

## **DELOS, CENTER OF THE CULT OF APOLLO**

### **- Archaeoastronomical perspective**

Delos is a small island in the centre of the Cycladic group. It has neither enough water nor arable land to produce enough food for its inhabitants. Despite these facts, the island was chosen to be the cult centre of Apollo, the very significant deity of the Greek pantheon. In this paper, rational reasons are sought for why such an inhospitable place, where there is no reason for people to stay longer, was chosen for such an important role. The position and orientation of the main Apollo's temple at the island were analysed. The results showed that the axial orientation of the temple is suitable for observing the setting of the constellation Corvus (Raven), which is certainly related to the mythology of this deity. Gnomonic factors at the island were also analysed, i.e. the relation of the height of the gnomon and the length of its shadow, especially on the days of some important Apollo's holidays and on the cardinal days of the year (solstices and equinoxes). The results show that the geographical latitude of the island was very suitable for compiling a solar calendar using the help of a gnomon and observing certain constellations. This could be an important criterion in choosing the location of the sanctuary.

**Key words:** Delos, Apollo, Lyra, Cygnus, Delphinus, Corvus, archaeoastronomy, gnomon