



# EXPLORING THORIKOS

**Edited by**  
**Roald F. DOCTER and Maud WEBSTER**

**Ghent University**  
**Department of Archaeology**  
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Belgische School te Athene - École belge d'Athènes - Βελγική Σχολή Αθηνών







Thorikos occupies the coastal northeast of the Lavrion area of Attica, Greece. The ancient town comprised the double-peaked Velatouri hill, which has seen human activity since the Final Neolithic period and been the focus of archaeological research for more than 50 years. This timely publication serves as a guide to ancient Thorikos, a presentation of ongoing work and a preview of new undertakings. Growing out of a Belgian initiative in the 1960s, the Thorikos Project is today an international program with a wide range of contexts and assemblages under study. Here, members of the international team present themes of current interest and aspects of recent work in a multi-authored collection of texts intended for the general public as well as for specialists.



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Cover illustrations: (front): The double-peaked Velatouri hill seen from the west; the island of Makronisos in the background, 1974 (photo: Thorikos archive). (back): Drawing architecture in the field, West Necropolis 2014 (photo: T. Pieters). The site map, prepared by C. Stal, A. Deruyck, A. De Wulf and R.F. Docter, is to be found on pages 6-7.

Illustration on pages 5, 12, 16, 18, 20, 34, 52, 57, 69, 71 and 72: Ceramic pomegranate, 735-720 BC (TC65.598, Thorikos archive/KVG).

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Roald F. Docter and Maud Webster, eds.

### CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Introduction: Thorikos Through Time</b>	<b>9</b>
Maud Webster	
<b>2. A History of Archaeology at Thorikos</b>	<b>11</b>
Maud Webster	
<b>3. The Site and its Topography</b>	<b>13</b>
Cornelis Stal and Alain De Wulf	
<b>4. Geophysical Investigations</b>	<b>14</b>
Maarten Praet, Apostolos Sarris, Sylviane Déderix and Lieven Verdonck	
<b>5. The Geology of Thorikos</b>	<b>17</b>
Christophe Scheffer, Panagiotis Voudouris, Alexandre Tarantola, Olivier Vanderhaeghe and Adonis Photiades	
<b>6. The Thorikos Survey Project (TSP)</b>	<b>19</b>
Floris van den Eijnde, Amber Brüsewitz, Sylviane Déderix and Roald F. Docter	
<b>7. The Final Neolithic and Bronze Age Occupation</b>	<b>21</b>
Robert Laffineur, Sylviane Déderix, Nikolas Papadimitriou and Margarita Nazou	
<b>8. The Mycenaean Tombs</b>	<b>24</b>
Robert Laffineur	
<b>9. The Early Iron Age Occupation</b>	<b>27</b>
Alexandra Alexandridou	
<b>10. Early Iron Age Cemeteries</b>	<b>29</b>
Koen Van Gelder	





<b>11. The Archaic-Classical Settlement</b>	<b>31</b>
Johannes Bergemann, Rebecca Klug and Roald F. Docter	
<b>12. Archaic-Classical Cemeteries</b>	<b>33</b>
Johannes Bergemann	
<b>13. Thorikos in Myth</b>	<b>35</b>
Roald F. Docter and Maud Webster	
<b>14. Cults at Thorikos</b>	<b>36</b>
Silke De Smet	
<b>15. The Theatre</b>	<b>37</b>
Andreas Kapetanios and Roald F. Docter	
<b>16. The Fortifications</b>	<b>40</b>
Floris van den Eijnde, Amber Brüsewitz and Roald F. Docter	
<b>17. The Towers</b>	<b>42</b>
Roald F. Docter	
<b>18. Mines and Mining</b>	<b>43</b>
Denis Morin and Serge Delpech	
<b>19. The Ore-Processing Workshops</b>	<b>45</b>
Sophie Duchène, Kim Van Liefferinge and Maria Kayafa	
<b>20. Coinage</b>	<b>48</b>
Panagiotis P. Iossif	
<b>21. Vessels for Storage and Consumption</b>	<b>49</b>
Patrick Monsieur and Andrea Perugini	
<b>22. The Organic Remains</b>	<b>51</b>
Lilian Karali, Eftychia Yannouli, Evi Margaritis, Francis Janot and Roald F. Docter	
<b>23. Ceramics from Roman and Byzantine Thorikos</b>	<b>53</b>
Alexandra Konstantinidou, Patrick Monsieur and Carina Hasenzagl	
<b>24. The Finds Laboratory</b>	<b>54</b>
Roald F. Docter, Andrea Perugini, Sophie Duchène, Margarita Nazou, Sophie Mortier, Emilio Rodriguez-Alvarez, Carina Hasenzagl, Silke De Smet, Alexandra Alexandridou, Winfred van de Put and Amber Brüsewitz	







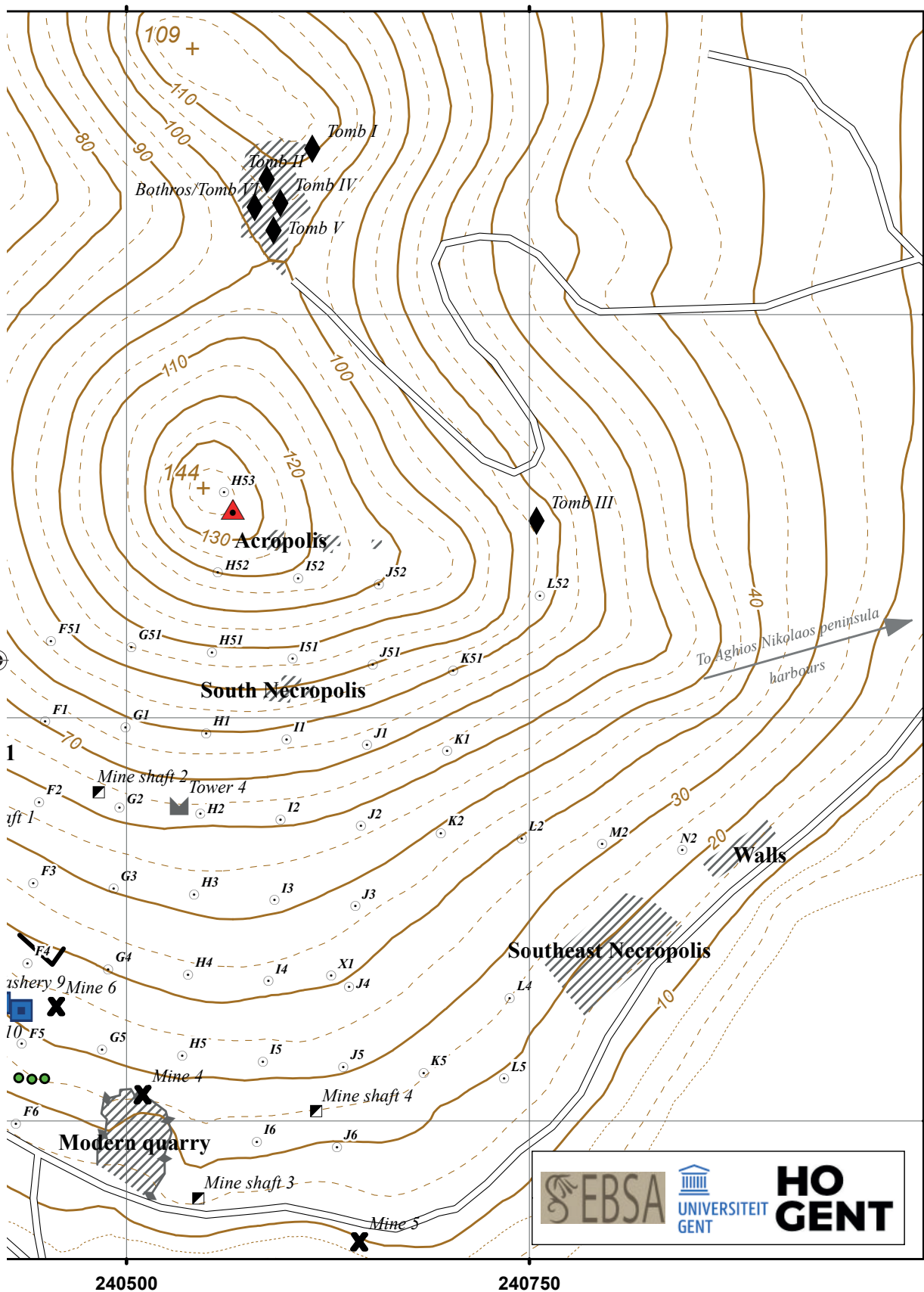
<b>25. The Thorikos Archive</b>	<b>56</b>
Guy Dierkens and Koen Van Gelder	
<b>References</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Authors</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>72</b>



*Orthophotograph of the Industrial Quarter  
(Photo: CS)*







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## Foreword

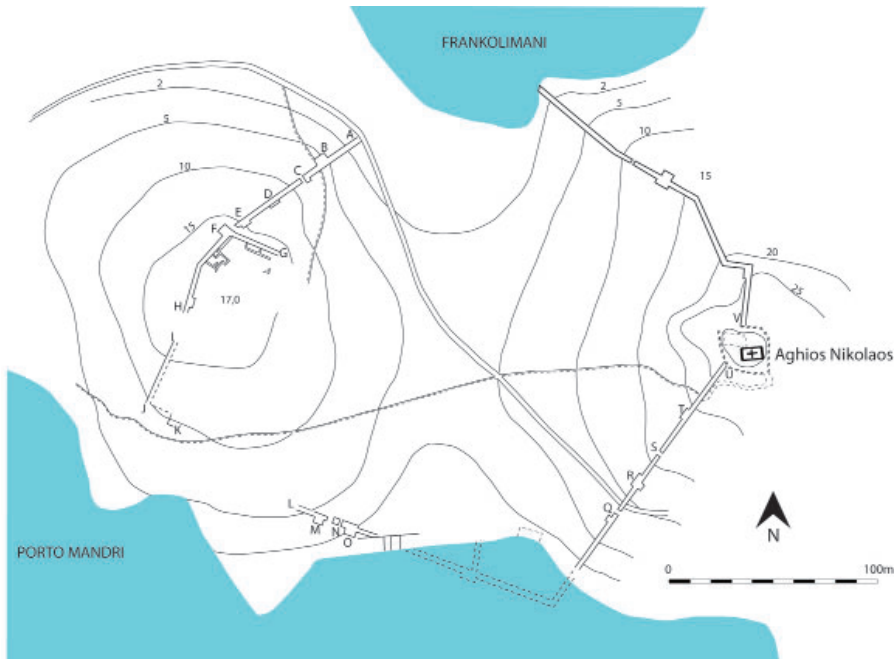
This publication has been conceived as a comprehensive guide to the archaeology and excavation history of the site of Thorikos, and at the same time a presentation of ongoing work and a preview of new undertakings – a mission statement of sorts for the five-year fieldwork project currently under way (2018–2022). Growing out of a strictly Belgian initiative led by the universities of Ghent and Liège, the Thorikos Project has become a truly international research program, involving more than 40 scholars affiliated to 12 universities and other institutions, as well as countless students and volunteers. Rather than having one or two authors covering the many aspects of this complex site and its exploration, we are therefore happy to have the specialists themselves present their work in a multi-authored collection of texts, highlighting both the coherence of the project and the collaborative spirit that underlies it. The resulting book is intended for the general, interested public as well as for specialists.

The monograph written by the project's previous director Herman Mussche in 1998 remains indispensable for a more in-depth account of the archaeology of Thorikos before c. 1990, but previous general guides to the site date to the -70s and -80s of the last century and are both out of print and outdated at this point (Mussche 1974; 1978; 1986). In the years since, the site has been briefly treated in a guide to the Lavreotiki and the Lavrion Museum published by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture (Salliora-Oikononakou 2007) and in a book accompanying an exhibition held at the Numismatic Museum of Athens (Iossif, ed. 2010). A local publication has also been dedicated to the ancient theatre at Thorikos and its partial restoration (Dermatis and Manthos 2010). For other relevant and scholarly literature, the academic readership will find an extensive reference section at the end of this book.

We are sincerely grateful to the contributing authors for agreeing to participate in this venture so swiftly, and to Victor Martínez Hahn Müller for taking on the layout in the same enthusiastic manner. Many preliminary and comprehensive publications on both old and recent fieldwork are currently in advanced stages of preparation, and it is hoped that the spirit of rapid publication informing the present book will have a favourable influence on the scholarly venues as well.

Roald F. Docter and Maud Webster, 30 November 2018





*Plan of the harbour fortifications on the Aghios Nikolaos peninsula  
(drawing: J. Angenon after Mussche 1998, 105, fig. 24).*

## 16. The Fortifications

In his account of the Peloponnesian War, Xenophon (*Hellenica* I, 2, 1) related that the Athenians fortified Thorikos in the first year of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad (408/407 BC). This remark most likely refers to the maritime fortress on the Aghios Nikolaos peninsula, but other defensive structures are not to be excluded. In particular, the fortifications observed by both the American traveler Edward Dodwell in 1801 and the British colonel William Martin Leake in 1841 come to mind. These were described as walls with square, projecting towers surrounding the town with a circuit of over 4.5 km. Little appears to remain of these walls today, and it is possible that they were demolished for building material during later infrastructural works related to modern mining activities. But a stretch of a 0.80 m thick, double-faced wall with large boulders discovered in the western part of the site may be connected with the historical observations. To the south and southwest, ancient Thorikos would have been protected by an estuary in the now silted-up Adami plain and lower Potami valley, so a start of these fortifications in the southwest is plausible. In the prolongation of this wall, between the West Necropolis and the Industrial Quarter, a rectangular construction with walls of 0.80 m – perhaps a tower – was excavated in 2018, and is thought to mark a northern gate. Associated pottery suggests a date in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. In a







*South corner of stairs (T) and ramp with Aghios Nikolaos in the background, seen from the west (Thorikos archive, photo: H. Mussche).*

second phase, its walls were reinforced to a thickness of two meters, and it was transformed into a cistern.

FvdE, AB, RFD

References: Dodwell 1819; Mussche 1961; McCredie 1966, 33-34; Mussche 1998, 6, 16-17, 60, 101, fig. 19; Labarbe 1977, 25; Apostolopoulos *et al.* 2014.



*Orthophotograph of rectangular structure of the late 5th century BC (image: CS *et al.*).*



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*SEG: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, A. Chaniotis, T. Corsten, N. Papazarkadas and R.A. Tybout (current eds.), Leiden (<https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/supplementum-epigraphicum-graecum>).

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