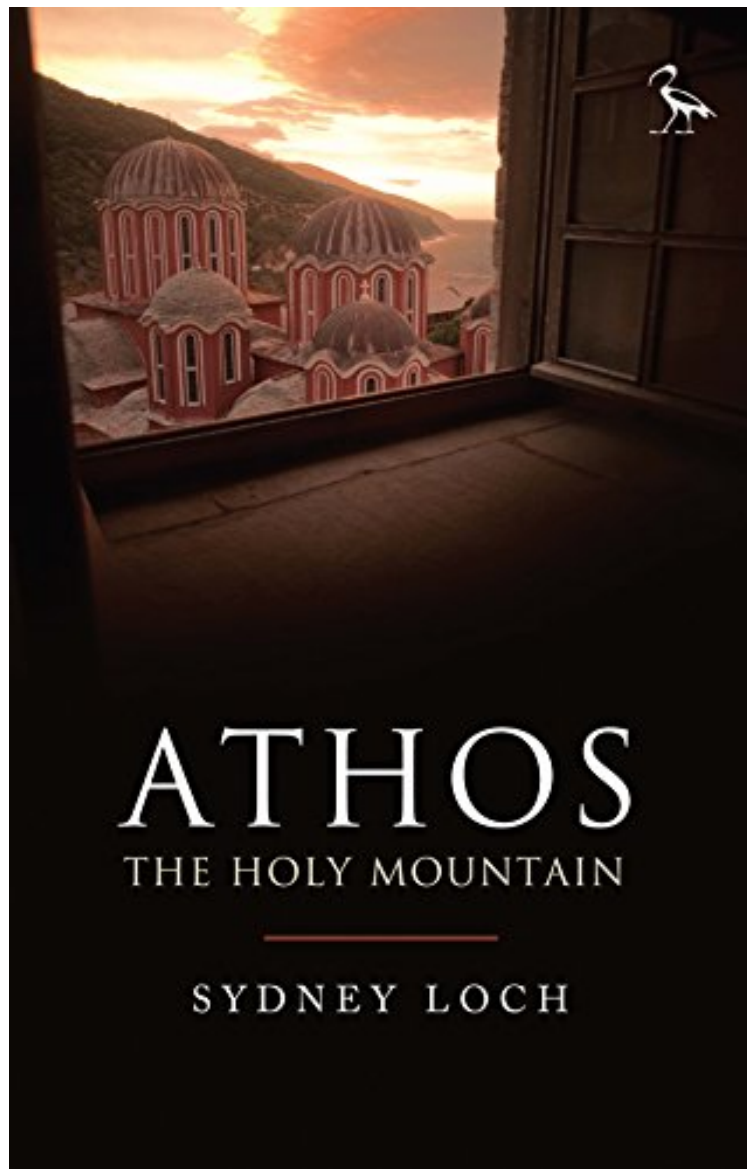


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## Athos: The Holy Mountain

*Sydney Loch*

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**Sydney Loch : Athos: The Holy Mountain** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Athos: The Holy Mountain:

It calls for a writer more able at words to picture the sheer beauty of the Mountain. To convey the altering feeling of

morning, or high noon; of afternoon, and deep midnight; of the golden scores of stars puncturing the sky. Athos, the Holy Mountain of Greece, is one of the most mysterious places in the world. A rugged pyramid that rises up from the Aegean Sea, the mountain is wreathed in myth, legend and ancient traditions that, to this day, remain largely hidden from view. The heart of Athos started to beat at the dawn of Christianity and its community lays claim to being the oldest democracy in the world. An entirely autonomous region of the Hellenic Republic, it is home to twenty Eastern Orthodox monasteries that cling to its rocky flanks. No women are allowed to set foot upon the peninsula and the monks who inhabit this isolated place still use the Julian calendar, living on 'Byzantine Time', where each day starts at sunset. While living in the mountain's shadow, in Ouranopolis, Sydney Loch spent many years exploring Athos, and here he paints an enthralling, unrivalled portrait of the Holy Mountain.

About the Author Sydney Loch was born in Ealing in 1888 and emigrated to Australia in 1905. An Anzac veteran, Loch wrote the once-banned, but now classic, account of Gallipoli, *To Hell and Back*. In 1922, Loch and his wife, Joyce, worked as aid workers in Thessaloniki, helping many Greeks escape Turkey and later rescued thousands of Polish and Jewish children from the Nazis during World War II, setting up a Polish refugee camp in Haifa. After the war, they moved to Thessaloniki, where Loch died in 1955.