothy O'Neill, Gnosis Magazine "A very interesting interpretation of the symbolism of the Mithras-religion."--Journal for the History of Astronomy "Lucid....A surprisingly convincing and readable book, and I heartily recommend it to the educated general reader."--Biblical Archaeologist "[A] thrilling book....Bravo for Ulansey."--Religious Studies "Why are the Mysteries of Mithra such a mystery to us?...The astronomical explanation...has been revived in our time under different forms, but never as convincingly, with such an impressive array of arguments--iconographic, geographic, mythological, numismatic, and literary--as those offered by Dr. David Ulansey."--Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, Institut de France "Ulansey's extremely interesting book throws a completely new light on the origin of the Mithras religion."--B.L. van der Waerden, University of Zurich "Ulansey has put the development of western Mithraism in an utterly new perspective."--Martin Schwartz, University of California, Berkeley

From the Back Cover The teachings of the ancient Roman 'mystery religion' of Mithraism--one of the most

important competitors of early Christianity--were guarded with the utmost secrecy, revealed only to select initiates. While the Mithraists never wrote down their secret doctrines, they did leave a key to them in the arcane iconography which filled the walls of their underground temples. Until now, all attempts to decipher this iconography have proven fruitless. Most experts have been content with a vague hypothesis that these images somehow derived from ancient Iranian religion.

About the Author: David Ulansey is Assistant Professor of Religion at Boston University.