

**Publication 6 October
2005**

Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca Riddle of Homer's Odyssey Finally Solved

The ancient island of Ithaca, home of the hero Odysseus, has been 'missing' for over 2000 years. Many have searched for it, yet of all the great city states of the Mycenaean world, Ithaca is the only one which had not been rediscovered. Until now.

After the fall of Troy, Odysseus spent ten years trying to get back to his homeland of Ithaca. Most people will know at least some of the incidents from Homer's *Odyssey*. To the Greeks, Odysseus is a national hero.

From the geographer Strabo in AD 1, through to William Gladstone and Heinrich Schliemann in the nineteenth century, many have tried to find Ithaca again. In 1998, Robert Bittlestone caught the explorer bug, while on holiday in Greece, but it only really took hold in 2003. Then, starting just with the text of the *Odyssey* and a map, he set out to find the elusive island. In the course of the next few years, Bittlestone drew on techniques developed in his career as an IT consultant, consulted eminent classicists and geologists (and a football referee), and worked with NASA on the latest satellite photographs. Every relevant line of Homer was checked and rechecked against all possible sources of information, as Bittlestone (and his family and friends) picked their way across the landscape of Greece. What he discovered is that ancient Ithaca is exactly where Homer said it would be, but that it was hidden for thousands of years through a violent quirk of geology.

Odysseus Unbound tells the story of his search, showing every step in the development of his solution and bringing in the expertise of Professor James Diggle and Professor John Underhill. It is a highly personal and entirely convincing narrative, complete with its own twists and disappointments. We learn about earthquakes and tsunamis, both ancient and modern, and about the wholesale evacuation of a civilisation. We re-read the story of the *Odyssey*, armed with maps, 3D satellite pictures and the authors' own photographs of the real sites. We even find out the punch lines to a couple of mysterious Homeric jokes. Not only do we find the island of Ithaca, but also Ithaca city and harbour, the lost islands of Doulichion, Same and Asteris, Odysseus' palace, his father's farm, even the home of Odysseus' swineherd Eumaios (encountering some pigs as we get there). With only a small stretch of the imagination, we may even discover Homer's origins, and the place where his great poem was first recited.

Odysseus Unbound rediscovers one of Greece's greatest cultural treasures, long kept hidden, and returns it to the people of Greece.

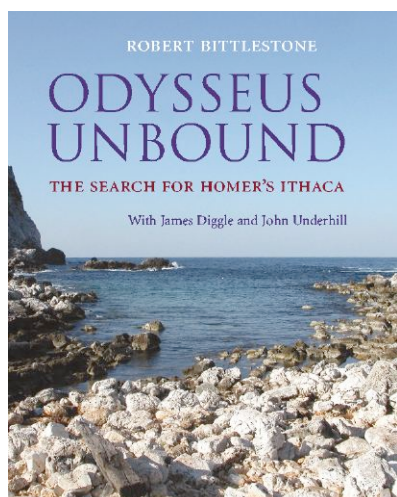
About the authors

Robert Bittlestone was educated in classics and science before reading economics at the University of Cambridge. He is the founder of Metapraxis Ltd, a company specialising in the detection of early warnings for multinational companies. He is the author of many articles about the importance of visualisation and he has applied these principles to the enigma described in the book.

James Diggle is Professor of Greek and Latin at Cambridge and a fellow of Queens' College. He was University Orator at Cambridge for eleven years.

John Underhill is Professor of Stratigraphy at the University of Edinburgh. His primary research interest lies in the use of geological fieldwork and geophysical methods to investigate the structure of sedimentary basins. He has been investigating the geology of the Cephalonia for many years. He is also a professional football referee and in 2001 was promoted to the FIFA list of International Referees.

Notes to editors



Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca

Robert Bittlestone, with James Diggle and John Underhill

Hardback 0521853575 £ 25.00
340 figures 618 pages

Publication: 6 October 2005

To request a review copy, to arrange interviews with the authors, or for sample text and images for reproduction, please contact **Rob George**, Publicity Manager, Cambridge University Press by email to rfgeorge@cambridge.org or telephone +44 (0)1223 325742.

Cambridge University Press is the printing and publishing house of the University of Cambridge and has grown to become one of the largest academic and professional publishers in the world, publishing over 2,000 books and 150 journals a year, which are sold in some 200 countries across the globe.