

THE DECORATIVE PROGRAMME OF A SMALL, PROBABLY SACRED BUILDING IN MONTE IATO

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Abstract

The paper deals with a three-room building found in the western quarter of Monte Iato (PA, Sicily) and aims to understand its function by analysing the decorative programme and the few available data. The focus will be on the main room of the complex, which features a wall painting in the early third-Pompeian style consisting of vegetal candelabra and garlands set on a plinth adorned with a velum ornatum. The velum ornatum motif seems to find its first origin in sacred contexts and could be connected to the ceremonial use of defining sacred spaces with velaria in particular situations. In support of a religious purpose for the building, there are also some objects discovered in the destruction layer dated to the early Imperial period. Further evidence, including the interior structure and location, suggests a sacred use for the building.

In conclusion, an attempt will be made to understand whether such evidence is sufficient to prove the interpretation of the context as a cult building.



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