



# The Folds of Olympus: Mountains in Ancient Greek Culture and in Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing

A lecture by **Jason König**

Professor of Classics, University of St Andrews

The history of ancient Greek responses to mountains has been largely invisible to classical scholarship, with its tendency to focus on urban culture. This lecture aims to bring that history to life by giving attention to five separate mountains: Lykaion, Hymettus, Helikon, Parnassus and Olympus. It looks at the literary and archaeological evidence in order to explore what makes each of these mountains distinctive, while also arguing that they have a shared importance, as examples of the ancient Greek tendency to see mountains as spaces where the present and the past have a special connection with each other.

The second half of the lecture looks at the way in which those assumptions have been replicated in modern responses to the mountains of Greece, with special attention to the writing of a series of nineteenth-century travel writers (especially Edward Dodwell, Edward Daniel Clarke and Henry Fanshawe Tozer) who visited and wrote about these five mountains in ways that closely mirror our ancient sources. I argue that giving attention to their work, and to the mountains of Greece, can help us to rethink conventional histories of mountaineering and mountain writing in the nineteenth century.

Jason König is Professor of Classics at the University of St Andrews. He has published widely on ancient Greek and Roman culture, including 12 books and more than 50 chapters and articles. His work has focused especially on the Greek literature and culture of the Roman empire, and more recently on ancient representations of landscape and human-environment relations. His recent publications include *The Folds of Olympus: Mountains in Ancient Greek and Roman Culture* (Princeton University Press, 2022) (shortlisted for the London Hellenic Prize 2022) and *Mountain Dialogues from Antiquity to Modernity* (Bloomsbury, 2021; jointly with Dawn Hollis). He was Principal Investigator on a project funded by the Leverhulme Trust on 'Mountains in ancient literature and culture and their postclassical reception', 2017-2023.

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Autumn  
Lectures  
in Classics

National Hellenic Research Foundation  
Auditorium 'Leonidas Zervas'  
48 Vasileos Constantinou Av., Athens

16 / 10 / 2023 // 19:00

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