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Fieldwork at Gordion 1950–2012

Gordion is frequently remembered as the location of an intricate knot ultimately cut by Alexander the Great, or as the capital city of King Midas, king of Phrygia, who in Greek legend was cursed with asses' ears and the ›Golden Touch‹¹. In antiquity, however, it served as the center of a kingdom that ruled much of Asia Minor during the early first millennium B.C. and interacted with Greece, Lydia, Assyria, and Persia (figs. 1–4). This short article traces the most important discoveries that have been made at Gordion since the beginning of fieldwork, with an emphasis on the material of Phrygian date (ca. 950–330 B.C.)².

The site was initially discovered during the construction of the Berlin–Baghdad railroad in 1893, and the first excavations, by Alfred and Gustav Körte, were not launched until seven years later. Alfred Körte identified the site as the Phrygian capital of Gordion based on ancient descriptions of the area, and conducted fieldwork on the citadel mound and in five of the tumuli³. The excavations lasted for only one season of three months duration, but they highlighted the enormous potential of the site for further fieldwork. Fifty years passed before Rodney Young of the University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology inaugurated a new campaign of excavations, which lasted between 1950 and his untimely death in 1974⁴. Young, like the Körtes, was primarily interested in the Citadel Mound, of which he cleared much of the eastern side, and the tumuli, of which he excavated thirty (fig. 5).

Renewed excavations took place between 1988 and 2002 under the direction of Ken G. Sams (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) and Mary M. Voigt (College of William and Mary), again under the auspices of the Penn Museum⁵. During this period exploration was extended to the outlying residential areas (the Lower and Outer Towns), which yielded a more nuanced understanding of the sequence of settlements and their chronology. Since 2006 there has been a moratorium on excavations in favor of a stronger focus on the final publication of the earlier results, which have recently appeared in six new volumes⁶. Nevertheless, non-invasive fieldwork has continued, with emphasis on topographic mapping and geophysical survey (radar and magnetometry).

Since the beginning of the project, excavations at Gordion have produced a series of remarkable finds, especially regarding the Early Phrygian city and the surrounding tumuli, and the research on those finds during the last 15 years has been equally noteworthy. A recently revised analysis of the site's chronology has transformed what had been interpreted as a Cimmerian attack of ca. 700 B.C. into a conflagration possibly related to new construction that occurred 100 years earlier⁷. As a consequence, the chronology of Phrygian architecture, ceramics, and artifacts has changed dramatically, as has our understanding of the history and archaeology of central Anatolia in the Iron Age⁸.

1 Roller 1983; Roller 1984.

2 I am grateful to Ortwin Dally for his invitation to lecture in Berlin, and for his offer to publish the text. This is an abbreviated version of an article in the proceedings of a conference on Phrygian Gordion held in Philadelphia in 2007 (Rose 2012b).

3 Körte 1897; Körte – Körte 1904.

4 Young 1950; Young 1953; Young 1955; Young 1956; Young 1957; Young 1958; Young 1960; Young 1962; Young 1964; Young 1965; Young 1966; Young 1968; Young et al. 1981.

5 Voigt 1994; Voigt 2002; Voigt 2003; Voigt 2005; Voigt et al. 1997; Voigt – Young 1999; Voigt – Henrickson 2000; Sams 1994a; Sams 2005.

6 Roller 2009; Simpson 2010; Miller 2010; Matero 2011; Rose – Darbyshire 2011; Rose 2012b.

7 Rose – Darbyshire 2011.

8 The lack of scholarly focus on Phrygia has begun to change only recently. Several new books on Phrygian topography and religion have appeared within the last decade (Uçankus 2002; Berndt–Ersöz 2006; Sentürk – Tüfekli Sivas 2007), and several Gordion conference volumes have recently appeared or are in press (Kealhofer 2005; Rose – Darbyshire 2011; Rose 2012b).



Fig. 1 Gordion. Aerial view

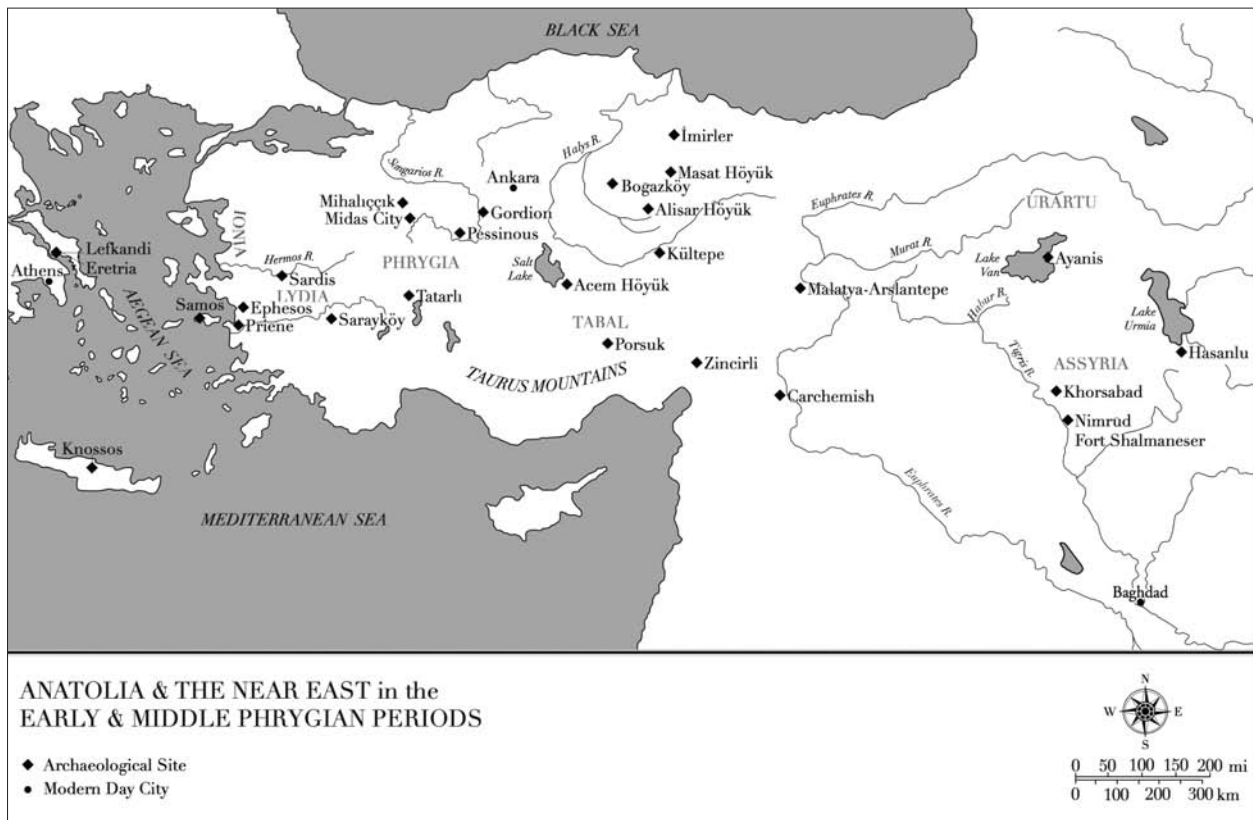


Fig. 2 Map of Anatolia showing Gordion

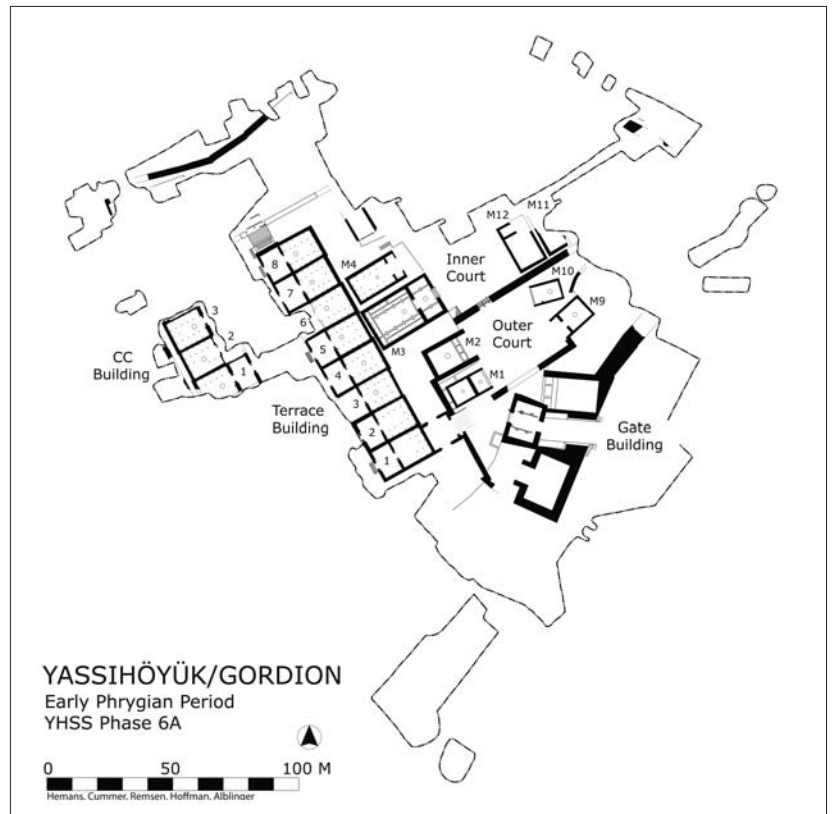


Fig. 3 Plan of Early Phrygian Gordion (scale 1:3000)

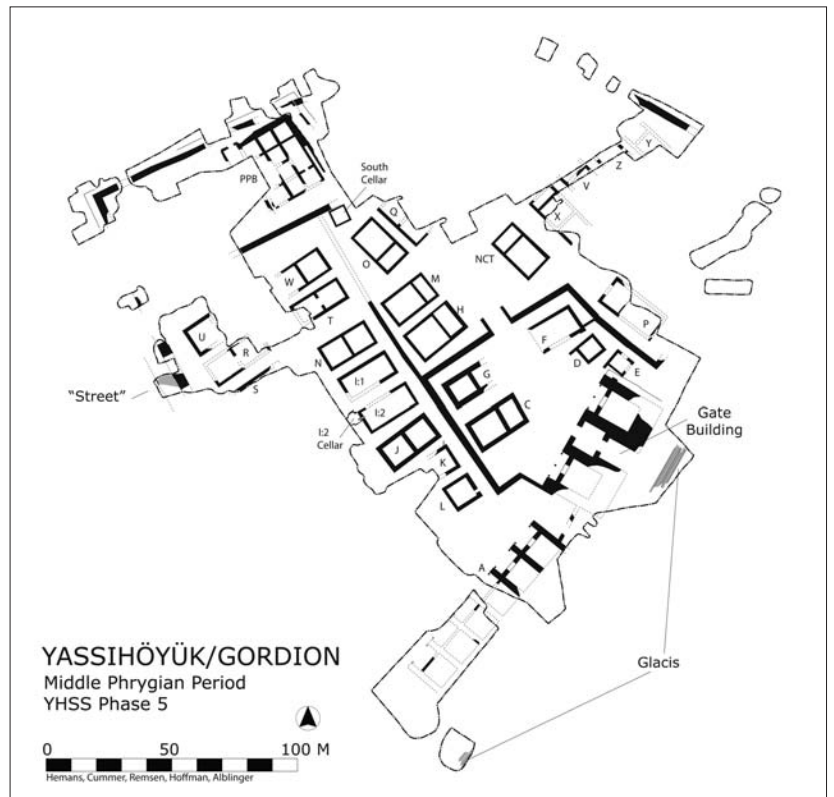


Fig. 4 Plan of Middle Phrygian Gordion (scale 1:3000)

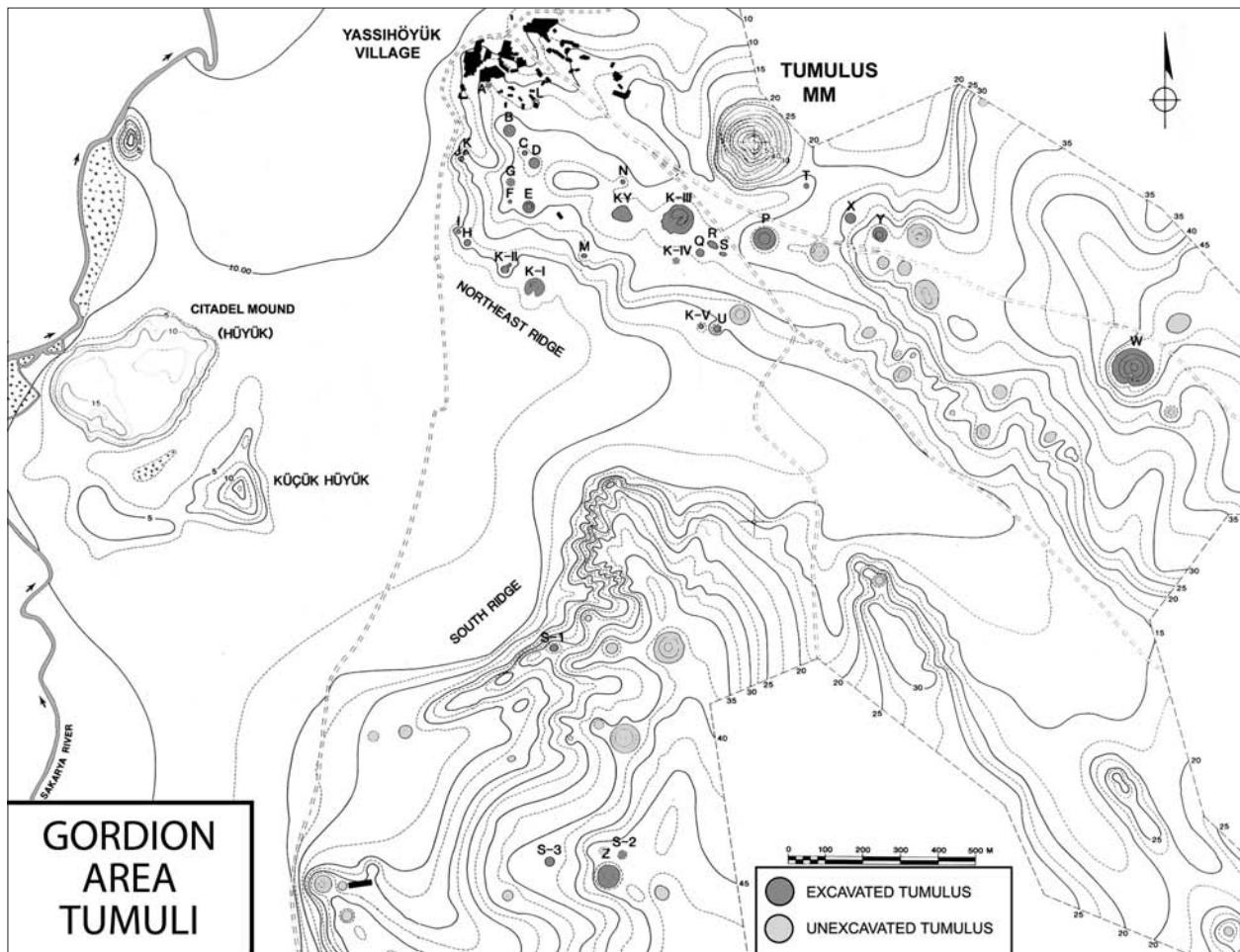


Fig. 5 Plan of the tumuli surrounding Gordion (scale 1:20 000)

During the last few decades the chronological designations for the Phrygian levels have also changed – what was viewed as ›Persian‹ during the Young excavations has been reassigned to ›Middle Phrygian‹, and the period of Persian control is now referred to as ›Late Phrygian‹. The current system with numerical dates is as follows⁹:

Early Iron Age	11 th century–ca. 950 B.C.
Initial Early Phrygian	ca. 950–900 B.C.
Early Phrygian	ca. 900–800 B.C.
Early Phrygian Destruction	ca. 800 B.C.
Middle Phrygian	ca. 800–540 B.C.
Late Phrygian	ca. 540–330 B.C.

The beginning of the Early Phrygian Period is generally dated to the 10th century B.C., although the Phrygians' ancestors appear to have arrived in central Anatolia from Thrace during the 12th century, at roughly the same time in which another Thracian group began to occupy the citadel of Troy¹⁰. The immigrants to Phrygia probably traveled across the Bosphorus, while those to Troy almost certainly crossed the Hellespont. A few Geometric sherds at Troy are, in fact, decorated with stamped circles and triangles set in alternating rows, which one also finds at Gordion, although the forms at each site are different, as is the decoration¹¹.

The Early Phrygian citadel would have risen 5–9 meters above the surrounding plain (vs. 13–16.5 meters today), and the Sakarya River lays on

⁹ In addition to the system listed above, another dating system has been developed by Mary M. Voigt based on stratigraphy, with a YHSS prefix (Yassihöyük Stratigraphic Sequence): Early Iron Age = YHSS7; Early Phrygian = YHSS6; Middle Phrygian = YHSS5; Late Phrygian = YHSS4.

¹⁰ Sams 1988; Sams 1994a; DeVries 1990, 371 f. 390 f.; Genz 2003; Wittke 2004; Vassileva 2005a. For Troy, see Rose 2008.

¹¹ Sams 1994a, 129.



Fig. 6 Gordion. Early Phrygian gate, looking east toward Tumulus W

¹² Marsh 1997, 23–26; Marsh 1999; Marsh 2005; Marsh 2012.

¹³ Voigt et al. 1997, 4–6. During the Middle Phrygian period, the street would have linked the ›Outer Town‹ at the north to the ›Lower Town‹ at the south, but there is no evidence for Early Phrygian occupation in either area. Early Phrygian levels were uncovered on the western mound in only one small sondage, so the nature of the settlement there is still very uncertain (Voigt – Young 1999, 209).

¹⁴ DeVries 1990, 373–377.

¹⁵ Sams 1995; Sams 2005; DeVries 1990, 377. Three rows of pithoi were found in this wing at the time of excavation: Young 1956, 260. For the orthostats, see Sams 1989; Sams 1994b; Orthmann 1971, 31–33. 61 f. 220 f.; Prayon 1987, 48–52.

¹⁶ DeVries 1990, 396; Pizzorno – Darbyshire 2012.

the east side of the mound at that time, having traveled to the western side relatively recently, perhaps as late as the 19th century (fig. 1)¹². We currently perceive the mound as having contained a unified settlement across the upper surface, and from the Hellenistic period onward that was true; but in the Early Phrygian period the mound was probably significantly smaller, with a high fortified elite quarter at the east (the ›Eastern Mound‹), a lower domestic quarter at the west, probably unfortified (the ›Western Mound‹), and a street that cut diagonally through them¹³. The street was over 7 m wide and slightly over 2 m lower than walking level in the Terrace Zone area, while its length, from one end of the mound to the other, would have been ca. 285 m (figs. 3, 4).

The Eastern Mound had reached its final form before the end of the 9th century and was divided into two zones of very different function (fig. 3)¹⁴. The entrance to both was through a monumental gate with battered limestone walls and a mudbrick superstructure, probably over 16 m in height (fig. 6). The walls of the gate may have been decorated with carved stone orthostats, and the central passage was framed by two wings, one of which, at the north, was used for the storage of pithoi¹⁵. The gate led to two courts (the ›Outer‹ and the ›Inner‹), which were separated from each other by a wall that must have been over 4 m high judging by breadth of its foundations. This was a quarter intended for the elite.

Although both courts were flanked by megarons, the Inner Court was much larger, with three times as many megarons. Reconstructing their original number is not easy since the remains are so lacunose; but the Middle Phrygian buildings are similar in number, size, and position to that of their predecessors, and this fact, coupled with the foundations uncovered by Young, enables one to posit as many as 12 megarons in the Inner Court (vs. four in the outer one), with four on the western side and eight on the eastern side, organized in two rows of four set opposite each other¹⁶. The four megarons in the Early Phrygian Outer Court, nearest the gate, appear to have had pebbled



Fig. 7 Gordion. Drawing of the pebble mosaic in Megaron 2

floors, with an unusually elaborate mosaic featuring polychromatic geometric designs in the main room of Megaron 2 (fig. 7)¹⁷.

Another zone of activity, on the southwest side of the citadel (the Terrace Zone), was devoted to industry (fig. 3). Although only 11 buildings there have been excavated, one can safely reconstruct two long rows of buildings – eight in each row positioned on either side of a 16 m wide court. The length of each building is close to twice its width, so each group of two represents a nearly perfect square, and its interior, at 21 m × 11.50 m, encompasses approximately the same space as the megarons at Mycenae, Pylos, and Tiryns. Within the rooms was preserved an abundance of equipment for textile and grain processing, with some buildings containing between 500 and 600 loomweights¹⁸.

Primary access between the elite and industrial quarters appears, not surprisingly, to have been limited to one door on the inner side of the Gate Complex, with the backs of the industrial buildings facing the elite megarons at the east. Indeed, the highly restricted access routes between these districts suggest a society more tightly controlled than any other in Anatolia or the Near East. Although there was very likely a second city gate, careful coordination of traffic would have been essential, especially given the fact that workers would have continually exited to retrieve water from the Sakarya River since there were no wells or cisterns on the citadel¹⁹.

Until recently, the achievements of Early Phrygian Gordion were assumed to have occurred during the 8th century, but the radiocarbon and dendrochronological dates of seeds and wood found within the destruction level, coupled with the type and style of the associated artifacts and pottery, indicate a date of ca. 800 B.C. for the conflagration²⁰. This discovery, in turn, allows us to situate Early Phrygian Gordion in a different historical context, set against the reigns of a series of powerful men: Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III in Assyria,

17 Salzmänn 1982, 4. 6–8. 78. 93 f. nos. 46–56. – Megaron 2: Young 1958, 143; Roller 2009; Roller 2012. – Megaron 9. 12: Young 1964, 288–290; Young 1965. – Megaron 1: DeVries 1980, 37. The floor does not survive in Megaron 10, but all of the surrounding megarons had pebble floors, and this one would undoubtedly have followed suit. The floor in Megaron 9 featured red, white, yellow, and blue pebbles, so we should probably reconstruct a geometric design along the same lines as the one in Megaron 2, to which Megaron 9 was oriented.

18 DeVries 1990, 385 f.; Burke 2005, 71 fig. 6, 2; Burke 2010. In one of the CC (Clay-Cut) Terrace Buildings, sifted barley lay on the floor, probably intended for beer production (DeVries 1990, 386). The number of sheep bones in Early Phrygian levels represents an increase over those in Early Iron Age strata (Zeder – Arter 1994, 113 f.), but this is probably related more to meat consumption than wool production.

19 Young 1964, 286.

20 Voigt 2005; DeVries 2007; DeVries 2008; Rose – Darbyshire 2011; Kuniholm 2011; Manning – Kromer 2011.

Sarduri I of Urartu in northeastern Anatolia, and Hiram I and Solomon in Phoenicia and Israel, respectively. We have no contemporary references to Gordion in the Assyrian texts, although the Muski – the Assyrian word for Phrygians – are mentioned in the Annals of Assurnasirpal II as having paid tribute to the king at the beginning of his reign²¹. In addition to tribute, there is good evidence for diplomatic and gift exchange between these and other rulers, and the ivory horse trappings in North Syrian style found in one of Gordion's Terrace Buildings probably fall into a similar category²².

The new chronology also demonstrates that Gordion's Early Phrygian architecture was even more innovative than had been previously thought: the site featured the earliest known stone megaron and akroterion in the Near East, dating to the initial Early Phrygian building phase in the 10th century B.C., as well as the earliest pebble mosaics, dated to the 9th century²³. The rows of workshops, over 100 m in length, were among the longest in Anatolia, second only to those in the Hittite capital at Hattuša. The roofing systems are particularly noteworthy: the ceiling of Megaron 2 featured beams over 10 m in length with no internal supports, which is, as far as we know, a more daring feat of engineering than one would have found in roughly contemporary Assyrian palaces, including the throne room of Assurnasirpal II (884–859 B.C.)²⁴.

The amount of earth moving that occurred during the Early Phrygian period would have been enormous, as one can judge from the monumental burial mounds such as Tumulus W, or the tons of earth that separate the ›Early Phrygian Building‹ in the elite quarter from Megaron 9, which stood above it. Moreover, the industrial buildings were constructed on a terrace that rose 2 m above the level of the Outer and Inner Courts, which would have necessitated the transport of over 20 000 cubic meters of earth to the citadel. Nevertheless, even a project as extensive as the latter one would have involved less earth than was necessary to build a medium-sized tumulus, and would have represented no significant challenge to a community accustomed to such ambitious building projects²⁵.

An even more monumental public works project was still to come: toward the end of the 9th century, the rulers of Gordion planned for a major change in the appearance of the citadel – not in the number and general layout of the settlement's buildings (at least on the Eastern Mound), but in the height of the citadel itself, which would be raised 4–5 meters above its Early Phrygian level. This involved the excavation and movement of over half a million cubic meters of clay – the same kind of monumental public works project that would reappear 60 years later when Tumulus MM was created. Although both the Eastern and Western Mounds were raised, the central street was not, which meant that it now lay ca. 7 m below the new occupation level within the Middle Phrygian citadel. The two mounds would consequently have seemed even higher than they actually were.

Preparations for the new project were already under way ca. 800 B.C.: the builders had blocked the access route between the Terrace Zone and the Outer Court, and had begun the process of laying rubble and clay fill in a partially dismantled Gate Complex, while adding new water facilities related to construction²⁶. Megaron 3 had been filled with a variety of luxury goods, many of which were found near the door and therefore perhaps placed there for storage during construction. Most of the other megarons had been emptied of their contents, although the buildings in the Terrace Zone still contained the equipment for weaving, grinding, and cooking that were in use there. It was at this time that a massive fire swept through the site during one of the summer months, with the flames probably fanned by winds from the north²⁷. The fire

21 Wittke 2004.

22 Young 1962, 166 f.

23 Sams 1994b; Sams – Voigt 2011; Sams 2012.

24 Liebhart 1988.

25 DeVries 1990, 373 f.

26 Voigt 2012.

27 DeVries 1980, 36; DeVries 1990, 386. In the former article DeVries mentions the discovery in Megaron 3 of 19 cornelian cherries, a summer fruit, which had apparently been consumed shortly before the fire. The buildings on the northeast side of the elite quarter were not burned, and the wind generally comes in from a northern direction, at least during the summer. The fire may therefore have started in the Inner Court and then moved with the wind in a western and southerly direction toward the gate.

may, in fact, have been caused by construction-related activities, although summer fires in Anatolia were probably just as common then as they are now.

The re-dating of the destruction level has completely transformed our understanding of the material culture of Asia Minor in the late 9th century. Ceramics that were regarded as typologically backward in the old chronology can now be shown to have been innovative in form and decoration, just like the architecture and city planning in evidence on the eastern side of the citadel. Moreover, it is now clear that the destruction levels at both Gordion and Hasanlu date to roughly the same time, thereby supplying us with unusually detailed views of the public infrastructure in place ca. 800 B.C. at two key fortified citadels in central Anatolia and northwestern Iran²⁸.

During the new construction program none of the earlier buildings was dismantled, and the Early Phrygian gate was actually used to support the foundations of its Middle Phrygian successor, which is why so many cracks are now visible in the masonry of the earlier structure²⁹. Other than the greater height of the new citadel, the layout of the constituent buildings was essentially the same, although there were a few significant changes: the same number of Terrace Zone buildings were constructed, but they were shifted further toward the new gate complex, and the vestibule of each building became much deeper so that it was essentially the same size as the main room. The buildings were also free standing rather than components of a single conjoined row, presumably to hinder the spread of fire (fig. 4).

The width of the new gate, at 50.5 m, was essentially the same as its Early Phrygian predecessor, but it projected 20–23 m further to the west and thereby increased the amount of space available for building in the Outer Court. Like its predecessor, the Middle Phrygian gate contained courts at north and south flanking the central passage, although the plan was now more regular, with the two courts of identical size. The architecture was also much more massive: the front walls of the towers are 8 m thick, while those that flanked the Outer Court had a thickness of 5.50 m; the other walls that comprise the courts are almost as thick. The doorways themselves measured nearly 5 m.

The actual height of the Gate Building, however, is more difficult to assess. The walls consisted of a stone foundation with mudbrick superstructure, and they are vertical, not battered or inclined as in the Early Phrygian Gate. Young found eight courses of the South Court still in place, rising to a height of 3 m, but it seems likely that the new gate would have been approximately as high as the earlier one. What was most especially distinctive about the new gate by comparison to its Early Phrygian predecessor was the appearance of colored stone from a new series of quarries. The Early Phrygian Gate featured a heavy coat of plaster over rhyolite, a light igneous rock that was presumably used because it is lighter and would have been more suitable for an area of occasional seismic activity. The Middle Phrygian builders eschewed rhyolite in favor of gypsum and andesite, which evince a range of colors that includes white, dark red, blue, and gray. There is no trace of plaster on these stones, which means that the original color was a component of its design and would have complemented a series of dark red and orange architectural terracottas that lined its face and sides.

In using this technique of construction, the builders were following a model first formulated during the Early Phrygian period. The area between the Early Phrygian Gate Complex and the nearby ›Post and Poros Building‹ was paved with red and white stones set in a checkerboard pattern, thereby complementing the multi-colored mosaic floor in Megaron 2 (fig. 7)³⁰. The ›Polychrome House‹, which formed part of the Early Phrygian Gate, featured

28 Dyson 1989.

29 DeVries 1990, 391–400.

30 Sams – Voigt 1995, 373.



Fig. 8 Gordion. The glacis of Middle Phrygian Gordion

walls of bright red and blue stone, and the first Early Phrygian circuit wall, which was connected to the Polychrome House, contained courses of white, red, and yellow³¹.

That coloristic scheme was continued in the design of the stepped glacis that surrounded the north, east, and south side of the eastern citadel mound (fig. 8). The decision to include a glacis, which had not been a feature of the Early Phrygian Citadel as far as we know, was undoubtedly prompted by the need to retain the 5 m of clay that had recently been deposited on the citadel mound. The insertion of a glacis at this time is not unusual; what made Gordion's glacis distinctive was that it was faced with sections of different colored stones, apparently from several different quarries, possibly to highlight the extent of the area under Phrygian control³². Such manipulations of colored stone in architecture are rather reminiscent of the alternating light and dark orthostat reliefs at Arslantepe/Malatya and Carchemish during the same general period, although one does not find such coloristic juxtaposition in any other known glacis installations.

One other new addition was Building A, a six-room complex constructed on the southeast side of the citadel which lay directly southwest of the Middle Phrygian Gate and extended nearly as far as the line of the street that cut through the citadel mound (fig. 4)³³. The new complex faced the Terrace Buildings and effectively constituted the third side of the district, even though there is insufficient evidence to determine whether it served the same function, at least during the Middle Phrygian period. It is abundantly clear, however, that Building A was joined to the new Middle Phrygian gate and constituted part of the city's new fortification system. It should therefore have been constructed at the same time as the Gate Building, i. e. in the early 8th century B.C.

The new building program also included an outer fortification system that featured mudbrick walls at least 4 m high set on stone foundations 3.50 m thick. Magnetic prospection has also detected the existence of a ditch in front of the walls, although it has never been uncovered by excavation³⁴. Square towers were constructed at intervals of ca. 16 m in the outer fortifications, and the entire area under protection now reached nearly 255 000 m² (fig. 9)³⁵. The walls were linked to forts constructed at the northern end (Kuştepe) and

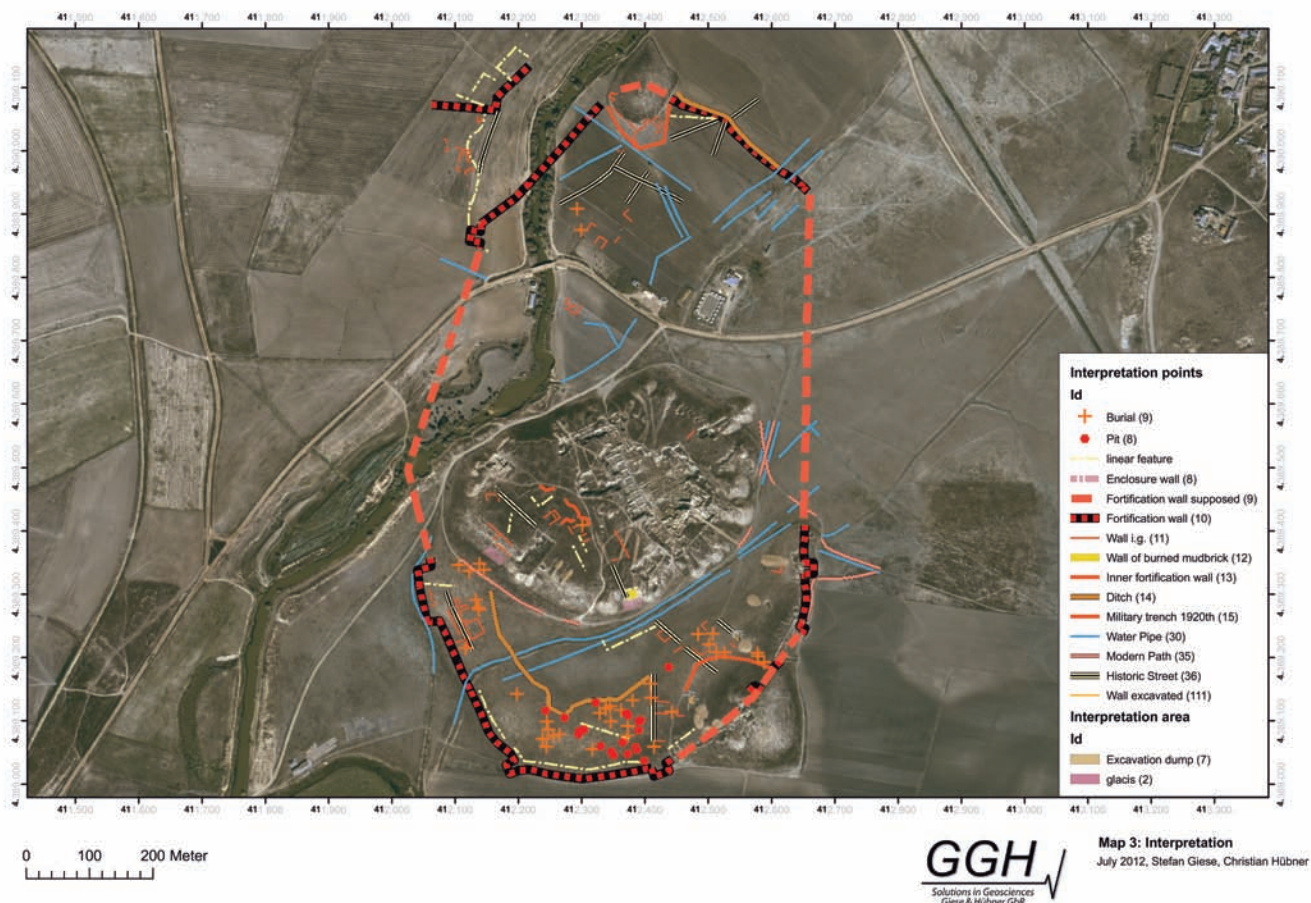
31 Young 1956, 260; Young 1964, 291.

32 Voigt – Young 1999, 205.

33 Burke 2012.

34 Sams 2009.

35 Sams 2008; Marsh 1999.



the southeast (Küçük Höyük) (figs. 4. 9. 10). Excavation of the latter mound revealed a mudbrick platform 12 m in height, at least 50 m long, and over 10 m wide, on top of which a four storey wood and mudbrick fortress had been constructed (fig. 10)³⁶.

Such a dual system of defenses with inner and outer fortifications had a long history in ancient Near East, beginning at least as early as the third millennium B.C. at Troy and continuing in the late Bronze and early Iron Age at Hattuša, Kanesh, Zincirli, and Troy again in a different configuration³⁷. The Trojan system also featured a defensive ditch, as did a relatively large number of settlements in Anatolia (Carchemish), Syria (Qatna, Ebla, Kadesh), and Palestine (Hazor, Lachish, Askelon), among others, so the presence of such a feature at Gordion is not unexpected³⁸.

The excavation of the fortification walls on either side of Küçük Höyük did not yield clear evidence for dating, but the earliest evidence for occupation within the Lower Town is Middle Phrygian, and the following sequence of construction activities seems logical³⁹. To raise the level of the Citadel mounds, the work force used approximately 175 000 cubic meters of clay, and trace elements demonstrate that a substantial quantity of it came from the area adjacent to the Sakarya River⁴⁰. In other words, there would have been a massive excavation along the river at the same spot in which the fortifications were built. It seems logical to assume that the digging for the foundations of the city wall yielded a substantial amount of the clay used to raise the level of the central part of the citadel, and that the two operations were part of a single building program. Such simultaneous construction of inner and outer

Fig. 9 Gordion. Magnetic prospection showing the outer wall of Middle Phrygian Gordion (scale 1:12 000)

³⁶ Young 1957, 324 f.; Young 1958, 140 f.; Edwards 1959, 264; Mellink 1959.

³⁷ Troy: Rose 2008, 409 n. 55; Jablonka 2006. – Hattuša: Seeher 2002. – Kanesh: Özgüç 1999. – Zincirli: Wartke 2005.

³⁸ Bunimovitz 1992; Finkelstein 1992.

³⁹ Voigt – Young 1999, 211–215.

⁴⁰ Voigt – Young 1999, 203 n. 6.



Fig. 10 Gordion. The mudbrick fort within Küçük Höyük, destroyed by a Persian attack

fortifications was relatively common in Anatolia and the Near East in antiquity, both in the Bronze Age and in later periods. If the same situation prevailed here, which seems compelling, then we can date the construction of the outer fortifications to the early 8th century.

The building program at the beginning of the Middle Phrygian period would therefore have been even more monumental than we have assumed. Here too we should view such extensive building activity against the backdrop of an almost equally energetic campaign of city foundations and citadel constructions in eastern Anatolia (Urartu, under Argishti I), the Upper Euphrates (Zincirli/Sam'al in North Syria), and Assyria (Nimrud under Assurnasirpal II). Each new construction would have highlighted the need for increasingly sophisticated defenses in the other areas.

It may have been only at this time that substantial buildings began to be constructed in the Lower Town, in the area protected by the new fortification wall. In an area near Küçük Höyük Voigt uncovered several Middle Phrygian buildings set on an artificial terrace well above the level of the plain – a development that is noteworthy in itself⁴¹. Alluviation from the Sakarya River increased significantly during the first half of the Middle Phrygian period, probably in large part due to the massive removal of clay along the river's course. Deforestation and grazing may also have played a role, but the periodic flooding that had begun to occur would have necessitated the construction of terraces for the new Lower Town structures, although the flooding would have been hindered by the new fortification walls⁴².

New construction extended to the Western Mound as well: massive rubble foundations of Middle Phrygian date were excavated at the northwest corner of the mound, possibly suggesting that a defensive wall now surrounded the public buildings and dwellings there⁴³. Further to the northwest lay the Outer Town, which was also the site of new occupation at this time, although excavation has revealed few of the houses that once punctuated the area⁴⁴.

Combining all of the evidence for new building at Gordion during the 8th century allows us to reconstruct the following program: a 5 m rise in the heights of both Eastern and Western Mounds, with new monumental structures in both areas; the construction of an outer line of defense protected by a ditch and by forts at north and southeast; and the beginning of habitation in

41 Sams – Voigt 1995, 375 f.; Voigt et al. 1997, 6–8.

42 Marsh 2012.

43 Voigt – Young 1999, 210 f.; Voigt 2002, 194.

44 Voigt 2005, 35.

both the Lower and Outer Town, which were, in turn, linked by the stone-paved street that separated the Eastern and Western Mounds⁴⁵.

It is only during this period of 8th century construction that we have evidence for the lives of two of Gordion's rulers – Gordias and Midas. Our information regarding the former is limited to the story of the knotted cornel bark attached to the ox-cart in which he had first entered the city; but Midas, reportedly his son, was an historical character whose career is described in contemporary writing⁴⁶. The Greek and Latin citations indicate that he married the daughter of the ruler of Aeolian Kyme and was the first non-Greek to have made a dedication at Delphi, specifically, a throne that Herodotus saw in the Corinthian Treasury there⁴⁷.

A part of that throne may still exist: excavations conducted near the Treasury of the Corinthians at Delphi in 1939 uncovered two votive pits, one of which contained a nearly complete ivory figurine of a man with a lion, 0.22 m high (fig. 11)⁴⁸. Based on style and technique, this figurine can be identified as Anatolian, and specifically Phrygian. It probably served as a kind of appliqué on the front of an upright piece of wood, most likely as part of a support for the arm of a throne. The conclusion that the Delphic ivory formed part of Midas' throne seems highly likely, and the Treasury where it was dedicated would ultimately develop into a showplace for prestige gifts by at least two other Anatolian kings, Gyges and Croesus⁴⁹.

The most important references to Midas are found in the Assyrian Annals, where he is referred to as Mita of Mushki. These records constitute our best source for Phrygian military and diplomatic initiatives during the 8th century, most of which involved the Assyrians and the city-states in the Upper Euphrates/Taurus region. By the middle of the 8th century, many of these city-states were either independent or Urartian allies, having earlier been Assyrian vassals. With the advent in 745 of Tiglath-Pileser III, who launched a new war on Urartu, allegiances shifted again, and several of the Syro-Hittite city-states sent tribute to the new king, such as Urik(ki) of Que (Cilicia) and Warpalawa of Tyana⁵⁰.

This change in allegiance was also transitory: the Assyrian Annals indicate that during the last quarter of the 8th century Midas' support against the Assyrians was increasingly sought by cities in the Upper Euphrates region, including Pisiri of Carchemish, Ambaris, King of Tabal, and Kurti of Atuna. Midas' prominence, however, clearly extended across a much wider area, as attested by the discovery in Tyana of a stone stele, probably basalt, that had been erected by Midas himself⁵¹. The presence of such a stele in Tyana is not surprising, since the king of the area, Warpalawa, was an ally of Midas, but the inscription is striking in that it was written in Phrygian even though Luwian was the primary language in the area.

By 709 Assyrian power had clearly forced Midas to reverse course: he sent tribute to Sargon II and subsequently intercepted anti-Assyrian agents en route from Que to Urartu, ultimately turning them over to the Assyrian governor of



Fig. 11 Delphi. Ivory figurine of a lion tamer

45 Mellink 1959.

46 Mellink 1992, 622–634; Sams 1995; DeVries 2008; Berndt-Ersöz 2006.

47 Hdt. 1, 14 (ivory throne); Aristot. fr. 611, 37 (Rose); Poll. 9, 83; Muscarella 1989.

48 Amandry 1939, 107–109; Amandry 1944/45; Barnett 1948, 16 f.; Schefold 1968; Rhoads 1970; Carter 1985,

216–225; Amandry 1991, 199–202; Schiering 2003.

49 DeVries – Rose 2012. Gyges provided six gold mixing bowls – each of which weighed over 400 lbs., while Croesus supplied four silver chests and a gold statue of a lion weighing approximately 570 lbs. (Hdt. 1, 14; 1, 50 f.). Alyattes sent an enormous silver bowl

to Delphi in a welded iron stand (Hdt. 1, 25), although its site of dedication is not recorded.

50 The historical sources for these events are conveniently summarized in Mellink 1992.

51 Mellink 1979; Brixhe – Lejeune 1984, 260–267 no. T2.



Fig. 12 Gordion. The exterior of the tomb chamber in Tumulus MM

Que⁵². With so much military conflict and shifting allegiances, it is hardly surprising that Gordion and several of the neo-Hittite city-states constructed such sophisticated fortifications. What is surprising, in light of Gordion's extensive interaction with North Syria, is the absence of sculptural representations of Gordias or Midas. During the 8th and 7th centuries, many of the Syro-Hittite city-states featured public stone statues of their kings, often 3 or 4 m high; at Gordion, however, none of the settlement's rulers appear to have been represented in sculpture or painting, and the same was true for Lydia⁵³.

The primary mode of commemoration for the Phrygian kings appears to have been their tumuli, and at least one of them seems to have influenced the architecture of the citadel. This is Tumulus W, the oldest known burial mound at Gordion (mid-9th century), which was set on the highest point of a ridge to the northeast of the city (figs. 5. 6). It looks as if the Early Phrygian Gate was turned from its planned orientation so that both tumulus and gate were directly aligned⁵⁴. As Richard Liebhart has argued, it seems that a prominent individual at Gordion died while the gate was being constructed, which prompted the entrance to be modified so that anyone leaving the citadel would be directed toward the burial mound⁵⁵. During the Middle Phrygian rebuilding, the gate was rotated approximately 30 degrees further toward the southeast, so that a resident exiting the citadel would have looked in the direction of the northernmost tumulus on the Southeast Ridge.

Tumulus MM stands nearly twice the size of Tumulus W and can be seen from virtually every corner of the site and its surroundings. Once regarded as the tomb of Midas himself, the dendrochronology points to a date ca. 740 B.C. for its construction, which suggests that the tomb was built by Midas at the beginning of his reign to honor his predecessor⁵⁶. The mound was nevertheless just as much a monument to Midas himself in that it was the largest tumulus in Asia Minor, and would remain so until the construction of the burial mound of the Lydian king Alyattes at Sardis nearly 200 years later⁵⁷.

Especially noteworthy is the technique used to construct the wooden tomb chamber within Tumulus MM, which had to bear the weight of a 53 m high mound set above it (figs. 12. 13). It is this feat of engineering for which Midas should be remembered rather than the vast quantities of gold attached to him by later Greek and Latin authors. As has often been pointed out, not a single object of gold was discovered within the tomb chamber, nor are gold objects commonly found in excavations on the mound or in tumuli⁵⁸. Yet as Mary Ballard has noted, we may be viewing the story of Midas's gold through the wrong lens. The shroud that covered the 60-year-old occupant of Tumulus MM featured an inorganic pigment called goethite that endowed

52 Mellink 1992, 622.

53 For an overview of these statues, see Draycott – Summers 2008, 17–21. Rulers regularly appeared in relief format in Near Eastern iconography, but the tradition of colossal statues in the round seems unique to the Upper Euphrates region, especially between the 9th and 7th centuries B.C. The one example found thus far on the Anatolian plateau is at Kerkenes, dating to the early 6th century B.C. (Draycott – Summers 2008).

54 Young 1962, 168.

55 A full presentation of the evidence for the link between Tumulus W and the Early Phrygian Gate will appear in Liebhart et al. forthcoming.

56 Young et al. 1981; Liebhart 2012; Simpson 2010; Simpson 2012.

57 Hanfmann 1980, 100 f.

58 For gold finds at Gordion, see Edwards 1959, 265 f.; Young 1962, 166; Young 1964, 287; Kohler 1980; Kohler 1995, 197; DeVries 1990, 382; Voigt – Young 1999, 211.



Fig. 13 Gordion. The interior of the tomb chamber in Tumulus MM at the time of excavation

the garment with a kind of golden appearance that may have been replicated in the textiles for which the Phrygians were famous⁵⁹.

In 2008 the archaeologist Liebhart made an astonishing new discovery within the tomb: four Phrygian names had been inscribed on a wooden beam that was added to the roof at the conclusion of the original funeral: Nana, Myksos, Syrunis, and Sitidos (fig. 14)⁶⁰. One of these names – Sitidos – was also preserved in wax on one of the nearly 100 bronze omphalos bowls found within the tomb chamber, which strongly suggests that he was one of the mourners at the funeral, and the same is probably true for the other three. No additional names appear to have been inscribed on the beam, nor have any other such ›name beams‹ been discovered in Phrygian tombs, although they are only visible with fiber optic lighting and may easily have been missed in earlier excavations. The significance of this beam is difficult for us to understand, but the names may relate to four officials who were in charge of the funeral ceremony.

The menu of the funeral meal, which included barbecued goat or lamb, a lentil stew, and a wine-beer-mead punch, has been reconstructed by Patrick E. McGovern based on the residue in the vessels, while reconstructions of the extraordinary boxwood serving stands that held the various dishes have been published recently by Elizabeth Simpson (fig. 13)⁶¹. Positioned around the vessels were large quantities of fibulae and bronze belts for which the Phrygians were famous. These fibulae have been found as far west as Athens and Olympia, while the belts, which occasionally featured incised geometric decoration, were imported by elite Greeks and dedicated in such high-profile sanctuaries as Delphi, Didyma, and Samos⁶². One can find such belts and fibulae worn by Midas' ally Warpalawa on a rock-cut relief at Ivriz, in the province of Konya, and they may well have been gifts from the Phrygian king himself⁶³.

Strabo linked the end of Midas' life to the Cimmerian raids on Asia Minor ca. 700 B.C., and most scholars found this relatively easy to accept as long as the destruction level of the site was dated to the same period (Strabo 1, 3, 21). The New Chronology, however, has cast doubt not just on the circumstances of Midas' death, but also on the presence of the Cimmerians in this part of Anatolia⁶⁴. Certainly their strength during the late 8th and 7th century was formidable: the Urartian kingdoms were heavily damaged by Cimmerian raids in 714, and both Sargon II and the Lydian king Gyges reportedly died in

⁵⁹ Ballard 2012.

⁶⁰ Sams 2008; Liebhart et al. forthcoming.

⁶¹ For the meal: McGovern 2000; McGovern 2001; McGovern 2010; McGovern et al. 1999. – For furniture, Simpson 2010; Simpson 2012.

⁶² Vassileva 2005b; Vassileva 2007; Vassileva 2012.

⁶³ Mellink 1992, 638.

⁶⁴ Ivantchik 2001; Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 22–29.

Fig. 14 Gordion. The incised names of the roof beam of Tumulus MM (scale 1 : 6)



combat with them in 705 and 654/2, respectively. There may in fact be some evidence for their attack on Gordion within an extramural Middle Phrygian settlement northeast of the citadel. Excavation in this area yielded a cemetery (the ›Common Cemetery‹) above houses that appear to have been destroyed by an attack ca. 700. Although it is clear that the citadel was not seriously damaged by the Cimmerians, the outlying areas may have been⁶⁵.

The 7th century evidentiary record at Gordion is not as full as that from the 9th and 8th centuries, but a significant amount of relevant material has been uncovered during both the Young and Voigt Excavations, bringing new clarity to issues of local ceramic production and construction techniques as well as changes in agriculture and diet⁶⁶. The tumulus tradition continued, as did the wooden tomb chambers, but they now held both inhumation and cremation burials. If one examines five of those constructed between 650 and 600, one immediately notices the disappearance of the bronze belts and fibulae that had been so characteristic of the Phrygian elite during the 9th and 8th centuries, although gold objects now began to be included in the funeral assemblages⁶⁷. Thus far there is little evidence for contact with the Greek world during this period: only a small amount of imported pottery (Corinthian Late Geometric and Protocorinthian) has been uncovered, and only three amphoras, all of which date toward the end of the 7th century⁶⁸.

At some point toward the end of the 7th century, Gordion's power began to diminish as that of Lydia grew, and Lydian influence is clearly detectable in Gordion's archaeological record throughout the first half of the 6th century⁶⁹. Electrum coins struck in Lydia were in use at the site ca. 600 B.C. or shortly thereafter, and the brightly colored figural and geometric architectural terracottas that begin to appear at the site in the early 6th century are probably a by-product of Lydian influence⁷⁰. The fact that such substantial quantities of Lydian pottery have been found in the fort of Küçük Höyük may also suggest the presence of a Lydian garrison there⁷¹.

In the end, Gordion's sophisticated fortification system and its defenders folded in the face of the mid-6th century Persian attack: a large siege mound similar to the one at Cypriot Paphos is still preserved on the southeast side of Küçük Höyük, and hundreds of trilobate arrowheads discovered within the remains of the fort indicate overwhelming archery fire (fig. 10)⁷². Magnetometry and

65 Anderson 1980; Anderson 2012. Without additional evidence from the area linking the attack specifically to the Cimmerians, however, one can only speculate.

66 Voigt et al. 1997; Voigt – Young 1999.

67 Kohler 1980; Kohler 1995.

68 DeVries 1980; DeVries 1997; DeVries 2005; DeVries 2007; DeVries 2008.

69 Mellink 1992, 648 f.

70 Young 1964, 283. – For Lydian hoard, Bellinger 1968; Åkerström 1966, 136–161. – For architectural terracottas, Glendinning 2005.

71 Young 1958, 141; Greenewalt 2012.

72 Young 1957, 324; Mellink 1959.

electric resistivity have also revealed the existence of a smaller siege mound against the northwest face of Kuştepe, which was reduced to an enormous pile of mudbrick as a consequence of the attack. Only two human skeletons were found in the remains of Küçük Höyük, but the casualties must have been high, as during the Persian attack on Lydian Sardis. With Gordion's two forts subdued, the Persians probably seized control of the city relatively quickly, and the compromised fortifications were never rebuilt.

Yet in this new phase of Persian control, generally referred to as Late Phrygian, the site continued to prosper, with notable new constructions in several areas of the Eastern Mound during the late 6th/early 5th century⁷³. These include the rebuilding of a massive megaron (Building C) next to which was inserted a small and partly subterranean building measuring 4.50 × 3.75 m and dating probably to 500–490 B.C.⁷⁴. The interior featured unusually elaborate decoration, including wall mosaics constructed of polychromatic ceramic pegs as well as several horizontal zones of painted processional friezes. The largest of these featured a procession of human figures, probably arranged in two groups moving along the walls at left and right and meeting on the back wall opposite the door (fig. 15).

Nearly all of the participants are women dressed in brightly colored costumes and adorned with elaborate jewelry – necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. The latter are of a special type with disks attached to ear-caps, as found on the nearly contemporary Polyxena sarcophagus from the Granicus valley⁷⁵. Floral and laurel crowns appear on the heads of the participants, one of whom wears a headdress of griffin protomes that may be a sign of rank. One of the figures raises her right hand toward her lips to enjoin silence, while others carry spouted pitchers with drinking tubes, a few of which are being used by the participants. The evidence as we have it points toward the realm of cult – one in which women figured prominently, and the paintings are, in fact, our sole representations of Phrygian women at Gordion.

More imposing was a radical addition to Building A, generally referred to as the Mosaic Building, which was executed at approximately the same time (figs. 16. 17). The two western rooms of the complex were dismantled and in their place an entirely new suite of rooms was constructed. A stone paved court now led to a large room decorated with an intricate pebble mosaic featuring meander patterns, while identical mosaics were laid in additional rooms at west and south⁷⁶. The walls of the main room appear to have been decorated with mosaics of ceramic pegs, as in the Painted House, and centered on the back wall of the room was a base that probably held a chair or throne. It seems likely that this complex was intended as the headquarters for the region's Persian administrator, which would fit with the Achaemenid-period cylinder seals that were discovered in the immediate vicinity⁷⁷.

Pharnabazos, the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, wintered at Gordion in 408 B.C. with a contingent of Athenians, thereby suggesting a relatively high level of prominence still in place; an earthquake may have occurred shortly thereafter, however, as well as an attack by the Spartan general Agesilaos in 395 B.C.⁷⁸. Although the Hellenica Oxyrhynchia notes that the Spartan attack was unsuccessful, Young's discovery of a profusion of arrowheads within and around the gate probably stems from that attack and serves as an indication of its severity⁷⁹. By the same token, however, it also proves that the citadel's defenses were still functioning.

Several of the Middle Phrygian buildings had been robbed of stone before these events occurred, but the spoliation increased considerably as the 4th century progressed, and the configuration of buildings on the mound became



Fig. 15 Gordion. Detail of the processional frieze in the Painted House, reconstruction drawing

⁷³ DeVries 1990, 400. This included, in addition to the examples cited above, Building M (Edwards 1959, 265), Building E (Young 1955, 5), which featured a hearth constructed of well-cut red stone, Building X (Young 1955, 5; DeVries 1990, 396), and the Yellow House (Edwards 1959, 266 f.).

⁷⁴ For Building C, see Young 1955, 8; Mellink 1980, 91. – For the Painted House, see Mellink 1980.

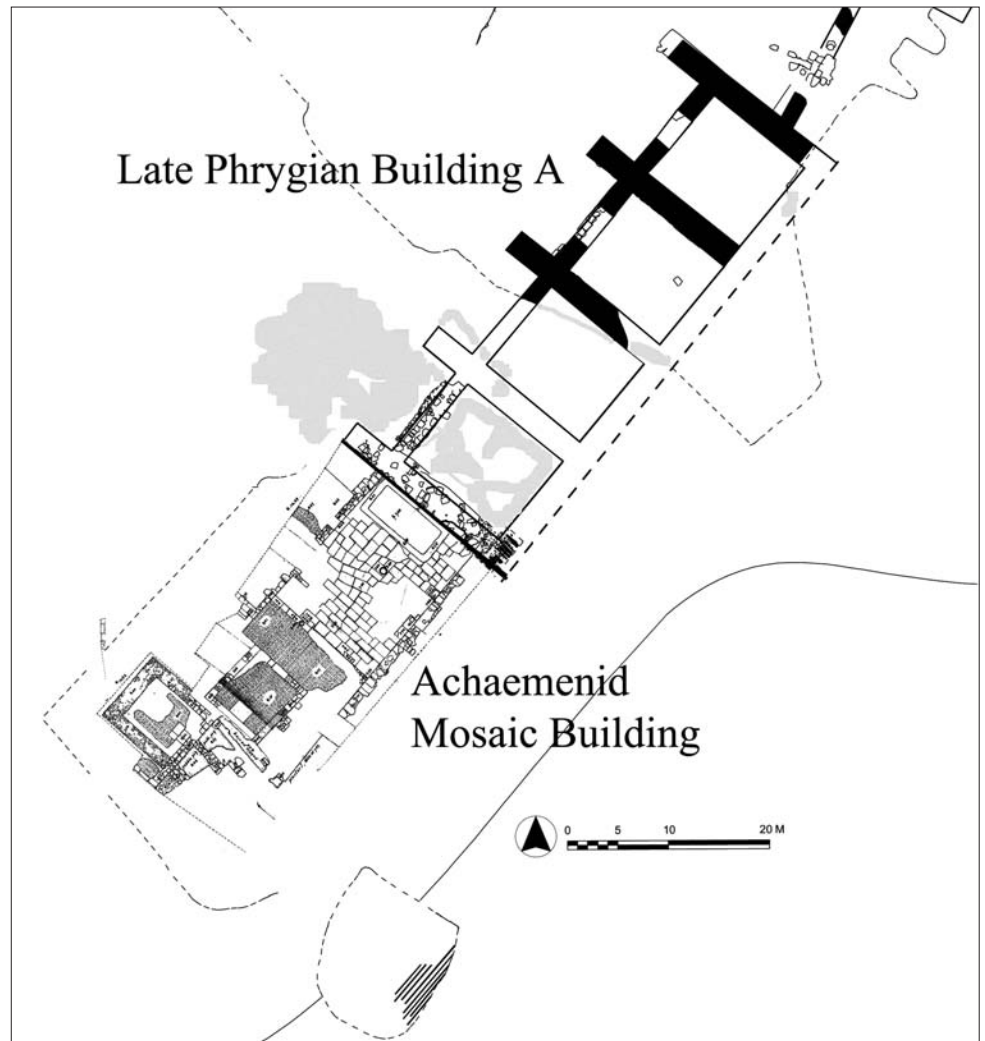
⁷⁵ Sevinç 1996. Similar disk-shaped earrings are worn in the tomb paintings at Aktepe: Özgen – Öztürk 1996, 45 fig. 83.

⁷⁶ Burke 2012.

⁷⁷ Dusinger 2005, 38 no. 8; 41 no. 16; 51–54 no. 33; 65 f. no. 48.

⁷⁸ Hell. Oxy. 1, 4; 21, 6; Young 1955, 6 and 1962, 154 thought that the earthquake dated to the mid 5th century; DeVries 1990, 400 dated to ca. 400 B.C. Building X (DeVries 1990, 396) contained a bridle with ivory and bronze strips, similar to those from Persepolis. It therefore looks as if this structure functioned in part as a storage site for horse gear. For Agesilaos, see Bruce 1967, 141 f.

⁷⁹ Young 1955, 11. A hoard of sigloi with a date range of 420–375 B.C. was almost certainly concealed at the time of the attack (DeVries 1990, 400).



16

Fig. 16.17 Gordion

16 Plan of the Late Phrygian mosaic building (scale 1:750)

17 Detail of the floor of the mosaic building



17

radically transformed as a result⁸⁰. Much of what had been the elite quarter was now devoted to metallurgical activities: a bronze foundry was constructed above the remains of the Painted House, and an ironworking complex was set up nearby⁸¹. Yet none of these changes should be taken as evidence of a depressed economy. There is abundant evidence for the manufacture of alabaster, antler, and bone items, while the number of Greek imports actually increased⁸². Nevertheless, at the time of Alexander's arrival, one of the few prominent buildings still largely intact would have been the ›Mosaic Building‹ adjacent to Building A, and this is perhaps the best candidate for the structure that would have held Gordias' ox-cart with the legendary knot⁸³.

Until this point, the topography of the central part of the city had remained relatively stable, but this too would change in the early Hellenistic period: the central street that had divided the Eastern and Western Mounds was completely filled in, thereby creating a relatively level surface across the entire area that can still be seen today (fig. 1)⁸⁴. Although this would have been a small-scale enterprise by comparison to some of the other public works projects at Gordion, it would still have involved the movement of nearly 14 000 cubic meters of earth. The newly leveled area provided additional space for habitation, and houses were gradually built across it in the course of the Hellenistic period. The reasons for this leveling program were no doubt varied, but one of them may have been the shifting course of the Sakarya in the Lower Town, which probably made habitation there more difficult. Another would have been the increased security that residence on the mound would have supplied, which is a phenomenon that occurred repeatedly at Troy as well.

The mid 3rd century witnessed yet another significant change in the configuration of the settlement as a large group of European Celts arrived in central Asia Minor, which gradually acquired the name ›Galatia‹⁸⁵. Their residence at Gordion was relatively short-lived, however; they abandoned the town in 189 B.C. and were massacred by the Roman general Manlius Vulso shortly thereafter⁸⁶. Subsequent Roman, Byzantine, and Selcuk settlements appear to have been relatively small by comparison to their Phrygian predecessors, although Roman Gordion has been linked to the *statio* of Vinda/Vindia mentioned in ancient road itineraries⁸⁷.

If we examine the character of Gordion's landscape over time, one of the most striking components is the repetition of military conflict involving opposing forces from East and West; nor was that conflict restricted to antiquity: the Sakarya River witnessed a battle as late as 1921 wherein Ottoman forces opposed an eastward march by the Greeks. The principal reason for such conflict was geography – Gordion lay on one of the easiest crossing routes from inland Anatolia to the western coast, and passage in either direction would have required subduing the forces at or around the citadel. The only potent traces of those conflicts today are the remnants of the Persian siege mound at Küçük Höyük and the Turkish memorial at Duatepe, which commemorates the Sakarya River battle of 1921. What has not changed, however, is Gordion's key position on a major east–west route through Anatolia. The main railroad line from Istanbul to Ankara still lies adjacent to Gordion's citadel mound, and passengers continue to be struck by the way in which Tumulus MM towers over the surrounding landscape, just as it did over 2700 years ago.

80 For those well underway by 500 B.C., see Voigt – Young 1999, 202; for those of the mid-5th century, Edwards 1959, 265.

81 For the bronze foundry, see Young 1955, 3. 10; for ironworking, Sams – Voigt 1990, 79; Sams – Voigt 1991, 460; Voigt – Young 1999, 220. 224.

82 Sams – Voigt 1990, 79; Voigt personal communication.

83 Arrian (Arr. Anab. 2, 3) locates the cart and its knot in the Temple of Zeus at the time of Alexander's arrival at the site, but there is no evidence that temples *per se* existed at Gordion, other than (possibly) Megaron 2 during the Early Phrygian period (Mellink 1983).

84 DeVries 1990, 400 f.

85 Arslan 2002; Darbyshire et al. 2000; Dandoy et al. 2002; Voigt 2003; Mitchell 2005.

86 Liv. 38, 18 f.; Grainger 1995.

87 For the Roman settlement, see Goldman 2000; Goldman 2005; for the Medieval settlement, see Sams – Voigt 1997.

AbstractCharles Brian Rose, *Fieldwork at Gordion 1950–2012*

Some of the most dramatic new discoveries in Anatolia have been made at Gordion, the Phrygian capital that controlled much of central Asia Minor for over two centuries and interacted continually with Lydia, Greece, Assyria, Persia, and the Syro-Hittite realm of Tabal, among others. Although for many years its topographical development was regarded as relatively well understood, a recently revised analysis of the site's chronology has transformed what had been interpreted as a Cimmerian attack of ca. 700 B.C. into a conflagration possibly related to new construction that occurred 100 years earlier. As a consequence, the chronology of Phrygian architecture, ceramics, and artifacts has changed dramatically, as has our understanding of the history and archaeology of central Anatolia during the Iron Age. This article presents the most important discoveries that have been made at Gordion since the beginning of fieldwork in 1950, with an emphasis on the material of Phrygian date (ca. 950–330 B.C.).

Keywords

Gordion • Phrygians • Midas • mosaics • tumuli

ZusammenfassungCharles Brian Rose, *Feldforschung in Gordion 1950–2012*

Einige der aufsehenerregendsten neuen Entdeckungen Anatoliens wurden in Gordion gemacht, der phrygischen Hauptstadt, von der aus über mehr als zwei Jahrhunderte ein Großteil Zentralkleinasiens kontrolliert wurde und die kontinuierlich u. a. mit Lydien, Griechenland, Assyrien, Persien und dem syrisch-hethitischen Königreich von Tabal in Verbindung stand. Obwohl die Entwicklung des Geländes bislang als relativ gut erforscht galt, zeigt eine vor Kurzem überarbeitete Untersuchung zur Chronologie des Ortes, dass das, was bisher als kimmerischer Einfall um 700 v. Chr. gedeutet wurde, eine Feuersbrunst war, die wahrscheinlich zu einem neuen Ausbau führte, der einhundert Jahre früher stattfand. Dies hat erhebliche Konsequenzen sowohl für die Chronologie der phrygischen Architektur, Keramik und Artefakte als auch für unser Verständnis der Geschichte und Archäologie Zentralanatoliens in der Eisenzeit. Dieser Beitrag präsentiert die wichtigsten Entdeckungen, die in Gordion seit Beginn der Feldforschungen im Jahr 1950 gemacht wurden, mit Schwerpunkt auf dem Material phrygischer Zeit (ca. 950–330 v. Chr.).

Schlagworte

Gordion • Phrygier • Midas • Mosaike • Tumuli

Sources of illustrations

Figs. 1, 2, 5–8, 10, 13–16: Gordion Excavation Project • Figs. 3, 4: G. Pizzorno – G. Darbyshire • Fig. 9: S. Giese – Ch. Hübner • Fig. 11: Schiering 2003, fig. 1 • Fig. 12: R. Liebhart • Fig. 15: P. de Jong

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