

# SKYROS

## THE RESTING PLACE

### OF RUPERT BROOKE

## SKYROS

Most of the Aegean Islands which project like many-coloured jewels above the sapphire sea, possess characteristic geographical features quaint local customs and picturesque costumes in addition to historical associations dating back many centuries before the dawn of written history.

The present rugged and deeply indented Aegean Isles, are only the highest summits and fragmentary relics, of vast territories which united Modern Greece with the opposite coasts of Asia Minor in pre-historic times and aptly illustrate the poetic lines.

"There rolls the deep where  
grew the tree  
Oh Earth, what changes hast  
thou seen".

No other part of Europe provides such a fascinating district for the study of the resistless natural forces of evolution, as the island-studded expanse of the blue Aegean, whose countless isles and islets rise above the deep blue depths, covering the drowned vallers and vast submerged plains, formerly connecting Greece with Asia Minor.

It was to Skyros in pre-Homeric times, that the ancient Athenians banished Theseus their national hero who first united the scattered tribes of Attica into a kingdom and subsequently delivered Athens from the humiliating human tribute, imposed upon her by all-powerful Minos, the Sea-King of Crete.

Today, the visitor is shewn a lofty precipice, from which Lycomedes the treacherous King of Skyros, hurled the aged Theseus into the surging sea below, in order to prevent him escaping from the island and returning to Athens.

Several centuries later, in a fit of tardy remorse, the Athenians sent to Skyros and recovered the remains of their former King which they interred in the Temple of Theseus below the Acropolis, thus atoning for their neglect of their national hero.



The Grave of Brooke

And so today, the remains of Rupert Brooke, one of the most promising of the immortal band of poets whose career was cut short by his untimely death, lie peacefully at rest in the friendly sun-kissed soil of Skyros.

It is indeed most fitting that Greece, the original home of Poetry, should have opened a special Fund for public subscription, to erect a suitable memorial to the Genius of Rupert Brooke.

Byron died during the siege of Missolonghi in 1824 and by the inspiration of his example, immortalised the scene of Hellenic heroism against Turkish tyranny.

By a remarkable coincidence, less than a century later, Rupert Brooke while proceeding to the Dardanelles

of liberty, died at sea and was buried at Skyros.

From Kymi on the eastern coast of the long and lofty island of Euboea, which fringes the coast of Greece for nearly a hundred miles, the picturesque island of Skyros is less than thirty miles away.

Its twin ports of Kalamitsa on the west and Achileion on the east coast above which rises the town of Skyros overshadowed by a steep hill, are connected by a road running across the narrow isthmus below Mount Konchylia whose rugged summit rises over two thousand feet above the southern half of the island.



RUPERT BROOKE

The northern half of the island which is by far the most fertile, is dominated by a lesser height called Olympos, rising about twelve hundred feet above the level of the sea.

Skyros lies in the direct track of steamers between Piraeus and Salonica and is justly celebrated for the export of many coloured marbles, fruit, honey, cheese and lobsters, which are kept in specially constructed rock-pools while awaiting shipment.

Picturesque windmills crown its windy heights, crescent-sailed caiques flit like white-winged birds across the narrow seas, white-washed, villages cluster about the hillsides waving cornfields, vineyards, scented orange-groves and fig-trees abound and everywhere deep blue bays and inlets penetrate far into the heart of the hills.

On feastdays and holidays, the handsome girls and women wear bright-coloured and elaborately embroidered costumes which greatly enhance their natural beauty and charms, while the marriage feast of a well-dowered Skyrian bride, is a most picturesque and interesting ceremony.

#### DEVONIAN

#### The Life and Work of Rupert Brooke

Rupert Brooke was born at Rugby on the 3rd of August 1887, the second of three brothers.

He studied literature at Cambridge where he led a carefree and pleasant life, took a moderate part in athletics, played football and always had volumes of poetry in his pockets.

His introduction to the public was somewhat original.

Gibson, Drinkwater, Harold Monro and others, a volume entitled "GEORGIAN POETRY" appeared in 1911 which contained the poems of these young men under pseudonyms.

In December of the same year, he published his first collection of poems and after finishing his studies at Cambridge, he travelled in Germany and visited Florence.

In 1913 he left for America as correspondent of an English news-paper. He visited the islands of the Pacific Ocean and his impressions were published in a volume with a preface by Henry James.

He returned to England in the Spring of 1914 and when the war broke out a few months later, he enrolled as a volunteer in the Navy with the rank of sub-Lieutenant.

His final collection of poems was published in 1914 entitled "1914 and Other Poems".

#### His Military Service and Death.

In October 1914 he entered Antwerp with the Naval Brigade and early in 1915 he left with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force for Egypt.

At Port-Said he received a sunstroke but recovered and shortly afterwards took part in the Expedition to the Dardanelles.

There he suffered a relapse and died on the 23rd of April 1915 aboard the French Hospital-ship "DUGAY-TROUIN" from blood-poisoning.

He was interred at Skyros and his mother did not desire to have his remains transported to England nor his eternal sleep to be disturbed.

Mr. Denis Browne in a letter to Brooke's biographer, Mr. March wrote:

"We buried him the same evening in a most beautiful spot surrounded by grey-green olive trees and near one which seemed to mourn for him"

"We buried him the same evening could gather on his grave and Quilter placed a wreath of olive-branches on the coffin."

"We covered the grave with pieces of white marble which were lying around and on the cross which we erected our Interpreter wrote in pencil"

"Here lies the servant of God sub-lieutenant in the British Navy, who died for the liberation of Constantinople from the Turks."

On the 2nd of June, two days before his own death, Denis Browne wrote: "we passed near the island of Brooke at sunset."

All the glorious colours appeared in the sky and on the sea to render him homage and will always radiate

## THE OLIVE TREE.

Of all the trees which particularly enhance of the fertile plains and coastal districts of Greece, none is more decorative, none more characteristic nor more widely distributed than the useful and picturesque olive tree, which in many of the more sheltered parts along the coasts, grows within reach of the salt spray.

Its gnarled and twisted trunks full of tortuous and tense expression, depict as much individuality and character as humanity itself and no two olive trees resemble each other either in form or features.

Was it not on the rocky summit of the temple-crowned Acropolis that Athena Queen of the Earth strove with Poseidon the king of the Sea, to decide who should name and possess the City which was finally awarded to the grey-eyed Goddess and bears her name.

Who can deny that the fruitful olive-tree which sprang up at the bidding of Athena as a proof of her superlative power, was not a more valuable and acceptable gift to mankind, than the salt Spring which welled up from the impact caused by the mighty trident of the king of the Sea.

The olive is the symbol of peace and security because it was with an olive branch that the dove returned to the Ark floating on the waste of waters at the time of the Deluge.

Its oil has been used for thousands of years for food and light and heat. It kept alight the lamps in the Tabernacle and anointed the heads of Priests and kings.

The citizens of ancient Athens, believed that the destinies of their city were inwrought with that of the olive, so the lamps of the Parthenon were lighted with its oil and the general reverence led Solon to promulgate a Law for its planting, as the symbol of freedom, hope, mercy, purity and prayer.

When peace was sought between warring nations, the messengers bore olive-branches, as did the Athenians who sought the Delphic Oracle and a Crown of wild-olives was the coveted prize of the Victors at the Olympic Games.

The greatest drama in the history of humanity was enacted on the olive-covered slopes of the Mount of Olives and the pale colour of the olive leaves, is said to be due to their still reflecting the glory that shone on them when CHRIST was transfigured on Olivet.

Alongside the "Sacred Way" leading to Eleusis, may still be seen the sacred olive-tree of Plato which still flourishes although it is over two thousand years old.

There is something almost supernatural and uncanny about the olive tree.

Its longevity appears almost eternal, its fructivity and vitality are such that even if most of its trunk (be cut down so as to only leave a small portion, this stump will presently commence sending out branches and finally bear fruit.

The island of Lesbos is reputed to possess more than ten million olive trees and its inhabitants never leave any part of the tree unexploited.

They feed their goats on its leaves, they eat the olives with their bread or press them to extract the oil. The residue amounting to 10/20% is again pressed so as to extract the last traces of oil which is used for soap-making and finally the oil-cake left over is used for fuel.

#### DEVONIAN

SHORTHAND-TYPIST. Experienced in English French and Greek. Competent in general Office work. Seeks position. Write I. I. C/o the Athens Times

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