

## VERA MUTAFCHIEVA'S ASHES WERE SCATTERED IN THE AEGEAN SEA



Here, at the Promontory of Sunion, people from all over the world gather every evening to watch the sunset.

A month after Vera Mutafchieva's cremation, her ashes were scattered in the waters of Aegean, deep into the sea near the Sunion Promontory – the southernmost tip of the Attica peninsula.

Visible from the sea, on top the high rock of Sunion sits the temple of the God of the sea Poseidon, who, according to the beliefs of the ancient Greeks is an intermediary between our world and the hereafter. In other mythologies (the Celtic, for instance) the water mirror is the transition zone between the two worlds – the living and the ideal.

The sonar of the boat, hired by the daughter and the granddaughter of the writer in the nearby port of Lavrio, has measured a depth of 80 meters – the reason for the dark blue colour of the otherwise transparent Aegean waters. The exact bearings of the place were registered by means of a GPS.

Sunion was described by Vera Mutafchieva in the chapter “Temples” in the book “The Wide World”:

*“They did know how to pick a place! It was impossible for an inspired builder to pass by this promontory without digging into the white rock the foundations of a sanctuary – it was created for an alter of infinity.”*

It is believed that the first westerner who discovered the beauty of Sunion was Lord Byron: in an uncivilized way he carved his signature on the stone. Perhaps. For too long historical misfortunes befell Poseidon's temple, and it endured long under the Ottomans too. Today, or more precisely every evening, it provides a sensational view.

Connoisseurs gather there. Low under their feet rests the ultramarine of the Aegean; frozen islands float in the distance. At dusk, the wind abruptly turns from sea to land; you advance with an effort along the high, worn, flat rock. You are surprised you are not there, but you hoped to be: Sunion was far from the big roads, silence reigned all around. But it turns out it was populated. With silence.

Dozens of silent people from four world directions sit at sunset on the slabs of the cape, leaning on the wind swept columns, dangling their feet over the flat blue abyss. While the sun is sinking into the Aegean, leaving in its wake an hour's glow, criss-crossed by feathery night clouds – an international conglomeration of contemplators is holding a meeting.

Its representatives are not that representative: patched jeans, not so clean shirt, unkempt sweater, creased skirt – it's as if he has imposed the uniform of negligence towards everything sacred to a man with prestige and a future. The contemplator has no future, he is subject to the passing moment.

Here no-one knows no-one, they were all attracted individually by a rare loneliness. They drown in it like drug addicts in their dreams – with no movement or sound. The wind from the Aegean blows at hair, beards, shirts; behind the glasses do not blink the eyes of the inebriated.



Isn't contemplation real intoxication? Isn't it that alluring border between life and non-existence, where – still with sensory perceptions – man has let go the rein of his spirit, which soars in the dusk over Sunion without a yesterday and a tomorrow?

The meeting ends when it's dark – pitch dark. It ends by itself. It was – you realize later – a mixture of pilgrimage, inebriation and a desired absence from life. A gain that is yours forever, making everything else absolutely worthless.

The Aegean Sea is the place where the ashes of the opera diva Maria Callas (1923-1977) were scattered. Besides for her unique artistic qualities, she is also famous for her complex character – a combination of stubbornness and modesty.



She used to say: “Don’t talk to me about rules. Wherever I am, I’m the one to lay down the damn rules.” Or: “I don’t kill my enemies. But I want them on their knees. I want it and I can do it, because that is how it should be.” But also: “The singer is in no way different from any instrument player, only we also have words. The mistakes made by the singer are unpardonable, just like those made by the violinist or the piano player. There is no forgiveness for a bad trill (an opera terms), unsung ornaments or, if your registers are bad. All that is envisaged by the composer has to be sung! A beautiful voice is not enough. When you perform the part, you need a thousand shades of happiness, joy, sorrow, fear. If you strove for maximum expressivity it might so happen that you sing something in a hoarse voice (it often happened to me), it is inevitable. You have to aspire to that supreme expressivity – even if people do not understand it. Sooner or later they will, you must never stop trying to convince them.”

*Genka Markova - 24 chasa Daily, 24.07.2009*