

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ARCHAEOASTRONOMY



**Société Européenne pour
l'Astronomie dans la Culture
(SEAC)
European Society for Astronomy
in Culture**



**Laboratory of Archaeometry,
Dept. of Mediterranean Studies,
University of the Aegean, Rhodes,
Greece**

SEAC 2006
**“Ancient Watching at Cosmic Space and Observation of
Astronomical Phenomena”**

6-10 April, 2006, Rhodes, Greece

Organized by

- ▶ **Societe Europeenne pour l’Astronomie dans la Culture (SEAC)**
- ▶ **University of the Aegean, Department of Mediterranean Studies**

In Collaboration with

- ▶ **International Astronomical Union (IAU) Commission 41 (History of Astronomy)**
 - ▶ **National Observatory of Athens**
 - ▶ **Archaeological Institute of Aegean Studies, Rhodes**
 - ▶ **Hellenic Rock Art Center**

International Scientific Committee: Dr J. A. Belmonte (President of SEAC, Astronomy), Prof. G. Banos (Astronomy), Dr M. Blomberg (Archaeology), Prof. A. Gurshtein (Astronomy), Prof. S. Iwaniszewski (Archaeology), Dr P. Kousoulis (Agyptology), Prof. I. Liritzis (Archaeometry), Ass. Prof. X. Moussas (Astronomy), Dr M. Papathanassiou (History of astronomy), Prof. C. Ruggles (Archaeoastronomy), Dr M. Rappengluck (Astronomy-Archaeology), Prof. J. Seiradakis (Astronomy), Prof. P. Themelis (Archaeology), Prof. C. Zerefos (Atmospheric environment), Dr A. Yiannikouri (Archaeology).

Local Organizing Committee: Prof. I. Liritzis (Chairman, Archaeometry), Prof. A. Sampson (Prehistoric archaeology), Prof. A. Savvides (Byzantine history), Dr P. Kousoulis (Egyptology), Dr M. Stefanakis (Classical archaeology), Dr S. Siropoulos (Ancient History-Classics), Dr A. Drivaliari (Archaeogeology), Ms M. Mellou (School Education), Ms I. Arfara (PhD student archaeometry), Mr V. Papachristou (Chemist), Ms H. Vassiliou (PhD student archaeoastronomy)

1st ANNOUNCEMENT (July 2006)

Archaeoastronomy, an upcoming interdisciplinary for astronomy in past cultures, emerges and establishes itself as a uniquely significant part of our cultural heritage. Historic and prehistoric data drawn from increasing number of monuments, standing stones, instruments, landscape topographic markers, rock art and wall paintings, textural reports, all converge to the same target: refer to movements of certain celestial bodies – stars and constellations, solar stands, lunar standstills- during rising or setting on particular sightseeing cardinal horizon.

Symbolism, rituals, ceremonies, religious beliefs were amongst others the main reasons of orientation of temples and sanctuaries. Since the dawn of humanity there is ample evidence of the various ways in which people strive to harmonise human activities with cycles of events in the natural world. Ritual performances may have a key role in reaffirming the natural (cosmic) order, as they did, for example in ancient Mesoamerica. Sacred calendars were invented related to crop-planting and other agricultural activities, for navigation purposes and eventually for purely scientific reasons (as in classical Greece). Early herders and cultivators, much as the earlier Mesolithic hunter-gatherers tended to move seasonally about the landscape according to the availability of different resources at different times of the year. Different sky configurations may have regulated and defined such movements. All these activities were performed through the whole cosmos as they perceived it consisting of the starry night and the landscape. Certain constructions acted as a microcosm resulting from a projected macrocosm; their geometry, their setting with regards to horizon, represented some sacred function, affirmation of some ideological structures, political control, the center of the world, the house of god. Astronomical alignments incorporating effects of light and shadows, may have empowered the monument giving it special significance on certain regular occasions.

Many astronomical and meteorological phenomena have had attracted the attention of early societies as omens associated with calamity and / or prosperity. Since the dawn of humanity early societies had had an intuitive interest to astronomical symbolism in their endeavor to elucidate fear and transform chaos to order, harmonising their conscience and perception with outer cosmos. Consternation but wondering too, have contributed to make astronomy an inseparable part of ancient cultures.

Ancient people observed astronomical phenomena, which were considered inseparable parts of their needs and beliefs- they were reflected on their restricted microcosmic landscape and such a projection aided development of calendars, symbols, orientations, established long traditions, helped daily life, contributed to the progress of science and philosophy of later times and modern era.

Thematic Issues will include:

- Ancient Greek astronomy*
- Ancient technology for astronomical observations*
- Astronomy of ancient literate cultures*
- Ancient astronomy on Rhodes*

- *Cosmic images: Rock art and human perception*
- *Ethnoastronomy and history of astronomy*
- *Ancient calendars*
- *History and iconography of constellations*
- *Orientations and interpretations*
- *Astronomical traditions in past cultures*
- *Astronomical symbolism and rituals*
- *Archaeology, history and mythology: an interplay with astronomy*
- *Sociological & religious impact of astronomy on ancient/ prehistoric societies*
- *Megalithic monuments, astronomy and prehistoric archaeology*
- *The boundaries of archaeoastronomy*
- *Anthropological foundations of archaeoastronomy*
- *The role of archaeoastronomy in the history of astronomy*
- *Human struggling between the micro- and macro- cosmos: astronomical overview.*
- *Cosmological, symbolic and cultural complexity derived from sky*

*This venture though a European initiative is open to the international academia for those working on **Astronomy in Culture**.*

Registration fees: €380 (for early registration) including: 1) attendance of all conference sessions, 2) conference material and proceedings (Special Issue of *Mediterranean Archaeology & Archaeometry* journal), 3) five nights bed & breakfast at 1st Class Hotel Mediterranean, City of Rhodes, 4) four lunches at the Hotel, 5) four dinners, 6) coffee and refreshments during breaks and 7) excursions.

For accompanied persons in double room the fee is € 150 and includes: all above (no choice of parts is accepted), but not conference material and proceedings.

For those living in Rhodes and those wishing to look for an independent lodging the registration fee is € 130 which includes, daily sessions, coffee breaks, conference material, excursion, and proceedings.

Early bird registration: 15th January 2006.

Last minute registration (paid at the registration desk): €430, including all the above.

Abstracts deadline: 15 December 2005. Submit an abstract via e-mail max one page min. half a page, fonts 12', single space (including title, name and affiliations and 1-3 references at the end).

Proceedings: Publication of the proceedings is planned. They will form a special issue of the international journal MAA (Mediterranean Archaeology & Archaeometry) following the Journal's peer review procedure. Submission of articles during conference at the registration desk.

Web site: Further information will soon be available at the conference web site: www.rhodes.aegean.gr/maa_journal/SEAC2006

Grants in aid: There will be some assistance for colleagues, especially postgraduate students, from eastern countries towards the registration fee. The extent of this depends on the available grants from sponsors. The aid will be towards waiving part of the fees.

How to reach Rhodes: Rhodes can be reached from Athens by air. There are two air companies (Aegean airways and Olympic airways) operating four times a day from Athens, and once per day from Thessaloniki and Heraklion (Crete); while in April onwards operate some Charter flights from international European airports. Rhodes can also be reached daily by Ferry from Piraeus (port of Athens). Details on these in the 2nd announcement.
