

A Lekythos found in House 1 at Thorikos (2007 campaign)

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At the end of a cleaning campaign in the Industrial Quarter of Thorikos (**Fig. 1**),¹ a small black-figured lekythos was found between the earth and rubble in the west corner of room E, House 1 within *insula* 11. It is visible on two photographs taken on the 17th of April. On the first, taken just after the heavy overgrowth had been removed it is still stuck between the loose soil and rubble and had not yet been recognized as such (**Fig. 2**). On the second photo, taken after a final cleaning of the room surface, it had become fully loose and had moved slightly more to the corner.

This find must have entered the surface of room E after the conclusion of the excavations, since the stratigraphy of room E had already been fully explored till the bedrock in the first excavation campaign of 1963.² The layer corresponding to the construction of House 1 has been dated by the excavators to the last thirty years of the 5th century BCE (cf. **Fig. 3**).³

The lekythos body may have entered the present surface of room E in many ways and even from other parts of Thorikos and should, hence, be considered to be an unstratified surface find. Its presence within the architectural ensemble of Thorikos, which in this part of the site is not fenced off, touches upon a more structural phenomenon, namely the fact that even after the conclusion of the excavations, archaeological finds seem to turn up. We have noted this on several occasions during the two cleaning campaigns in Thorikos (2006-2007). One may postulate three possible explanations: in the first place it is possible that it was picked up by a visitor elsewhere on the site and left in room E at the close of his or her visit. The sherds encountered everywhere in Thorikos and on other Greek archaeological sites on top of walls can only in this way find a logical explanation. The lekythos presented here may also have come included in the dump material with which the floor level of room

¹ This short note is at the same time the only report on the two cleaning campaigns organized in Thorikos in 2006 and 2007 under the direction of Roald Docter. Between May 29 and June 3 2006, the Theatre area was cleaned and from April 10 to 18 2007 the Industrial Quarter. These campaigns were financially supported by the Belgian School at Athens. We would like to thank the secretary of the School, Mr. P. Iossif, as well as its then director, Dr. Christiane Tytgat, for their support. In Greece our thanks go Dr. I. Tsigoti-Drakotou, the late Dr. M. Oikinomakou, Ms E. Andrikou, Dr. A. Giraud, as well as the staff of Lavrio Museum. We benefitted from the generous hospitality of the Technological Park in Lavrio; our thanks in this connection go especially to D. Papadopoulos and the then mayor of Lavrio, D. Loukas. Participants to the 2006 campaign were Roald Docter, Guy Dierkens, René van den Bichelaer and Lamia Fersi; in 2007 Roald Docter, Alan Sreat, Guy Dierkens and Thomas Pieters. The lekythos was studied by Winfred van de Put in 2011.

² Mussche 1968, 91; see also generally on House 1, Mussche 1998, 46-50, 139, fig. 93.

³ Mussche 1998, 48-49; Mussche 1968, 96 (initially dated to the last quarter of the 5th century BCE).



Fig. 1. Thorikos. Industrial Quarter, House 1, viewed to the northwest after cleaning campaign (17.04.2007).

E was raised after the conclusion of the excavation in 1963.⁴ It is, however, even possible that it once formed part of the rubble make-up of the walls forming room E. Its massive and compact shape may have caused it ending up in a cartload of stones with which the ancient masons built the walls. It is clear that the walls show some voids where rubble has been washed out over the last four decades, especially in the corner (**Fig. 2**). The earlier date of the small lekythos would not contradict this reasoning.

TC07.1 (surface find in room E, southwest corner, 17.04.2007), body and shoulder with transition to neck of black-figured cylindrical lekythos, broken off at transition to foot (**Figs. 4-5**).

Surface of reserved areas reddish yellow (5YR6/6). Surface heavily worn.

Diam. shoulder 4.1, PH 8.7.

Shape: tapering body, slightly concave nearing shoulder. Rays on shoulder. Two reserved lines at lower part of body. Chariot scene. 1. Possibly figure left of 2; patch of white and black with some incisions preserved. 2. Woman in chariot (?) to right, holding up arm. White of face preserved as encrustation; trace of white in arm. 3. Figure behind horse(s), too damaged to identify. Two (?) horses to right, trace of white of tail of one preserved. 4. Figure, wearing himation, sitting to left. Published: van de Put 2011, 182, 187, no. 6. Date and attribution: Haimon workshop, 470-460 BCE [WvdP].

⁴ The practice of using dump material from the excavation to raise (floor) levels is well attested in Thorikos. As the best example one may mention the reconstruction of the slope of the uppermost *koilon* of the Theatre in 1977, for which 500 m³ dump material from behind the *analemma* wall was used, Mussche 1998, 33.



Fig. 2. Thorikos. Industrial Quarter, House 1, west corner of room E during cleaning campaign (17.04.2007); arrow indicates position of lekythos.

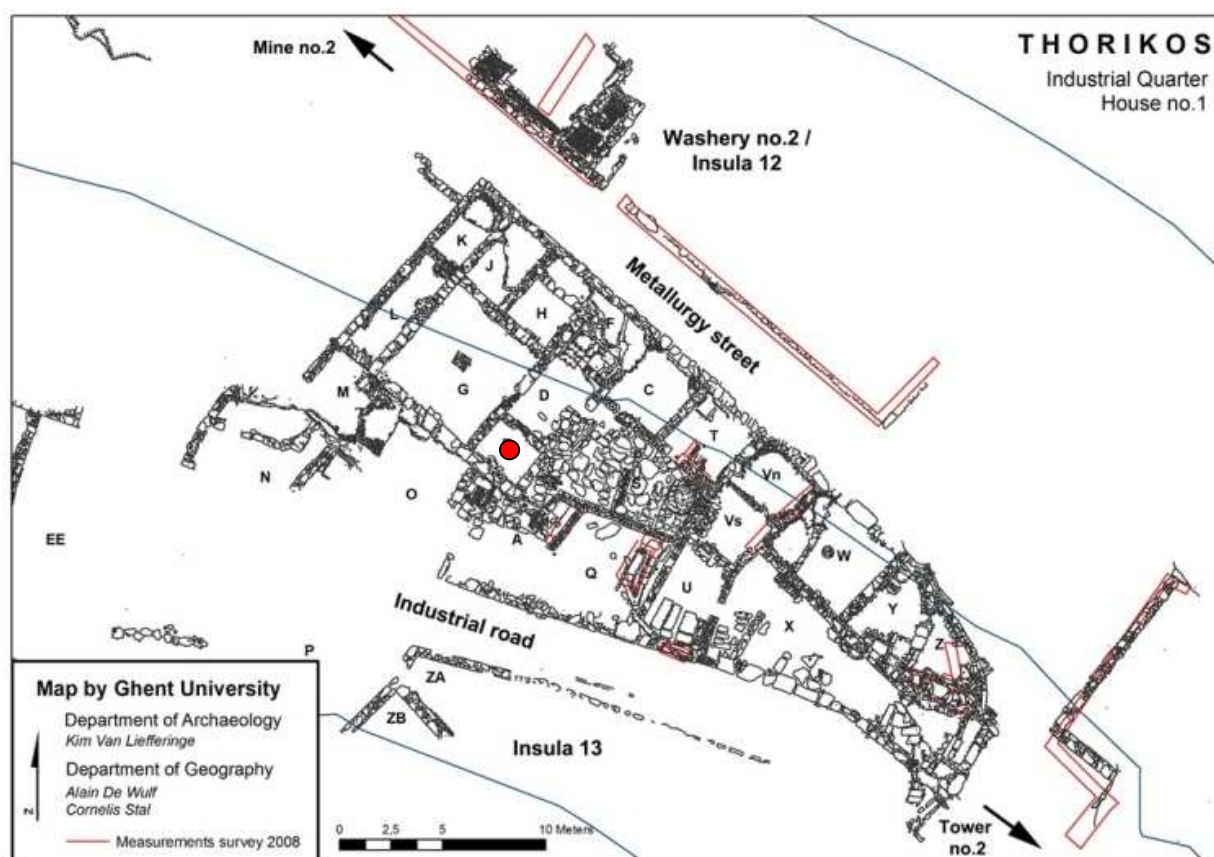


Fig. 3. Thorikos. Industrial Quarter, House no. 1 (situation 2008); the red dot indicates room E.



Fig. 4. Thorikos. Black-Figure lekythos TC07.1; Haimon Workshop. Left and central view.

Although the lekythos in its present (but probably also ancient) state lacks any specific aesthetic value, the fact that it originates in Thorikos is of some importance. In his recent dissertation, the first author discusses the lekythoi from the site, especially those from settlement contexts (van de Put 2011, defended in January 2012).

House 1 contained lekythoi conforming to the dating of the house by the excavators to the last thirty years of the 5th century BCE (see above; van de Put 2011, 182-183, 186-187). As a stray find, the present lekythos could originally have been a grave-gift, as many lekythoi from the 6th and 5th century BCE have been preserved as such (van de Put 2011, 200-202), also in Thorikos. The ‘goddess mounting or riding a chariot’ theme is ubiquitous on late black-figured lekythoi in the period 490-460 BCE, particularly in the mass production of the Haimon workshop of which the present lekythos is an example. It seems to elevate the marriage theme to a mythological level



Fig. 5. Thorikos. Black-Figure lekythos TC07.1; Haimon Workshop. right view and section (drawing RD, digitized by F. Gignac, Archéodesign, Montreal). Scale *ca* 1:1.

to reflect an important aspect of the life of the deceased, where the ‘goddess’ is interpreted as Ariadne (van de Put 2011, 121-123). A good parallel, in shape and decoration, is the bothros find TC63.1683, interpreted as ‘horse-race’ by M. Devillers (1988, 45, cat. 266), but the present lekythos seems unlikely to come from this votive deposit. The lekythos may well have been used domestically, as the house contexts of Thorikos indicate this function for a slightly later period, and the wells of the Athenian Agora for a slightly earlier. Unfortunately, we do not have a parallel for the theme in a domestic context. In the mining context of Thorikos, another secondary use of the shape may be suggested: that of handy container for lamp oil for use in the mines, to fuel the many lamps as inventoried by Blondé 1983. The find of a nicely decorated squat lekythos in what appears to be the kitchen of House 1 (TC86.37; van de Put 2011, 183, cat. 14) is an indication that (relatively) fine lekythoi were used secondarily for menial purposes.

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