

New Religious Movements as Target Audience at Malta Temples:

A challenge for Interpreters

Marie Avellino-Stewart & Dane Munro

Understanding and interpreting landscapes entails the encoding of symbols and deciphering of codes left on the palimpsest. Interpreting Neolithic and more significant Neolithic temple sites is challenging and rife with contested meanings. Landscape is used by adherents of the New Religious Movements, on a faith-based visit to Malta, as an extension of the spiritual fulfilment the Neolithic temples of Malta have to offer. The same landscape is then part of both the inner and outer pilgrimage in the context of not only the modern designer religions, but also of the established religions. This paper presents a case study of the Neolithic temple sites located in the Maltese Islands, which are significantly located at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea. The paper suggests that although these are shared spaces they are also a contested space as the interpretation of these sites are firmly biased.