

Please, contribute to the

Theatre of Thorikos

the oldest stone-built theatre of Antiquity



Excavations in 1963 in the Theatre of Thorikos

Please, support the ‘Theatre of Thorikos’

Published research data and the quality thereof are key to the advance of scientific knowledge. It is, therefore, to be regretted that the oldest stone-built theatre of the Ancient World has still not been fully and conclusively published. In order to fill in this lacuna, we seek financing through the Fund Raising channel at Ghent University. This will serve the funding of two study campaigns in Greece (2018-2019) and a restricted number of small-scale additional control excavations. The final publication will appear with Peeters Publishers in Leuven; besides that, the raw data will become available in open access.

We seek support of private and corporate donors to make a donation to the University Fund of Ghent University:
IBAN: BE26 3900 9658 0329 (BIC: BBRUBEBB) with reference ‘Thorikos LW-619’.

Donations of 40 EUR and more may be tax deductible (in Belgium up to 45%). To this end, Ghent University will provide an attestation in Spring of the year following your donation. It should be stressed that Ghent University will not take any overhead on the donations.

Thorikos

The ancient mining town of Thorikos is situated in the Southeast of Attica, the hinterland of Athens. Since 1963, Belgian archaeologists investigate this strategically positioned center of the silver- and lead-rich Laurion district. In the heydays of Athens, the 5th century BC, silver from the Laurion formed the basis of the Athenian economy. Telling in this respect is the story of the Athenian statesman Themistocles who, after the discovery of a silver-rich vein, convinced the Athenian citizens to invest the yields in the construction of a naval fleet consisting of triremes. Thanks to this visionary politics, Athens managed to defeat the Persians in 480/479 BC and to position itself as the superpower in the Eastern Mediterranean thereafter. Archaeological investigations have shown, however, that silver was mined in Thorikos already many centuries earlier, at least since the Early Bronze Age (c. 3200-2000 BC).

Multidisciplinair onderzoek

The archaeological investigations, organized and coordinated by Ghent University, have always been interdisciplinary and are characterized by close collaborations with historians, geographers, geologists, geomorphologists, hydrologists, mining engineers, archaeozoologists, and palaeoecologists. Next to Ghent University also other teams participate in this larger project: the Université de Liège, Utrecht University, the Georg-August Universität Göttingen, the Université de Lorraine (Nancy), and the Ionian University (Corfu).

Each team targets a different, specific aspect of the site. With the aid of sophisticated prospection technologies; the French colleagues of Nancy investigate the mine galleries that have been dug into the mountain over distances of more than 4km and on different levels. The German team of Göttingen publishes one of the houses in the Industrial Quarter (6th-4th century BC). The team from Liège has been investigating the

Mycenaean tholos tombs on the Velatouri Hill (16th – 13th century BC) and, in 2018, will start a new investigation into the contemporary Bronze Age settlement on the acropolis. By means of an intensive survey, Ghent and Utrecht Universities have investigated the complete settlement hill, in the course of which more than 60,000 finds and features were found, spanning the full period from the Final Neolithic (c. 4500-3200 BC) to the Early Modern period. These testify to the unique importance of the site. For the first time it was possible to connect the different zones excavated between 1963 and 1989 on the basis of detailed archaeological distribution maps. Over the next 5 years, the team from Ghent and Utrecht will excavate the Early Iron Age settlement on Acropolis (9th – 7th century BC), a tower in the Industrial Quarter and the remnants of a defensive wall probably dating to the Peloponnesian War (end of the 5th century BC).



The Theatre

Without doubt, the most important monument of Thorikos is the ancient Theatre, which is generally considered to be the oldest stone-built Greek theatre (end of the 6th or – more likely – the beginning of the 5th century BC) that underwent a monumentalization in mid-5th century and a extension in the 4th century BC. As such, and at the same time, it is also the oldest theater of Antiquity. Up to this moment, however, the theatre has remained unpublished, except for a preliminary report, notwithstanding the fact that archaeological excavations took place already in the 60-ies of the last century and a detailed plan of the stone architecture was produced. Recent archaeological investigations by the Greek Heritage Management along the theatre's orchestra in the frame

of stabilization works yielded new data, which unfortunately also remained unpublished. In collaboration with Greek colleagues of the Ionian University at Corfu, the Ghent team will prepare the long-awaited final publication of the Thorikos Theatre. This will imply both a full and thorough study of the old and new finds and the architecture from the old and new excavations, and a series of small-scale additional control excavations. The total sum needed is calculated to be 26,000 EUR: 13,000 EUR in 2018 and 13,000 in 2019.



For more information:

Prof. Roald Docter
Ghent University
Department of Archaeology
Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 35
B-9000 Gent
Tel. +32.9.3310169
Mobile +32.484.734641
Email: [Roald Docter@UGent.be](mailto:Roald.Docter@UGent.be)