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Comité Local de Tourisme de Lesbos

Local Tourist Committee of Lesbos

Örtlicher Tourismus

Ausschuss von Lesbos



The third island of Greece in size, known to the ancients as the Green Island, with the most wonderful scenery, situated near Asia Minor but at some distance from the mainland of Greece.

Its dented coasts and smooth hills covered with every possible hue of green make it unique in the Aegean. No other neighbouring island can compete with Lesbos in beauty.

Inspired by these idyllic surroundings, Sappho, the tenth Muse of Ancient times, wrote her unsurpassed lyric poems.

It has an area of 1.613 square kilometers and a population of 127.000.

H-i s t o r y .

The island has a great historical interest. It appears in history early, in the ages of mythology. The ancient Greeks speak about the Pelasgians and connect them with the settlers and rulers of the time.

The first settlements of the island were apparently established after the 17th century B.C. It is believed that at about the end of the 11th century the Aeolians settled in Lesbos under the leadership of Penthiolos. His descendants ruled over the island up to 659 B.C. when kingdom was abolished and long and serious political trouble ensued in the cities of the island (especially in Mytilene) the most important of which were Mythimna, Antissa, Pyrrha and Eressos, as well as Mytilene.

Before that troublesome time as well as after when peace and order reigned through Pittacos' efforts in 648 B.C., the island greatly developed and became a prosperous and important naval power establishing many colonies, especially in Asia Minor.

About the middle of the 6th century Lesbos was conquered by the Persians and its inhabitants were often forced to join them in their campaigns. Later, trying to help the Ionians in their revolt against the Persians they were conquered again.

After the naval battle of Mykale in 479 B.C. Lesbos was set free and joined the Athenian Confederacy. With the rebellion suppressed its inhabitants were cruelly punished by the Athenians.

In 404 B.C. it came under Sparta and in 392 was retaken by the Athenians.

It gained self-government through the Antalkideios peace but there was great political disorder at home, as it used to attach itself to different cities or make new alliances.

In about 334 B.C. Lesbos decided to share the adventures of Alexander the Great and after his death it became part of the State of Ptolemies of Egypt.

It flourished greatly and came to the highest point of its prosperity during the Roman period. Many privileges were granted to it by the Roman Rulers Pompejus, Caesar, Augustus and Adrian.

There was nothing interesting in the history of the island except long and destroying assaults from the Scythians, Slavs, Saracens, Venetians, Turkish and French Pirates, during the Byzantine times. It was also a place of exile for a number of eminent Byzantine personalities.

In 1204 of our era it became a part of the Baldwin State and was freed in 1261.

v. Paleologos, when he married John's sister Mary.

The G atelusi ruled the Island until the Turks occupied it in 1462.

The Turkish occupation brought misery and decline to the island until the Greek element became active and the island began to prosper again especially during the 18th and 19th centuries.

During the revolution of 1821 unfavourable conditions prevented its spreading to Lesbos, through many people of the island, living in other parts of Greece took part in the fight. Many of the naval battles of the time took place in its waters, as the burning of a Turkish ship at Eresos in 1821.

It was liberated by the Greek Fleet in 1912 and was given to Greece by the Treaties of Athens (1914), Sevres (1920) and Lausanne (1922).

Distinguished men.

On the other hand Lesbos has been the native land of many distinguished men; Terpandros, Sappho, Pittakos, Alcaeus, Theophrastos and Longos. and in modern times, Demetrius and Gregory Vernardakis, Argyris Eftaliotis, Stratis Myrivilis and many others.

Archeological places and Monuments.

In addition to Mytilene, the cities of Mythimna and Antissa, Pyrrha, Arisvi, Eresos, Therme, Vrisa and the site of Clopedi, near Aghia Paraskevi, have great archeological interest. Many ruins of buildings and other reminders of the old times are presented there.

Mytilene

1/ the Museum, 2/ the Fort of the city of Mytilene, partly restored by Francesco Gateluso in 1312 and completed by the Turks. 3/ Parts of the old polygonic walls of Mytilene on the hill of St Kyriaki. 4/ the ancient Theater of Mytilene, of the Hellenistic period (300-100 B.C.). Some marble seats are still preserved. 5/ the Aqueduct, near the village of Moria of the district of Mytilene, built during the Roman period. Very picturesque. 6/ Ancient Forum in the ancient North Harbor of the city. 7/ the churches of St Apostolos (built in 1815) and St Theodoros (built in 1795), most beautiful specimens of architecture and decoration. 8/ the Cathedral of St Athanasios of Mytilene, built in 1864 where there are held the relics of Neomartyr St. Theodoros of Byzantium, who suffered martyrdom in Mytilene in 1795 and thus became the Patron Saint of the Town. The Altar, the Archbishop's Throne and the Iconostasis of the Church are remarkable specimens of Byzantine art. 9/ Yenitza mi, (the New Mosque) of Mytilene and the Turkish Bath are also interesting.

Picturesque Places

Kratiagos covered with pine trees some 10 kilometers from Mytilene, where you can drive along an asphalt road. On the way you see the pretty suburb of Akliou on the hill and the airport.

Therme a summer resort famous for its mineral water springs at some 10 kilometers from Mytilene.

Agiasos a village situated in the centre of the island (27 kilometers) with its peculiar architecture and the interesting local manufacture of pottery. On the way to Agiasos we drive by the gulf of Yera noted for its picturesque and beauty.

The Sanatorium is situated in a forest of pine and chestnut trees five kilometers from Agiasos on the way to Kammeno Horio.

St Ermogene a beautiful spot at the entrance to the gulf of Yera (10 kilometers) where you can get the best sight of its twisted entrance.

Mythimna a picturesque village in the North part of the Island (61 kilometers) famous for the wonderful sunsets and its mediaeval castle.

The petrified forest of Sigri-Eresos; the only one of its kind in Europe, many millions of years old, situated in the western part of the island (90 km).