

PHRYGIAN FURNITURE FROM GORDION¹

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Plates 58-63

Gordion, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Phrygia, was ruled at the height of its power in the eighth century BC by the rich and famous King Midas, a ruler whose influence was felt far beyond the boundaries of the Phrygian state (Roller 1983; 1984). Midas was well known in the ancient world, appearing in Assyrian records as Mita, King of Mushki,² an enemy and then ally of Sargon II, who also had dealings with the kingdoms of Carchemish, Tabal, Que and Urartu. Midas was known to the early Greeks as well. Herodotus reports that Midas was the first foreigner to dedicate an offering at the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi: he dedicated a piece of furniture, the throne from which he gave judgment, which Herodotus claims was ἄξιοθέητος, 'well worth seeing' (Herodotus 1.14). The Phrygians, then, were cosmopolitan; the Phrygian king gave a prestigious gift to at least one neighbouring nation and probably received such gifts from foreign states as well. Yet the art of the Phrygians shows little direct influence from abroad. This is nowhere more clearly evident than in the furniture recovered from the site of Gordion, which is made in a uniquely Phrygian style and is, in many respects, quite unlike any other furniture known from the ancient world.

The remains of more than fifty pieces of wooden furniture have been recovered in the excavation of four tumuli and the City Mound at Gordion. The first group of pieces was found in Tumulus III, excavated in 1900 by Gustav and Alfred Körte. Unfortunately, the excavation of the tomb was not well recorded. Four pieces of furniture are identified in the excavation report by brief description only, without detailed information about the placement of the fragments on the tomb floor (Körte & Körte 1904, 43-53). The published photographs show wood fragments not *in situ* but after their removal

¹ The reassessment presented in this volume has been made possible by the hard work and dedication of the members of the Gordion Furniture Project team of archaeologists, conservators and scientists. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged here. The work of Rodney S. Young and the archaeologists who excavated Tumulus MM and cared for the furniture must also be acknowledged. Our present understanding is based ultimately on their early attempts to appreciate what they had found. The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, has sponsored the work of the Gordion Furniture Project; and the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara, and the General Directorate of Monuments and Museums of Turkey have provided access to the furniture and have helped to further our progress in countless ways. Many friends, colleagues and benefactors to the project have provided essential support, without which our work could not have been accomplished. Finally, I wish to thank Georgina Herrmann, whose interest in and knowledge of ancient furniture have been an inspiration.

All drawings and photographs are by the author except Figs. 1 and 6 and Pls. 58, 59a and 63b (courtesy of the Gordion Excavations, The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania) and Pl. 62a, b (reprinted from E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens, von Homer bis Alexander*, pls. 67 and 54, courtesy of Ekrem Akurgal).

² Scholars have generally accepted the identification of Mita with Midas, although the relationship between the kingdom of Mushki and that of the western Phrygians is a matter of debate (Mellink 1965, Muscarella 1989, *et al.*).

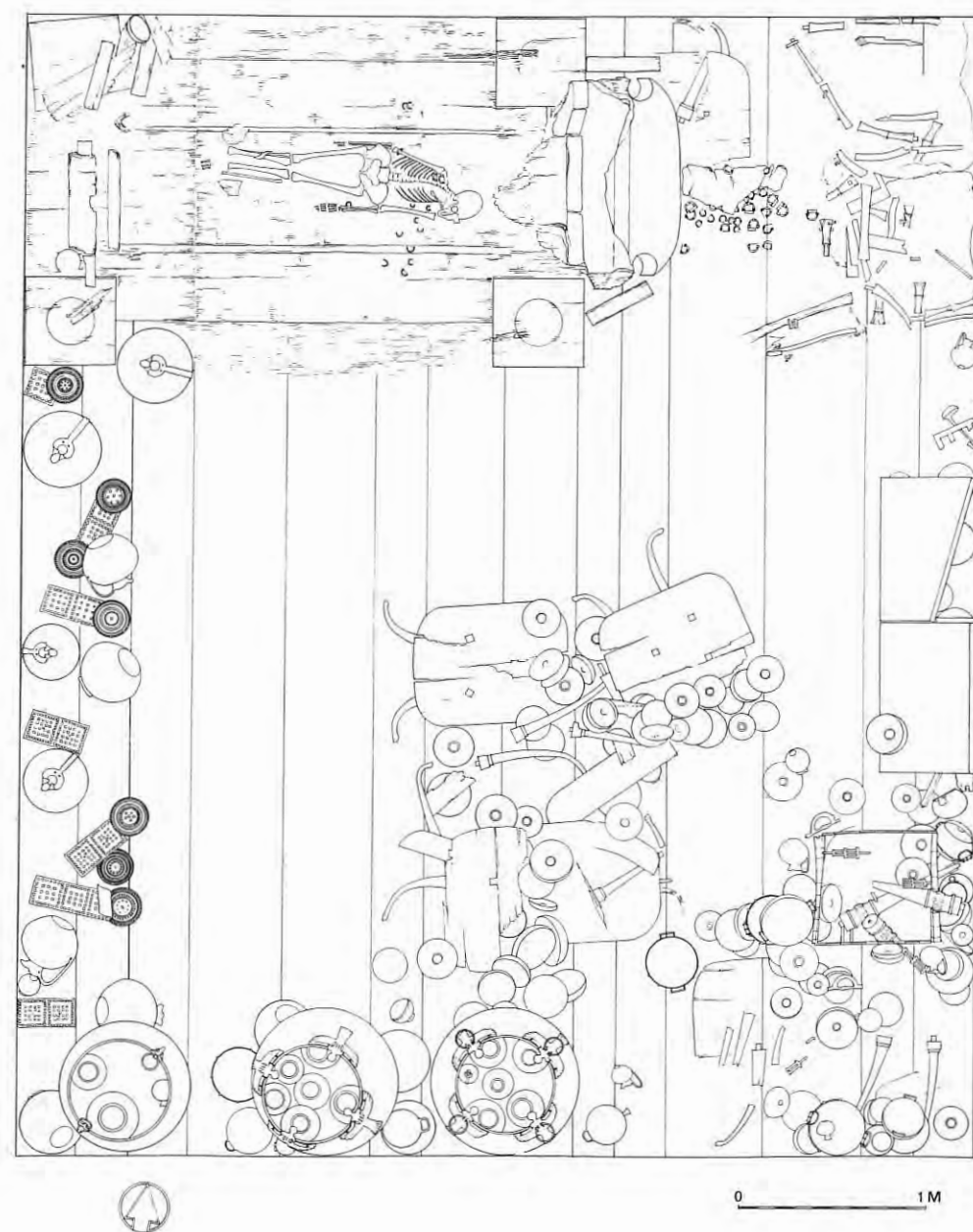


Fig. 1. Plan of the Tumulus MM chamber.

from the tomb (Körte & Körte 1904, figs. 6, 9-15). The excavators thought that they had found a 'sarcophagus', a 'kline' or bier, and two chairs, although it seems likely that at least some of these identifications are incorrect.³ The surviving pieces, in the Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, are fragmentary and cannot now provide much additional information. The published photographs suggest that the furniture buried in Tumulus III included several pieces similar to those that would be uncovered in subsequent excavations.

The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania began excavating at Gordion in 1950 under the direction of Rodney S. Young, and work continued at the site under Young's direction until 1973. It was during this period that the most important finds of ancient furniture were recovered. Fortunately, these finds were well documented. Even though many of Young's initial interpretations have had to be revised, this has been possible, in most cases, by reference to the field notebooks and the many *in situ* drawings and photographs made at the time of excavation. The furniture was found in three important tombs, Tumulus MM, Tumulus P and Tumulus W – excavated in 1957, 1956, and 1959 respectively – and in the destruction level of the City Mound. All of these contexts, including Tumulus III excavated in 1900, have been dated to the eighth century BC.⁴

TUMULUS MM

Tumulus MM, the largest tumulus in the Gordion necropolis, stands today approximately 53 metres high, with a diameter of nearly 300 metres. The huge mound of earth covered a wooden tomb chamber that may have been the tomb of Midas himself. The tomb's occupant was buried with a rich array of finds (Fig. 1): 170 bronze vessels, including large cauldrons on iron stands, small cauldrons, ladles, jugs, situlae, and bowls; 10 bronze and leather belts; beads and pendants; more than 180 bronze fibulae; 18 pottery vessels filled with the remains of food; and at least 15 pieces of wooden furniture. As the Tumulus MM chamber was intact at the time of excavation, the wooden furniture was found in relatively good condition, due in part to the fairly low humidity that had prevailed inside the sealed chamber. The Tumulus MM furniture may therefore be used to begin this discussion, as it forms a corpus of Phrygian furniture on which interpretations of more fragmentary pieces from other contexts can be based.

The Tumulus MM chamber was built up from floor level without doors, indicating that the furniture and other grave offerings must have been lowered into the chamber from above at the time of burial (Young 1981, 94). Most of the furniture had been placed against the walls. The collection was interpreted by the excavators as follows: a massive four-poster 'bed' in the north west corner of the tomb (Pl. 58a); three badly deteriorated pieces of furniture, possibly stools, in the north east corner; eight 'plain' tables in the north, centre and south east of the chamber (Pl. 58b); an elaborately carved and inlaid table, found near the east wall, whimsically named the 'Pagoda Table' by Young (Pl. 59a); and two standing 'screens' found near the inlaid table, thought by Young to have been 'throne backs' in front of which the great monarch would have held audience, seated on fine

³ The excavators report that Tumulus IV also contained a 'sarcophagus', of which only the bronze fittings survived (Körte & Körte 1904, 100-01).

⁴ For the location of these tumuli see Young 1981, fig. 1. Tumulus III is designated as K-III on the plan.

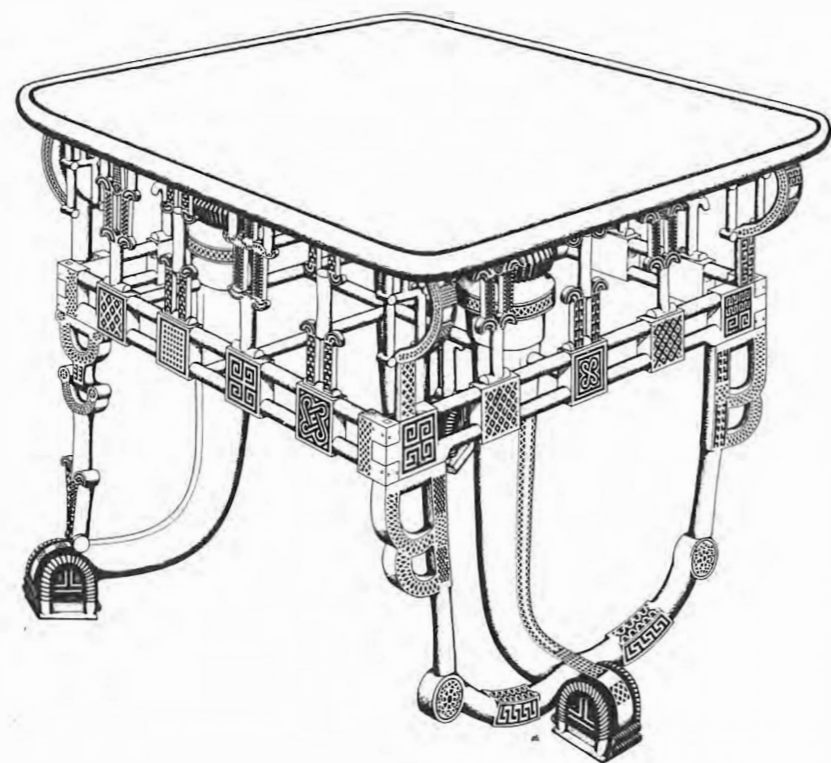


Fig. 2. Reconstruction drawing of the inlaid table, Tumulus MM.

cushions on the floor (Pl. 60a). The furniture was photographed, drawn and published in these interpretations (Young 1974; 1981, published posthumously), which found their way into a number of other publications (Baker 1966, 226-32; Meiggs 1982, 458-61; *et al.*). A programme to conserve⁵ and restudy the furniture was begun in 1981, and many of Young's interpretations have now been superseded.⁶

The Inlaid Table, Tumulus MM

The first piece to be restudied was the inlaid table, with surprising results. In Young's opinion, the design of the table had left something to be desired (Young 1974, 9):

'It was the dowels and tenons and mortises which afforded the clues which enabled us to reconstruct the whole and reveal it in its full horror. However much it may revolt us it must be admitted nevertheless that it is from a technical point of view a masterpiece of the cabinet-maker's craft and certainly worth looking at.'

⁵ The conservation of the furniture is discussed at length in a number of publications (Payton 1984; Simpson & Payton 1986; Simpson, Spirydowicz & Dorge 1992), to which the reader is referred. Results of wood species and wood pathology analyses have also been published (Aytuğ 1986 and 1988, Aytuğ & Görcelioğlu 1988, Aytuğ & Pehlivan 1989, Blanchette *et al.* 1991, and Blanchette & Simpson 1992). In the interest of space, these subjects will not be treated in detail here. The conservation and study of the furniture from the University of Pennsylvania excavations at Gordion is carried out in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara.

⁶ The furniture from Tumulus MM, its conservation and related scientific studies will be published in E. Simpson, *The Wooden Furniture from Tumulus MM at Gordion, Turkey*. The University Museum, Philadelphia (forthcoming).

An examination of the excavation photographs showed, however, that it was not the design of the table that was faulty, but the reconstruction drawing published by Young (Young 1981, fig. 109). Poorly drawn and incorrect in its detail, it gave a completely erroneous impression of what was actually a well designed, finely crafted, highly imaginative creation. When the table was correctly drawn, its reputation could be redeemed (Fig. 2), and it has since taken its place among the masterpieces of ancient Near Eastern art (Simpson 1983). The table was reconstructed on a Plexiglas mount (Pl. 59b) and is now on display in the Phrygian section of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara.⁷

The inlaid table was a portable banquet table with four handles and a tray-shaped top.⁸ It was constructed from 40 major components, all expertly fitted together with mortise-and-tenon joinery. The table had three legs, ensuring its stability on the uneven floors that must have been common in antiquity. The legs supported the square frame and table top by means of an elaborate system of carved strutwork and interior dowels. Although tables with decorative strutwork were made elsewhere in the ancient world (Baker 1966, figs. 294, 304-05; *et al.*), the inlaid table from Tumulus MM stands alone in terms of the complexity and originality of its design. The frame pieces, top struts, legs and leg struts were all inlaid profusely with geometric patterns, incorporating squares, diamonds, triangles, hooks, rosettes, a pendant half-circle and even miniature mazes (Simpson 1988, 28-29). A wood species analysis has determined that the wood of the frame and legs was boxwood, the inlay juniper, and the top walnut (Aytuğ 1986 and 1988;⁹ see Hepper pp. 6, 3 and 7 above). The table had once had corner pieces that were removed in antiquity; also missing were sections of inlay that had been chipped out of the table's four handles. These missing pieces were probably made of precious metal, removed because of their intrinsic value, although the circumstances of their removal cannot now be reconstructed.

Eight Plain Tables, Tumulus MM

The eight plain tables from Tumulus MM were found collapsed on the tomb floor among the scatter of bronze vessels that had once been placed upon them (Pl. 58b). Like the inlaid table, they had tray-shaped tops, indicating that they, too, were banquet tables used to serve food. The eight tables ranged in height from c. 47-55 cm., were similar in form, each with a rectangular top and three legs. The two rear legs of individual tables curved out in various directions: toward the sides, the corners, or, in one case, the back. The legs were probably made from naturally curved or trained branches; there is as yet no conclusive evidence for steam bending in the furniture from Gordion. The means of joining the legs to the table tops was distinctive, resembling leg joinery of furniture from the Middle Bronze Age tombs at Jericho (Kenyon 1960, 530, and see Parr pp. 42-43 above), Urartian furniture from Adilcevaz (Öğün 1982, pls. 21, 26c) and the furniture from the Pazyryk tombs in Siberia, now dated to the fourth-third centuries BC (Rudenko 1970, pls. 50,

⁷ The table was first mounted in 1983 (Simpson & Payton 1986) and remounted in 1989 (Pl. 59b) because of difficulties with the original mount.

⁸ The original height of the table was approximately 64 cm.; the table top measured approximately 78 cm. square.

⁹ In this article, several of the early drawings published by Young (Young 1981) have been attributed incorrectly to E. Simpson (Aytuğ 1988, figs. 4, 6 and 7).

51, 52d; Muscarella 1991).¹⁰ A square tenon extended up from the top of each leg, this was fitted into a mortise cut into a round collar that extended down from the table top, and the leg was secured in the collar with a peg that passed through the entire collar-and-tenon joint. The legs of the plain tables were made of boxwood; the table tops were walnut (Aytuğ 1986 and 1988), except for the top of Table 6, which has now been identified as maple.¹¹

The Inlaid Serving Stands, Tumulus MM

The two 'screens' or 'throne backs', called Screens A and B by Young, were found leaning against the east wall of the Tumulus MM chamber (Pl. 60a). Behind them had fallen pieces of their wooden back structures, which Young had recognized without understanding their purpose. The faces of the screens were made of boxwood, inlaid with juniper (Aytuğ 1986; 1988). Thousands of tiny inlaid diamonds and triangles formed a kind of lattice that surrounded the inlaid square designs that covered most of the expanse of the surface. In the lower part of each screen was an inlaid rosette-like medallion, surrounded by a circular, bevelled border (Pl. 60b). Above this was a pendant half-circle, connected to the rosette by two arcs. The rosette-like design on each screen was supported visually by two curved leg-like elements. These were made of walnut and had begun to deteriorate by the time the tomb was excavated.

The inlay was finely executed, and although much of the wood of the inlay was shrunken and damaged, the overall beauty of the original designs is still evident in many areas (Pl. 60b). The inlay was accomplished by the following method: patterns were scribed into the surface of the wood with a sharply pointed tool; channels and recesses were drilled and then hollowed out; inlay was cut and tapped into place in the recesses; finally, the wood was planed or otherwise smoothed down to a finished surface. Some of the original scribe marks are still visible, and the pricks of the compass used to lay out the central rosettes can be seen at the centre of each circle (Pl. 60b). The faces of the screens were assembled by means of mortise-and-tenon joinery. Tenons were cut from the ends of boards, extending out in the direction of the grain; these were fitted into mortises cut into adjacent boards and secured with wooden pegs. Where two boards butted edge to edge, floating tenons (or flat dowels) were inserted into mortises cut into the edges of both boards, and these were secured with pegs. Graffiti were found cut into several of the tenons from both screens (Pl. 60c). The markings include straight lines, diamonds, compass-drawn circles, rosettes, and even letters. These marks seem to have been made in preparation for scribing the designs to be inlaid, either in order to test the tools or to adjust the spacing for patterns. Whatever their purpose, they were not meant to be seen once the screens had been assembled.

The most remarkable feature of the square designs that cover the surface of the screens' faces is the character of the symmetry used to construct them. ● Of the 208 square designs on Screen A and the 192 designs on Screen B, most are variations of a small number of designs that are symmetrical with respect to rotations of 180°. Designs with this symmetry, as typified by the simplest, a swastika with a broken central bar (Pl. 60d), will reproduce themselves only when rotated 180°. Any other manipulation of the

¹⁰ The comparanda are outlined in Simpson, 'Furniture in Ancient Western Asia', *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (forthcoming)

¹¹ This identification supersedes that listed in previous publications (pcrs. comm., R. Blanchette 1994).

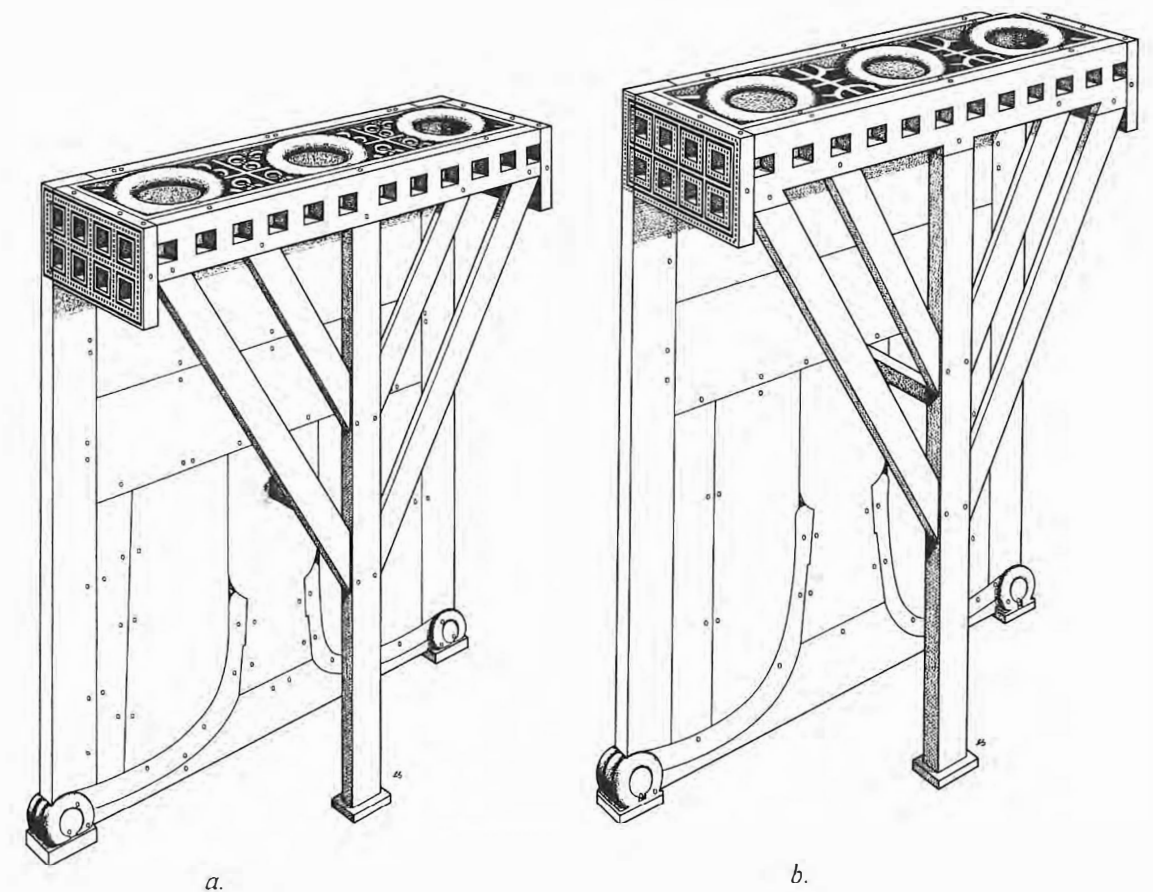


Fig. 3. Reconstruction drawings of the serving stands, Tumulus MM, back views: a. Screen B; and b. Screen A.

design will produce something different. The Phrygian craftsmen knew this and played with the designs; (1) rotating them 90°, (2) flipping them around their central axis, and (3) rotating them 90° and then flipping them, thus introducing great variety to a basic underlying scheme. The rotational impulse inherent in the square designs, themselves bounded by the rectilinear lattice of diamonds and triangles, created a dynamic tension in the overall effect. It is this subliminal sense of the dynamic that sets Phrygian design apart from that of other ancient peoples (Simpson 1988).

The screens were obviously important objects, but their function had not been recognized. When properly reconstructed in drawings (Fig. 3), the purpose of the Tumulus MM screens can be understood.¹² Both screens had top shelves made of walnut, which were supported by straight back legs¹³ and diagonal struts made of boxwood. Each top shelf was carved in one piece, the design incorporating three open rings. The upper surfaces of the rings were darkened and dented, suggesting that they had once held objects; what these objects might have been can be ascertained

¹² The preserved height of both serving stands is 94 cm.

¹³ Nothing remains of these back legs. They have been reconstructed in the drawings, based on evidence from the adjoining pieces.

from the screens' context. Found nearby in the tomb were five pairs of small, round-bottomed bronze cauldrons (Young 1981, pls. 58-59: MM4-13), two bronze ladles (Young 1981, pl. 64: MM47-48), and many bronze bowls. The bronzes must have been used with the screens, the rings of the top shelves acting as supports for the vessels. The 'screens' were elaborate serving stands with screen-like faces, functioning as pieces of banquet furniture along with the nine tables found in the tomb. The two stands have been reconstructed on Plexiglas mounts and are on display in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara (Simpson, Spirydowicz & Dorge 1992, figs. 13-14, 16).

Seen from the back, each stand appears to have three legs, like the three-legged tables, although two of the 'legs' are incorporated into the design of the front face of the stand. The feet of these curved legs are abstract versions of Phrygian lion's paws, as shown by comparison with the feet of two stone lions from the City Mound at Gordion (Pl. 61a). The curved front 'legs' of the serving stands recall the curved legs of the inlaid table. The legs of the table, then, must also have lion-paw feet, although in a much more elaborately stylized version. Lion's legs are found on furniture in Egypt and throughout the ancient Near East, but only in Phrygia are the natural forms abstracted almost beyond recognition.

Furniture from the North East Corner, Tumulus MM

In the north east corner of the chamber were found the deteriorated remains of several pieces of carved wooden furniture (Young 1981, pl. 43b). With these were found clumps of pink and purple textiles, suggesting that cushions may have been used with the furniture. Various fragments, including legs of three sizes – 'short', 'medium' and 'long' – were recorded and photographed at the time of excavation. Young suggested that these had belonged to three stools. The remains are now extremely degraded, with only one of the legs surviving intact. The leg is made of boxwood, approximately 19 cm. tall, with two mortises cut near the top at right angles to one another. Young associated several fragments with this leg, including one long and two shorter 'slat-like' pieces. All three have survived, with much of their joinery preserved. Whether they belonged to the same piece of furniture as the short legs is uncertain. It is clear, however, that they once fitted together

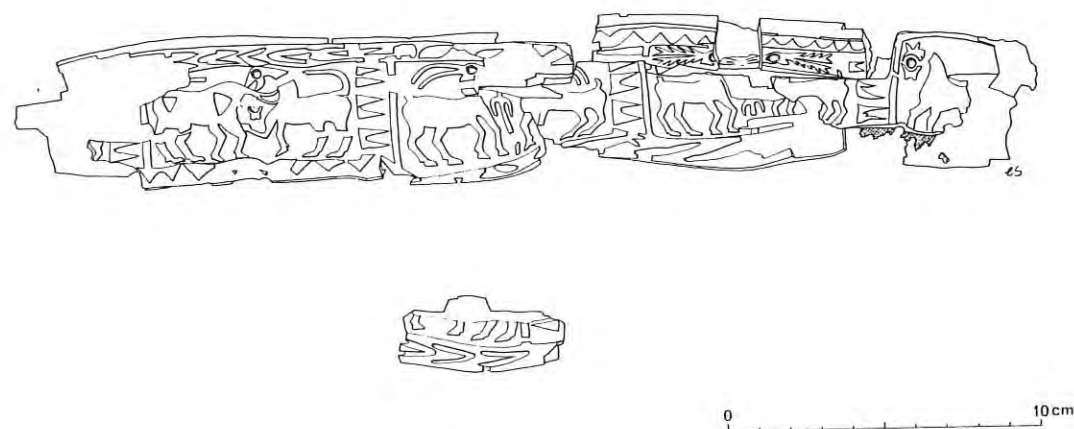


Fig. 4. Drawing of the carved stretcher from the north east corner, Tumulus MM.

to form the back of a seat or the head of a bed. The long 'slat-like' piece, now fragmentary, was a horizontal stretcher that was supported from below by two vertical slats. The stretcher was thought by Young to be undecorated, but when brought out for study, one face was found to be carved. Small, lively animals are depicted in panels, including a bull and lion in combat, two goats flanking a tree, two deer flanking a tree, and a horse (Fig. 4). Although the full extent of the design cannot be reconstructed, the surviving fragments are precious: they constitute the only remaining figurative carving from the Tumulus MM burial (Simpson 1993). The wood of the carved stretcher has been identified as boxwood (Aytuğ 1986; 1988).

The King's 'Bed'

The king buried in the Tumulus MM chamber had been laid to rest on what Young thought was a massive, four-poster bed (Pl. 58a), used in the palace during the king's lifetime and then placed in the tomb for his use after death (Young 1974, 3-4; 1981, 187-90). The wood had deteriorated, and the 'bed' had collapsed on the tomb floor, covered with clumps of degraded textiles. As Young excavated the remains, he formulated the details of what he understood to be the bed's construction (Young 1981, fig. 112). According to Young's interpretation, the platform of the bed was made from five planks of varying widths, with two planks set on edge at the sides to support the outermost planks of the platform. Four cubical blocks were set in at the corners; in the tops of these blocks were shallow, round cuttings, beddings for four thin posts that Young thought might have supported a canopy, although no remains of one were found. A headboard and footboard were supported at the two ends of the bed by iron bars that were socketed into the inner faces of the corner blocks. Two long, inlaid side rails rose from the outer edges of the platform, stretching between the corner blocks at the head and foot of the bed (Young 1981, figs. 112-13).

This interpretation was found to be problematic, however, when considered along with the *in situ* photographs. Most difficult to reconcile with Young's reconstruction was the position of the side rails, which were actually found underneath the remains of wood and textiles on the tomb floor. The rails, which were supposed to have been socketed into the top of the platform, were said to have fallen to the floor, moved in under the platform and then been covered by debris on the bed's collapse – an impossible scenario for inanimate objects (Gordion notebook 63, 192-93). In an attempt to understand this important piece of furniture better, a new study was initiated, and the remains of the bed were located at Gordion. The 'headboard' was found, although investigation showed that the piece was not a headboard but part of a much larger object. It soon became evident that this object had been made from a huge cedar log with the 'headboard' oriented horizontally: the 'bed' was an open log coffin, and the 'headboard' and 'footboard' were horizontal ledges extending out at both ends (Fig. 5).¹⁴ The iron bars had been anchored to the ledges, serving to reinforce the log to keep it from splitting. The 'corner blocks' were large,

¹⁴ The degraded wood of the surviving fragments has been difficult to analyze. Successive tests have resulted in the wood of the coffin body being identified as cedar or yew (Aytuğ 1986; 1988), yew (Simpson 1990) and finally correctly identified as cedar (Blanchette & Simpson 1992). The corner-block wedges were identified as yew (Aytuğ 1986; 1988; Simpson 1990) and then correctly as pine (Blanchette & Simpson 1992). The wood of the rails has been tentatively identified as boxwood and yew. The coffin body as reconstructed was approximately 3.24 m. long and 1.07 m. wide.

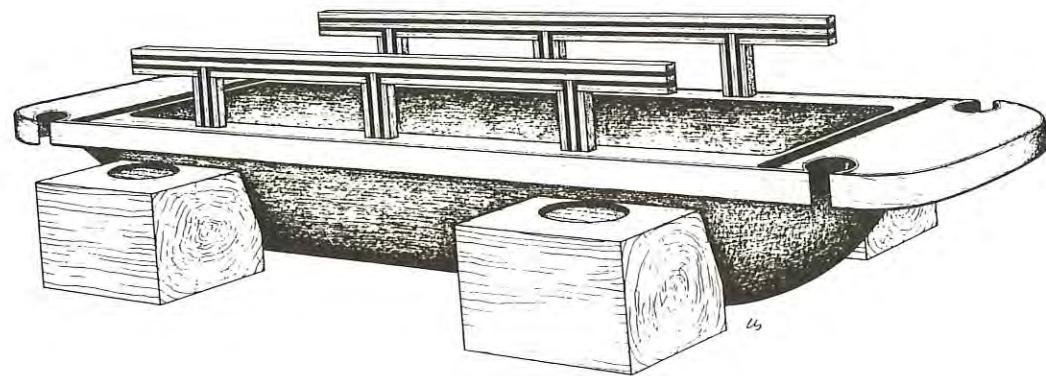


Fig. 5. Reconstruction drawing of the king's coffin, Tumulus MM, as assembled for the funeral ceremony before the burial.

block-like wedges, pushed up against the sides of the coffin to steady the rounded body. The shallow cuttings in the blocks' top surfaces did not hold thin posts: the 'posts' were pieces of wood that had broken off from the sides of the coffin body.¹⁵ The rails must have originally fitted into the sides of the coffin, although their position on the tomb floor still seemed problematic.

When the excavation photographs and drawings were reviewed, the reason for Young's confusion became clear: the coffin had been placed in the tomb chamber with its parts disassembled, and the position of the pieces on the floor had not reflected the form of the assembled object. At the time of burial, the rails had been set down on the floor to either side of the coffin, and two of the block-like wedges had been placed not against the coffin body but near the tomb's west wall, not serving their intended function. This indicated that the coffin must have been assembled elsewhere before it was used for the burial. The king must have lain in state during a funeral ceremony held outside the tomb, after which the huge coffin was taken apart, its pieces lowered down into the tomb chamber, placed on the floor in an orderly way, and the body lowered in (Simpson 1990). The contents of the tomb chamber, which included many bronze cauldrons, ladles, jugs and bowls, the remains of food, and at least eleven pieces of banquet furniture, seem to indicate a feast. Was this a funerary banquet held outside the tomb in conjunction with the ceremony, the furnishings subsequently buried with the king?

TUMULUS P

Tumulus P, the burial of a young child, was excavated in 1956.¹⁶ The roof of the wooden tomb chamber had collapsed under the earth of the mound, crushing many of the objects inside and hampering systematic excavation. The objects were removed piece by piece, a list of finds was

¹⁵ The function of the cuttings in the tops of the blocks is still not well understood. They might have held inlay, although none was recovered.

¹⁶ The height of Tumulus P at the time of excavation was approximately 12 m.; the diameter was approximately 70 m.

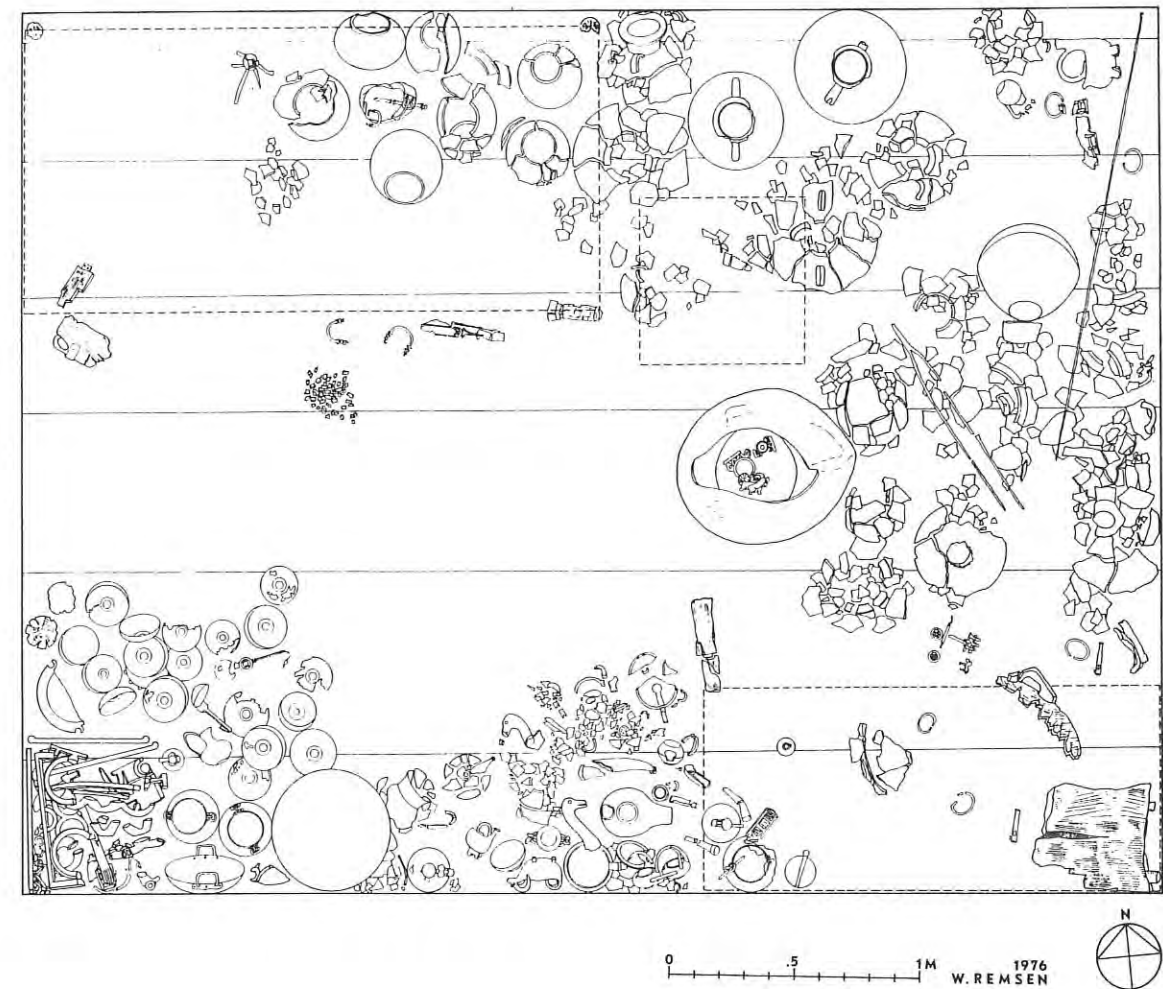


Fig. 6. Reconstructed plan of the Tumulus P chamber.

compiled, and a plan was subsequently reconstructed, in part from photographs, in an attempt to locate each of the finds in its proper position on the tomb floor (Fig. 6). The rich burial contained bronze cauldrons, ladles, jugs, bowls, belts, fibulae and a miniature quadriga; iron implements; glass, glazed and pottery vessels; and many wooden artefacts. Although much of the wood was broken and badly degraded, enough remained to allow almost all of the finds to be identified. They included 12 miniature animals, five spoons, one ladle, 27 vessels and lids, a fan, a parasol and more than 22 pieces of fine furniture. The collection of wooden artefacts is the most comprehensive from Gordion, adding much to our understanding of types and styles of Phrygian furniture.¹⁷

The child was buried at the north west of the tomb, lying on a carved, inlaid bed (Fig. 6: dashed outline), the wood of which has been identified as boxwood (Aytuğ & Pehlivan 1989). Very few fragments were recovered, but those that did survive provided evidence for a carved,

¹⁷ The furniture from Tumulus P is now being studied and will be published in E. Simpson, *The Furniture from Tumulus P, Tumulus W, and the City Mound at Gordion, Turkey*, The University Museum, Philadelphia (forthcoming).

inlaid headboard with handles at the top corners, a carved footboard, legs and side rails (Young 1981, fig. 40, pls. 30e-g, 31a-b). To the south of the bed, in the south west corner of the tomb, were found the remains of three pieces of furniture, an inlaid 'screen' and two carved 'stools'. These had fallen to the floor and broken apart, but the wood had survived somewhat intact, protected by roof beams that had collapsed at a slant, serving to shelter the finds beneath them (Young 1981, pl. 4a). Fragments of many more pieces of furniture were recovered from the eastern half of the tomb.

The Inlaid Serving Stand, Tumulus P

The Tumulus P 'screen', found in the south west corner, was similar to the Tumulus MM 'screens' in its construction. It had an openwork top shelf incorporating two large rings (Pl. 61b), a curved back leg with diagonal struts to support the shelf from below (Pl. 61c), and an inlaid face, the lower section of which was carved in openwork (Pl. 61d). The upper section of the face had deteriorated, but enough had survived to allow the dimensions and design to be reconstructed (Fig. 7).¹⁸ The top shelf, back leg, struts and face were made of boxwood; the inlay of the screen's face was yew and juniper (Aytuğ & Görçelioğlu 1988). Young had understood how the pieces fitted together (Young 1981, 62-67), although the reconstruction drawings that accompanied Young's text (Young 1981, figs. 35-36) suggested a different interpretation. In the drawings of the curved back leg of the screen, a large, penannular ring (Young 1981, pl. 29e) was reconstructed at the bottom of the foot, an implausible combination that created a leg too long for the face. The ring cannot have belonged to the screen's back leg; without it, the leg is the proper height and ends in a foot that sits squarely on the floor. In the reconstructed plan of Tumulus P (Fig. 6), the mysterious penannular ring appears in the south west corner among the fragments of the screen; as will later be seen, the ring cannot have been found here but must have been recovered from a different area of the tomb.

Like the Tumulus MM screens, the Tumulus P screen was a serving stand.¹⁹ Deposits of bronze were preserved on the upper surfaces of the rings of the top shelf (visible in Pl. 61b), indicating that bronze vessels had once sat in the rings. As in the Tumulus MM burial, small bronze cauldrons (Young 1981, pl. 8a-c: TumP 3; TumP 4), ladles (Young 1981, pl. 8h-i: TumP 8-9), and bowls were found near the stand in the tomb. These objects must have been used with the stand, the cauldrons perhaps placed in the rings at the time of the burial.

Symbols on the Gordion Furniture

The face of the Tumulus P serving stand differs markedly from those of its Tumulus MM counterparts, both in the openwork carving of the lower section and in the bolder, simpler treatment of the inlay. Nonetheless, aspects of the design of the faces of the three stands are strikingly similar. On each stand, a large, rosette-like medallion is set into the lower section, predominating within a field of geometric inlay. Above each rosette is an inlaid pattern incorporating two arcs and a pendant half-circle. In all three cases, the rosette is supported by two curved legs with stylized lion-paw feet, although the legs and feet of the Tumulus P stand are further abstracted and covered with inlay. The similarity in the design and placement of these elements on all three stands suggests that the combination must have had a meaning. Correspondences with the monumental carved

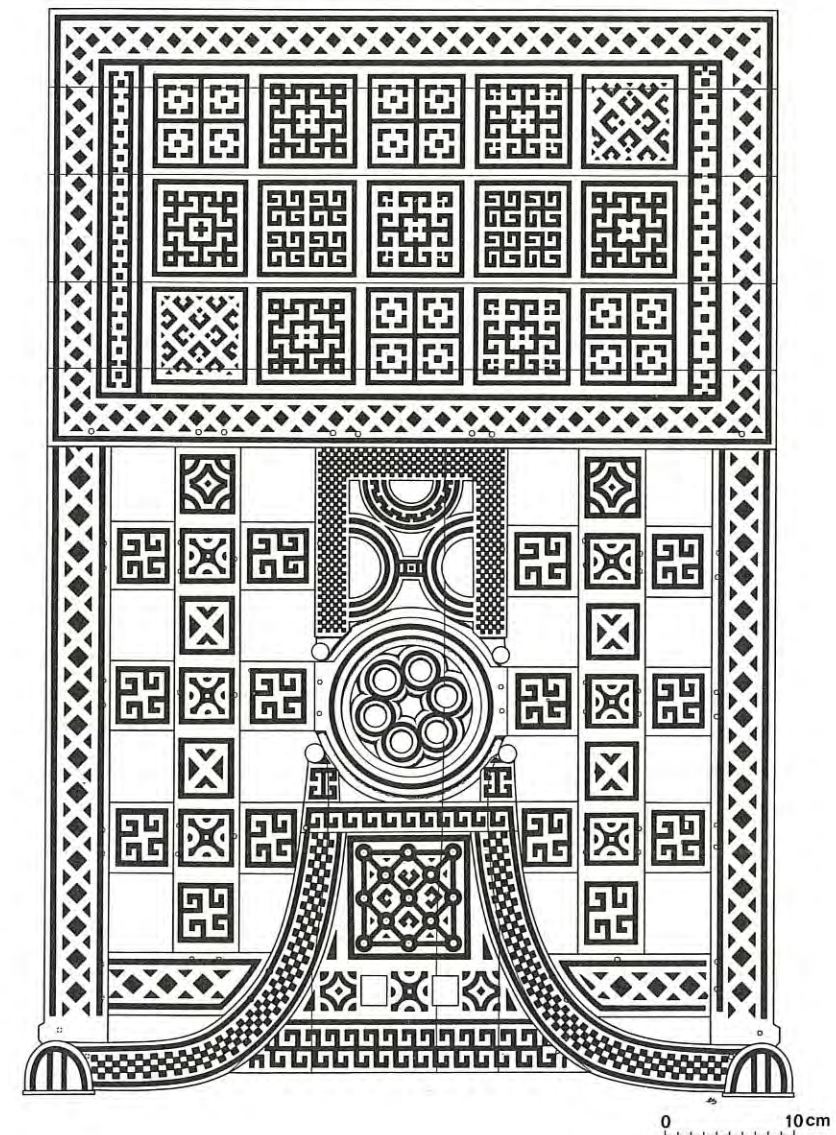


Fig. 7. Reconstruction drawing of the front of the serving stand, Tumulus P.

rock facades in the Phrygian highlands suggest what this meaning may have been.

The Midas Monument at Midas City (Pl. 62a) depicts a building facade with a gabled roof supported by posts and a lintel (Haspels 1971, 73-76, figs. 8-9). The monument was named for the Phrygian inscriptions cut into the face of the rock, one of which mentions the name of Midas (Haspels 1971, figs. 598:1-2). The facade is covered with geometric decoration, recalling in its overall effect the patterning on the Tumulus MM serving stands (Pl. 60a) and in specific designs the serving stand from Tumulus P (Pl. 61d and Fig. 7). This resemblance has been noted by

¹⁸ Young's published reconstruction of the inlaid face (Young 1981, fig. 33) was essentially correct, although wrong in some of its details.

¹⁹ The reconstructed height of the serving stand is approximately 85 cm.

scholars and has even been used to suggest that the Midas Monument and the Gordion stands are contemporary (Haspels 1971, 103-04), although this dating is not universally accepted (Akurgal 1961a, 110; *et al.*). In the middle of the lower section of the monument is a niche that is now empty but once held some object, as indicated by a cutting in the ceiling of the niche (Haspels 1971, 75). Carved into the walls of the niche are graffiti, which include the names of Midas and the Phrygian goddess Matar²⁰ (Haspels 1971, 289-90, figs. 598:5, 599:4-5). Other rock monuments in the surrounding area suggest that the object in the niche of the Midas Monument may have been a statue of Matar herself.

The most imposing of these monuments is Arslan Kaya, a facade with a gable, posts and lintel, carved onto a huge rock (Haspels 1971, 87-89, figs. 186-91). The face is decorated with geometric patterns carved in relief, and a niche predominates at the centre of the lower section. Inside the niche is the figure of a goddess, flanked by lions that stand on their hind legs, touching her head with their paws (Pl. 62b). The attitude of the goddess and her association with lions have led to her identification as Matar (Haspels 1971, 89 [here called Kybele]; *et al.*). Arslan Kaya, the Midas Monument and other rock monuments in the area must have been shrines of the goddess; through her statue in the niche, she appeared to the faithful in an epiphany at the shrine's door.²¹ The position of the niche in the lower section of the rock monuments corresponds to the position of the rosette and associated elements on the Gordion serving stands. This suggests that the grouping on the stands may relate to the epiphany of the goddess.

On each serving stand, two curved legs with lion-paw feet support the central rosette at both sides. In abstract form, these elements recall the scene in the niche of Arslan Kaya in a dramatic way, with the two lion legs on the stands suggesting the flanking lions and with the rosette-like medallion in the position of the head of the goddess. The rosette, then, may be a symbol of the goddess Matar,²² and the decoration on the stands' faces may signify the appearance of the goddess at the door of her shrine. The pendant half-circle above the rosette is not as easily explained,²³ although it clearly had significance. The rosette and pendant half-circle appear as prominent motifs on the front top struts of the inlaid table from Tumulus MM. The decoration on the stands – and also the table – thus seems to have been overtly religious, suggesting that these pieces may have been cult furniture, used for ritual banquets or sacrifice. The Phrygian rulers, who must have associated themselves closely with their gods, may have appropriated the symbolism of Matar for their own use. Objects

²⁰ The goddess Matar ('mother') was known to the Greeks as Meter or Kybele (Roller 1988, *et al.*).

²¹ Other monuments in the area incorporate niches, some of which contain figures of the goddess. Most notable is the Büyük Kapı Kaya (Haspels 1971, 87, pls. 182-84, 522), a rock carved with the lower section of a facade. The face is covered with carved decoration reminiscent of the designs on the Tumulus P screen, and in the niche stands the goddess, flanked by plinths on which two other figures must have stood. These were probably lions, as suggested by the scene in the niche at Arslan Kaya.

Several other representations of the Phrygian goddess have been recovered. She is often shown standing in a niche or an architectural frame. Matar may wear a long gown and high headdress and be associated with various attributes, including lions, hawks, bowls and jugs (Bittel 1963; Mellink 1983; Roller 1988, *et al.*).

²² Divine symbols were used widely throughout Mesopotamia and neighbouring areas in the first millennium BC. The rosette symbolized the goddess Ishtar and her Near Eastern counterparts; it is found as well on the headdress of the goddess Kubaba on a relief from Carchemish (Akurgal 1962, pl. 115). The 'rosettes' on the Gordion serving stands are decorative and somewhat abstract versions of the petalled or star rosettes of greater Mesopotamia; this is in keeping with the Phrygians' characteristic sense of design and use of decoration. A detailed discussion may be found in Simpson, 'Symbols on the Gordion Screens' (forthcoming).

²³ The arcs and pendant half-circle found above the rosette on each of the stands must relate to the goddess, although the nature of this relationship is not clear. The half-circle may have symbolized one of the goddess' aspects or attributes.

such as the serving stands and the inlaid table, with their potent symbolism, would have signified the sanction and protection of the powerful deity that watched over the Phrygian royal house.

Plain Tables, Tumulus P

Several wooden tables were found in the tomb, including two three-legged tables that resembled the plain tables from Tumulus MM (Young 1981, fig. 38, pl. 30b).²⁴ The legs of these tables were made of boxwood, and the tops were walnut (Aytuğ & Pehlivan 1989). A similar table was reproduced in miniature, as evidenced by fragments of three tiny legs. This must have been a small toy table made for the child who was buried in the Tumulus P chamber.

The Mosaic Table, Tumulus P

A large, square inlaid table was found in fragmentary condition in the centre of the tomb near the foot of the bed (Fig. 6: dashed outline; Young 1981, fig. 39, pls. 30c-d). The boards of the table top were butted edge to edge and glued, the joints secured in some areas by floating tenons and butterfly clamps (Young 1981, fig. 39a-d). The top was inlaid with squares and crosses made from rectangular blocks of inlay, the individual pieces *c.* 1 cm. wide and up to 4 cm. long. Young called this table the 'Mosaic Table', because of the bold character of the inlay.²⁵ Although the inlaid design is easily understood, the dimensions of the table top and the form and number of the legs remain unclear.²⁶ Fragments indicate that the legs were attached to the underside of the top by means of elaborate mortise-and-tenon joinery: a tenon at the top of each leg ran through a separate collar and into a mortise cut in the underside of the table top, with floating tenons and pins used to secure the assembly (Young 1981, fig. 39f-g). The table top, legs and collars have been identified as boxwood; the inlay, as yew.

The Tripod Tray Table, Tumulus P

One of the most unusual tables from Gordion is the massive tray table from Tumulus P, called the 'Tripod Tray Table' by Young. It was found at the north of the tomb chamber, north of the Mosaic Table, in shattered fragments (Young 1981, pl. 6a). The oval table top was dished at the centre and carved with ledge 'handles' that extended along most of the perimeter on two sides (Pl. 62c). The top was made from ten boxwood boards (Aytuğ & Görçelioğlu 1988) butted edge to edge and glued; no pegs, tenons, or clamps were used in the joinery of the top boards.²⁷ Young had not been

²⁴ The reconstruction drawing published in Young's monograph (Young 1981, fig. 38) shows the table with four legs, but it actually had three.

²⁵ One of the furniture fragments from Tumulus III (Körte & Körte 1904, fig. 10), identified by G. & A. Körte as the seat of a chair, looks as though it may have been part of the top of an inlaid table similar to the Mosaic Table from Tumulus P.

²⁶ The table has recently undergone conservation treatment, and the pieces can now be handled. Future research may reveal new information about its dimensions and form.

²⁷ Young noted a few small mortises on the underside of the boards of the table top, which he thought had been used to secure a batten or battens to hold the boards of the top together (Young 1981, 67). A number of curved pieces that Young identified as parts of a 'curved chair back' (4253 W 56) seem to have made up these battens, attached to the underside of the ledge 'handles' at both sides of the table top. A few of these curved pieces show evidence of mortise-and-tenon joinery, but most were butted and glued. The whole batten system must have been glued to the underside of the ledges.

able to identify the legs of the table, but mortises in the underside of the boards of the table top indicated there had been three. After the table was conserved, the pieces were studied; several

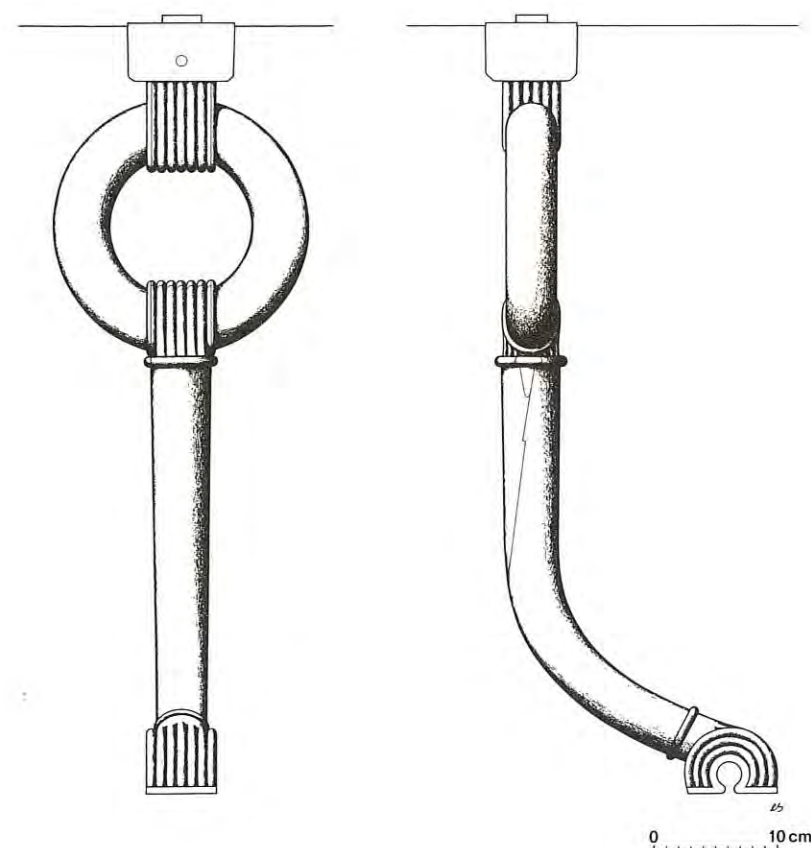


Fig. 8. Reconstruction drawings of a leg from the Tripod Tray Table, Tumulus P, front and side views.

unplaced fragments have now been identified as parts of the table's three legs. Surprisingly, one of these was the penannular ring that had been reconstructed at the bottom of the back leg of the Tumulus P serving stand (Young 1981, pl. 29e): the block at the top of the ring was found to fit perfectly into one of the mortises cut in the underside of the table top. Parts of two more rings were located (Young 1981, pl. 32h), as well as leg fragments and one carved foot. The form of the legs could thus be reconstructed (Pl. 62d; Fig. 8). The penannular rings, published as having come from the south west corner of the tomb (see Fig. 6, south west corner, and Young 1981, 75: TumP 161), must actually have been found in the area of the Tripod Tray Table.

The table legs were made entirely of boxwood (Aytuğ & Görçelioğlu 1988) and were remarkable constructions. A section carved with finger-like ridges extended down from the top block, seemingly grasping the ring, which was in fact two separate arcs that were glued to the sides of

the fingers. More fingers grasped the ring at the bottom,²⁸ below which the leg curved out, ending in a carved foot. The foot was carved with ridges, here resembling toes or claws: yet another type of stylized lion-paw foot. Each leg was constructed from six major components, with only one mortise-and-tenon joint in the assembly. The rest of the pieces were glued, like the boards of the table top. The Tripod Tray Table was a *tour de force* of glued joinery, surpassing all other pieces of furniture from Gordion in the mastery of this difficult technique.

Legs of Stools and Other Pieces of Furniture, Tumulus P

More than 20 furniture legs have been preserved from the Tumulus P burial, either complete or in fragmentary condition (Young 1981, 70-72, pl. 31b-g). At least 15 of these are of the same type as the stool legs found in the north east corner of Tumulus MM. All of these legs had two mortises cut at the top at right angles to one another. These mortises housed tenons that had extended from the ends of the stretchers that had joined the legs; some of the tenons had broken off and were found lodged in the mortises.²⁹ The longer legs of this type had additional mortises cut further down on the legs to accommodate stretchers at a lower level. Several of these legs seem to have been part of the child's bed, while others certainly belonged to four-legged stools. Legs of at least five different sizes were found, suggesting that five or more stools had been placed in the tomb. The stools ranged in height from c. 33-47 cm., except for one, which was only 13 cm. high and must have been made for the child buried in the chamber. Like the stools from Tumulus MM, these stools probably had square seats of reed or rush woven over the frame formed by the four top stretchers. The legs of this type were made from boxwood, with tenons of poplar and oak (Aytuğ & Pehlivan 1989).

Fragments of four or more square legs with top tenons were preserved, ranging in size from 16.5 cm. to 21 cm. (without the tenons). The fragments that have been analyzed indicate that the square legs were made of poplar (Aytuğ & Pehlivan 1989). These legs seem to have belonged to at least three pieces of furniture, although this furniture has not yet been identified. The remains of one piece of furniture associated with a square leg were found at the south east of the tomb. This was thought by Young to have been a 'long table with painted top', although no conclusive evidence remains for such a table (Young 1981, 8 and n. 13).

Carved Stools, Tumulus P

Four carved wooden stools were found in the tomb, the two smallest of which seem to have been footstools. Each of these footstools was apparently made from a single piece of wood, identified in both cases as boxwood (Aytuğ & Pehlivan 1989). Their preserved height ranges from c. 8.5-11 cm., but they must once have been bigger, as the wood is now shrunken and degraded. The two footstools had carved, openwork faces of similar design – so similar, in fact, that Young thought that all of the preserved fragments had come from only one stool (Young 1981, fig. 43: TumP 158,

²⁸ Hands that grasp circles appear in the design of a number of surviving ancient artefacts, including horse-bits from Iran (Sialk), the Caucasus and Egypt (Moorey 1971, 111-112, pl. 14 112-13; *et al.*). The Phrygians, characteristically, transformed the hands into abstract representations, obscuring the natural form that inspired the more decorative Phrygian motifs.

²⁹ A similar leg was found in Tumulus III (Körte & Körte 1904, fig. 9c).

pl. 32d). On the front and back faces of both footstools, stylized 'legs' curved out to the left and right, with an arched opening between the legs at the bottom centre of each face.³⁰ The faces seem to be schematized versions of the front and back faces of the carved, inlaid stool from Tumulus P (to be discussed below).

A third carved stool, found in the south west corner of the tomb, was larger (H. c. 28 cm.) and must have been used as a stool or low table.³¹ Its front and back faces were carved in the same pattern, with cut-outs at the top corners and two pairs of concentric arcs carved in openwork at the centre, one pair curving up at the top of each face, and a second pair curving down below (Young 1981, fig. 44, pl. 32e). The wood of this stool has been identified as boxwood (Aytuğ & Pehlivan 1989).

The Inlaid Stool (or Table), Tumulus P

The fourth carved stool from the tomb, also found in the south west corner, was the most elaborate in its conception. The front and back faces were carved entirely in openwork and inlaid with geometric patterns, and the front face was studded with bronze, hemispherical tacks (Fig. 9).³² The faces of the stool were made from alternating strips of boxwood and yew, butted and glued; the boxwood, where inlaid, was inlaid with yew, and the yew, where inlaid, was inlaid with boxwood (Aytuğ & Görcelioğlu 1988; subsequent unpublished analyses). The height of the stool was approximately 30 cm.

The stool's construction was not well understood by Young, who thought that the top had been made from four slats spaced out at (undetermined) intervals; these, he supposed, must have been supported by cross pieces, themselves supported by struts which rose from stretchers that connected the front and back faces at floor level (Young 1981, 72-74). Mortises in the back of the 'feet' of both faces suggested the existence of the floor-level stretchers, although these had not been identified. A new study of the inlaid stool was subsequently undertaken, previously unrecognized fragments were located, and the fragments of the stool were conserved.³³ The form of the stool is now certain, and it has been reconstructed for display in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara (Pl. 63a).

Two carved 'rungs' (Young 1981, fig. 46, pl. 32i) were identified as the stretchers that connected the front and back faces at floor level. The length of these rungs gave a measurement for the depth of the stool (c. 28.5 cm.). Five top slats were recognized; these fitted between the two top slats of the front and back faces, making a total of seven, all butted edge to edge and glued, without the supporting cross-pieces or struts that Young had postulated (Pl. 63a). Like the Tripod Tray Table,

³⁰ This arched opening supports the identification of these pieces as footstools. Simple versions of this type of footstool appear on a number of contemporary reliefs from eastern Anatolia, including the stele of a princess from Zincirli (Akurgal 1962, pl. 130) and the stele depicting a husband and wife from Maraş (Akurgal 1962, pl. 139). This Syro-Anatolian type of footstool may be contrasted with the Assyrian type as seen on the stele of King Barrekup from Zincirli (Akurgal 1962, pl. 131).

³¹ Children are seen playing a game on a low table on a contemporary relief from Carchemish (Akurgal 1962, pl. 122).

³² The reconstruction of the front face of the stool shown in Fig. 9 supercedes the reconstruction drawing published by Young (Young 1981, fig. 42). The bronze tacks, all of which have broken off the wood, are restored in the drawing. Tacks of this sort are still used to decorate Turkish traditional furniture (Glassie 1993, facing p. 65).

³³ The pieces of the inlaid stool were conserved in 1985, 1991 and 1993.

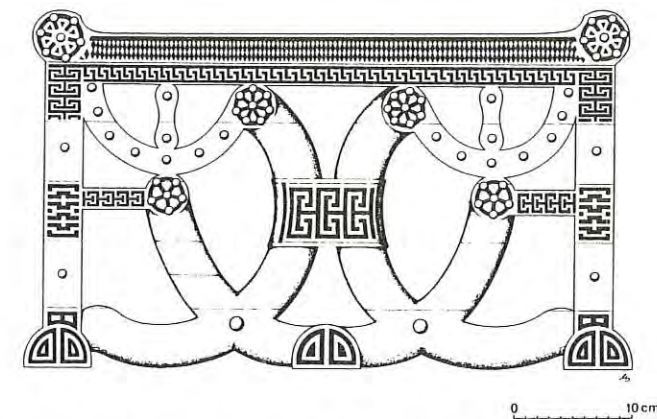


Fig. 9. Reconstruction drawing of the front of the inlaid stool, Tumulus P.

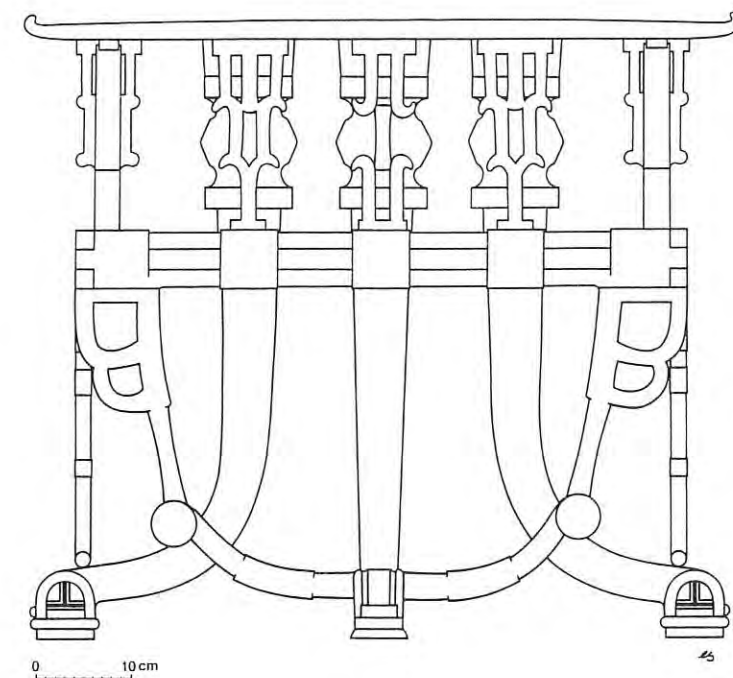


Fig. 10. Schematic front view of the inlaid table, Tumulus MM.

the inlaid stool was a masterpiece of glued joinery, with only four, small floating tenons used in the assembly of the faces and the top.³⁴

Correctly reconstructed, the inlaid stool recalls another piece of furniture from Gordion, the inlaid table from Tumulus MM. When the table is viewed from the front (Fig. 10), its design bears a striking resemblance to that of the faces of the inlaid stool (Fig. 9). The left and right

³⁴ Two floating tenons were used on each face to secure the top slat to the adjoining strip below. In addition, the back of the front face shows two ancient repairs, one made with a butterfly clamp and one with a small, floating tenon.

'feet' on the stool faces correspond in position and design to the left and right rear feet of the table; a third, central 'foot' on the stool recalls the front foot of the inlaid table, although turned to the side in its most characteristic view. The left and right rear legs of the table find counterparts in the curved 'legs' that rise from the left and right 'feet' on the faces of the stool. The stool faces have no front 'leg', although a curved front 'leg strut' rises from the stool's front 'foot', curving up to support the top of the stool. The rear leg struts of the table also find counterparts on the stool, in the vertical 'struts' that rise from the tops of the stool's left and right 'feet'. Finally, the raised outer edges of the stool's top correspond to the raised rim of the inlaid table when seen in section, its most characteristic two-dimensional view. The front and back faces of the inlaid stool clearly represent a three-dimensional table like the inlaid table from Tumulus MM. The Phrygian artists have, in effect, collapsed a three-dimensional object into two dimensions for the purpose of design (Simpson 1988). The analogy suggests that the inlaid 'stool' may actually have been a small table, emulating its larger and more complex counterpart.³⁵

The Child's Chair or Throne, Tumulus P

No chair had been recognized among the remains of the Tumulus P furniture, although the editors of Young's posthumous monograph had tentatively identified a 'seat(?) with legs' from the fragments found in the tomb's south east corner (Young 1981, 77, pl. 33e-g). With the 'seat' were associated several large chunks of wood and four cylindrical feet that had been sheathed in bronze, one of which had retained its sheathing. The wood of this piece of furniture has now been conserved, permitting a preliminary study of its components. The 'seat' was apparently a small chair of a grand sort, with arms that swung out to the sides and up, terminating in two finial-like points at both sides of the back. The chair recalls the Levantine sphinx throne, the arms of which were formed by the wings of two sphinxes that flanked the seat.³⁶ The makers of the child's chair seem to have created an abstract, Phrygian version of the sphinx throne, altering the original form almost beyond recognition. The wood of the child's chair has been identified as boxwood.

TUMULUS W

The 'Screen', Tumulus W

The roof of the Tumulus W chamber had collapsed, crushing the contents within (Young 1981, fig.

³⁵ Young's excavation notes record the remains of 'purplish powder' on the upper surface of the 'stool's' top slats (Gordion Notebook 43). This may be evidence of a purple cushion, in which case the 'stool' may actually have been a seat.

³⁶ Such a throne is depicted on an ivory plaque from the Canaanite palace at Megiddo (Loud 1939, cat. 2; Pritchard 1969, fig. 332); another is shown on the sarcophagus of King Ahiiram of Byblos (Pritchard 1969, fig. 456), dated variously to the thirteenth-century BC. See also Gubel 1987, Type 1a, 37-75; and Gubel and Herrmann, pp. 142-43 and 159 above, for a recently discovered north Syrian version on an ivory pyxis depicting a scene like that on the Ahiiram sarcophagus.

116).³⁷ The skeleton of a man was found at the middle of the chamber, lying on layers of cloth that had been placed on the floor.³⁸ The burial goods included a bronze and leather belt, found on the skeleton, 34 bronze fibulae, two large and two smaller bronze cauldrons, two bronze ladles, 13 or more pottery vessels and several wooden plates. One of the most spectacular finds from the tomb was an ornate piece of wooden furniture, identified tentatively by Young as a 'screen'. The object was found collapsed on the floor, in extremely damaged condition (Pl. 63b). It had been made of a number of boxwood boards, only three of which had survived. The preserved remains measure *c.* 69 cm. (north-south, as found in the tomb) by 25 cm. (east-west), and Young's notes indicate that traces of the piece were found as far as 50 cm. further to the west on the tomb floor. The face was carved in large, openwork panels of geometric patterns – diamonds, squares, and circular designs – and was decorated over the entire surface with bronze, hemispherical tacks (Young 1981, fig. 129).³⁹ The form of the object is not yet understood, although Young noted a 'scroll foot' found some distance to the north in the tomb, which he suggested might be one of two front feet of a 'screen', or the foot of the rear leg (Gordion Notebook 84; Young 1960, 230). The close proximity of two small bronze cauldrons and two bronze ladles, along with large bronze cauldrons and bronze bowls, suggests that the 'screen' may have been a serving stand.⁴⁰

THE CITY MOUND

The most important group of furniture fragments from the City Mound was found in Megaron 3, a large building with an interior second-floor gallery (Young 1962, 9-10). The building had burned in the fire that destroyed the city in the late eighth or early seventh century BC. The wood that was recovered was carbonized and extremely fragmentary. Nonetheless, it could be surmised that seven or more pieces of furniture had been used in the central room of the building. These included what may have been a 'screen' or serving stand; an inlaid table with inlay resembling that of the Mosaic Table from Tumulus P; and one or two pieces of furniture that incorporated carved plaques depicting bulls, horses and armed riders (Young 1960, figs. 23-24). Also found in Megaron 3 was a set of ivory plaques, some of which were carved with concentric squares and others with small figures, including a deer, a griffin eating a fish and a Phrygian horse and rider (Young 1960, fig. 25). These plaques must have belonged to a spectacular piece of furniture. Other buildings from the destruction level on the City Mound contained fragments of carbonized wood, a few of which have been identified tentatively as pieces of stools or chairs.

³⁷ Tumulus W, the second largest tumulus in the Gordion necropolis, stands approximately 22 m. high with a diameter of approximately 150 m.

³⁸ Examination indicated that the tomb's occupant was probably a young man, but the sex remains uncertain (Young 1981, 197). No evidence of a bed or coffin was noted. Evidently the cloth on which the body had lain was placed directly on the tomb floor.

³⁹ The reconstruction drawing of this piece published by Young is approximately correct in its details, although it is probably oriented in the wrong direction. The fragments of the Tumulus W 'screen' have recently undergone conservation treatment, which will allow them to be handled and restudied.

⁴⁰ The largest group of fragments from Tumulus III, thought by the excavators to be a chairback, constitutes a panel carved in openwork and decorated with bronze tacks (Körte & Körte 1904, fig. 9a). This resembles the Tumulus W 'screen' and may have been a serving stand.

A REAPPRAISAL OF THE COLLECTION

Recent research has shown that a wide variety of wooden furniture was used at Gordion, represented by examples of at least 15 tables, 13 stools, one or two chairs, two footstools, three to six serving stands, one or more beds and at least two coffins.⁴¹ In addition, one or more wooden boxes have been preserved, along with plates, bowls, spoons, a fan and a parasol. Twelve small wooden animals were found in Tumulus P, some of which may have been furniture attachments.⁴² Other worked fragments were found in the same tomb; these represent objects that are as yet unidentified. Several styles are present in the collection, but all of these are demonstrably Phrygian: although many imported objects have been found at Gordion, wooden furniture is not among them (Muscarella 1989; Sams 1993).

Two major styles can be recognized in the carved, inlaid pieces. These are exemplified by (1) the serving stands and inlaid table from Tumulus MM, characterized by delicate forms and the profuse inlay of complex patterns, often involving elaborate play with symmetry; and (2) the Tumulus P serving stand, inlaid stool, Mosaic Table and Tripod Tray Table, characterized by bolder carved shapes, extensive use of openwork, virtuoso glued joinery, the use of decorative bronze tacks, inlaid designs with more straightforward symmetry, and an even greater tendency toward the abstraction of form. The fragmentary inlaid furniture from Tumulus W, Tumulus III and the City Mound resembles the Tumulus P furniture in these respects. Whether these styles indicate chronological or regional differences or merely reflect the tastes of patrons or designers is not known.

Much has been learned about the tools and techniques used by the Phrygian woodworkers. The artisans were highly skilled and adventurous in their use of wood, capable of amazing feats of carving and joinery that must have astonished their contemporaries – as they overawe modern cabinetmakers today. Mortise-and-tenon joints were used in a variety of forms, and glued butt joinery was executed with great expertise. The carving of the wood was extraordinarily fine, and intricate designs were laid out and inlaid to near perfection. A sense of care and concern on the part of the craftsmen is everywhere apparent. Evidence has been found for the use of the saw, drill, rasp, scribing tool and compass; evidence for the earliest use of the lathe from a securely dated archaeological context has been documented on a wooden plate from Tumulus W. There is no indication to date that Phrygian cabinetmakers used the process of steam bending, and none of the furniture from Gordion was veneered. The woods used have been identified as boxwood, juniper, yew, walnut, maple, poplar, oak, cedar and pine. Woods were combined for a dramatic and colourful effect: boxwood was used in combination with juniper, yew, walnut and maple. Ivory and metal attachments adorned the most elaborate pieces.

The furniture from Gordion is exceptional in its state of preservation. The quality evident in the many pieces that have survived intact may serve to indicate the magnitude of the loss of

⁴¹ The remains of many more pieces are extant, although specific types are often difficult to identify from the fragments. The second coffin, from Tumulus B, dates to the second half of the seventh century (Young 1951, 14-15; Simpson 1990, n. 13).

⁴² In addition, Tumulus III contained a wooden animal affixed to the lid of a bronze cauldron (Körte & Körte 1904, fig. 45).

wooden furniture from the archaeological record. In the unusual design of these pieces, the complexity of the inlaid geometric patterns, the play with symmetry and dimension, the abstraction of form, and the incorporation of symbols as elements of decoration, the Phrygian furniture from Gordion is unprecedented. With this collection in mind, one may envision the style of the throne that Midas dedicated at Delphi – and may imagine the surprise and excitement with which visitors to the sanctuary must have viewed this piece. Herodotus' praise notwithstanding, without the survival of the Gordion finds, a major school of ancient woodworking could never have been truly appreciated.



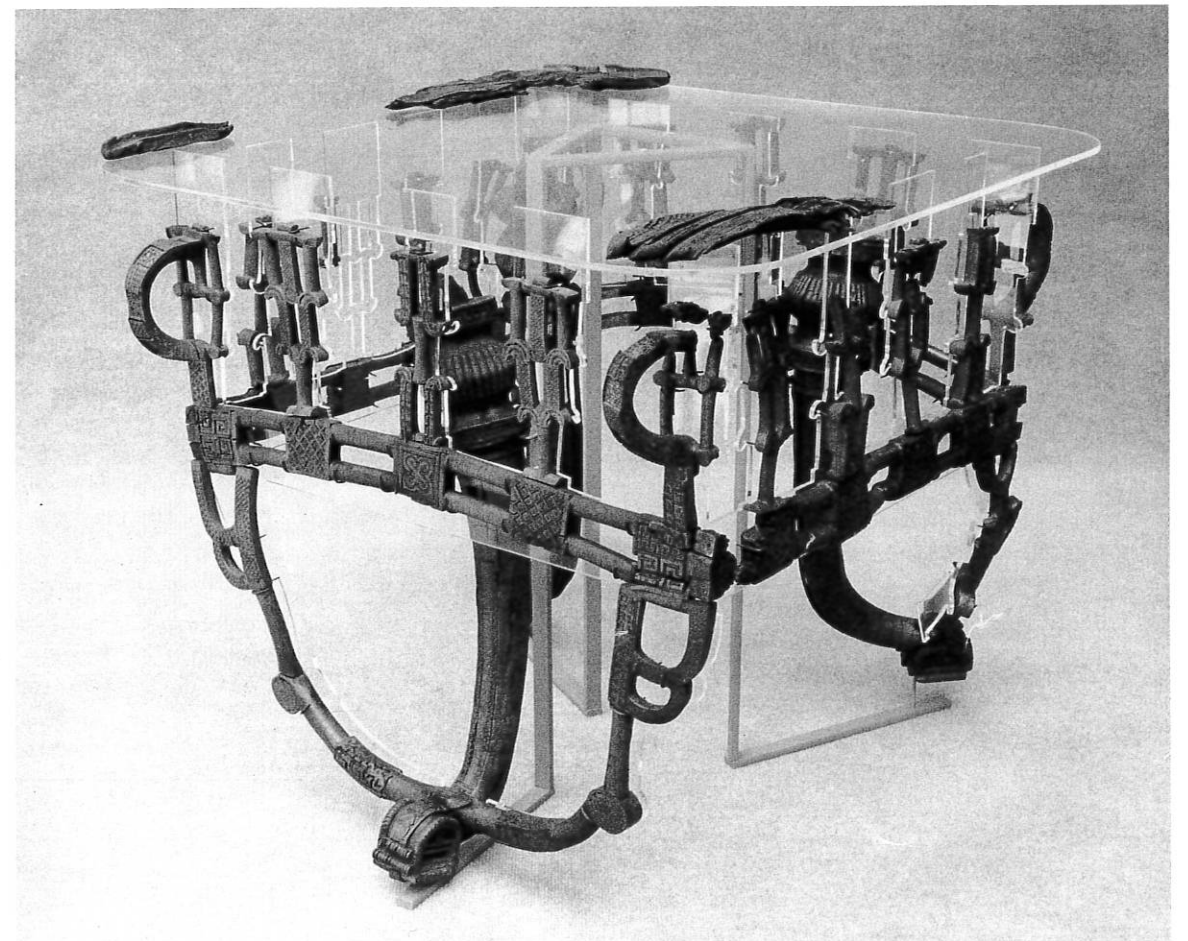
a) The king's coffin as found at the north of the Tumulus MM chamber, 1957.



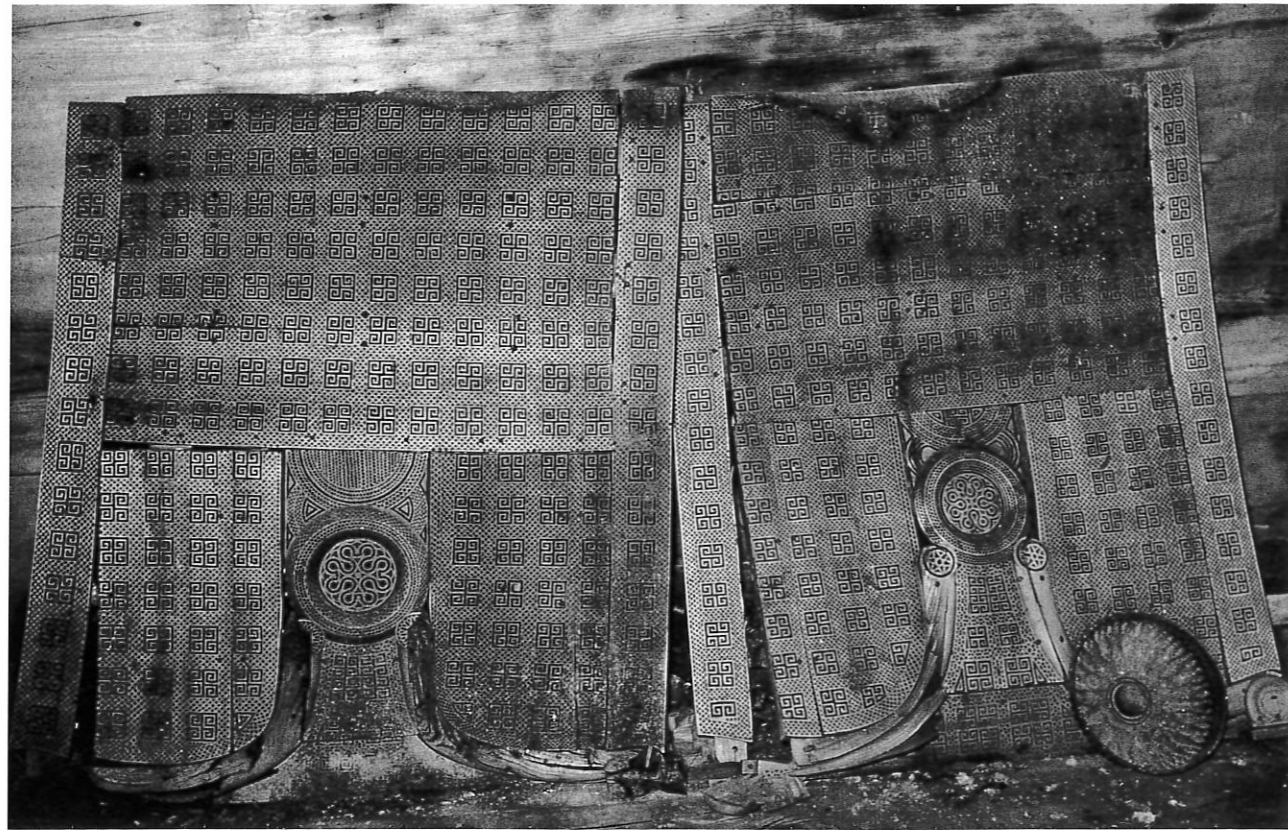
b) Interior of the Tumulus MM chamber, with the remains of Tables 1, 4 and 5, and the bronze vessels that had been stacked upon them, 1957.



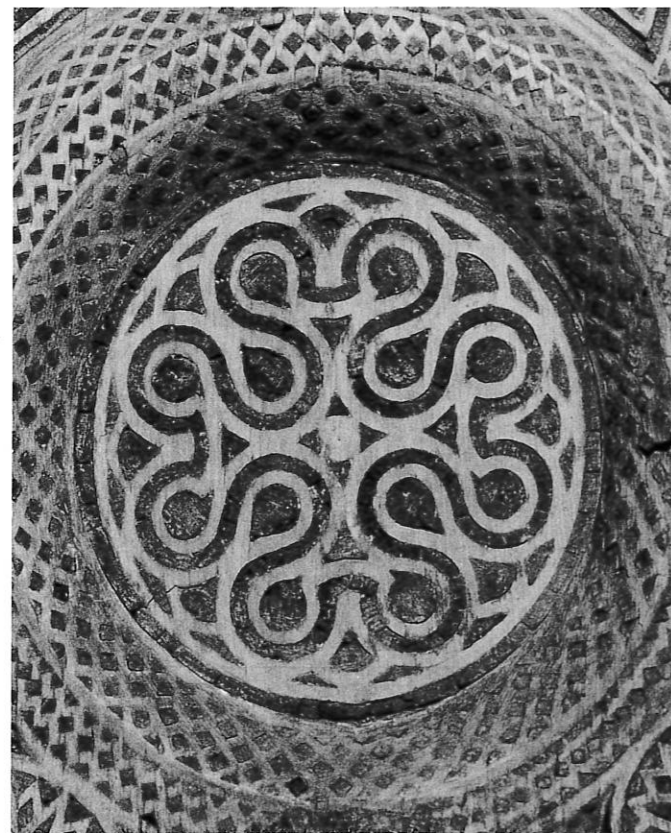
a) The inlaid table as found collapsed on the floor of the Tumulus MM chamber, 1957.



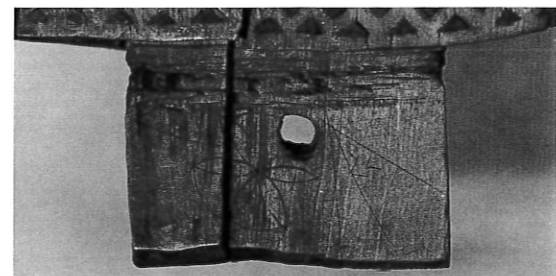
b) The inlaid table, Tumulus MM, as reconstructed for display, 1989.



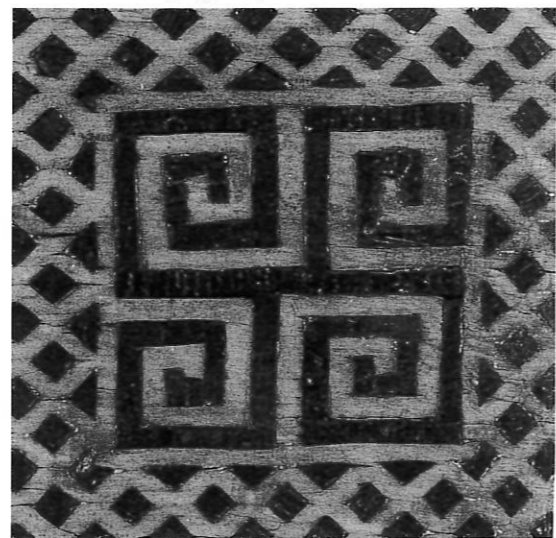
a) The serving stands (Screens A and B) as found leaning against the east wall of the Tumulus MM chamber, 1957.



b) Serving stand (Screen B), detail of the rosette at the centre of the inlaid face.



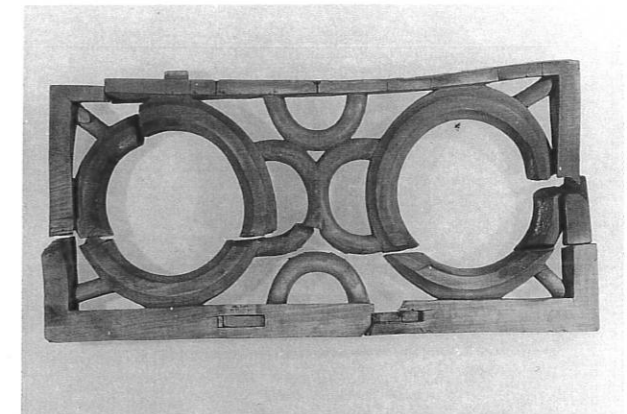
c) Serving stand (Screen B), detail of tenon with incised graffiti of a rosette, lines and letters.



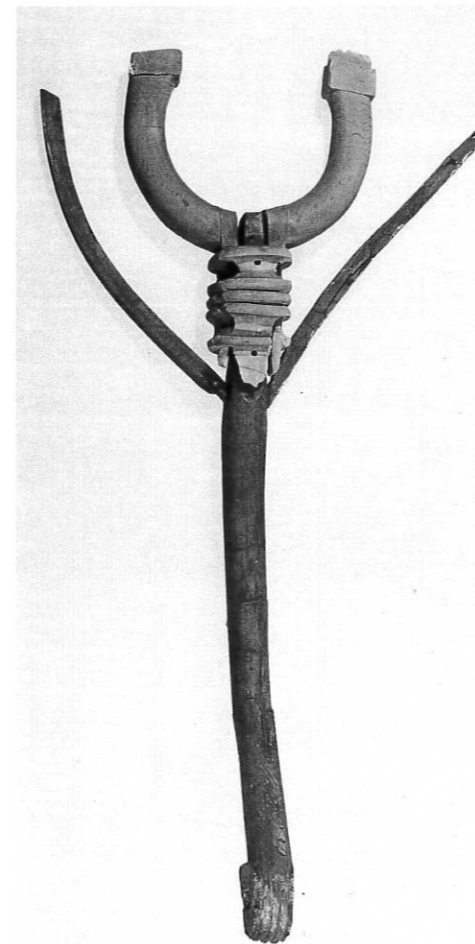
d) Serving stand (Screen B), detail of one of the inlaid square designs with rotational symmetry of 180 degrees.



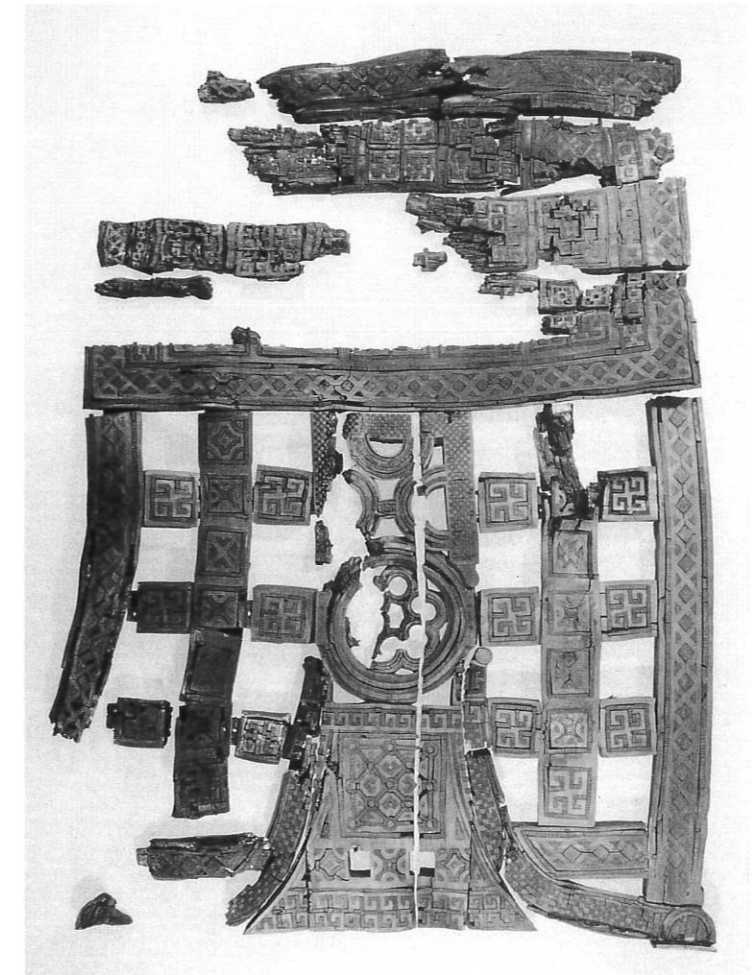
a) Stone lion from the City Mound, Gordion (S 43).



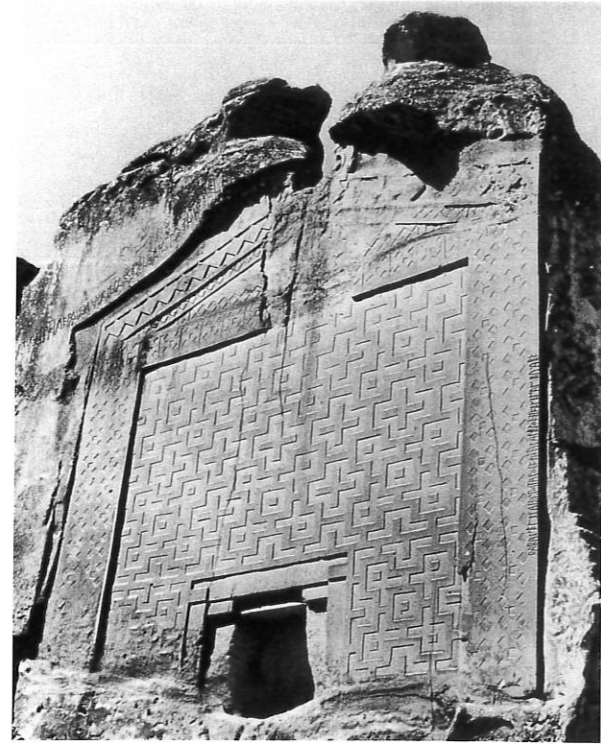
b) Serving stand, Tumulus P, top shelf, top view.



c) Serving stand, Tumulus P, curved back leg and diagonal struts, as the leg would have been seen from the back



d) Serving stand, Tumulus P, front face.



a) *The Midas Monument, Midas City.*



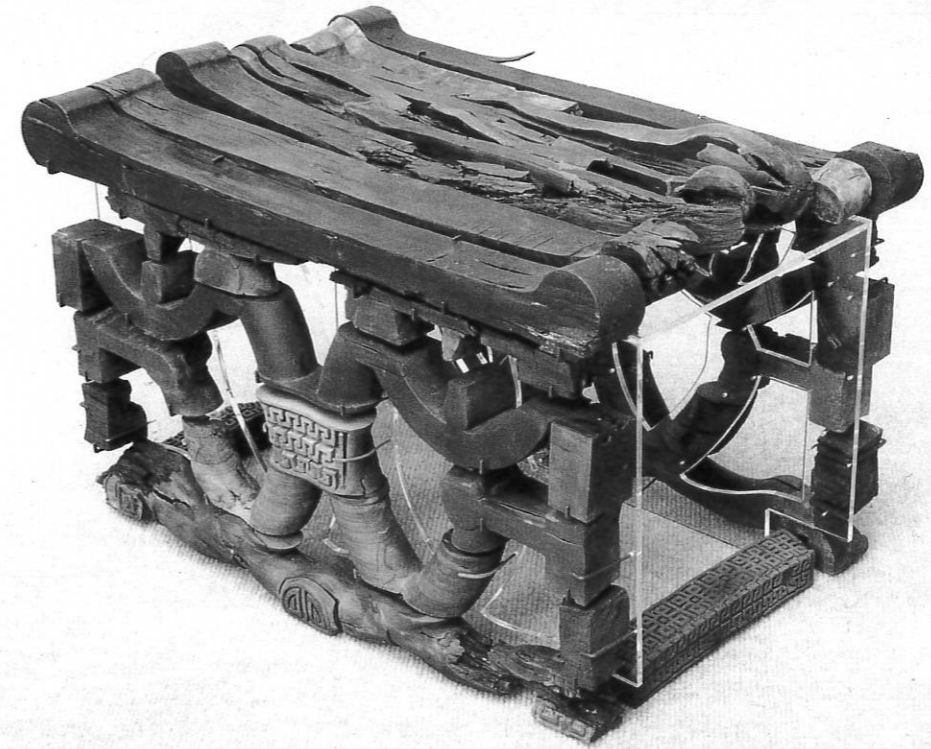
b) *Arslan Kaya, the goddess and two lions inside the niche.*



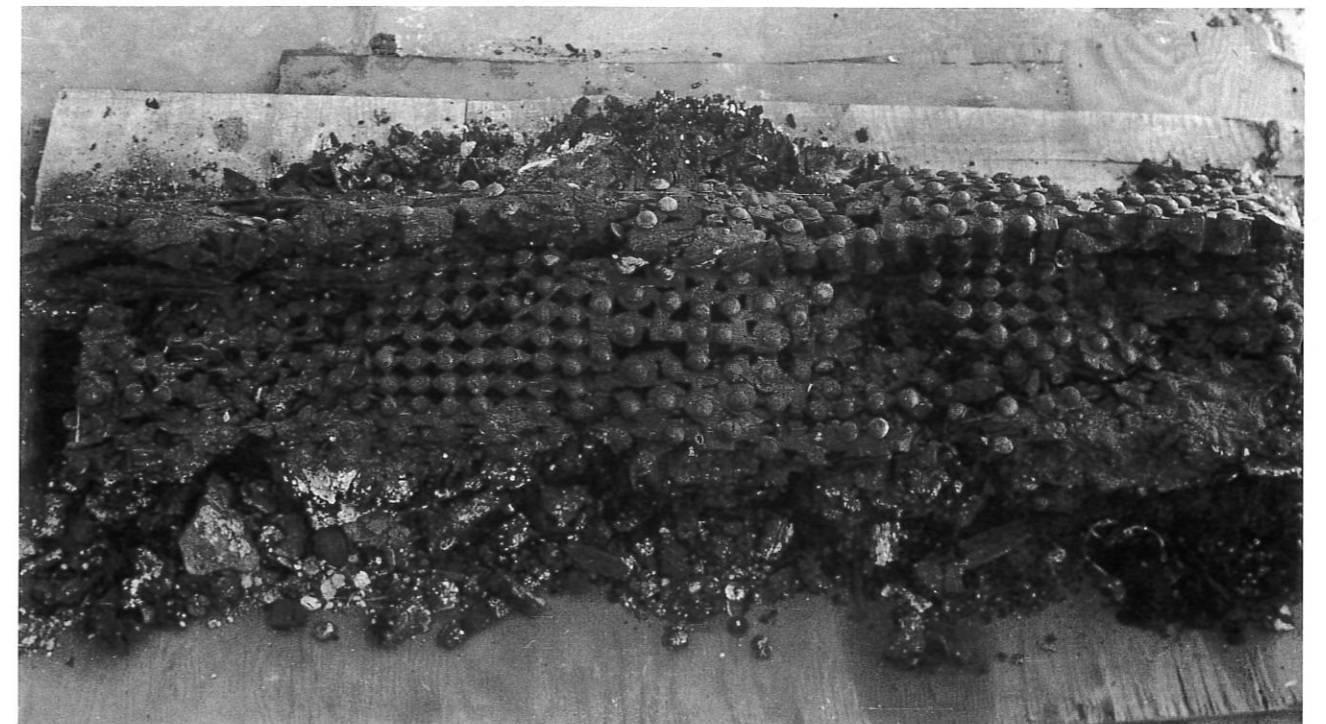
c) *Tripod tray table, Tumulus P, table top, top view.*



d) *Tripod tray table, Tumulus P, leg fragments.*



a) *Inlaid stool, Tumulus P, as reconstructed for display, 1993.*



b) *'Screen', Tumulus W, as found on the floor of the tomb chamber, 1959.*



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