Hittite Mortuary Practices

Anton M Axelsson
Abstract

The Hittite burial material consists of a very heterogeneous material. The material shows some shared aspects between the different cemeteries and their grave types. However, this material lacks previous extensive comparative studies in central Anatolia. This study aims to problematize this funerary material, by re-evaluating the previous interpretation and by creating links between the different types of material and the cemeteries it was found in. This will be achieved by analyzing four different categories of Hittite graves from the three cemeteries: Osmankayasi, Gordion and Ilica. The total material consists of 268 graves: 91 from Osmankayasi, 46 from Gordion and 131 from Ilica. The material was originally excavated and published during the fifties and sixties by the three archaeologists Kurt Bittel, Machteld Mellink and Winfried Orthmann. The burial material will be analyzed to establish parallels and differences between the three sites, their materials and grave categories. Literary sources and empirical data will be used to supplement previous research but also the new interpretations discussed in this thesis.

Keywords: Hittite, cemeteries, mortuary practices, Osmankayasi, Gordion, Ilica, cremations, pithos burials, pit graves, cist-graves, ethnicity, status, equids

Abstrakt

Tack till:

Min handledare Michael Lindblom som har delat med sig av sin kunskap och inspirerat.
Labels used for the burials in the cemeteries:

Osmankayasi cremations and vessels: I – LII

Osmankayasi disturbed cremations and vessels: 1 – 17

Osmankayasi pit graves: Ms 1 – Ms 22

Gordion burials: H 1 – H 48

Ilica burials: Grave 1 – Grave 131
1. Introduction

Excavations in central Anatolia from the second half of the 20th century brought to light many aspects of the Hittite mortuary practices, but also resulted in an equal amount of unanswered questions, some remaining until today. Hittite mortuary practices were not uniform across the board and at least four different types of burials have been recognized: cremations, pit graves, pithos burials and cist-graves. The different kinds of burials have certain patterns, which in some cases differ between the sites, but when applied across the site boundaries, some larger patterns in the Hittite funerary assemblages is visible.

Comparative studies of Hittite burial materials only exist to a small extent and have not been used to try to establish these larger patterns in the burial material (Emre 1992; van de Hout 1994; Bryce 2002; Seeher 2011). This study aims to do just that by drawing on material from three different Hittite sites: Osmankayasi, Gordion and Ilica. The funerary material from these places has been described as sober and poor (van de Hout 1994: 54), which have left the interpretation of the cemeteries as being burials grounds of the commoners. This study will re-evaluate the material, so to be able to update our understanding of the Hittite funerary material.

1.1 The aim of this paper

The lack of comparative studies of the Hittite mortuary practices have left the interpretation fairly inconclusive. Therefore, the main goal of this thesis is to study the burial material of Osmankayasi, Gordion and Ilica, and to compare the three sites in order to investigate patterns, but also to see if these patterns cross over the site boundaries when it comes to the mortuary practices. Each site offers different categories in the burial material, such as Osmankayasi and Ilica with their majority of cremation burials and Gordion with its large number of pithos burials. Each category will be presented separately, to be able to study the material value connected to the different burial types and to attempt to connect possible patterns between them. The burial types and funerary goods from each site will be used comparatively, to contrast the sites with each other and to determine the variability in Hittite funerary customs and what can be assigned as foreign influences. The material will also be compared to determine if there are any large regional differences between the three cemeteries. Previous studies (van de Hout 1994: 54-55; Bryce 2002: 178) have claimed that the Hittite graves at the cemeteries lack stratification, this will be re-evaluated to determine the validity of this claim.

1.2 The material

The main portion of the material discussed in this paper comes from the publications by the responsible archaeologist of the excavations of the three sites: Osmankayasi (Bitte et al. 1958), Gordion (Mellink 1956) and Ilica (Orthman 1967).

The graves of the three sites have mainly been dated from to the first half of the 2nd millennia B.C. (Mellink 1956: 55; Bittel et al. 1958: 27; Orthmann 1967: 60-61), thus spanning parts of the Assyrian colony period (20th – 18th century B.C.) and the early parts of the Old kingdom period (17th – 15th century B.C.), with the Osmankayasi material even continuing into the early imperial period (15th – 13th century B.C.).
Burial data can to a degree reflect how a society developed and stratified throughout its lifetime, therefore a wide range of different burial types with varying ages will be used in this study. The three sites hold a total of 268 burials, divided into four different categories: cremations, pithos burials, pit graves and cist-graves. The funerary material from the sites lack extensive studies and interpretation. By re-evaluating the material, it will be possible to establish regional differences and stratification in the burial material or to at least problematize the previous interpretation of the material as being poor.

1.3 Theory and method
The material contained in the three publications will be used comparatively, in combination with other empirical studies to evaluate the collective burial material from these three cemeteries. The material of the cemeteries will be studied through a materialistic approach, which will be used to establish an understanding of the different phenomenon appearing in the material assemblages, and in turn applying it in a wider context (Bauer & Koshiba 2016: 118-121). Even though it is not possible to apply funerary evidence in a wide spectrum on a living society as the sole evidence for a period, it can still be used as an indication of culture and material value of the society it stems from. Elite goods in a funerary context can for example serve as evidence for stratification within a society and therefor reflect the society itself to a certain degree (Smith et al. 2000: 45). Mortuary practices and connected rituals are usually associated with many fundamental aspects of cultures, such as the preservation of lineage and hereditary (Emberling 1997: 323-324; Singer 2007: 169). The material presented in this paper can therefore be used not only to discuss the mortuary practices of the Hittites but also to discuss possible cultural and regional differentiations in the material.
Fig. 1: Map of Anatolia: sites and areas discussed and mentioned throughout the paper.
2. Research history

The number of known Hittite cemeteries is very limited, with only eight excavated major Hittite burial grounds, including the three sites discussed in this paper. The five other cemeteries are: Yanarlar (Emre 1978), Kazankaya (Ö zgüc 1982), Ferzant (Ö zgüc 1986), Demircihöyük-Sariket and Ağırzören (Türktüzün 2001). The excavations were mainly conducted during the second half of the 20th century and many questions have been left unsolved, which will remain so, until modern excavations and studies of the material is done (Seeher 2011: 388-389).

Previous research on Hittite mortuary practices has mainly focused on literary sources such as the šalliš waštaiš ritual, which was a royal funerary cremation ritual (Otten 1958; van den Hout, 1994, 2002; Kassian et al. 2002; Singer 2007). The archaeological material of the eight Hittite cemeteries that have been excavated has mainly been used as a backdrop and comparison for these literary and historical studies, with only minor interpretations applied on the archaeological material.

2.1 The Osmankayasi cemetery

The first phase of extensive archaeological excavations of Hattusha lasted from 1906 to 1912 and was mainly conducted by German archaeologists. During this period of excavations, a possible Hittite cemetery was identified to the north east of the main site. Only a small part of this burial ground was uncovered, which left the interpretation of this area inconclusive. The German endeavors at Hattusha were resumed in 1931 by the young archaeologist Kurt Bittel. The excavations persisted up until the breakout of the Second World War. After the war in 1952, German excavations led by Bittel started once again at Hattusha and in its adjacent areas. The area to the northeast, which had previously been identified as a plausible Hittite Cemetery in 1912, was now given its due archaeological attention (Bittel et al. 1958: 1; Güterbock 1992: 580). Just as the German archaeologists had believed four decades earlier, the area turned out to be a Hittite cemetery. During the excavation season of 1952, a large number of Hittite burials were uncovered during two and a half months of intense excavating, which yielded a very heterogeneous funerary material (Bittel et al. 1958: 6-16). The excavation results and its material were later published in 1958, in Bittel’s book: Die Hethitischen Grabfunde Von Osmankayasi. Bittel’s book also included Osteological studies of the human remains by Johann Schaeuble and zoological studies by: Wolf Herre and Manfred Röhrs.

2.2 The Gordion cemetery

The settlement at Gordion is one of the most well published and researched sites in central Anatolia. The first excavation season started in 1950; to date there has been 35 seasons, with the main bulk of the excavations focusing on the area called Yasshöyük (the citadel mound) (Rose 2017: 137). The Hittite cemetery at Gordion was discovered in 1951 during one of the excavations in the Yasshöyük mound. Later the same year, excavations of the cemetery commenced. The exploration of the cemetery lasted three seasons 1951-1953. They resulted in a large and varied burial material of Hittite nature. What brought focus to the discovery and excavations of the cemetery at Gordion, was that this was the first cemetery to be identified as being connected to the Hittites (Mellink 1956: XI; Emre 1991: 5), and beating Osmankayasi
by one year, even though it was discovered almost four decades earlier. The results were published in 1956 in Mellink’s book *A Hittite Cemetery at Gordion*.

2.3 *The Ilica cemetery*

Both the settlement of Ilica and its adjacent burial ground were discovered in 1945, but it was not until 1963 excavations of the cemetery started. The decision for the excavation was taken due to the local population performing their own illegal excavations of the area. To protect the area from further damage, German archaeologists initiated excavations of the Ilica cemetery later the same year. Similar to Osmankayasi, the initial interpretation of the area as a burial ground during the surveying of the area turned out to be true. The cemetery was excavated during two seasons from 1963 to 1964, which exposed the whole area (Orthmann 1967: 5). Ilica turned out to hold the largest number of Hittite burials ever to have been excavated and still remains so until today. Both seasons were led by the German archaeologist Winfred Orthmann (Emre 1991: 4), who later authored the publication of the site *Das Gräberfeld Bei Ilica*, published in 1967. Ostological studies of the material were done by Herman Helmuth, which was included in the in the same publication.
3. The Osmankayasi cemetery

Hattusha is located in north central Anatolia, near the modern Turkish village of Boğazköy and lies 150 km east of modern Ankara in the ancient region of Hatti (Fig. 1) (Bryce 2005: 17). The cemetery at Osmankayasi is located about 800 meters to the northeast of the main site of Hattusha along what Bittel proposes to be the procession road leading to the rock sanctuary of Yazilikaya (Bittel 1970: 94). Osmankayasi covers an area of 72 m², on a natural plateau which is surrounded by a rock formation, creating a natural niche in the center. The niche stretches 10.25 m and is 5 m wide at its widest point. In present day it is exposed to the natural elements, but during the Hittite period, this little niche was a cave with a covering rock ceiling and with an entrance facing northwest. The cave has since collapsed and buried the graves inside even further. Some of the burials were severely damaged by the collapse. To make matters worse, the cave has occasionally in the past been flooded with clay, which brought large boulders with it, which ended up damaging several burials, except for a few which got buried deeper under the new sediment layers (Bittel et al. 1958: 4).

At Osmankayasi 91 burials have been identified. They are divided into two categories: cremations and pit graves. The cremations burials are in a majority with 52 well preserved cremation vessels and 17 in a fragmentary state, while only 22 fragmentary pit graves have been found in the cemetery (Bittel et al. 1958: 6-12, 22).

3.1 Osmankayasi burials

The majority of the burials and cremations vessels of Osmankayasi are located along the eastern, southeastern and southern wall of the cave, with only a few cremation vessels being along the southwestern wall (Bittel et al., 1958: 5, 13). Along the cave walls the cremation vessels and pit graves were densely packed, so that when new burials were needed, the previous generations of pit graves were dug up and the remains were just shuffled aside, even going so far as to destroy the previous burials (Bittel et al. 1958: 14-16). The conscious destruction of earlier burials in favor of new ones might have been seen as a justifiable evil to be able to use the small cave, which would otherwise have become unusable after a few generations. Eventually, the cave was at least used from the mid-19th to the 14th century B.C. This dating is achieved through the cemetery ceramic typologies, which correspond with several contemporary sites. The oldest of the ceramic assemblage match typologies of Karum Ib (1850-1800 B.C.) (Mellart 1957: 63; Bittel et al. 1958: 26-27). In a later publication from 1970, Bittel states that the burials date from 17th to 13th century B.C., though it is never specified what he based this re-dating on (Bittel 1970: 94). As it stands, the late dating of the 13th century remain inconclusive with the 14th century B.C. being the more conclusive and accepted as the latest date of Osmankayasi. This because larger quantities of the ceramics match the ceramics found in layers of Hattusha dated to the 14th century B.C. (Bittel et al. 1958: 26, 29).

Bittel organized the graves excavated at Osmankayasi chronologically into three periods: younger, old and older. This phasing of the graves does not have any sharp division between the periodical groups and is quite problematic. Bittel’s superficial dating of the material should not be taken as an exact sub-division of the material, but instead should be seen as an attempt at organizing the relative chronology of the graves, until 14th dating of the burial material is published. But more than half a century later and no such datings of the material have been published. As previously mentioned, the Osmankayasi material has mainly been dated through the ceramic vessels containing the cremation remains or the vessels found
associated with the burial contexts. The division of the dating as young, old and older is achieved in a similar way, by using the stratigraphic recordings from the excavation, but also through comparisons of the vessel typologies with materials found at other contemporary sites in central Anatolia which have more well-defined contexts with datings (Bittel et al. 1958: 25).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cremations</th>
<th>Pit graves</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disturbed:</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double burial:</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacent to equid skulls:</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remains oriented along the cave walls:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Cremations</th>
<th>Pit Graves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E:</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetectable:</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table. 1: Osmankayasi burial data (Bittel et al. 1958: 4-16).

All but one of the pit graves are from the later period of the Osmankayasi cemetery (young and old groups), not surprising when taken into account that the older pit graves were dug away to make room for the new. Several of the skeletons which were dug up during the Hittite period had their crania secondarily reburied. This would suggest a special value associated with the human head compared to the rest of the body. Human bones from disturbed graves were found discarded in the filling layers. In total, 22 pit graves were uncovered in varying states of preservation, not counting the fragmentary bones found in the filling layers. Out of these 22 pit graves, 16 were secondary burials with only the crania of the individuals. Human bones from the filling layers have in some cases been tentatively identified as belonging to the same individuals as some of the crania, but this is only speculations on Bittel’s part and not conclusive. The remaining six burials were fragmentarily preserved, with only a few bones other than the crania (Bittel et al. 1958: 14-16).

Remains from several different species of animals were uncovered alongside the humans: pig, cattle, sheep, goat, dog and equids. Pig and cattle remains are few; both species were small in stature in comparison to their modern counterparts. (Herre & Röhrs 1958: 70-71). Several equid (perissodactyl mammals: horse, donkey etc.) skulls were uncovered near to the human skulls and a few of the cremation vessels (some equid skulls were bordering more than one burial): XVI, XXIX, XL, LII, Ms 2, Ms 3, Ms 10, Ms 14, Ms 20, Ms 21 (Bittel, et al. 1958: 14-16). The remains from no less than 13 equids have been uncovered in the cemetery. Similar to the pit graves, only the crania of the equids remain, except one case were the spine and a few other bones were preserved. The equid remains have been dated through their contexts from the 15th to the 14th century B.C. and all of them were male in their prime at the time of death. (Bittel et al. 1958: 14-16; Herre & Röhrs 1958: 63). Two out of the 13 equids were of a larger horse breed, and the remaining 11 were of a smaller breed. The smaller equids were suggested to be a sub-species related to Equus heminus (Asiatic half breed donkey). However, these smaller animals show deviations from the characteristics of donkey species. Because they shared some characteristics with horses, though small in stature, and therefore are assigned as a semi-species of pony and donkey (Herre & Röhrs 1958: 64-70).

Cremations uncovered at Osmankayasi are in a large majority, with 54 semi-intact cremation urns, and another 17 which were in a disturbed state (Bittel et al. 1958: 22). Most
of the intact vessels stood upright and were leaning against the cave walls. Some of the vessels were placed in close vicinity to each other, which Bittel suggests could mean simultaneous cremations. Several of the vessels have been wedged in place by small stones to keep them in an upright position. Similar to the pithos burials of Gordion, several cremations jars were sealed by stones, to protect its content. Some of the vessels did not only contain human remains but also simple artifacts, such as bowls, though usually in a fragmented state. One vessel (XXXIV a) was stamped with a seal. Vessels of this kind with a stamp on its neck are fairly uncommon in contemporary central Anatolia, and are usually dated between the 20th to 16th centuries B.C. But the vessel is wheel-made, which suggests that it has been produced after the 19th century B.C. The vessel XLVII lacks a stamp, but it contained a stamp seal as a burial gift (stamps are further discussed in next chapter), which is the only stamp uncovered at Osmankayasi. As previously mentioned with the horse skulls, some animal remains were found adjacent to some of the vessels, though the only deviation from horse remains were that of dogs (Bittel et al. 1958: 6-14; Glatz 2015: 184-185).

The assemblage of the cremation vessels was very heterogeneous. Some of the vessels share many aspects, but in total Bittel have identified 48 different types of vessels in the cemetery, this includes the 17 fragmented cases. These 48 vessel types, range from large clay plates and vessels reminiscent in shape of large modern tea pots. The most common type consisted of tall vases with or without a standing-ring, with handles at the bottom of the neck. Even a quite peculiar libation vessel in the shape of a pig snout was used in the case of the disturbed cremation burial 13 (Bittel et al. 1958: 13, 26). The Schnabelkannen (beak jar) typology which is more common at the Ilica cemetery does occur as well, but a lot less frequent (Bittel et al. 1958: 25, 28; Orthmann 1967: 40-50).

Most of the cremation vessels only contained completely burnt ashes. Some contained such large quantities of burnt human remains, suggesting they likely contained more than one individual. A few of the vessels held human bones which were not completely disintegrated, when the bodies were cremated. In five of the vessels with the partly preserved bones, there were remains from two individuals: an adult and child (III, IV, VI, VII, XVI). The children were all toddlers with an estimated age of 2-6, while age estimations for the adults remain inconclusive. The vessel of XXVI contained severely fragmentized bones which are also believed to have belonged to a child, in the same vessel there was also remains of an animal, presumably bones from a dog. Inclusions of dog bones in human burials have occurred in earlier Pre-Hittite burials at Alaca Höyük (Schaueule 1958: 35-37). The occurrence of remains of children in seven out of the twelve cremation burials with semi-preserved human bones, would suggest that less care was taken to totally incinerate the bones of children. No infants have been found in the Osmankayasi material, and have rarely been uncovered at other Hittite sites, except for one case at Gordion (Mellink 1956: 8). This is surprising, as infant mortality is believed to have been high in Hittite society. The infant burials have instead predominantly been uncovered inside the habitation area. This might be because the infants were seen as being unfit to be buried away from their homes (Seeher 2011: 389), and were therefore kept close to their living families and relatives.

In the osteological studies of the material, 36 individuals were selected from the burial material (39.5% of the burials). These 36 individuals consisted of 12 individuals who had been cremated, 22 pit graves and the remains of 2 individuals were taken from the filling layers in a fragmentary state. As discussed previously, the human remains at Osmanakayasi were excavated in a very fragmentary state. Only a small sample of the cremation burials were useable, because the majority only consisted of completely burnt ashes, so only the content of the seven vessels (10.1%) were chosen (III, IV, VI, VII, XVI, XXVI, XXIII). The total cremation sample was of 12 individuals divided on these seven vessels, which all stemmed from the younger group of cremations. Even the human skulls from the secondary burials were in a poor state of preservation, with many missing front facial characteristics (Schaueule 1958: 35). The lack of intact craniums and for that matter pelvis bones, made the sex determination significantly difficult because of their importance in this assessment (DiMichele & Spradley 2011: 151). In 12 cases out of the sample group the sex of the individuals was not possible to determine, 15 were determined to be male and nine to be
female (Schaeuble 1958: 39). Age could be estimated on 34 individuals, which showed that a majority were either juveniles or adults (Table 2), at the time of their death (Schaeuble 1958: 37-39, 50).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups:</th>
<th>Older burials</th>
<th>Younger burials</th>
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<tr>
<td>Infans I: age 2-7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
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<td>Infans II: age 7-14</td>
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<td>5.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juvenile: age 14-20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26.5</td>
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<td>Adult: age 20-30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature: age 30-50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senile: age 50-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Osmankayasi age groups data (Schaeuble 1958: 35, 50).*
4. The Gordion cemetery

Gordion is located in western central Anatolia, about 80 km southwest of modern Ankara (Fig. 1) in the ancient region known as Phrygia. Gordion is mainly known for its later Phrygian remains, but the cemetery indicates Hittite habitation during at least the first half of the 2nd millennia B.C. Gordion is located on several mounds, with the Hittite cemetery at the far northeastern edge covering an area of about 6000 m². The area where the cemetery is located was extensively inhabited during later Phrygian periods (8th to 7th century B.C.), which has periodically interfered with the preservation of the burials (Table. 3) (Mellink 1956: 55, 63; Emre 1991: 5).

In total, 46 burials have been excavated at Gordion. They are of three different types: pithos burials, pit graves and cist-graves. Cist-graves are underrepresented with only three examples; pit graves are the second largest category with its nine instances, while the pithos burials dominate with 34 burials (Mellink 1956: 4-8). All of the Hittite burials lay in virgin soil, with only a few disturbed contexts. This suggests that the cemetery was extramural during the Hittite period and first during the Phrygian period was the area incorporated into the habitation area (Mellink 1956: 4-17).

4.1 Gordion burials

Similar to many other contemporary central Anatolian sites, including Osmankayasi and Ilica, the dating has mainly been done through pottery which finds parallels to the assemblage of the settlement at Karum. The Gordion ceramics correlates with the typologies from Karum IV-I and early Old kingdom period. This gives the Gordion material a relative date from the pre-20th to the 16th century B.C. (Mellink 1956: 54-55; Mellart 1957: 63).

Cist-graves with its three instances, is the smallest category of Hittite burials at Gordion; they were all uncovered in a disturbed state, with only one (H 3) being semi-intact. The cist-graves are not confined to just one area of the cemetery, but are strewn around the area, which indicates that it was not just a phase of the burial practices, but that they were constructed contemporary with other types (chronological proximity). The small number of cist-graves suggests that the type never became part of the norm in the Hittite mortuary practices such as the pit graves and the pithos burials (Mellink 1956: 4). Cist-graves have only been uncovered at two other contemporary Hittite sites in central Anatolia: Ferzant and Ilica (Orthmann 1967: 21; Emre 1991: 3). Ferzant’s two Hittite cemeteries were partly excavated under illegal circumstances by the local population; which testified to the occurrence of cist-graves at both of the cemeteries. At the large Hittite cemetery of Ilica only one cist-grave (Grave 56) have been uncovered (see next chapter).

The cist-graves were constructed as large stone coffins, though this is barely visible in the badly disturbed state of H 31 and H 40. The semi-intact H 3 gives an idea of how the other cist-graves were constructed; the stone sides were constructed out of large stone slabs. The large stone block which usually covered the cist-graves, as can be seen in examples from the contemporary Mycenaean Peloponnesos, are missing in Gordion’s cist-graves most likely because of disturbance from later periods, that is of course if there ever was a lid covering these graves. Other than the assumed stone structure of the coffins, the three cist-graves lack uniformity in many aspects such as the orientation of the burials (Table. 3) and grave H 31 is a double burial. As it stands, no conclusions can be drawn from the cist-graves burial gifts because of their disturbed state, but Mellink suggests that their burial gifts originally might have been similar to those of the pit graves (Mellink 1956: 4; Cavanagh 2015: 330).
The pit graves were fairly simple and were buried in virgin soil, with deep enough pits to put it right above the bedrock. One example even cut into the bedrock. There are nine uncovered pit graves, with one double burial. Unlike the other two categories; the pit graves are fairly well preserved with only one case of a disturbed grave (H 30), which had an intrusion from a later pit grave (H 29) (Mellink 1956: 5-7).

### Table 3: Gordion burial data (Mellink 1956: 4-17).

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<tr>
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<th>Pithos burials</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disturbed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double burial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child burial</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
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Remains orientation;

<table>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two of the pit graves (H 23 and H 26) contained children. Both burials had very few gifts and were similar in modesty to the majority of the pit graves (Mellink 1956: 5-7). However, one of the pit graves stands out as going against the norm of modesty: grave H 22. The burial gifts of grave H 22 included: two plain-ware bowls, a gold wire earring, a silver ring, a series of copper toggle-pins, two copper bracelets, several beads of different materials and a spindle whorl made out of gypsum (Mellink 1956: 6). The large number of burial gifts suggests that the individual in the grave belonged to the elite, especially when taken into account the normal modesty of Hittite burials. Seven Hittite burials at Gordion included spindle whorls; two pit graves and five pithos burials. (Mellink 1956: 4-17, 50).

Mellink states that the pit graves which date to the Hittite period might originally have been more numerous than the nine instances presented in the report. This is because most of the burials lack grave goods and cannot be securely dated (Mellink 1956: 3, 5-7). Osteological studies and 14C dating of the bones would perhaps expand the number further. No such studies have been published, which leaves the possibility of a much longer and more extensive Hittite habitation period of Gordion than what can be shown today.

Pithos burials occur at three of the larger identified Hittite burial sites: Gordion, Ferzant and Yaranlar (Emre 1991: 3-5). The pithos burials from Ferzant are few, while Gordion and Yarnalar hold large numbers of preserved pithos burials. Both sites show that pithos burials were the mortuary norm there; Gordion however, with its 34 instances of pithos burials is holding the largest number of the three sites mentioned (Mellink 1956: 8-17).

Just like the cist-graves, pithoi were used as coffins for the deceased. The large jar formed a protective shell around the deceased when embedded into the soil. The vessels' mouth was sealed with stones or sherds to keep soil from entering into vessels. The pithoi were sunk into pits, which sometimes even were dug into the bedrock. For stability and protection, the pits were first filled with gravel or mud bricks, before the pithoi were lowered into them. The pithoi were not buried in an upright position, but were emerged into the soil at a leaning angle. Both the opening of the pithoi and the deceased’s skullcap were often found in a
The pattern of burying the deceased in a southeastern direction does not occur in the other burial categories at Gordion.

Two of the pithos burials contained more than one individual. Burial H 1 held an adult woman and an infant, most likely the mother and her child. Burial H 7 contained two adults, but was in a very disturbed state, which left it inconclusive if the two individuals were buried at the same time, or if the burial was reopened for the second individual (Mellink 1956: 8). The woman and the infant in burial H 1 most likely suffered the fate of death through child birth, and their burial together, as discussed in the previous chapter, goes against the Hittite burial norm of burying infants within the living space close to their living family (Seeher 2011: 389).

Most of the pithos burials were not particularly rich in their gifts. Mellink (1956: 8-9) suggests that the burial gifts might have served as tokens of the material possession of the individuals, or their life biographies. This would suggest that the gifts in the pithos burials perhaps cannot be interpreted as objects which the deceased would bring to the life beyond, but might instead have served as symbols instead. But the pithos burials H 4 and H 17 went against this norm of modesty, with H 17 being similar in its richness to pit grave H 22. The pithos containing the individual in H 4 were of a different type than the others, because it was a small cooking pot. Five small cooking pot burials at Gordion have been uncovered. All of these burials were of children and H 4 was the most elaborate one, almost rivaling H 17 and H 22 in their burial gifts (Mellink 1956: 15-17). Among the gift assemblage from H 4, there is one gift that stands out because of its uniqueness; a silver ring with a stamp seal. Only two stamps have been found at the cemetery, with the second example from burial H 41 which was not as luxurious as H 4’s stamp and was made out of copper (Mellink 1956: 35, 42). Sealings functioned as administrative tools, which later grew into status objects and were used as jewelry; examples of this can be found in the contemporary Mycenaean and Minoan world (Shelmerdine 2008: 12; Crowley 2008: 277-280).

The pithos burials at Gordion suffer largely from later disturbances from the Phrygian and Roman periods of the site. Almost half of the pithos burials were in a disturbed state (Table. 3). This leaves many of the pithos burials and the extent of their gifts interpretation in a state of flux, like the cist-graves, because nothing conclusive can be said about the 16 cases of disturbed burials. But in the case of the well-preserved pithos burials, it can be stated that modesty was the norm of what the deceased would be given as gifts. This might have been the case with the disturbed examples as well, or perhaps the disturbed burials surpassed the preserved in gifts. Because out of these 16 cases, there are some signs of grave looting, with five pithos burials showing evidence for possibly having been broken into at one point (H 5, H 24, H 34, H 41, H 43) (Mellink 1956: 8-17). These burials might have been targeted for their potential riches in burial goods. Some type of steles or markers at the surface might have been in place to mark these graves, and making them easy prey for their looters. But the suggestion of steles or markers at the Gordion cemetery is purely theoretical; even if this once was the case, they would have been removed during later periods, when the area of the cemetery was built over. No typical steles have been uncovered at a Hittite cemetery, with only Hittite funerary steles first appearing during the Neo-Hittite period in Syria (Gilibert 2011: 95).
5. The Ilica cemetery

The site of Ilica is located in west central Anatolia, near the modern village of Aya and 48 km west of modern Ankara (Fig. 1). The old settlement of Ilica lay north of the modern village, and is partly located on a rocky ridge named Asarcık Hüyük. The Ilica village continues southward down the ridge and at the farthest southern edge of the settlement the burial ground is situated. It is dominated by big stone blocks, most of them arranged from north to south, with some blocks still standing upright today. The area covered by the stone blocks encompasses an area of about 1.4 hectare, which holds the majority of the burials, with only a few burials uncovered to the east outside of the stone outcrop. Orthmann (1967: 5-7) suggest it is likely that the cemetery originally continued further northward, but to the north lays the modern village which more than likely has destroyed what once there was.

In total 131 burials have been discovered at Ilica. Similar to Osmankayasi, cremation vessels are in a large majority with 126 instances. Pit graves is the second largest category, as at the other two sites while cist-graves continue to be in minority with only one case (Orthmann 1967: 10-35). There is some confusion about the number of pit graves among scholars. Emre (1991: 4) states that there were nine pit graves, while Seeher (2011: 389) states four and van de Hout (1994: 54) concluded that there were none. In Orthmann’s publication from 1967, three instances of pit graves were presented (Grave 1, 30, 70), and one possible pit grave (Grave 35) (Orthmann 1967: 10, 16-17, 24).

5.1 Ilica burials

The burials were mostly found in clusters; with most of them in the central area of the cemetery. Most of the clusters appear in close vicinity to the stones markers (Orthmann 1967: 39). It has to be taken into account, however, that many of the original stones have been removed during the later centuries. The older burials in the eastern part of the cemetery were completely destroyed in many cases from later exploitations of the area, except for a few which were buried deep and close to the outlying stones which marked the border of the burial ground (Orthmann 1967: 9).

Similar to Osmankayasi, the burial material at Ilica have been divided into three periods of relative dating: Period A, B and C, and similar to Gordion the cemetery was used after the Hittite period and therefore only Period A and B is Hittite. Period C is believed to be significantly younger and belong to late Hellenistic and early Roman Imperial times. Therefore, the graves from Period C are not discussed in this paper. The Period A graves have been dated to the Early Bronze Age. The burials from this period are very few; two were found in Trench G, while Trench L is believed to have held graves dating to this period as well, but now destroyed (also not include in this paper) (Orthmann 1967: 8-9, 59-60). Most of the burials date to Period B, which have been dated through pottery synchronisms with other sites, mainly with Karum. The older ceramics from Period B match with ceramics found in the layers of Karum Ia-Ic and the younger correspond with later layers of the same site which dates to the Hittite Old Kigdom period. This gives the material a relative date from the 19th to the 16th century B.C. (Mellart 1957: 63; Orthmann 1967: 60-61).

The only cist-grave at Ilica (Grave 56) was uncovered in the middle of Trench A, together with other burials in a large cluster. The grave was semi-enclosed with large flat stone slabs forming the coffin’s outer walls. The eastern wall was missing because of incursions from Grave 54 and Grave 57, the wall was most likely removed to make room for the newer
burials. Similar to the Gordion cist-graves, no stone lid was covering the stone coffin, leaving the deceased to be covered by soil. Because of the exposed state of the cist-grave, the human remains were in a bad state of preservation; the only parts preserved were the crania and parts of the upper limbs. The burial gifts included were fairly modest, with only a lead figurine standing out which had been placed alongside the head (Orthmann 1967: 21-22).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cremations</th>
<th>Pit graves</th>
<th>Cist-grave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Double burial:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child burial:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remains orientation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE:</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E:</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE:</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetectable:</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Ilica burial data (Orthmann 1967: 10-35).

The three pit graves, including the plausible pit grave of Grave 35, are spread out over the cemetery. Grave 30, 35 and 70 are buried in clusters together with cremation burials, while Grave 1 is only adjacent to two other burials at the far north-western edge of Trench A (Orthmann 1967: Plan 3: Schnitt A). Grave 1 was a double burial, with the bones of a second individual found between some stones in close vicinity to the east of the first individual. There were few burials gifts in the double burial, only some ceramic sherds and a bronze ring. Grave 30 and 35, were the poorest of the four burials and only included some fragmented ceramic vessels. Similar to the double burial of Grave 1, Grave 70 included ceramics and a ring, but in silver (Orthmann 1967: 10, 16-17, 24). All of the skeletal remains were poorly preserved, most likely because of unfavorable soil types. Future soil analysis might be able to determine the validity of this theory. Another possibility which Orthmann suggests is that some of the pit graves might be secondary, because human bones have been found scattered in the filling layers, similar to Osmankayasi (Orthmann 1967: 36-37).

Unlike the Osmankayasi assemblage of cremation vessels, the Ilica cremations are less heterogeneous, with only 23 different vessel categories uncovered in the 126 cremations burials. The most common type was beak jars of the Schnabelkannen type, which has five different sub-categories and occurs in 90 of the cremation burials and in one of the pit graves (Grave 1) (Orthmann 1967: 40-50). Unlike the other two sites of Osmankayasi and Gordion, Ilica hosts a large assemblage of handmade pottery. Most of the handmade pottery is found as burial gifts in some of the graves, but also scattered around the cemetery. In 11 of the cremation burials, the vessels containing the human remains were handmade: Grave 9, 11, 22, 27, 53, 76, 80, 92, 106, 107 and 122 (Orthmann 1967: 40-50).

Unlike Osmankayasi where the cremation vessel were placed leaning against the cave wall, at Ilica all of the 126 cremation vessels were buried. The largest cluster of cremations was in the center of the cemetery. Very few of the pits for the cremation vessels had a lining of stones for protection like the pithos burials at Gordion. Many of the cremation vessels had their beak (neck of the vessel) broken off or damaged, Orthmann believes this to be intentional damage (Orthmann 1967: 35). This intentional breakage was most likely done to
repurpose these everyday jars as cremation vessels and to make them significantly easier to bury when their large beaks were removed. Similar to the Gordian pithos burials, the vessel openings were in many instances sealed with sherds or stones, some vessels were sealed shut with inverted bowls or other vessels. Another aspect which the cremation vessels share with the Gordian pithos burials was that they were also put into the soil at a leaning angle. Although unlike the pithoi at Gordion (Table. 3), most of the vessel openings were placed in an eastern direction. Because the beak was broken off in many instances of the cremation vessels, the direction of the burials is difficult to detect in 56 cases (Table. 4). The volume of human ashes in the vessels varies significantly, with some vessels holding such large amounts that it might be remains from more than one individual. Other vessels held very small volumes and a few held none (Orthmann 1967: 35-36; Helmuth 1967: 65-67). The vessels which held no remains might have functioned as cenotaphs for individuals which could not be buried. A few of the cremation vessels does not only hold the remains of humans but also the remains of animals: Grave 13, 50, 63, 81. These remains most likely belonged to animals which were sacrificed and cremated together with or separately to the humans (Orthmann 1967: 13-26, 36). Unfortunately, the species of the animals is not stated.

Double cremation burials only occur in four instances: Grave 10, 25, 75, 92. Grave 10’s two individuals were an adult male and a mature female. The remaining three double burials contained each the remains of a child or juvenile and an adult. Neither the sex of the child or adult was possible to determine (Helmuth 1967: 66). These four double burials with a child and an adult are highly reminiscent of the five double cremation burials at Osmankayasi. Grave 93 and 94 were buried on top of other vessels, therefore these two graves have been counted as double burials as well (Orthmann 1967: 28-29).

The most common burial gift was pottery and similar to the cremation vessels, these were commonly of the Schnabelkannen typology, though many burials lacked gifts (Orthmann 1967: 10-34, 40-50). The overall material from the graves is fairly sober; very few artifacts can be used to discuss stratification in the material. A reason for this might be because a lot of the material showing status might have been cremated together with their owner. This is possibly evident in the rings uncovered in the cremation burials at the cemetery, which is poorly preserved, which Orthmann (1967: 53-55) has suggested to have been in such a poor preservation state because they were partly incinerated with the human remains. Occasionally animal bones were found in the burials, in Grave 42 six knucklebones from an animal were found in a cup. The animal bones were always few in numbers and unlike the animal remains at Osmankayasi, or the cremated animal remains, these bones are not believed to have belonged to animals sacrificed in connection to the funerals (Orthmann 1967: 36).

Because of the fact that most of the funerary material consisted of cremation graves, the number of graves that the sex of the individual could be determined on was very limited. The state of the cremated human remains fluctuated significantly because of how long and intense the cremation process had been in each case. It could range from remains weighing 2 grams to 1180 grams, with the former being too small of a sample for age and sex determination. It was only possible to determine the sex of the 26 individuals: 20 male and six female. Out of the 131 graves, the age of 117 individuals (89.3%) could be determined within a margin for different sets of age groups: infans I, infans II, juvenile, adult, mature and senile (Table. 5). Because of the poor state of preservation with some of the cremation burials, the accuracy of the margin of the ages of some of the individual could be significant lower than other instance, such as the groups of infans I or infans II, adult or mature and mature or senile (Helmuth 1967: 65-67). Few individuals in the Ilica cemetery reached a mature age before death, with 69.2% estimated to have died at an age around of 30-35 (Helmuth 1967: 66). This does quite contrast the Osmankayasi material, where 32.4% of the individuals from the sample group were at an age around 20-30 (Table. 2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infans I: age 2-7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infans I or Infans II: age 3-14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infans II: age 7-14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infans II or Juvenile: age 7-20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile: age 14-20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile or Adult: age 14-30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult: age 20-30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult or Mature: age 20-50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature: age 30-50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature or Senile: age 30-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senile: age 50-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably Adult</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table. 5: Illica age groups data (Helmuth 1967: 66).*
6. Discussion

6.1 Burial patterns

Initially in this paper the question of patterning between the different cemeteries and grave categories were asked. Patterns is evident in the material in several aspects, one aspect is the occurrence of pit graves at all of the cemeteries. But always in a pattern of being the second largest category, though at Ilica the four pit graves (3%) are only a fraction of the total 131 graves (Table. 4) (Orthmann 1967: 10-35). While at Gordion the pit graves make up 19.6% of the graves and at Osmankayasi 24.2% (Table. 1 and 3) (Mellink 1956: 4-17; Bittel et al. 1958: 4-16). Cremations were the preferred mortuary practices at Osmankayasi and Ilica, while at Gordion not a single example of cremations have been found. Gordion deviated from the cremation norm and instead pithos burials were the preferred grave type (further discussed in the next chapter).

On the individuals whom the age was possible to determine at Osmankayasi and Ilica, the majority was at an adult age at the time of death (Schaeuble 1958: 35, 50; Helmuth 1967: 66). Though the age data of Osmankayasi is not representative of the cremations burials as a whole, because only twelve individuals (five double burials) were possible to determine the age on from the total 69 cremations (Schaeuble 1958: 37, 50). The sample groups which was possible to use for sex determination was even smaller at the two sites. But in the instances it was possible to determine the sex, the majority was male. At Osmankayasi 15 were male and nine female (Schaeuble 1958: 39), at Ilica 20 male and six female (Helmuth 1967: 65-67). But as already mentioned in previous chapters, these groups are quite small in relation to the total number of graves at each cemetery. So it is debatable if it can be used to represent the material as whole. The Gordion material lack osteological studies, so nothing conclusive can be said on the division of the sexes or for that matter the age. But seven graves included spindle whorls; two pit graves and five pithos burials, with one of them even being the richest grave (H 22) of Gordion (Mellink 1956: 4-17, 50). The inclusion of spindle whorls in graves determines the sex of the individuals quite clearly as a female, because spindle-whorls had a feminine association in Hittite society. This is evident in several contemporary Hittite sources, such as the Paskuwatti's ritual, which was supposed to cure male impotence:

…I place a spindle [whorl] and a distaff in the patient’s [hand], and he comes under the gates. When he steps forward through the gates, I take the spindle [whorl] and distaff away from him. I give him a bow (and)[arro]w(s), and say (to him) all the while: "I have just taken the femininity away from you and given you masculinity in return. You have cast of (sexual) behavior expected [of women];[you have taken]to yourself the behavior expected of men". KUB 9.27 (Hoffner 1971: 277).

As mentioned in the Paskuwatti’s ritual, the bow and arrow was perceived as male objects and represented masculinity because of its martial association (Bacelli et al. 2014: 114). Wooden bows and arrows have never been uncovered in a Hittite burial context, but this should not exclude the possibility of these artifacts once occurring as burial gifts.

Another pattern which can be discussed is the directions of the burials. The Osmankayasi material lacks the same uniformity in the direction of the burials as the other two cemeteries. This is caused by the cremation vessels being placed along the cave walls and most of the pit-graves being secondary. But the majority of the burials were placed along the eastern wall of the cave (Table. 1), similar to Ilica where the majority of the cremation vessels were buried with their openings in an eastern direction (Table. 4). The burials at Gordions only deviate
from this slightly, where the norm was to bury the dead in a southeastern direction (Table. 3), comparable to the 20 burials at Osmankayasi which were placed along the southeastern wall of the cave (Table. 1). A pattern with burials throughout prehistory and history was either to bury the dead facing east, or the deceased was buried with the skullcap to the east, or in the case of vessel burials the opening was buried in an eastern direction. The fact that the sun rises in the east is most likely what have given it importance in the burial sphere. The notion of burying the dead towards the east and the sun has various meanings in different cultures and periods (Giles 2012: 73). In the case of the Hittites the sun represented the deity who was highest in the hierarchy of the gods, the sun goddess Arinna who was the queen of the earth and heaven (Krasau 2003: 227.228). So, the choice for the Hittites of burying most of their dead in an eastern or southeastern direction might have been the case because it was the direction of Arinna. Although the grave types which were not part of the burial norm, such as the pit graves and cist-graves do not show the same preference for being buried in an eastern direction. Instead these individuals seem in many instances to have been buried without regards to uniformity, and direction seems in many cases to have been picked at random, especially evident at Gordion (Table. 3).

6.2 Cultural differences and ethnicity

The habit in central Anatolia of using pithoi as makeshift coffins dates back to the late Neolithic (Bacvarov 2008: 66). This means that this practice predates the Hattians (later Hittites), by several millennia. The Hattians were of Indo-European origin, believed to have arrived in central Anatolia during the 3rd millennium B.C. (Bryce 2005: 13). Pithoi were continuously used in burials during the Early Bronze Age and it was a well-established practice in the region of Hatti (Fig. 1) when the Indo-Europeans settled there. Cremations were first introduced in central Anatolia during the early period of the Hattians in the second half of the 3rd and early 2nd millennia B.C. The occurrence of different mortuary practices at the cemeteries most likely did not represent different ethnicities as it has sometimes been suggested. It is more likely that it was a matter of different burial preferences within one group, which several ethnographic accounts can attest to commonly occur within ethnic groups (Seeher 2011: 389-390). Although it should not be ignored that the Hittites were known to move large amounts of people, sometimes even in the thousands after annexations of new lands. An example would be the Hittite king Suppiluliuma I’s campaigns in Syria, where thousands of Egyptians soldiers and commoners were taken as prisoners of war and forcefully moved back to the region of Hatti (Bryce 2005: 184-185). The possibility of ethnical variation in the individuals in the cemeteries should therefore not entirely be ruled out.

When discussing the differences in the burial customs at the Hittite cemeteries the possible cultural differences between regions need to be taken into account. The Hittite kingdom and later empire was not one set of people spread across the whole governed land. An historical parallel that can be made is the organization of the 16th century A.D. Habsburgian Holy Roman Empire, where the local rulers of regions were autonyms but owed obligations to the central ruler, both against foreign and domestic threats (Kann 1977: 32). Similar obligations in the Hittite period is discussed in treaties between the Hittite King Mursili II and the viceroys installed in conquered and annexed regions (Bryce 2005: 205). While the rulers of the regions might have been Hittite, the local population could not always have been exchanged in its entirety and therefore local variation in culture and mortuary practices is to be expected outside of the Hittite heartland of the Hatti region. While the Osmankayasi cemetery is located in the Hatti region, close to the capital of Hattusha, Gordion and Ilica lie beyond its borders (Fig. 1). The occurrence of cremation burials and similarities in the burial material at Osmankayasi and Ilica might signal a Hittite cultural spread to Ilica at least in the case of the mortuary practices. At Gordion fewer comparisons in the mortuary practices can be made. Mortuary and cultural adoption in the Hittite world have many similarities to the Romanization phenomena in the later Roman Empire. Romanization in the
colonies was a string of decisions and actions of local population and Roman officials in the implementation of certain aspects of the Roman culture in areas outside of the heartland of the Empire. This was in a way the adoption of Roman customs in a region and also a way for its local population to be able to cope with the new social and political structure that was imposed on them by the Romans (Revell 2014: 383). Comparable cultural adoption by local population in areas which were acquired by the Hittites is highly likely. An example of this adoption would be the Hittite type of pottery being accepted across the board, while an example of rejection and regional difference is the lack of cremations at Gordion and vice versa with pithos burials at the other two cemeteries.

Pottery is quite often used as an ethnic marker in archaeology and anthropology. But in the case of Hittite pottery at Gordion and other contemporary sites under Hittite rule, it is more likely that it can only be used as a marker for the extent of the economic production and distribution system. Instead the mortuary practices and associated rituals are better evidence for ethnical and cultural differences. This is the case because the treatment of the dead is often related to many fundamental aspects of a culture. In traditional societies the living is dependent on the bond with their dead ancestors. Therefore, it is not as easily exchanged as material culture (Emberling 1997: 323-324; Singer 2007: 169). This would suggest that the funerary material of Gordion to have ethnical differentiation from the material of the other two cemeteries. This makes the distinction of what is Hittite culture and what is not, difficult to determine.

6.3 The status reflected in the cemeteries

Because of the generally very simple burials at most Hittite cemeteries, it has been suggested (Bryce 2002: 178; van de Hout 1994: 54-55) that all of the excavated burials belonged to commoners, which would mean that the burials of the elites have yet to be discovered. This interpretation of the funerary material is problematic and less than convincing when taking into account the material discussed in the previous chapters. Another proposed scenario is that within Hittite mortuary practices status in life and material wealth did not need to be represented in the burial gifts and that a simple burial sufficed for all social classes (van de Hout 1994: 56). This notion of simplistic burials could be argued to be represented in the Ilica material if taken at face value, but cannot be applied across the board, because the entirety of the material does not lack stratification. Assigning all of the Ilica burials as being simple is not entirely conclusive either. This because the possibility of the burial gifts being burnt along with their deceased owners, which some evidence exists to support, such as the rings found in the cremation vessels which is believed to be poorly preserved because they had been cremated together with their deceased owners (Orthmann 1967: 53-55). Childe (1945: 16-17) discussed the phenomena of simple graves occurring in prosperous societies. In many societies with the increase of material possession and wealth the grave material grew exponentially poorer, which is apparent in several contemporary Bronze Age cultures in Europe and might have been the case with the Hittites to a certain degree as well. But, the three Gordian burials of H 4, H 17 and H 22 (Mellink 1956: 6, 11, 15) show clear breakage of this norm of modesty in their wealth of burial gifts.

The placement of the cemetery should not be overlooked in the case of Osmankayasi, because it was located along what Bittel (1970: 94) has suggested to have been the ancient procession road leading to the rock sanctuary called Yazilikaya. Yazilikaya was used from the 17th to the 13th centuries B.C. and is believed to have served several functions, one which was as the royal crypt of Tudihilaya IV (c. 1237-1209 B.C.) (Bittel 1970: 94, 103; Bryce 2005: 296). A cemetery only for commoners located along a road which possibly were used for royal funerary and religious processions, seems unlikely at best.

One of the major aspects which van de Hout uses in the discussion of status of the buried individuals in the cemeteries and assigning them as being commoners is the age groups (Table. 2 and 5) (van den Hout 1994: 55). Only eleven individuals from Osmankayasi have an estimated age of 20-30 years (32.4%), with the age group 14-20 years old (26.5%) being the...
second largest group (Schaeuble 1958: 37-39, 50). While at Ilica 69.2% of the individuals buried in the cemetery were at an age of 30-35 years old (Helmuth 1967: 66). van de Hout (1994: 55) bases this statement on that several members of the Hittite royal family and nobility are known to have reached significant higher ages than 50 years old. An example would be queen Puduhepa, who might have reached the age of 90 years old. Though there are also examples of less fortunate royalties, such as the kings Arnuwanda II and III, who both only reigned for one or two years each, before falling ill and dying (Bryce 2005: 191, 289, 327). So, determining the status of the individuals at the grave fields from the estimated age groups is not convincing. While age data might not be able to tell anything about the status of most of the individuals from the three cemeteries. The fact that there were burials of children with elaborate burial gifts, gives an idea of the structure of the stratification within the Hittite society. These elaborate child burials contradict the notion of status being something which could only be earned through achievements (Brown 2007: 304). It is already established that the throne of the Hittites was in most cases inherited either patrilineal or matrilineal depending on suitable male heirs (Bryce 2005: 89-90). But these child burials might suggest that status in Hittite society as a whole was mainly hereditary.

The occurrence of animal remains at the Osmankayasi cemetery has been suggested as being evidence of ritualistic feasting connected to the funerals (Bryce 2002: 178). This is most likely true in the case of the cattle and pigs, but equids were animals with high value and compared to the midden layers of Hattusha where other animal remains can be found, there have barely been any equid bones in these layers. Horses were not animals in the Hittite society that were bred for their meat, or at least very seldom were; instead horses were bred for their capabilities of hard labor and war. As previously discussed, the remains of 13 equids have been found in the Osmankayasi cemetery, two of the equids were of a larger horse breed (Herre & Röhrs 1958: 60-63), which has been suggested as being war horses (Crossland 1967: 23-24). The domestic horse was first introduced in the Near East around the turn of the second millennia B.C. Early written sources describe the larger breeds as being bred to perfection for combat, but were also described as noble companions to their fellow combatants. The first written central Anatolian account of horses comes from the 18th century B.C. during the reign of the famous conqueror Anitta (plausibly the first Hittian/Hittite king), which also describes the use of war-chariots in combat (Herre & Röhrs 1958: 60-61; Bittel 1970: 18-19). These early sources give the impression of an animal held in high regard by their owners, but which could also be very highly valued, because of the intricate breeding processes. The skills and labor invested in the breeding and training of the Hittite war horses is highly evident in a Hittite horse training text called the Kikkuli Text. The Kikkuli Text is the oldest known written war horse training guide in the world, which dates to around the 15th century B.C., making it contemporary to the horse remains. The intensive training of the animals described in the text spanned 184 days (Nyland 2008: 2; Raulwing 2009: 2-3). From Güterbock’s interpretation of the full Kikkuli Text, it has been estimated that the Hittite professionally bred steeds could reach top speeds rivaling modern day Arabian stallions used for horse endurance competitions (Nyland 1992: 293). The funerary ritualistic slaughter of these two horses which were of the larger breed, which in all likelihood had been extensively trained, perhaps even the full 184 days described in the Kikkuli Text, cannot have been a decision made lightly. So, the inclusion of these two valuable horses (their craniums) in the Osmankayasi burials indicate high status for the individuals who were given these two horses to take to the life beyond, which would oppose the previous interpretation of Osmankayasi as merely a cemetery of the commoners from Hattusha (Emre 1991: 4; van de Hout 1994: 55; Bryce 2002: 178). Instead the cemetery was most likely shared among groups from different levels of the Hittite societal strata. The horse heads show a mortuary belief system, which in some cases demanded inclusions of things for the deceased to take to the life beyond.

The šalliš waštaiš ritual was a funerary cremation ritual that was performed in connection with the death of royalty. The ritual spanned 14 days and is described in 60 cuneiform clay tablets. The tablets are dated to the 14th to the 13th century B.C. (Kassian et al. 2002: 9-11, 40). Kassian et al. (2002: 13) suggests that the origin of the ritual dates further back than the Hittites. Certain aspects of the ritual could possibly date back to the Old Assyrian period (20th
– 18th century B.C.), such as the placement of tin gold strips over the eyes and lips of the deceased (Kassian et al. 2002: 87, 99), which have been found in a grave in the Old Assyrian capital of Ashur (Larsen 2015: 85). The šalliš waštaiš ritual is not believed to be of royal origin (Kassian et al. 2002: 13). This notion of the ritual not being originally a royal ritual makes certain aspects which are described in the text applicable on the burial material discussed in previous chapters.

[(Where)] the heads of horses <and> the h[(eads of oxen)] were burned… KUB.39.39 +37+38+36 (Kassian et al. 2002: 419).

This passage from the šalliš waštaiš ritual, suggests the possibility of horses and animals as sacrifices which were not only buried, but also cremated alongside their deceased owners, leaving no trace in the archaeological material. Unless the animal remains and ashes were included in the cremation vessels as the case was with the Osmankaysi cremation: XXVI, which held the remains of a child and a dog (Schaeuble 1958: 35-37). Or the few instances at Ilica with cremation vessels which held both human and animal remains (Orthmann 1967: 36), though not necessarily horses, because no zoological studies has been published on the Ilica material. The inclusion of cremated horse remains in the vessels is not represented in the funerary material, which leaves the possibility of these remains being deposited somewhere else, possibly at the site of the actual cremations.

6.4 Conclusion

Some uniformity in the otherwise heterogeneous material can be found, which ties the three cemeteries together. Although the patterns between Osmankayasi and Ilica show more uniformity than it does with the Gordion material. The differences in the mortuary practices between Gordion and the other two cemeteries might indicate more than just regional differences, but also ethnical and cultural differences. This notion of possible ethnical and cultural division within the Hittite kingdom and later empire would challenge the perception on what previously have been determined to be Hittite culture.

What had previously been determined to be a meager burial material as a whole is most likely richer and more stratified than previously thought. Many of the simplistic burials might lack evidence for stratification in the archaeological records, but the act of the funerary rituals might have been of greater importance for all classes of the Hittite societal strata than the actual burial gifts sent with the dead. The šalliš waštaiš ritual describes a very rich and elaborate royal cremation ritual which would barely, or not at all, have left any traces in the archaeological record; it is not unthinkable that the non-royal funerary rituals were conducted in a similar way. This puts the previous interpretation of the cemeteries of Osmankayasi, Gordion and Ilica as being cemeteries of only commoners into question. Because when it comes to the Hittite mortuary practices there might be more than meets the eye.
7. Summary

This paper has discussed the mortuary practices of the three Hittite sites of Osmankayasi, Gordion and Ilica, which are located in central Anatolia. The three cemeteries were excavated in the 50s and 60s and still remain as the Hittite cemeteries with largest burial material. The three cemeteries combined held a total of 268 graves, divided on four categories: cremations, pithos burials, pit graves and cist-graves. Most of the graves at Osmankayasi and Ilica were cremations, while at Gordion pithos burials were in majority. Osteological studies conducted on the Osmankayasi and Ilica material show that most of the individuals in the cemeteries were at an adult age at the time of death. In a few instances the sex of the individuals was possible to determine, which showed that the majority was male. Though these sample groups which the sex was determined on was very small and cannot therefore represent the whole material of the cemeteries. No such osteological studies have been done with the Gordion material, so age and sex division data is missing at the site from the Hittite period.

The three sites are believed to be of Hittite origin and dated to the first half of the 2nd millennia B.C., with only the Osmankayasi material continuing into the early second half of the millennia. Through studying the burial material of each cemetery, the notion of what constitutes Hittite culture has been problematized. Because what was previously assigned to be Hittite culture is more likely a collection of several different cultures under Hittite rule, also divided on several different ethnicities.

The Hittite funerary material is very heterogeneous, especially when comparing the three sites with each other. But certain patterns are apparent within the material, such as the direction of most of the burials being east or southeast, or the modesty of a large number of the graves. Though this modesty is not the case for all of the graves, some show evidence for stratification through their burial gifts, such as elite goods or the inclusion of the horse heads as sacrifices. This would suggest the existence of stratification in the material which was previously assumed to be missing.
Illustration list

Figures:
Fig. 1: Produced by author.

Tables:


Bibliography


