

ALCYONE

Climbing Guidebook

2023 EDITION

MOLYMPUS

A hands-on account

General information, access guide, panoramas and topos



ALCYONE
KATAFYKI
ERMIONI
GREECE

An Olympus Mountaineering

Climbing Guidebook



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View towards
ERMIONI

Route: Alcyone | 6a 100 m.



WARNING
ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK
Read before using this guidebook

Warning

This guidebook is a compilation of unverified information gathered from many different climbers.

The author cannot ensure the accuracy of any of the information in this book, including topos and route descriptions, difficulty ratings, and protection ratings.

These may be incorrect or misleading, as ratings of climbing difficulty and risk are always subjective and depend on the physical characteristics (for example, height), experience, technical ability, confidence, and physical fitness of the climber who supplied the rating. Additionally, climbers who achieve first ascents sometimes underrate the difficulty or risk of the climbing route.

Therefore, be warned that you must exercise your own judgment on where a climbing route goes, its difficulty, and your ability to safely protect yourself from the risks of rock climbing.

Examples of some of these risks are: falling due to technical difficulty or due to natural hazards such as holds breaking, falling rock, climbing equipment dropped by other climbers, adverse weather conditions, failure of your own equipment, and failure or absence of fixed protection.

Here are some ways to use this guidebook more safely.

1. Consultation: You should always consult with other climbers about the difficulty and risks of a particular route before attempting it. Most local climbers are glad to provide advice on routes in their area; we suggest that you contact locals to confirm ratings and safety of particular routes and to obtain first-hand information about the route of your choice.

2. Instruction: Most climbing areas have local climbing instructors and guides available. We recommend that you engage an instructor or guide to learn safety techniques and to become familiar with the routes and hazards of the areas described in this book. Even if you are already proficient in climbing safely, occasionally hiring a guide is a safe way to raise your climbing standard and learn advanced techniques.

3. Fixed Protection: Some of the routes in this book may use fixed bolts and pitons that have been pre-placed on the rock. Because of vari-

ances in the manner of placement, weathering, metal fatigue, the quality of the metal used, and many other factors, these fixed protection pieces should always be sceptically considered and should be backed up when possible by your own gear.

Never depend on a single piece of fixed protection for your safety, because you can never tell whether it will single-handedly hold weight. In some cases, fixed protection may have been removed or is now missing.

However, climbers should avoid adding new pieces of fixed protection, unless they deem the pre-placed protection faulty and are looking to replace it. Existing protection can be tested by an experienced climber, to determine its strength. The ethics of climbing also strongly discourage adding bolts or drilled pitons to a pre-existing route, intending the route to be climbed as it was meant to be by the first ascent party.

Be aware of the following potential inaccuracies while using this guidebook:

1. Incorrect Descriptions of Routes:

If you are climbing a route and you have a doubt as to where it goes, you should not continue unless you are sure that you can go that way safely. Route descriptions and topos in this book could be inaccurate or misleading.

2. Incorrect Difficulty Rating:

A route might be harder than the rating indicates. Do not be lulled into a false sense of security by a low difficulty rating.

3. Incorrect Protection Rating:

If you are climbing a route and you are unable to arrange adequate protection through the use of fixed pitons or bolts and by placing your own protection devices, do not assume that there is adequate protection available higher above just because the route protection rating is not determined as an X or an R. Every route is potentially an X (a fall may be deadly), due to the inherent hazards of climbing—including, for example,

failure or absence of fixed protection, your own equipment's failure, faulty protection placement, or improper use of climbing equipment.

4. Failure to Warn of a Particular Hazard:

Although an effort has been made to warn of known hazards on particular routes, this guide does not cover every hazard on every route. Climb carefully and be watchful.

There are no warranties, whether expressed or implied, that this guidebook is accurate or that the information contained in it is reliable.

There are no warranties of fitness for a particular purpose or that this guide is merchantable. Your use of this book indicates your assumption of the risk that it may contain errors and is an acknowledgment of your own sole responsibility for your climbing safety.



ERMIONI
KATAFYKI RAVINE
View towards Katafyki Climbing Crag

Katafyki Crag

An impressive gorge with a main face **over 150 m.** high and an impressive rock expanse along the river bed. Further up on the northern side there is a large area of rock- still undeveloped.

The main wall has an impressive overhanging middle section traversed mid-height by a large horizontal roof with holes. At first sight this can be somewhat overwhelming but once you're on, it turns out to be more amenable than one would have expected.

A very short approach (crag is just 20 meters off the road) and good protection from the elements make this area worth a visit.

Climbing in Katafyki is pleasant throughout the year, as the main wall is shaded after mid-day.

There are 64 routes here, among which, there are

4 multi-pitch trad routes reaching up to 123m. and 3 multi-pitch sport routes up to 150 m. in length. **Grades 5a to 7c+.**



About Ermioni

Ermioni (Ancient Hermione) was originally founded by mythical hero **Ermionas** and the ancient Dryopian tribe, and dedicated to the 'messenger' god, Hermes.

During the **Mycenaean period**, the city was honoured to Hermione, daughter of Helen and Menelaus, King of Sparta. When Helen and Paris sailed together for Troy, Hermione was cared for by Helen's sister Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon, King of Argos and Mycenae.

Hermione later married Neoptolemus (Pyrrhus), son of the Greek hero Achilles. In the Iliad, Homer described Ancient Hermione's involvement in the Trojan War, 1194-1184 BC, commanded by the **Argive King Diomedes**, also the number of warships that sailed from Hellas to bring back the beautiful Helen of Troy, Queen of Sparta.

Over a thousand years later, the Augustan Roman geographer Strabo wrote about Ancient Hermione as '**the town lying on the South-Eastern end of the Argolid, whereby its history goes**

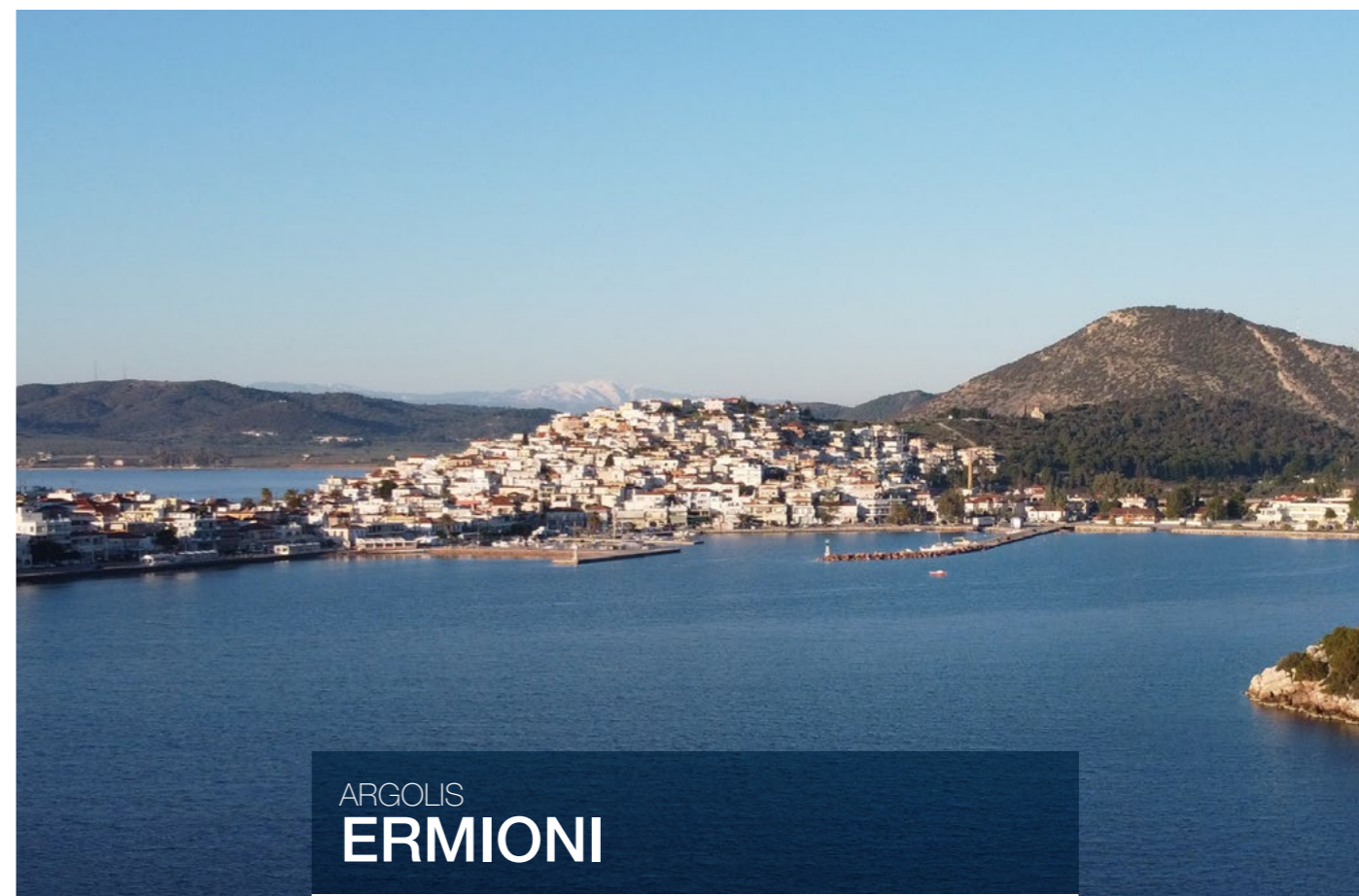
far back in time', and stated clearly that 'it is not one of the lesser towns'.

The Ermionida area of Argolida has been inhabited since the Paleolithic period, 40,000 years ago. Archaeological excavations at the Mesolithic **Franchthi Cave**, near Ermioni, discovered the oldest complete human skeleton in Europe, dating back to 23,000 BC.

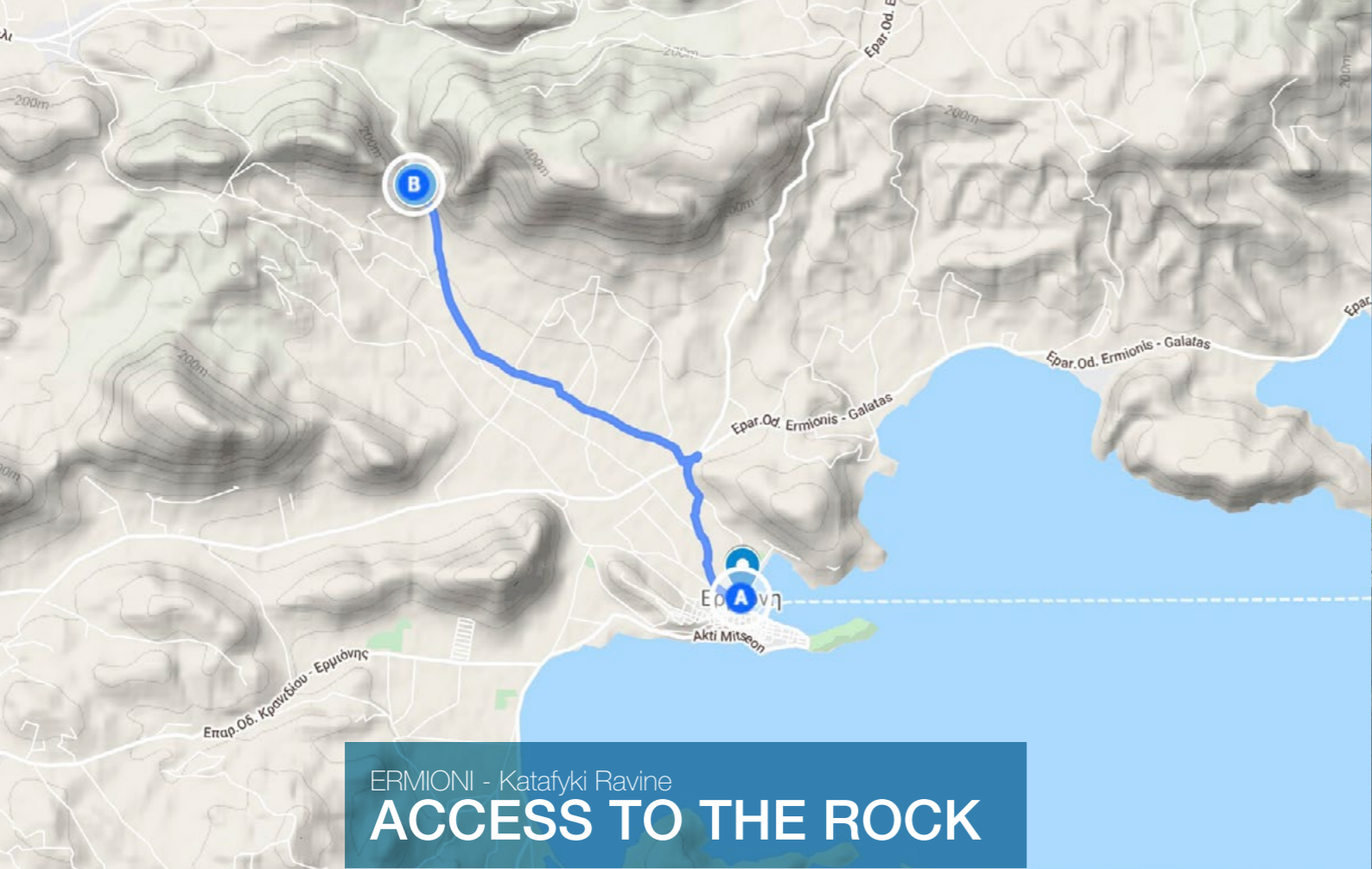
Useful links:

General Info: [Olympus Mountaineering Ermionida Climbing Guide](#)
[About Ermioni](#)

Climbing Crag [Katafyki Gorge](#)
[Pillars of the Wind](#)
[Rock of Ages](#)
[Mount Didimo](#)



ARGOLIS
ERMIONI
View towards Ermioni



ERMIONI - Katafyki Ravine
ACCESS TO THE ROCK
 Access from Ermioni towards Katafyki

Access

Approaching **Kranidi** from the north, you will come across an intersection. Follow the signs to Ermioni and drive along the long straight section until you reach an inconspicuous stone chapel on your left and a small sign towards **Katafyki Gorge** (oriented towards the opposite direction

so it's easy to miss!). Take a hard left and follow the tight tarmac road for about 3 km. Park the car at the **St. Nicholas chapel** and follow the trail that goes under the bridge. From that point, you will have a clear view of the ridge and you have to follow the cairn (pile of stones).



Alcyone
Pitch 1



Alcyone
Pitch 3



Alcyone
Pitch 4



ALCYONE

6a | 100 m. ★★★★★☆ Katafyki - Ermioni

1st Ascent: 29/05/2023

1st Ascensionists: K. Grafanakis & Olympus Mountaineering

General route information

Alcyone (6a, 100m) was established and equipped in **May 2023** by **Vertical Art Greece**, with the first ascent claimed on **29/5/2023** by **K. Grafanakis** and **Olympus Mountaineering**.

Located slightly to the south (right) in comparison to **Maia** and **Taygete**, **Alcyone** (6a, 100m) begins from a narrow ledge on the right side of the second prominent ridge on the west face of the **Pleiades** crag. The **Pleiades crag itself resides on the western wall within the Katafyki ravine**, specifically situated between the **Katafyki Main Crag** and **Petrogerakas Crag**.

Alcyone (6a, 100m) consists of **four (4) pitches** and is fully equipped with bolts along its entire length, eliminating the need for portable protection such as nuts or cams. Anchors have been installed at each belay station, **except for R4, where climbers should secure themselves to a large tree using slings or a cordellette**. The quality of the rock on **Alcyone** varies. The first two pitches contain sections with **slightly loose rock**, but the quality greatly improves during the last two pitches, providing a solid and reliable surface for climbers to enjoy.

Approach

Approaching Kranidi from the north, you will come across an intersection. Follow the signs to Ermioni and drive along the long straight section until you reach an inconspicuous stone chapel on your left and a small sign towards **Katafyki Gorge** (oriented towards the opposite direction so it's easy to miss!). Take a hard left and follow the tight tarmac road for about 3 km. until you come to an agricultural dirt road with a sign pointing to **Katafyki** to the west. Another 500 m. of well trodden dirt road among olive groves and you are at the crag.

Park the car at the **St. Nicholas chapel** and follow the trail that goes under the bridge. From that point, you will have a clear view of the ridge and you have to follow the cairn (pile of stones).

From the parking spot till the beginning of the route, **you will need about 15 minutes of hike**.



4 Pitches 6a 100 m. ★★★★★☆

ALCYONE

1st Ascent: 29/05/2023

1st Ascensionists: K. Grafanakis & Olympus Mountaineering



ALCYONE

6a | 100 m.



Katafyki - Ermioni

1st Ascent: 29/05/2023

1st Ascensionists: K. Grafanakis & Olympus Mountaineering

Route description

Pitch 1 (6a - 30 m.)

The initial pitch of **Alcyone**, situated a few meters to the right (south) of the main ridge of the **Pleiades crag**, proves to be the most challenging segment of the route.

The ascent commences with a positive slab, followed by the need to surmount overhangs. These overhangs offer moderate holds, requiring careful foot and body placement. The first pitch of **Alcyone extends approximately 30 meters**, presenting a continuous climb featuring a mix of slab and overhang sections.

Climbers are encouraged to follow the natural line of the rock, seeking the most intuitive path. Upon reaching the prominent ledge, the next step involves a traverse towards the left, where the anchors and R1 come into view.

The belay station situated on this **ledge offers both comfort and a delightful vantage point**, overlooking the **Katafyki** and **Petrogerakas** crags.

This pitch, in parts might contain some loose rocks, so be delicate while climbing.

Pitch 2 (5c - 25 m.)

Commencing just above **R1**, the second pitch demands a dynamic move to position your body correctly and securely clip in the **second bolt**. Once you conquer the initial section, a ledge greets you. From this ledge, a slight movement to the right leads to the **crux of the pitch**, rated at 5c. Be aware that this particular passage may induce a sense of discomfort due to the slight exposure and average rock quality. However, once you successfully navigate this challenging section, the remainder of the pitch becomes considerably easier. After reaching the ledge, a straightforward walk of approximately **8 meters** brings you to the belay station.

Rest assured, the belay station provides exceptional comfort, and from this vantage point, you gain clear visibility of the upcoming sections: **pitch 3 and pitch 4**.

Pitch 3 (5b - 20 m.)

To embark on the **third pitch**, you begin slightly to the right from the anchors, aiming for the prominent **dihedral**. While this section does not pose significant difficulty, ample holds and foothold placements are available. It is important to approach this segment with the mindset of climbing a dihedral, utilizing the natural features to your advantage.

After securing the **fifth bolt**, veer towards the right to ascend to the ridge's pinnacle. Although a slight sense of exposure may be felt, the subsequent moves unfold gracefully on remarkably solid rock.

While this pitch is the shortest among the four, it rewards climbers with delightful movements that perfectly align with its grade (5b).

Resting at **R3** provides a truly splendid view, encompassing a wonderful panorama. Moreover, this belay station offers both serenity and comfort, allowing climbers to savor the surroundings while regrouping for the continuation of the ascent.

Pitch 4 (5c - 25 m.)

As we embark on the **fourth and final pitch of Alcyone**, we once again encounter a captivating start on a rock of remarkable quality. The challenge on this pitch emerges right from the outset, persisting until the fifth bolt.

Within the initial **10 meters**, climbers must maintain a continuous and sustained ascent, facing a difficulty level of **around 5c, perhaps even approaching 6a**. Once the **crux of this pitch** is overcome, the climb gradually becomes easier, with a maximum difficulty of approximately 5a.

It is noteworthy that the **last anchor is not equipped with bolts but instead relies on a large tree**. Therefore, it is **crucial to carry slings with you**, ensuring the establishment of a secure anchor point.

Upon reaching **R4**, our journey to conquer **Alcyone**, one of the seven sisters, draws to a close.



ALCYONE RETURN FROM THE ROCK

How to return from the top of Alcyone route

Return

To commence the return journey, head **eastward for approximately 50 meters** before veering right (south) and tracking the path marked by **red signs scattered throughout the terrain**. Although there may not be a clearly defined trail, the chosen goat trail should be evident enough to follow, leading directly to the **Welcome** sector of the **Katapyki** crag.

The return hike is estimated to take around **15-20 minutes** to complete.

ATTENTION: On this route is not recommended to return via abseiling. Best way to return is as described above.



Red marks for the return from the route

Necessary equipment

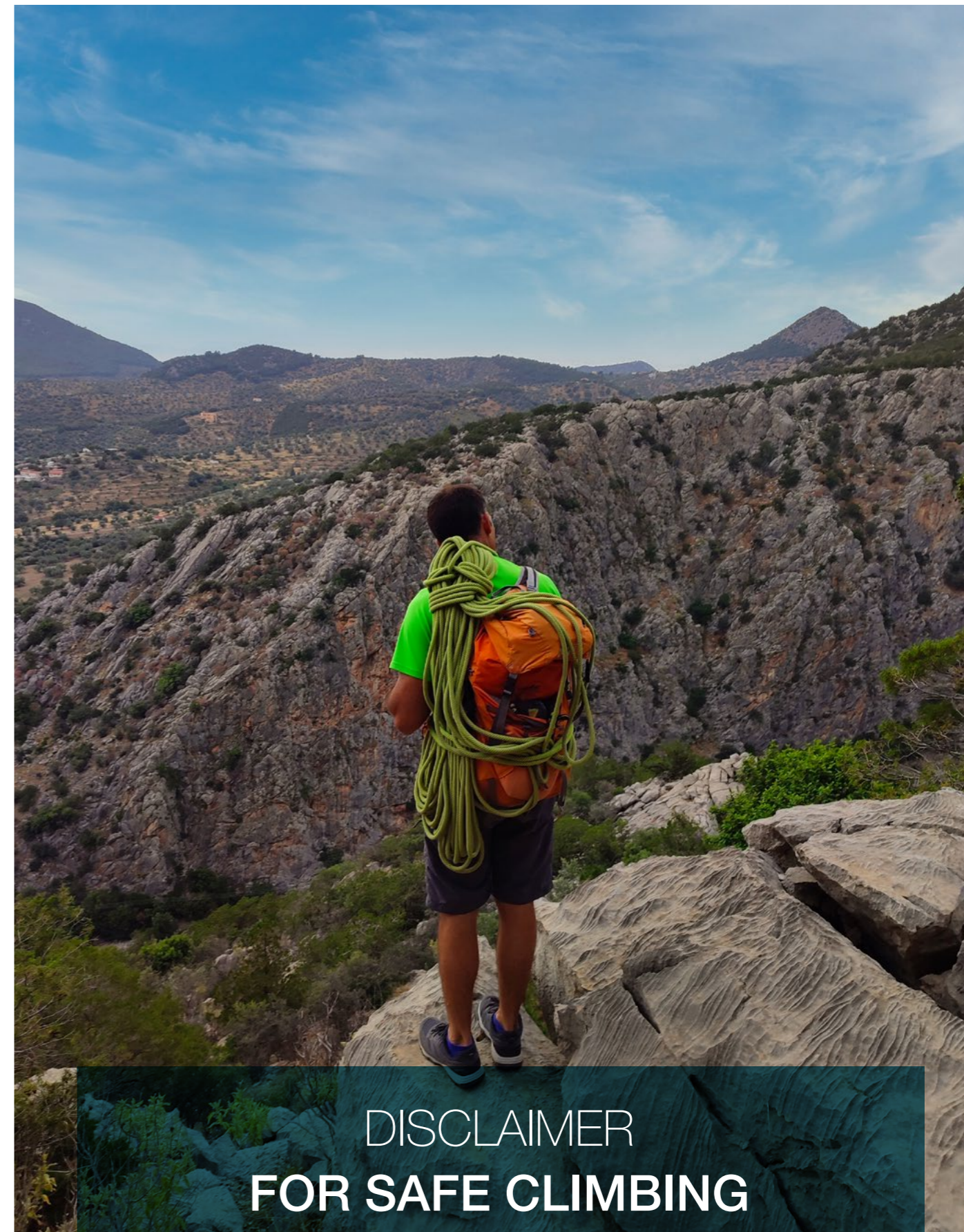
To repeat any route one needs the following items:

- 18 quickdraws
- Slings/Lanyards
- Kevlar cordelette
- 2 x 60 m. 1/2 ropes or 1 x 60 m. rope

R1,R2 and R3 are equipped with bolted anchors. R4 is done on a large tree at the end of the route.

Retreat

In case of emergency, a retreat is possible by abseiling via the anchors.



DISCLAIMER FOR SAFE CLIMBING

Rock climbing and mountaineering in general is a dangerous pastime that can lead to serious injury or worse. You should not undertake these without proper training or equipment.

By using this document you acknowledge that the information therein may be out of date or inaccurate and you agree that Olympus Mountaineering cannot be held liable for any damage that may be caused by use of this document.



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