

PORTARA ON NAXOS - THE CELESTIAL GATE

Portara is a monumental gate on Naxos, built by the end of VI century BC, by the local ruler Ligdamis, as the entrance of an unfinished temple. Some scientists think that the temple was dedicated to Apollo, others attribute it to Dionysus. Here, we attempted to contribute to the resolution of this dilemma, using the methods of Archaeoastronomy. We demonstrated that Portara does not face Delos, which was the important argument for the claim that the temple was dedicated to Apollo. Also we investigated the temple's orientation and the visibility of Corona Borealis, Lyra and Cygnus through the opening of Portara in connection with festivals of Dionysus and Apollo. Our findings support the possibility that three festivals were planned to be celebrated there: Metageitnia (dedicated to Apollo) and two winter festivals, Rural Dionysia and Lenaia (both dedicated to Dionysus).

Key words: Archaeoastronomy, Portara, Naxos, Corona Borealis, Lyra, Cygnus