

*Abstract*

***Medieval Malta – An Island Satellite in the Lee of Sicily: its landscape, hydrology and culture***

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15<sup>th</sup> November 2017

For centuries between AD 1000 and 1530, the Maltese archipelago was intimately drawn into the Sicilian sphere of influence. The archipelago's compact size and geographical proximity to its much larger neighbour directly contributed in placing Malta within the Sicilian orbit. The roots of the Maltese cave-dwelling phenomenon probably belong to the twelfth century and are the result of new attitudes adopted following the second Norman conquest of AD 1127. A strong troglodytic tradition during this period is probably connected to orchestrated attempts aimed at increasing the agricultural and hydrological output of specifically designated countryside areas of Malta and Gozo.