



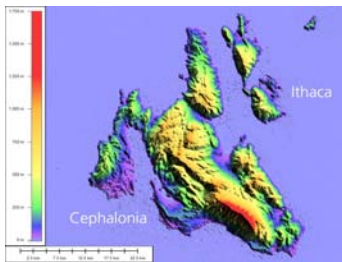
**RocSoc Lecture - Leeds University - March 5 2007 at 17:00**

## ***Where was Homer's Ithaca ?***

**John R. Underhill – Professor of Stratigraphy at the Grant Institute of Earth Science, University of Edinburgh**



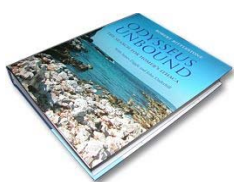
Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are two of the world's oldest texts. The *Iliad* describes events at the end of the Trojan War, believed to have taken place in the 12th century BC during the Mycenaean era, while the *Odyssey* tells the story of the subsequent return of Odysseus from Troy to his palace on the island of Ithaca.



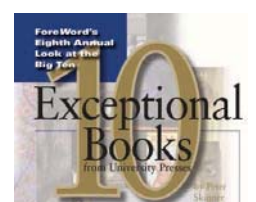
Homer describes Ithaca as a low-lying island, furthest out to sea on the west of Greece, but today's island of Ithaki doesn't fit this description. So did Homer make a mistake? Scholars over many centuries have assumed so, but John Underhill thinks that Homer may have been right all along. Catastrophic rockfalls and landslides since 1200 BC may have infilled a narrow marine channel and caused the western peninsula of Cephallonia to be joined to the rest of the island. If this can be proved it will provide an elegant and compelling answer to where Homer's

island of Ithaca was actually located during the Bronze Age.

On Monday March 5th John Underhill will present the latest news of the geological discoveries on Cephallonia to **RocSoc**, the Society for the **School of Earth and Environment** at Leeds University. This student-run society is the centre for social and educational activities in the Department and organises many events throughout the year. All members of the Department and RocSoc are welcome. The talk will begin at 5pm in the Earth Sciences Seminar Room in the **Department of Earth Sciences**. All are invited to **The Eldon** pub afterwards for a chance to discuss and exchange ideas about the talk and to catch up socially. For further details, contact the Talks Secretary, **Luke Jackson: ear5lpj@leeds.ac.uk**



**Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca** by Robert Bittlestone, with James Diggle and John Underhill. 618 pages, 340 colour illustrations. Cambridge University Press ISBN 0521853575. RRP £25.00.



**[www.odysseus-unbound.org](http://www.odysseus-unbound.org)**