

KNOSSOS AS MEMORIAL, RITUAL, AND METAPHOR

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ABSTRACT

Archaeological sites are powerful media by which the public gains an understanding of the past. Indirectly, this understanding helps to form the public's understanding of the present, too. Knossos is the emblematic site for 'Minoan civilisation', a medium through which tourists and other casual visitors to the site are introduced to a particular past. This chapter argues that Knossos is a monument of memorialisation that is visited by tourists as part of a socially constituted ritual. This ritual is embedded in metaphor. It is argued that Knossos is a metaphor that evokes largely unconscious, and thereby powerful, messages about the present, specifically the centrality of class as the primary organisational societal principle in the West.