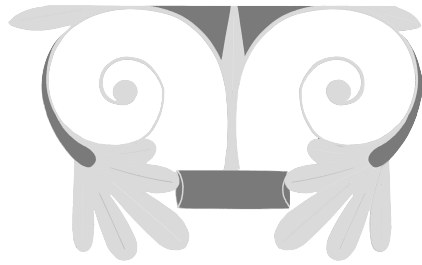


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**ASSOCIAZIONE  
INTERNAZIONALE DI  
ARCHEOLOGIA  
CLASSICA**

Proceedings of the XVIth  
International Congress  
of Classical Archaeology  
Boston, August 23–26, 2003

**Common Ground:  
Archaeology, Art, Science, and Humanities**

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## Greetings to the Participants

I would like to greet all of our colleagues gathered for this extremely important event, thanking the organizers, especially Amy Brauer and David Mitten, as well as Karen Manning, and all of Harvard University, for the enormous labor that they have undertaken to welcome us. I need to apologize for my absence, and for my consequent inability to deliver this message in person – but I leave the task to the vice-president of AIAC, Elizabeth Fentress.

The mission of Classical Archaeology today is the necessary unity of research and of conservation of our classical heritage. These are two faces of the same coin. Today we are called upon to renew our approach with an ever-closer dialogue with the methodologies developed for other scientific disciplines, mathematics, the physical and biological sciences. The theme of this conference is thus entirely apposite.

However, we cannot forget that the interface between cultural heritage and modernity does not take place in laboratories and lecture halls alone, but also, and often with far greater conflict, in the field. The need to protect our monumental heritage and our landscapes, whose importance is incalculable, has daily to deal with the headlong development needs of Western society, and to find ways to collaborate with those needs. At the same time we are threatened by the encroachments of legitimate development, and we have also to cope with the looters who, as we speak, are working in all Mediterranean countries, and whose products end up on the antiquities markets. Here, while the supply-side must be dealt with by local police, we as archaeologists must work to control the demand, by persuading our friends and institutions to stay

away from the purchase of unprovenanced antiquities. Although we all know how difficult this is, a powerful instrument for persuading institutions will be illustrated by Bonnie Magness-Gardiner, in the roundtable on the U.S./Italy Long-Term Loan Program. I hope that AIAC in the future will serve as a site for discussion, for the comparison of individual experiences in Classical Archaeology and historic preservation, and for the refinement of institutional sensibilities. Knowledge and preservation are two different names for the same reality. These are the motivations for two of our current initiatives. The first of these is the project *Fasti on-line*. This important new undertaking, sponsored by the Packard Foundation, is about to begin, and we would be grateful for input from all of you as to the form it should take. Our second new initiative is the new, on-line version of *AIAC News*, which I invite you all to read and respond to – we will be happy to publish your contributions to this and other debates. AIAC should do as much as possible to express the needs of its members, and in turn needs its members to survive. I hope that all of you who are not yet members will consider joining the association.

I would like to finish with a final thought. At Amsterdam we were able to announce Harvard's generous offer to host the next quinquennial meeting. This year no such announcement is possible, although discussions are underway. Thus any institution that is interested in hosting the 2008 meeting should not hesitate to get in touch with us. Candidates will be discussed at the next meeting of the AIAC council, and we welcome your offers.

I wish you a happy and fruitful conference.

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*Paolo Liverani*

*Musei Vaticani, Associazione Internazionale di Archeologia Classica, President 2003–2006*

# Introduction

**The XVIth International Congress of Classical Archaeology** was heralded by a stunning thunderstorm, and lightning struck the hotel, knocking out electricity as participants arrived for the conference (August 23–26, 2003). *Common Ground: Archaeology, Art, Science, and Humanities* attracted an enthusiastic group of over 400 scholars – archaeologists, art historians, and conservation scientists from twenty-five countries. One hundred forty papers, twenty-one posters, eight colloquia and two roundtable sessions presented new research and discoveries on topics including Classical Archaeology, museum studies, site preservation, historiography, and computer technology.

Opening remarks by Paolo Liverani, President of AIAC, were read by the Vice President, Elizabeth Fentress. In his keynote address, *Art, Science, and Unifying Vision in Classical Archaeology*, Professor George L. Huxley of Trinity College, Dublin, discussed the important connections between present and past, and stressed the need for a “unifying vision” in our studies of archaeology, literature, epigraphy, geography, prehistory and history, art, and technology. The collegial atmosphere of the sessions stimulated discussions of topics ranging from epigraphy to iconography, from ancient funerary practices to current directions in conservation, from buildings to cities to landscapes, and beyond. J. Rasmus Brandt, Past President of AIAC, delivered the closing remarks for the congress.

As the editors and organizers of the congress, we are very grateful for the help we have received from the members of the Program Committee and the Planning Committee, and particularly from the Harvard University Art Museums Local Committee whose tireless efforts before, during, and after the Congress ensured its success.

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## **Harvard University Art Museums Local Committee**

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Alexis Tumolo

Generous financial assistance from the following sources made possible the XVIth International Congress of Classical Archaeology: Jerome M. Eisenberg, *Minerva* magazine, Sol Rabin, and Jonathan Rosen.

The publication of these *Proceedings* has been made possible by major contributions from The Jerome Levy Foundation, from James Ottaway, Jr., Peter Aldrich, Harvard University Art Museums, and from the College of Arts and Sciences at George Mason University.

To all of the above individuals and institutions, we are grateful, and we are pleased to present *Common Ground: Archaeology, Art, Science, and Humanities*.

---

*Carol C. Mattusch, George Mason University*  
*A.A. Donohue, Bryn Mawr College*  
*Amy Brauer, Harvard University Art Museums*

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## *Note on Abbreviations Used*

Abbreviations of modern journals and books follow the guidelines of the *American Journal of Archaeology* 104 (2000) 10–24. Ancient authors and works are cited according to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (third ed.; Oxford and New York, 1996) xxix–liv.



## King Midas: History and Archaeology

*Maya Vassileva*

King Midas is a key figure in Phrygian history and in Greek myth. The famous King Midas has been associated both by the ancient authors and by modern scholarship with the kingdom that flourished during the eighth century B.C. in the area near present-day Ankara, Turkey. To the modern mind he is the figure with “the golden touch” or the opera character with the ass’s ears. These highlights are derived from the Greek myths and legends. King Midas was, however, a historical figure.

Herodotus is the first to mention King Midas and his fabulous rose gardens in Macedonia in his account of the origins of the Macedonian dynasty.<sup>1</sup> He is also the first to state that the Thracian tribe of Brygoi migrated to Anatolia, where they changed their name to Phrygoi, or Phrygians.<sup>2</sup> Herodotus’s text determined not only the subsequent written tradition about Phrygia, but the course of modern scholarship as well.

Despite the popularity of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and the story of Midas’s “golden touch” in Roman and medieval times,<sup>3</sup> it seems that the narratives about the captured Silenos being brought in front of King Midas<sup>4</sup> were better known in earlier antiquity. Setting King Midas in a Dionysiac context brings us back to the Thracian-Macedonian affinities. The texts that claim Midas was Kybele’s son<sup>5</sup> accord well with the major role of the Phrygian ruler in the cult of the Mother Goddess as demonstrated by Phrygian epigraphic data.<sup>6</sup>

The name of Midas was the key word in recognizing the Phrygian script and language in 1800.<sup>7</sup> A dedication to Midas, whose name was accompanied by the Mycenaean titles *lawagetas* and *wanax*, was carved on the imposing rock-cut façade at Yazılıkaya, near Eskişehir, nicknamed “Midas City.”<sup>8</sup> Ever since this discovery the Phrygian king has been credited with historical authenticity. The figure of Midas acquired a sharper historical outline when the name of King Mita of Mushki was read in the Assyrian cuneiform texts from the royal correspondence of Sargon II. These documents allowed the identification of Mita with Midas and of the Mushki with the Phrygians from the Greek texts.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Mushki were mentioned in earlier and in later cuneiform texts, the only royal name that has survived is that of Midas.

Gordion, the capital city of Phrygia, situated about 90 km southwest of Ankara, was identified and first excavated by the Körte brothers in 1900.<sup>10</sup> Since the early 1950s the site has been excavated by an American team under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania, first under Rodney S. Young. The many years of work revealed an impressive citadel with a palace complex, megaron buildings, and rooms where different crafts were performed. Recent excavations have exposed parts of the outer city.<sup>11</sup> Many finds and discoveries at Gordion are worth mentioning, but the great archaeological value of the site involves the Destruction Level. At some point the city suffered a major destruction by fire, although the entire area was not affected. Soon the citadel was rebuilt, sealing the ruins of the burned buildings under a thick layer of clay. The disaster provided modern scholarship with an enormous number of different objects which would have otherwise been lost or recycled under normal conditions of everyday life.

In accordance with the historical tradition, the archaeologists were looking for the glorious city of King Midas. Herodotus and the Assyrian texts testify to the disaster suffered by the neighboring kingdom of Lydia from the raids of the nomadic tribe of the Cimmerians.<sup>12</sup> However, nothing is preserved in these accounts about Phrygia or Midas. It is only Strabo who says that Midas committed suicide when the Cimmerians came.<sup>13</sup> It was thus assumed that Phrygia and Gordion had also been attacked before the Cimmerians reached Lydia and the eastern Greek cities.

The later chronographers Eusebius and Julius Africanus dated Midas’s death in 696/5 and in 676/5 B.C. respectively.<sup>14</sup> However, Greek chronography is a Hellenistic achievement, and dates of earlier events were more or less the result of artificial constructs. Nevertheless, the excavators associated the Destruction Level of the Phrygian capital with the Cimmerian attacks and dated it roughly to 700

B.C., thus choosing Eusebius's date.<sup>15</sup> It was accepted that the city of King Midas was buried under the ruins.

There are tens of tumuli in the immediate vicinity of Gordion, over 20 of which have been excavated.<sup>16</sup> The largest one was nicknamed "Midas Mound." It contained a lavish burial in a wooden chamber with hundreds of objects and several exquisite pieces of wooden furniture.<sup>17</sup> However, no gold was found here. Neither the expected name of Midas nor any other royal name or title occurs among the graffiti on the bronze phialai from the tomb. The grave goods "speak strongly of the era of Midas and recall his dealings with the Neo-Hittite sphere."<sup>18</sup> On such grounds, M.J. Mellink and E. Akurgal, among a number of other scholars, advocated the identity of the deceased as King Midas.<sup>19</sup> Young did not believe that a burial of such a scale could have been performed in time of a crisis or catastrophe.<sup>20</sup> The aristocratic or royal status of the buried individual in MM is beyond any doubt. Some scholars have recently been inclined to see Midas's predecessor, presumably named Gordias, as the occupant of the burial chamber, or to leave the question of the identification open.<sup>21</sup>

Although most of the excavated tumuli at Gordion provide intact archaeological complexes, their contribution to the absolute chronology of the site is still limited. The debate on their relative chronology is ongoing, and anchoring the material from the tumuli to the finds from the City Mound poses certain problems. It is generally agreed that Tumulus W is the earliest of those excavated. Young dated it to the end of the ninth century B.C. or slightly later, thus assuming that the sequence of the earliest tumuli was W, MM, III, and P.<sup>22</sup> Colleagues who prepared his posthumous volume on the three early tumuli hold another view, however, placing the biggest tumulus last in this sequence. Later on it was supposed that MM was built after the destruction.

The different nature of the Greek and the Near Eastern written sources on King Midas has long suggested that there was more than one Phrygian ruler bearing this name, and probably Midas and Gordias were alternating royal names in the dynasty.<sup>23</sup> Herodotus's narrative about Adrastos, son of Gordias, son of Midas, in the time of Croesus, and the story of the Gordian knot were among the arguments in favor of this view.<sup>24</sup> However, careful analysis of the written tradition about the Gordian knot strongly suggests that it was an artificial creation of the historians of Alexander the Great.<sup>25</sup> It could only have reflected the general character of Phrygian cult and religion.

Difficulties in dating the rock-cut Phrygian inscriptions became more and more obvious. Dating of the most imposing rock-cut façade with the monumental inscription, the so-called Midas Monument, is still controversial: opinions are divided between the eighth and the sixth centuries B.C.; in the latter case a posthumous worship of the great Phrygian ruler is assumed.<sup>26</sup> Midas's name appeared also on the so-called "Black Stones" from Tyana, considered to be among

the earliest Old Phrygian inscriptions.<sup>27</sup> However, no secure historical or epigraphic data are available for another King Midas. Nor has any other Phrygian royal name been provided by epigraphic evidence.

Recent progress in the archaeological studies at Gordion changed the initial view about the scale of the catastrophe at the site. The citadel was soon rebuilt, and it is clear that the destruction did not terminate either the Phrygian polity or Gordion itself. Doubts were expressed about the Cimmerians as the invaders. Suggestions about an accidental fire or a destruction by the Assyrians were also offered.<sup>28</sup> In 2001, the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences Laboratory gave a C14 date for some new samples from the Destruction Level that are a century earlier than those previously obtained.<sup>29</sup> The dendrochronology of the site has several times been corrected; most recently it has been suggested that the logs used for the burial chamber in the Midas Mound were cut within the range of c. 740  $\pm$  4/-7 B.C., while construction timbers from Terrace Building 2A are now dated to c. 883  $\pm$  4/-7 B.C.<sup>30</sup> Many problems remain, however, concerning the possible reuse of timbers on the city mound, in addition to the seasonal variations that could have affected the eighth century B.C. radiocarbon dates. The current belief is that the new dating would not affect the dates of the tumuli.

Although only briefly announced and not yet discussed in detail, the new dates for Gordion were readily accepted, probably because of the previously expressed doubts and changed interpretation.<sup>31</sup> However, objections to the new dates have also been stated on the grounds of artifactual analysis.<sup>32</sup>

If the new dating of the Gordion Destruction Level is convincingly argued in future scholarly writing, then the glorious architecture and finds cannot be associated with the era of Midas. In this case, the city of the famous Phrygian ruler would turn out to be much less well documented than previously believed. The situation demonstrates how difficult it is to use archaeological data for a historical reconstruction of the past of a non-literary society, and how changeable our views of the ancient world are, even when the finds are very abundant. Both the legendary and the historical King Midas remain elusive in Phrygian archaeology.

## Notes

1. Hdt. 8.138.
2. Hdt. 7.73.
3. Ov. *Met.* 11. 85–193.
4. FGrHist 115 F 75; 14 F 3.
5. Hyg. *Fab.* 191.1; 274.6; Plut. *Caes.* 9.3.
6. C. Brixhe and M. Lejeune, *Corpus des inscriptions paléophrygiennes*, Paris 1984, M–01a, c–e; T–02b.
7. W.M. Leake, *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor: With Comparative Remarks on the Ancient and Modern Geography of that Country*, London 1824; second ed. repr. Hildesheim and New York 1976.

8. Brixhe and Lejeune 1984 (supra n. 6), M-01a.
9. H. Winckler, *Die Reiche von Kilikien und Phrygien im Lichte der altorientalischen Inschriften. Altorientalische Forschungen* II.2, Leipzig 1898, 131–137.
10. G. and A. Körte, *Gordion. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabung im Jahre 1900*, Berlin 1904.
11. M. Voigt and R. Henrickson, "Formation of the Phrygian State: The Early Iron Age at Gordion," *AnatSt* 50, 2000, 39.
12. Hdt. 1.15–16; the Assyrian texts have been discussed most recently by A.I. Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, Fribourg and Göttingen 1993, 95–105.
13. Strab. 1.3.21.
14. Hieron. *Chron.* 92a Helm.
15. Young had attributed the Destruction Level to the Cimmerians in the early seventh century B.C. (R.S. Young, "Gordion – 1950," *UPMB* 16.1, 12), but c. 700 B.C. was later specified: cf. G.K. Sams, *The Early Phrygian Pottery. The Gordion Excavations, 1950–1973. Final Reports IV*, Philadelphia 1994, 1, 194.
16. R.S. Young, *Three Great Early Tumuli. The Gordion Excavations Final Reports 1*, Philadelphia 1981; E. Kohler, *The Lesser Tumuli. Part 1. The Inhumations. The Gordion Excavations, 1950–1973. Final Reports 2*, Philadelphia 1995.
17. Young 1981 (supra n.16), 102–190.
18. Sams 1994 (supra n. 16), 17.
19. E. Akurgal, "Chronologie der phrygischen Kunst," *Anatolia* 4, 1959, 115–121; M.J. Mellink, "Conclusions," in Young 1981 (supra n. 16), 271–272.
20. Young 1981 (supra n. 16), 102.
21. O.W. Muscarella, "The Iron Age Background to the Formation of the Phrygian State," *BASOR* 299–300, 1995, 99, n. 13.
22. Young 1981 (supra n. 16), 102, 109, 199, 232; Muscarella 1995 (supra n. 21), 97, 99, n. 12: c. 750/740 B.C.
23. Körte 1904 (supra n. 10), 25–26; S. Eitrem, "Midas," *RE* II. 15, 1931, 1526–1540; Muscarella 1995 (supra n. 21), 97–99.
24. Hdt. 1.35; Just. *Epit.* 11.7.3–16; Curt. 3.1.18; Arr. *Anab.* 2.3.1–8, Plut. *Alex.* 18.
25. M. Vassileva, "King Midas and the Gordion Knot," *Thracia* 15, 2003, 371–382.
26. Brixhe and Lejeune 1984 (supra n. 6), 6; G.K. Sams, "Midas of Gordion and the Anatolian Kingdom of Phrygia," *CANE* 2, New York 1995, 1156.
27. M.J. Mellink, "Midas in Tyana," in *Florilegium Anatolicum. Mélanges offerts à Emanuel Laroche*, Paris 1979, 249–257.
28. K. DeVries, "The Assyrian Destruction of Gordion?" *AJA* 102, 1998, 397; Voigt and Henrickson 2000 (supra n. 11), 51–52.
29. K. DeVries, P.I. Kuniholm, G.K. Sams and M.M. Voigt, "New Dates for Iron Age Gordion," *Antiquity* 77, no. 296, 2003, Project Gallery (<http://antiquity.ac.uk/ProjGall/devries/devries.html>).
30. S.W. Manning, B. Kromer, P.I. Kuniholm and M. W. Newton, "Anatolian Tree Rings and a New Chronology for the East Mediterranean Bronze – Iron Ages," *Science* 294, December 2001, 2532–2535.
31. K. Strobel, "Menschenopfer und Kannibalismus," *AntW* 33, 2002, 489; C. Brixhe, "Corpus des inscriptions paléophrygiennes. Supplément I," *Kadmos* 41, 2002, 24–29.
32. O.W. Muscarella, "The Date of the Destruction of the Early Phrygian Period at Gordion," *Ancient West and East* 2.2, 2003, 225–252.