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The treasure deposits of Troy: rethinking crisis and agency on the Early Bronze Age citadel

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Abstract

The treasure deposits of Troy have been largely studied in isolation from both architectural developments and other depositional contexts in Troia II–III. The corpus has been perceived as little more than a catalogue of information that can be assessed to outline various trends related to metallurgical production, expanding networks of exchange and fluctuations in economic wealth. Considerations of agency have been few and limited. This study relates the content and context of the treasures to depositional and architectural patterns that begin in Troia II. Meaningful continuities and transformations between Troia II–III ultimately challenge the widely held reconstruction that the treasures were a concealment of wealth in anticipation of an attack. The study arrives at an alternative explanation with a consideration of the relationship between the destruction and abandonment of the Troia II central megaron complex and the deposition of treasure. The central megaron complex and the treasure deposits represent two distinct and divergent strategies of élite initiative on the citadel. The study concludes with a consideration of the inherently destabilising practices of treasures deposition, the final destruction of Troia III and the end of the Early Bronze Age in Anatolia.

Özet

Troya'daki hazine gömüleri büyük çoğunlukla hem mimari gelişmelerden hem de Troya II–III evreleri diğer gömülerinden bağımsız olarak incelenmiştir. Bu nedenle bu çalışmalar sonucu oluşturulmuş yazılı açıklamalar metalurjik üretim, iletişim ağlarındaki genişleme, ekonomik refahtaki dalgalanmalar gibi farklı çizgiler izlenerek oluşturulabilecek taslak niteliğindeki kataloklardan daha fazla bilgi vermemektedir. Dönemsel faaliyetleri göz önüne alan çalışma çok az sayıda ve kısıtlıdır. Bu çalışma Troya II ile başlamak üzere gömüleri ve mimari modelleri ilişkilendirerek gömünün hem içeriğini, hem de ortaya çıkarıldığı ortamı incelemektedir. Troya II ve III arasında gözlenen anlamlı süreklilik ve değişmeler, geniş bir kesim tarafından kabul gören -hazine gömülerinin tahmin edilen bir saldırı için refahın gizlenmesi- olduğu görüşüne karşı fikirler ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu çalışma, Troya II merkezi megaron kompleksinde meydana gelen yıkım ve terk edilmiş olma ile hazine gömüleri arasındaki ilişkiyi değerlendirerek alternatif bir açıklamaya ulaşmıştır. Merkezi megaron kompleksi ile hazine gömüleri kale durumundaki bu kentte elit inisiatifinin birbirinden farklı ve zıt iki stratejisini temsil eder. Çalışma yöre halkına miras kalmış olan düzensiz gömü uygulaması, Troya III deki nihai yıkım ve Anadolu'da Erken Bronz Çağ'ın bitimini dikkate alarak bir sonuca ulaşmaktadır.

It is well known that Heinrich Schliemann used the discovery of Priam's Treasure to support his hypothesis that he was indeed excavating Homer's Troy (fig. 1). His interpretation of this depositional context leapt from a passage in the *Iliad* that related King Priam morosely rummaging through his chest of treasures, hoping to offer a ransom for the corpse of his son. In Schliemann's reconstruction, Priam's Treasure was sealed in the destruction context caused by the final Achaean assault (Schliemann 1880: 454).

Priam's Treasure (hereafter Treasure A) has since been securely dated to the late Early Bronze Age in Anatolia (about 1,000 years prior to the traditional date for the events described in the *Iliad*, see chronological chart in fig. 2). Nevertheless a kind of Trojan War in the Early Bronze Age has provided another context to interpret Treasure A and 16 additional deposits of metalwork and other precious objects that have also been securely dated to this period. The settlement of Troia II–III suffered three destructions and it is within the climate

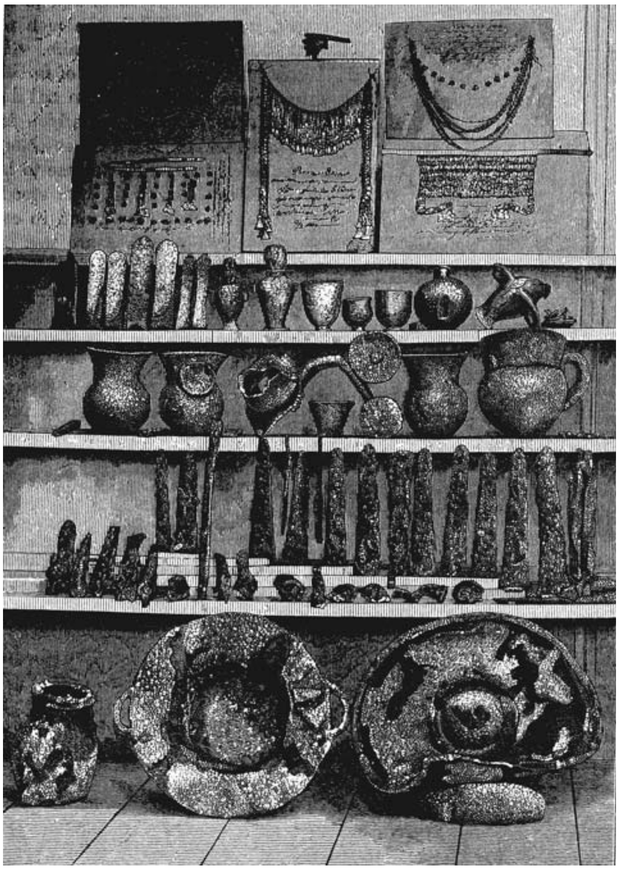


Fig. 1. 'Priam's Treasure' as displayed and represented by Schliemann (from Schliemann 1880: no. 14)

of recurrent settlement destruction that archaeologists and historians have outlined a hoarding scenario for the Trojan treasures, whereby wealth was concealed in anticipation of an attack (see below).

Considerations of instability are clearly one relevant approach to the problem of the treasure deposits; though there are additional contexts and dynamics that archaeologists have yet to explore. The three most significant for this discussion include the strong suggestions of banqueting and associated deposition on the Early Bronze Age citadel, the relationship between depositional contexts and architectural features on or near to the citadel, and the socially-contingent response of Troy's inhabitants to regional and pan-regional developments towards the end of the Early Bronze Age in western Anatolia.

The formal deposition of banqueting equipment on the Trojan citadel

The following discussion will relate Carl Blegen's chronological markers for phase IIc–III to the chronological markers created in a recent re-excavation and analysis by Günter Mansfeld (2001) of 'Pinnacle E4/5' at the centre of the citadel. The earliest level reached in this stratigraphic reinvestigation of the citadel is Troia II/7a (Blegen's phase IIc). Thus phase IIc (Blegen) is equivalent to Troia II/7a (Mansfeld) (see fig. 2).

The destruction that terminated phase I of Blegen's excavations marked one of the more significant transitions of the settlement's history. Innovations in ceramics began in phase IIa with one- and two-handled and handleless tankard shapes (Blegen et al. 1950: 229), predating the introduction of the potter's wheel which was the hallmark of phase IIb. New ceramic forms in phase IIb included flat plates with polished slip and wheelmade bowls with flaring sides (Blegen et al. 1950: 205). Phase IIb also introduced the pervasive red slipped wares (also called red coated wares), which assume the form of plates (both handmade and wheelmade), one- and two-handled and handleless tankards, bowls, jugs and storage jars. The emblematic form of the red slipped repertoire, the *depas* cup, was introduced in phase IIc (Troia II/7a) (Blegen et al. 1950: 224–37).

By the time the red slipped ware (hereafter RSW) repertoire had reached its full assemblage in phase IIc (Troia II/7a), the Trojans had begun to deposit this pottery in meaningful ways. Carl Blegen's excavations on the Ledge, about 100m west of the citadel (fig. 3a), identified a large rectangular basin (16m by 6m) cut out of an overhanging ledge of limestone, filled with a remarkable accumulation (3.5m) of depositional material, including large quantities of pottery (almost exclusively RSW) and faunal remains dominated by cattle and goat, with lesser volumes of sheep, deer, pig, dog and tortoise. The Ledge was also filled with unidentified burnt organic matter and with numerous stone idols, celts and spindle whorls (Blegen et al. 1950: 270–77). On the surface this appeared to Blegen as the settlement midden, though he could not explain the effort invested in cutting out this large basin from an overhanging ledge, nor the deposition of idols and celts. Blegen raised the possibility that this was a cultic space where burnt offerings had been made (Blegen et al. 1950: 270).

The Ledge appears to have fallen out of use in phase IId (Troia II/7d) (Blegen et al. 1950: 270), when depositional behaviour was transferred to numerous pits on the citadel in phase IId (Troia II7d), a level which Blegen has identified as the 'Pit Period' (Blegen et al. 1950: 206). Blegen identified 22 pits (which he called *bothroi*) concentrated in an area of the southwest corner of the enclosure wall (both within and outside of the enclosure corner), just south of the entrance of Megaron IIA (Blegen et al. 1950: 206, pls 456–57) (fig. 3a). Almost all the pits contained fragments of large pithoi, as well as slabs of schist that may have topped these containers (Blegen et al. 1950: 278). The *bothroi* were filled with

Year	Periodisation of treasure deposits	Troia (Mansfeld	Troy (Blegen)	Troy (Easton)	Poliochni	Demirci-höyük	Alaca-höyük	Syro-Mesop.
2000								
		VI	V	V				
		———	———	———				
								Ur III
2100								
		IV	IV	IV				
							transitional	———
								Guti
	———	———	———	———	———			———
2200	Troia III destroyed				Giallo			
		III/4a–d	IIId		destroyed			
	Troia II8/a–III	———	———					
	(phase IIf/g–III)							
	intentional deposits	III/3a–c	IIIc	III				Akkad
	A, B, C, J, F, L							
		———	———					
2300		III/2a–b	IIIb					
	‘neue Baukonzept’	———	———		Giallo			
		III/a–e	IIIa	———				
		———	———				4	
		II/9a–d	IIg					Mardikh
		———	———	Late II			Latest	IIB1
2400		II8/a–c	IIIf				Tomb H	Brak L
						abandoned		
	———	———	———	———	———			
	Megara destroyed	II/7f	IIe					
		———	———					
	Troia II/7a–f (phase	II/7e		Mid II				ED III
	IIc–e) unintentional	———	IId				6–5	
2500	deposits R1, N, G, Q	II/7c–d	———			———	R T	
					Rosso		o o	
		———					y m	
		II/7a–b	IIc			P–Q	a b	
		———	———	———		———	l s	Mardikh IIA
	Phase IIa–b	Pinnacle	IIa–b	Early II	———	O		Brak K
	———	E4/5 not	———		Verde	———	———	———
2600	Terminal phase I	excavated	I			N	7	Ninevite V

Fig. 2. Chronological scheme for the developments outlined in the paper. The relative dates for Mansfeld, Blegen and Easton reflect only their choice of chronological markers for the different phases and do not reflect the absolute dates arrived at in their respective studies (see Mansfeld 2001; Blegen et al. 1950; Easton 1997; 2002). The absolute dates are my own. I have arrived at the absolute dates through a combined consideration of radiocarbon and dendrochronological data retrieved from samples taken in the recent German-Turkish excavations of ‘Pinnacle E4/5’ on the Early Bronze Age citadel (Mansfeld 2001: 201–03) coupled with my comprehensive chronological analysis of Early Bronze Age Anatolia (Bachhuber 2008: 20–63, Appendix 2 for radiocarbon and dendrochronological data)

many representatives of the RSW repertoire, dominated by the flaring plates, pitchers and a few *depas* cups and other tankards (Blegen et al. 1950: 285–88, 292–93, 295–96). A silver bowl was identified in one of these pits (Blegen et al. 1950: 280–81), as were copper/bronze garment pins, crystal pendants, bone idols and combs, and spindle whorls. The pits were also nearly all filled with animal bones, shellfish and 'carbonized matter' (Blegen et al. 1950: 206, 279–80). The current German-Turkish excavations have identified similar pits in later contexts (Troia II/9d–III/1a = phase IIg/IIIa), including two with intact pithoi and one with a floor covered in ashes (Sazcı 2005: 55–56). Like Blegen's 'curious pits', these contained faunal remains, RSW ceramics and a single spindle whorl.

An interpretation of the phase IIc (Troia II/7a) Ledge context and the numerous pits on the later citadel may begin to be apprehended within a context of 'structural deposition' (after Chapman 2000). Robert Chapman observes (in the Neolithic and Copper Ages of the Balkans) that the contents of pits may be distinguished regularly from the cultural layer of refuse and detritus observed in settlements (Chapman 2000: 63). Patterns of repetition emerge, including in the deposition of burnt material or object sets (for example, a specific repertoire of pottery), which suggest in his study a degree of structure and formality (Chapman 2000: 83). I wish to introduce similar considerations to the evidence for the deposition of the RSW at Troia, and suggest that the Ledge and the pits on the later citadel represent formalised deposits of banqueting equipment and materials.

In the past decade banqueting has been the focus of considerable archaeological interest. Aegean prehistorians in particular have explored in depth the interpretive potential of banqueting activities to reconstruct meaningful social strategies within pre-palatial and palatial contexts (see recently Wright 2004; Halstead, Barrett 2004; Bendall 2007: 25–65). The regions of the east Aegean and coastal western Anatolia have been largely left out of this dialogue (I could find one passing reference in Wright 2004 and Halstead, Barrett 2004 to 'EB 2' forms in western Anatolia, see Day, Wilson 2004: 58). This is all the more notable, at least for the Early Bronze Age, as Anatolian ceramic forms were the inspiration, if not origin, for the Kastri/Lefkandi I repertoire, which is widely understood to have transformed fundamentally the ways in which Aegean societies consumed food and drink (Rutter 1979; for recent discussion and references, see Broodbank 2000: 309–13).

Much of the interpretive potential of banqueting depends on the ability to differentiate a public banquet from the prosaic day-to-day activities of food intake. This is not a straightforward exercise in the archaeological record. Anthropologists and archaeologists alike have devised lists of criteria that could amount to the material signature of a banquet (see Hayden 2001: fig. 2.1, 46–54; Junker 2001: 284–85; Dabney et al. 2004: 83). Evidence might include the presence of higher than usual quantities of preparation and serving vessels, and a deviation from the norm in the form, features and quality of these vessels (Hayden 2001: fig. 2.1; Dabney et al. 2004: 82–83). The refuse of a feast should include faunal remains, particularly of domesticated animals; and the deposition of this material should be in non-domestic contexts (Hayden 2001: fig. 2.1).

The depositions of the RSW and faunal remains in the Ledge and later *bothroi* widely agree with these criteria for banqueting activities. Additional evidence for banqueting might include the presence of ceremonial or prestige items that were used in the feast, or were intentionally destroyed through breakage and/or burial (Hayden 2001: fig. 2.1). The idols and celts are notable from the Ledge deposit, as are the silver bowl, copper/bronze garment pins, crystal pendants, bone idols and combs from the later *bothroi.*

The relationship between depositional contexts and architectural features in Troia II–III

From the beginning of Troia II (phase II) access was gained onto the citadel through the eastern Gate FO (fig. 3a); it would remain the main passage through all the developments related in this paper (Easton 2002: 307–08). In Troia II/7a (phase IIc) another and more elaborate gate with a monumental stone-paved ramp provided an additional passage. This was Gate FM which Schliemann famously identified as Homer's Scaean Gate. The construction of Gate FM was contemporary with both the full-fledged emergence of the RSW repertoire and the Ledge where much of this pottery was deposited. Recent excavations have identified a Troia III/1–2 wall built on top of Gate FM, terminating the gate's use on the citadel (Sazcı 2005: 58). This development adheres to a general trend in Troia III of decreased monumentality, which I examine below.

Gate FM provided direct passage to the *temenos* of the central megaron complex (fig. 3a, b); though Gate FM was not the main passage onto the citadel. This was provided by the older and more robust Gate FO. Nevertheless the stone paving and extension of the ramp of Gate FM provided it with an aura of material impressiveness lacking in the main Gate FO. The entrant through Gate FO would have also been confronted with the enclosure surrounding the megaron complex, versus unobstructed passage to the *temenos* from Gate FM (fig. 3a, b).

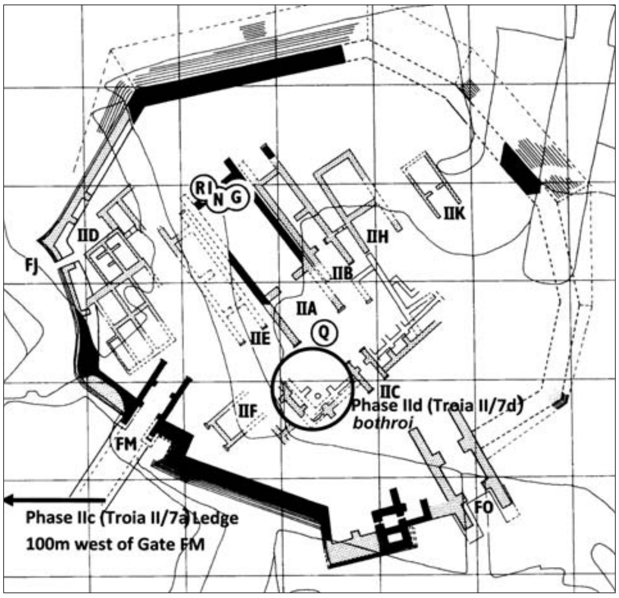


Fig. 3a. Locating the proximity of the Troy IIc (Troia II/7a) Ledge and the Troy IId (Troia II/7d) bothroi *(circled) (Troia II citadel plan from Easton 1997: fig. 86)*

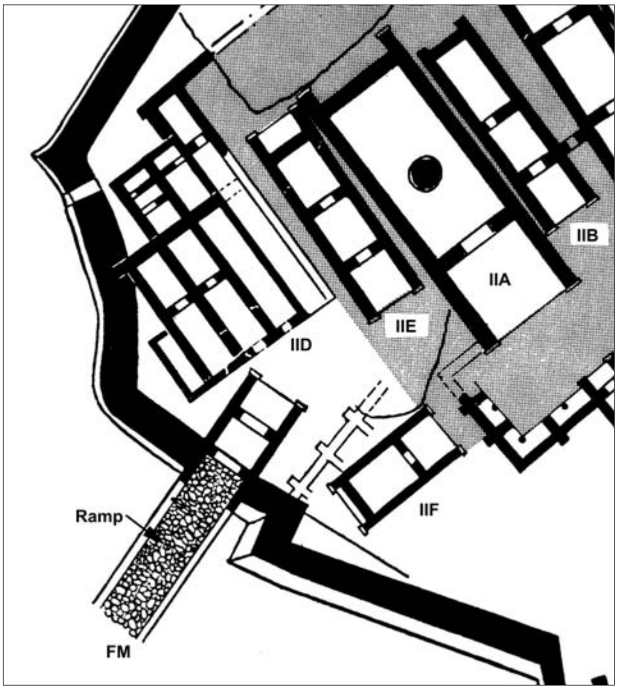


Fig. 3b. Showing detail of Megaron IIA with the monumental hearth and Gate FM leading into the temenos *(after Schirmer 1971: fig. 11)*

The Early Bronze Age citadel of Troia was not large (100m in diameter) and certainly did not require two monumentalising passages. It may be appropriate here to reconstruct special-purpose functions for Gate FM, one of which included joining the Troia II/7a (phase IIc) *temenos* to the Ledge context about 100m to the west (fig. 3a, b). Gate FM likely served as a public or ceremonial passage onto and off the citadel during this period and might have linked events on the citadel to activities of meaningful deposition related to banqueting at the Ledge basin, including the offerings of burnt foodstuffs and faunal remains, the RSW repertoire, idols, celts and spindle whorls.

The Ledge fell out of use by Troia II/7d (phase IId); or at least ceramic forms from this period have not been identified in the Ledge. Activities of formal deposition were transferred to the citadel. This is observed in Blegen's *bothroi* that were located within and just outside the *temenos* of the central megaron complex (fig. 3a). These phase IId (Troia II/7d) 'curious pits' (after Blegen 1950: 279) contained similar banqueting equipment (the RSW), faunal remains and burnt foodstuffs, but included also the earliest evidence for the intentional deposition of metal objects on the Trojan citadel – a silver bowl and several copper/bronze garment pins. It appears that metal had begun to be consumed in depositional contexts that were related to banqueting activities in phase IId (Troia II/7d).

The intentional deposition of metal in banqueting events encourages the reconsideration of the context and meaning of Schliemann's treasures, which is itself faced with several challenges. Judgments of the moral character of Schliemann have cast doubt on the veracity of his records, in particular his identification of 'Priam's Treasure' (Treasure A). His discovery of the deposit has been most vocally challenged by the modern historian David Traill (see, for example, Traill 1993; 1995), who has accused Schliemann of purchasing or manufacturing objects to create Priam's Treasure (Treasure A) or, likewise, of compiling objects previously excavated from contexts on the Trojan citadel or other sites. It should be emphasised that inconsistencies have only been identified in the recording of Treasure A, and in the recording of Treasures N, R and S (Easton 2002: 23–24). These have involved discrepancies in the records of when specific treasures were identified (Treasures A and R) and discrepancies caused by the intentional or unintentional recombination or amalgamation of deposits in the publications (Treasures A, N, R and S). It seems the worst Schliemann can be accused of is combining objects from separate deposits on the citadel; for example, bolstering the size of Priam's Treasure with previous or additional finds.

Subsequent excavations of Troy (see below), coupled with Donald Easton's enduring, reasoned and careful scrutiny of Schliemann's work (see, for example, Easton 1984; 1997; 2002) and my own study of Troy within a broader context in Early Bronze Age Anatolia (Bachhuber 2008), all generally support Easton's conclusions that the published treasures (17 datable to the Early Bronze Age) were more or less as Schliemann found them – with only minor inconsistencies in his journals and publications.

The next major hurdle for interpreting the treasures is their relative chronology, all but ignored by Schliemann as he excavated them. The stratigraphy of their deposition has been outlined in five major assessments (Götze 1902: 325–43; Blegen et al. 1950: 213; Bittel 1959; Easton 1997; Sazcı, Korfmann 2000). Blegen's excavations uncovered the greatest volume of gold and other metal objects in phase IIg (Blegen et al. 1950: 213, tables 7, 8); these were confined almost exclusively to jewellery and identified in much lesser volumes than Schliemann's treasures. Blegen has necessarily associated most, if not all, of Schliemann's treasure deposits to late phase II (phase IIg specifically = Troia II/9a–d, see below). Similarly, the recent German-Turkish excavations have identified small bronzes and a highly elaborated ceramic ritual vessel from a secure Troia II/9d–III/1 context (phase IIg/IIIa) in a building north of the main Gate FO, leading Göksel Sazcı and Manfred Korfmann (2000: 97) to conclude that this was indeed the *Schatzfundhorizont*.[1]

Kurt Bittel refined Blegen's reconstruction of treasure depositions with greater consideration of context. He agreed with Blegen that most, if not all, the treasures should be associated with late phase II (Bittel 1959: 21), but made the important distinction between three categories of deposition (Bittel 1959: 18–19): (1) treasures that were intentionally deposited in sealed contexts (for example, in containers placed in the ground), including Treasure A (Priam's Treasure) which was deposited in a cist-like construction, and Treasures C, D, F, E, I and M identified in ceramic vessels; (2) treasures that were excavated on the floors or amidst the rubble of destruction contexts, which include Treasures B, D, J and K; (3) treasures with very dubious context that may have been collected as stray finds on the citadel, including Treasures O, Q, R, S. The most salient distinction for the remainder of this discussion exists between objects that appear to have been intentionally deposited and those that do not appear to have been.

Donald Easton has arrived at conclusions that both agree with Blegen's and Bittel's analyses and also vary to some degree. Like Bittel, Easton observes three similar categories of treasures, though these have a chronological pattern not observed in Bittel's study (see Easton 1997: 194–97). These include: (1) treasures that may not have been intentionally deposited, as they appear to have been identified on the floors or amidst the rubble of destruction contexts – Treasure R2 from terminal Troy I contexts falls into this category, as do Treasures R1, N, G and Q from middle Troy II contexts (phase IIe–f, Troia II/7a–e) (see figs 2 and 4a); (2) treasures that were clearly deposited intentionally, because they were identified in containers or placed in pits in the ground – these were identified exclusively in late Troy II contexts (phase IIf–g, Troia II/8–9) and include Treasures A, B, C, J, F and L (fig. 4b); (3) Easton has also dated the last category of deposits to late phase II (phase IIf–g, Troia II/8–9), though, like the first category, these were identified on the floor or in the rubble of destruction contexts and thus may not have been intentionally deposited. The last category includes Treasures D, K, E, O and S1–2.

Two points of intersection emerge in the analyses of Blegen, Bittel, Sazcı and Korfmann, and Easton (respectively). Objects that were clearly and intentionally deposited in containers are dateable exclusively to contexts later than phase IIc–e (Troia II/7a–e) (see also Easton 2002: 308); and, with the exception of Treasure L, all these intentional deposits clustered around the building complex at the west end of the citadel that Schliemann called *das Haus des Stadtoberhauptes*, hereafter 'the house of the city king' (fig. 4b). It should be noted that the authors listed above do not include as deposited treasures the silver bowl, copper/bronze garment pins and crystal pendants identified in Blegen's phase IId (Troia II/7d) 'curious pits', though it appears this is where the trend of treasure deposition had begun.

The house of the city king is a building complex constructed after the destruction and abandonment of the central megaron complex of Troia II/7a–f (phase IIc–e). The house of the city king represents one aspect of an architectural transformation on the citadel that now conclusively belongs to Troia II/8a–III (late phase II–III) (*das neue Baukonzept* after Mansfeld 2001: 197, 188–200, fig. 12:1) (fig. 4a, b). The abandonment of the central megaron complex and its monumental hearth in Troia II/8a (see fig. 3b for Megaron IIA hearth), the proliferation of smaller and more shabbily constructed buildings and the apparent transfer of activities to a meaner 'house of the city king' clearly represent significant development on the citadel.

[1] Though see also Korfmann 2001b for a reassessment of the relative date of Priam's Treasure (Treasure A), which is earlier (late phase I–IIb) than the Troia II–III *Schatzfundhorizont* context of his previous conclusion, published a year earlier. The earlier late phase I–IIb date depends ultimately on associating Treasure A with Gate FL rather than the King's House (see below). Gate FL went out of use prior to phase IIc (Troia II/7a). His reconstruction is based largely on Easton's (1984: 146–48, fig. 2) locating of Priam's Treasure just west of Gate FM and on or just beyond the walls of the phase II citadel. However, more recently Easton (1997) has favoured associating Treasure A with 'the house of the city king' along with most of the other intentionally deposited treasures. Easton has thus moved the treasure to the interior of the citadel diminishing the likelihood of Korfmann's reconstruction.

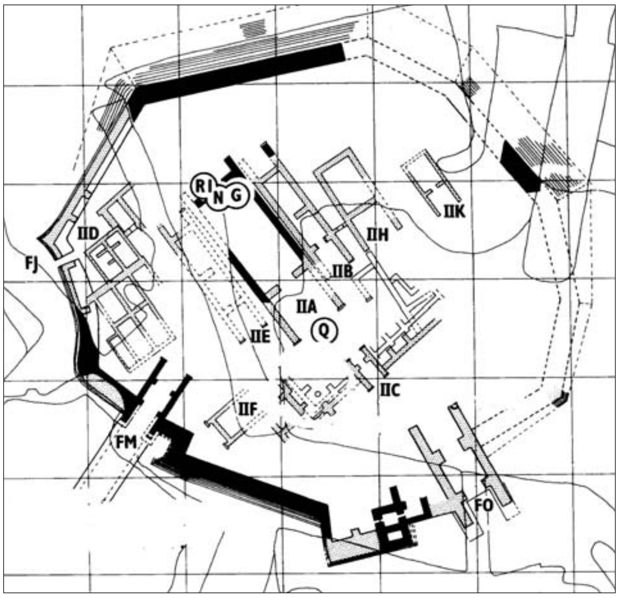


Fig. 4a. Easton's (1997) location of the treasure deposits on the Troia II citadel. None of these were deliberately deposited (from Easton 1997: fig. 86)

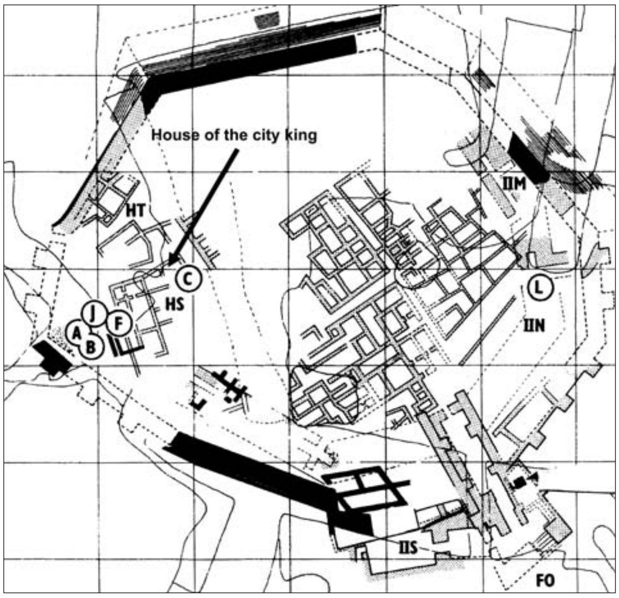


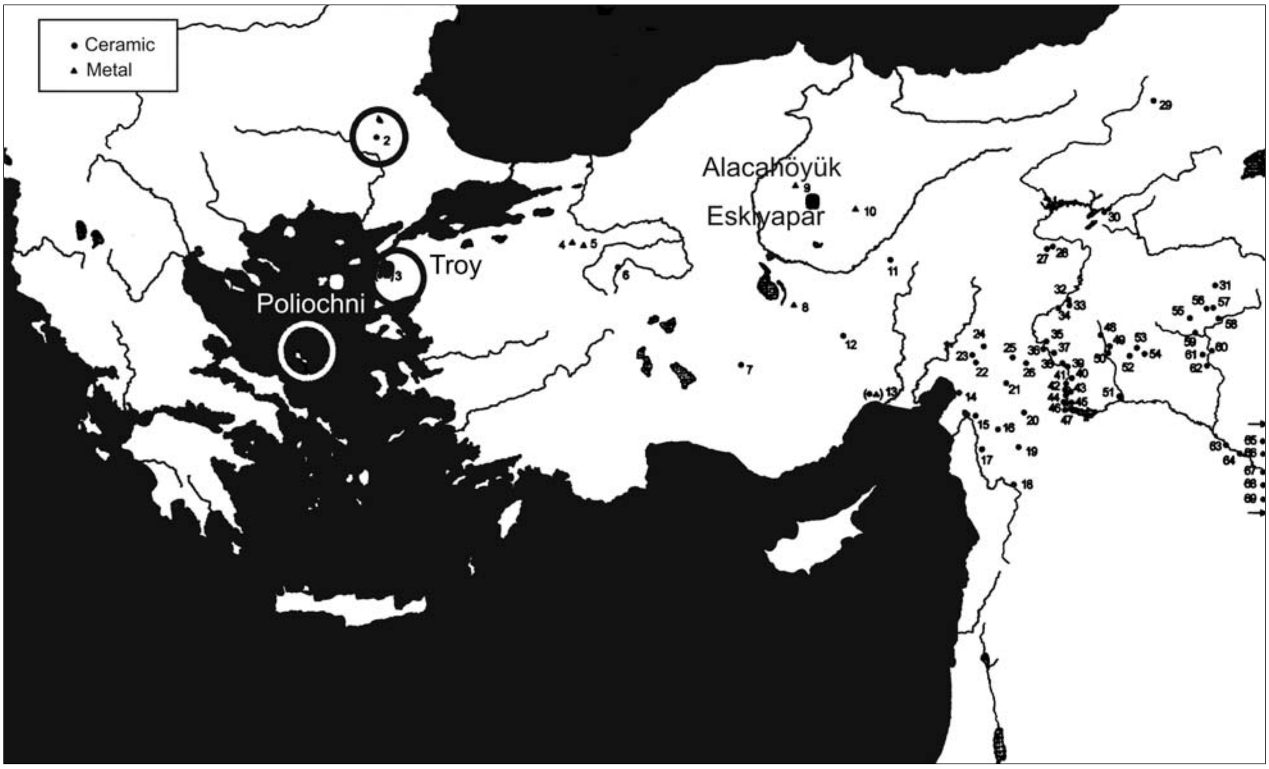
Fig. 4b. Easton's (1997) location of the intentionally deposited treasures on the Troia III citadel, clustering around the 'house of the city king' (from Easton 1997: fig. 87) (see fig. 2 corresponding my Troia III with Easton's late Troy II)

In late Troia II–III the citadel had the appearance more of a town than a restricted seat of élite residence and ritual activity. The citadel more closely resembled the densely-packed town plan of the contemporary and neighbouring island community of Poliochni (Rosso-Giallo) on Lemnos in the northeast Aegean (Bernabò-Brea 1964, and see below) (figs 4b, 5). It is worth then considering what manner of transformation occurred on the citadel in the transition from Troia II to Troia III.

The most poignant observation is the destruction and abandonment of the monumental hearth and the surrounding central megaron complex and *temenos* (fig. 3b). The hearth was a fundamental social and ideological institution in prehistoric Anatolia; the furniture had been treated with deference since the Early Chalcolithic (for the clustering of corpulent female figurines around elevated hearths at level VI Hacılar, see Mellaart 1970: pls 11, 191, 192–229; see Bachhuber 2008: 99–107 for discussions of hearth elaboration in Early Bronze Age Anatolia). The monumentalising of the hearth in Troia II/7a–f (phase IIc–e) may well represent a predecessor to the 'hearth-*wanax*' ideology that James Wright has observed in Mycenaean palatial society, whereby 'the symbolism of the role of the *wanax* … describes a centripetal organization located in the megaron of the palace and focused on the hearth where the ruler is responsible for the maintenance of the cult' (Wright 1994: 59–60).

The destruction and abandonment of the central megaron complex and hearth raises the question why the late Troia II–III inhabitants of the citadel chose not to reconstruct these monuments. A contemporary and related development was observed above with the abandonment of Gate FM. We might arrive closer to an interpretation with further consideration of the role of monumentality in this society. Numerous neo-evolutionary studies have emphasised the role of constructing and observing monumental structures during the initial stages of political centralisation (for overview and discussion, see Kolb 1994: 521–52; see also Trigger 1990). In this scenario, mobilising corvée labour towards monumental building projects and the observance of this monumentality can be effective in consolidating social groups through ideological and ceremonial means rather than via more overtly oppressive political and militaristic ones (Bradley 1984: 73). Monumentality tends to emphasise the social collective in both endeavour and observance, suppressing (though not eliminating) both socio-economic differentiation and opportunities for individual aggrandisement (Kolb 2005: 174; Knapp 2008: 206; though see critique below for the Trojan material).

The surge of monumentality in Troia IIa–f (phase IIc–e) included the construction of the central megaron complex, which remains to this day the largest building in the Early Bronze Age of western and central Anatolia, the construction of the monumentalising Gate FM and an expansion and strengthening of the citadel fortifications. These architectural developments correspond with the earliest identification of Syrian forms in western



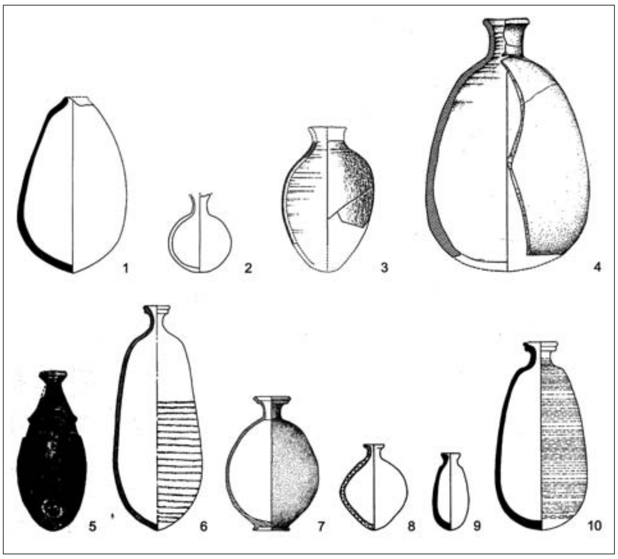


Fig. 5. Distribution of Syrian-inspired egg-shaped and alabastron-shaped flasks across Anatolia and adjacent regions (circles locate furthest west identifications of the flasks) (map after Rahmstorf 2006: fig. 5; image of flasks after Rahmstorf 2006: fig. 4); and a few sites mentioned in the text

Anatolia (fig. 5 and see below). Clearly the horizons of Troy had expanded, observed most poignantly in the exotic objects and materials that comprise part of the Trojan treasures (see below) (Korfmann 2001a; Easton et al. 2002: 103). The relationship between intensified long-distance exchange and the growth of Troia II is thus a linear one. It is worth considering (as Korfmann has suggested) that the élite of Troia II held a privileged position in the greater region of western Anatolia and the east Aegean islands in negotiating the acquisition, display and distribution of these kinds of exotic and desired objects.

These same individuals or select social groups would have engaged in a number of strategies to consolidate political authority and assert their will in the region, including implementing the monumentalising projects of Troia II7a–f (phase IIc–e). Nevertheless, efforts of political centralisation at Troy may not have been as consensual as the neo-evolutionary model outlined above would suggest. If political unification did occur, its hold was tenuous and probably not that expansive, judging from the bolstering of the citadel's fortifications in Troia II/7a (phase IIc) and the violent destruction in Troia II/7f (phase IIe) that terminated the existence of the central megaron complex and monumental hearth. The architectural seclusion of the central megaron complex (fig. 4a) also intimates more exclusivity and perhaps also fear than one would expect from a successful endeavour of social cohesion (after Ian Hodder's comments in Kolb 1994). It is worth considering tensions that may have existed between the builders of the monumentalising projects and other social groups in the region, who may not have enjoyed all the privileges of the citadel and who did not fully succumb to the will of the élite of Troia IIc–e.

The destruction and abandonment of the monumental hearth and the structures that enclosed it was no trivial decision; rather it represents a purposeful dissociation from the material manifestations of social and ideological power of Troia IIc–e. This was a deliberate attempt to erase a monumental reminder of the previous period, or to erase what archaeologists are currently interpreting as a material manifestation of social memory (see Richards 1996).

Do these developments suggest some manner of crisis that began with the destruction of the monumental Troia II/7f citadel and culminated ultimately in the final destruction of Troia III, ending the so-called *Maritime Troia-Kultur* of Early Bronze Age Troia (see Korfmann 2001c: 347–48; Sazcı 2005)? Jan Driessen has defined a crisis (after La Barre 1971: 11) as 'a deeply felt frustration or basic problem with which routine methods, secular or sacred, cannot cope'. Crisis architecture understands specific structural and planning changes as a material and necessarily adaptive response to unfavorable conditions. These developments might be observed in the decreased investment and energy input in architecture, a change in the settlement plan and a change in the function of buildings (Driessen 1995: 68–76). The partial abandonment, structural decline and transfer of activities that characterise the transition from Troia II to Troia III do adhere to Driessen's model (see also Zuckerman 2009 for discussion of crisis architecture at terminal Late Bronze Age Hazor in Canaan). Nevertheless, the late Troia II–III *neu Baukonzept* phase lasted at least two centuries (see fig. 2), and so the final and catastrophic destruction of the Troia III citadel and the end of the *Maritime Troia-Kultur* was not impending to the late Troia II builders (E.S. Sherratt, personal communication). A social transformation on the citadel may well have facilitated the decline and eventual destruction of Troia III (see below), though a crisis is not an appropriate designation for these developments. An alternative interpretation can be reached with more careful consideration of the deposition of treasures near the house of the city king in late Troia II–III.

Considering the intentionality of metal deposition

The agency behind the treasure deposits of Troy has received little academic scrutiny. Interest in the treasures has been mostly informed by a catalogue-like approach, where information from these objects has been assessed to outline various trends in material culture, including advances in metallurgy and the emergence of a shared, pan-regional metallurgical *koine* (Canby 1965; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971: 38–63; Branigan 1974: 106–14; Musche 1992: 101–28; Yalçın 2000: 26; Yener 2000: 67), or as a corpus to measure rates or intensity of exchange and a related prosperity in western Anatolia (Bass 1970; Yakar 1985: 144; Mellink 1998: 2–4; Korfmann 2001a; Şahoğlu 2005: 340–45). Similarly, archaeometric studies of the provenance and composition of the metal invested in the objects have addressed related concerns with production and exchange (Pernicka 2001; Pernicka et al. 2003). In other words, the study of the Trojan treasures and other intentional deposits of metal in Early Bronze Age Anatolia has been fundamentally more concerned with their content than their context (after Bradley [1998: 13] who makes the same observation for the study of hoards in Europe). The positivism engrained in the methodology of cataloguing the deposits, and measuring trends with them, has overshadowed, if not distorted, the social significance of these assemblages.

The intentions of metal deposition at Troy are not self-evident, though the rare discussions of context have generally reconstructed these activities within the three settlement destructions that plagued the Troia II–III citadel, including the catastrophes that terminated the use of the central megaron complex and later ended the *Maritime Troia-Kultur* period. In this scenario, the treasure deposits were a concealment of wealth in anticipation of an attack (Blegen et al. 1950: 366–67; Bittel 1959: 19; Bryce 2006: 51–52). Non-mortuary metal deposits identified within contemporary violent destruction contexts at Poliochni (Rosso-Giallo) (Bernabò-Brea 1964: 284–91) and Eskiyapar (the so-called 'EB III burnt house') (Özgüç, Temizer 1993) have supported this reconstruction (for concealment of the Eskiyapar hoard, see Özgüç, Temizer 1993: 613; Yakar 2000: 244; and see below for further discussion of the Poliochni and Eskiyapar deposits).

Whilst the treasures should be interpreted within a context of profound (and potentially destabilising) social change, we are left wondering why numerous and potentially useful weapons were deposited in the Trojan treasures if this society was indeed anticipating an attack (seven spears and nine daggers were identified in Treasure A alone [Götze 1902: 326–31]; see also the discussion below of the single deposit at Poliochni that contained four bronze daggers, three spears and five axes

[Bernabò-Brea 1964: 659, pls 171–74]). The concealment hypothesis also does not explain why more treasure deposits have not been identified in Early Bronze Age levels given the high frequency of settlement destruction contexts across Anatolia.

The discussion moves closer to an interpretation with Manfred Korfmann's suggestion that Priam's Treasure (Treasure A) represents a foundation deposit related to the construction of an auxiliary Gate FL (Korfmann 2001b: 378–80), presumably drawing on the well-known parallels from Mesopotamia and Egypt (for Mesopotamia, see Ellis 1968; for Egypt, see Weinstein 1973). Whilst Korfmann's Gate FL association is unlikely (see note 1), his observation shifts the emphasis away from precautionary concealment towards ritual activity. This is wholly appropriate and worthy of more careful consideration.

The question of 'ritual' versus 'profane' has traditionally dominated the study of non-mortuary metal deposition in Bronze to Iron Age northern and western Europe (where it was practised with remarkable frequency and subsequently given much consideration). For example, tools, raw materials and fragmented scrap metal have been normally associated with profane deposits; and intact weapons, ornamental items or objects with cosmological referents have been associated with ritual ones (Levy 1982: 22–44, fig. 3.1; for references to more recent adoptions of these criteria, see Fontijn 2002: 17). The emphasis on categorisation highlights a fundamental interest in identifying with whom or what deposits may have been associated. For example, non-ritual (or profane) hoards have been sub-categorised into 'personal', 'craftsman' and 'industrial' deposits, where industrial deposits have been further categorised into 'merchants' and 'founders' (Bradley 1998: 12), based on ever fluctuating and often contradictory criteria (Fontijn 2002: 15–18). As regards Troy, Easton (1997: 196) has categorised the Treasure L deposit with the four ceremonial stone axes as a 'lapidary hoard'. Ritual deposits, on the other hand, should not be associated with an individual (or trade), rather they should be interpreted as votives made to some cosmological entity. Likewise, distinguishing ritual from profane deposits in Bronze to Iron Age Europe has been based on inconsistent and ambiguous criteria (Fontijn 2002: table 2.3).

In the past three decades research has been moving beyond the categorisation of hoards, towards enquiring why valued objects and materials were deposited in sealed, non-mortuary contexts in the first place. These initial interpretive studies blurred the distinction between ritual and profane, particularly in the works of Kristian Kristiansen (1978) and Michael Rowlands (1980), who suggested that deposited objects and materials created scarcities for those types of objects and materials, thus maintaining their value within networks of exchange. All selective deposits then, regardless of their contents, contained within them an element of economic rationality, or calculation. Andrew Sherratt (1993: 24) interpreted the Trojan treasures within this formalist framework, whereby a period of metallurgical overproduction at Early Bronze Age Troy caused a glut in metal supply, and a subsequent risk of devaluation. The solution was to deposit large volumes of it in the ground – that is, in the Trojan treasures.

The reconstructions outlined above have been criticised as being too formalist (for example, as being too dependent on the market forces of supply, demand and profit motive) (Bradley 1984: 101–14; Fontijn 2002: 18), and have been challenged with more substantivist scenarios to account for the consumption of metal in non-mortuary contexts. In short, the more substantivist position moves away from considerations of production and exchange, and places greater consideration on the relationship between exchange and consumption. Here, the continued circulation of resources in Bronze Age societies was perpetuated via an aggressive social and economic strategy to maintain exchange imbalances, whereby conspicuously large, valuable and prestige-enhancing material consignments were proffered personally to exchange partners within a regional network. The regional partners were obliged to reciprocate this personalised gesture, and, not to be outdone, amassed enough resources and desirables to match, if not outdo in expenditure, the original gesture, and so on and so forth in the classic cycle of 'gift exchange'.

The occasion might also arise, however, to freeze the circulation of resources by consuming them in depositional contexts. Here, the creation of scarcity (as in the formalist model) is not the primary impetus to consume – but rather the conspicuous and public gesture of material consumption/destruction provides the context for a prestige elevating expenditure; and the act of consuming or destroying the expenditure shields the host from the cycle of debt obligations that are inherent in gift exchange (for discussion, see Gregory 1982: 59–61; Bradley 1985: 31; Voutsaki 1997: 37–40). Richard Bradley (1998: 138–42) has likened non-mortuary deposits of metals in Late Bronze Age northern and western Europe to 'gifts to the gods' (after Gregory 1980), whereby valuable materials that might have been expended in a gift-exchange gesture to a rival or counterpart were publicly removed from circulation and ultimately consumed in the earth. Here, the accumulation of prestige becomes a more important currency than the accumulation of materials in the deposition or consumption of metal in public events.

The negotiation of prestige sets in motion useful concepts introduced by Arjun Appadurai (1986), who outlines how the value of objects can be created beyond the spheres of production, supply and demand. He suggests that activities of exchange also create value, and assesses arenas of exchange to understand how social interaction is related to the valuation of commodities. He describes one such arena as a 'tournament of value'. These events occur periodically and within sanctioned social contexts removed from daily and mundane social and economic activities. The actors involved are nevertheless brought together in a competitive arena to jostle for social and political status, partially through the negotiation of desirable materials and objects. The jostling includes 'the disposition of the central tokens of value in the society in question' (Appadurai 1986: 21). Such tournaments are hosted ultimately as events to create 'new paths of commodity flow' (Appadurai 1986: 57).

The deposition of treasure and the transformation of élite initiative on the Early Bronze Age citadel

The negotiation of commodities has yet to be considered in the archaeology of Early Bronze Age Anatolia; though considerable research has aimed to reconstruct arteries of exchange linking the societies of the length of Anatolia to the metal demands of Syro-Mesopotamia (see most recently Vasıf Şahoğlu's [2005] 'Anatolian Trade Network' and Turan Efe's [2007] 'Great Caravan Route'). As has been long recognised, the metal-rich landscapes of Anatolia were bound to the metal-deficient landscapes of Syro-Mesopotamia in a kind of World System that emerged during the late Early Dynastic and Akkadian periods (fig. 2), when local élites in Anatolia vested considerable social and political capital in the production, circulation and consumption of metal (for relevant discussions, see Sherratt, Sherratt 1991; Sherratt 1993; 1997; Bachhuber forthcoming).

If a little oversimplified, the dynamic of gift exchange was probably the primary mechanism used to circulate the most highly-valued and contested materials and commodities across Early Bronze Age Anatolia. Activities of local metallurgical production and exchange intensified as Anatolians developed a taste for prestige-enhancing exotic stuff like lapis lazuli or tin (both, for example, identified in the treasure deposits of Troy and the royal tombs of Alacahöyük) and negotiated the acquisition of these materials with locally-procured resources (for example, silver and gold). Syro-Mesopotamian commodities were probably also desired by Anatolian élites. Machteld Mellink (1989: 323) has plausibly suggested that the Syrian flasks identified across the length of Anatolia in this period contained perfumed oils (fig. 5) (though see Zimmermann 2002 for the local imitation of the Syrian forms in central and western Anatolia). Another possible imported commodity may have been Syro-Mesopotamian manufactured textiles, presuming continuity with the Assyrian Trading Colony period and noting the primacy of textile industries in the contemporary Palace G archives of Ebla in northern Syria (Pettinato 1991: 165–66). This period of intensified communication and exchange in Anatolia reached its height ca 2500–2200 BC, contemporary with Troia II–III.

Likewise, Anatolia witnessed an unprecedented extravagance of depositional behaviour not observed again in the Bronze Age,[2] exemplified famously in the royal tombs of Alacahöyük (Koşay 1951: 153–88). The practice of lavishly adorning corpses in the mortuary practices of Alacahöyük masked a prestige-elevating strategy of the consumption of precious objects, where participants gathered to negotiate exotic and contested materials as well as status during funerary rites (see Bachhuber forthcoming). The royal burials of Alacahöyük may be plausibly reconstructed as representing tournaments of value, where 'strategic skill is culturally measured by the success with which actors attempt diversions or subversions of culturally conventionalized paths for the flow of things' (Appadurai 1986: 21).

The sprinkling of metal objects in the *bothroi* of Troia II/7d (phase IId) may have initiated similar behaviour on the Trojan citadel, which escalated and culminated in the treasure deposits of late Troia II–III. The proposed sumptuary behaviour should thus be studied within a continuum that began in Troia II/7a (phase IIc), when banqueting equipment and foodstuffs were meaningfully deposited with idols and celts. In

[2] One remarkable exception is the site of Kınık-Kastamonu in north-central Anatolia (Kastamonu province) (see Emre, Çınaroğlu 1993). Construction activity unearthed a deposit of up to 32 Hittite-period metal vessels (whole and in fragments, one bowl was inscribed with hieroglyphs). Subsequent excavations identified a deposit filled with ca 200 metal objects in a well-like structure, including figurines, weaponry and jewellery (see Gates 1997: 258; Greaves, Helwing 2001: 498–99). A ceremonial context is suggested in the deposition of an intact cattle skull with the objects. The same excavations identified two architectural levels, and the site has been interpreted as a Hittite town (on account of the vessels and hieroglyphs). Roger Matthews and Claudia Glatz (this volume) suggest Kınık-Kastamonu may have been a Kaska enclave, on account of its considerable isolation in this region. In such a scenario, the Hittite vessels may have been acquired in Kaska raids (Matthews and Glatz, this volume). On the other hand, they may have been acquired through less agonistic gift-exchange relationships between the Kaska and the Hittites, as the Hittites sought to procure the mineral resources of the northern region.

Troia II/7d (phase IId) metal objects had begun to be deposited or consumed with similar banqueting equipment and foodstuffs (and so the deposition of metal had become culturally conventionalised in this period). In such a scenario, extravagance related to banqueting activities increased with time, observed principally in the consumption of metal.

By late Troia II–III intimations of banqueting feature in several metal forms deposited in the treasures. This is most obvious in Treasure A (Priam's Treasure) with large bronze serving platters, normally referred to as 'frying pans' or 'skillets' (fig. 1, bottom row), and a variety of bronze, silver and gold drinking and serving vessels, often in whimsical shapes like the silver anthropomorphic flasks (fig. 6a) and the well-known gold sauceboat (fig. 6b). Metal drinking and serving vessels were also identified in Treasure B (Antonova et al. 1996: cat. nos 102–03).

The majority of the objects deposited in the treasures, namely the jewellery, weapons and ingots, does not explicitly evoke banqueting; though just as objects associated with depositional contexts in the Ledge and the *bothroi* were not functionally associated with banqueting activities (idols, celts, combs, garment pins, spindle whorls), so should we accept the possibility that the large volumes and varieties of metal forms and other precious objects deposited in Treasure A, and numerous other deposits besides, were similarly consumed. I observed earlier (after Hayden 2001: fig. 2.1) that one of the key material signatures of public banquets includes ritual display objects that were used in the feast or prestige items and materials that were intentionally destroyed through breakage and/or burial. It is worth considering whether the depositional behaviour that is so closely associated with the 'house of the city king' was also associated with banqueting in or near this building. Unfortunately, the house of the city king was obliterated in Schliemann's excavations and so banqueting contexts are challenging to reconstruct there.

The house of the city king is also conspicuous in late Troia II–III as having replaced the grander central megaron complex of Troia II/7a–f (phase IIc–e) as a focus for activities on the citadel. The abandonment of the central megaron complex and its monumental hearth (fig. 3b), coupled with the proliferation of more shabbily constructed and crowded buildings in late Troia II–III (fig. 4a, b), suggests a meaningful social and ideological transformation had occurred on the citadel that included the deposition of treasures in probable banqueting events. At the very least, it suggests that social and ideological power in late Troia II–III was more heavily vested in increasing productive capacities to generate the surplus required for the escalating ostentation of banqueting and treasure deposition, and less vested in mobilising corvée labour towards the construction and maintenance of monumentalising structures.

The developments on the late Troia II–III citadel may well represent the decline of religious (or civic) authority in Trojan society and the rise of a new kind of social power based on the self-aggrandisement of a ruler personage (after Michael Kolb's [1994] observations on archaeologically and oral-historically reconstructed developments in pre-contact Hawai'i; see below). In this new regime the political consolidation of a ruler personage was achieved in part through hosting extravagant feasts or consuming resources as a way of negotiating their distribution and negotiating also status, which itself has a tendency to communicate outward in emulative or competitive waves. The sumptuary codes of Troia II were thus broken in increasingly extravagant public banqueting events, which set in motion a contagion of competitive consumption while having reduced to irrelevancy previous ideologies related to the hearth and megaron.

The contagion can be observed in contexts contemporary with the late Troia II–III treasures, including the Poliochni Rosso-Giallo deposits and the Eskiyapar 'EB III burnt house' hoard. Poliochni Rosso is contemporary with Troia II/7a–f (phase IIc–e) (fig. 2), and, like the Trojan citadel, was near its height (at least architecturally) in this period (see Bernabò-Brea 1964: pls 23–25). The Poliochni Rosso settlement also underwent a massive reconstruction effort after a destruction of Poliochni Verde that included a strengthening of its fortifications (Bernabò-Brea 1964: 629–30).

The élite of Poliochni Rosso had also begun to engage in consumptive social strategies, observed in a single deposit of four bronze daggers, three spears and five axes identified in the floor of a room adjacent to the largest megaron structure of the Poliochni Rosso settlement (Bernabò-Brea 1964: 659, pls 171–74). This should similarly be interpreted as an extravagant and public gesture related to activities within the large adjacent megaron.

The settlement contracted significantly in the following Poliochni Giallo (contemporary with late Troia II–III) (Tiné, Traverso 2001: 61), yet the society had begun to deposit metal more frequently and had also begun to consume precious metals, which it did not do in the earlier period. The most well-known deposit from Poliochni was identified in a pithos from Giallo contexts (*Tesoro del Vano* 643), within a niche of a sprawling building complex adjacent to the plaza area of Megaron 605. The pithos contained numerous gold earrings, torques, necklaces and an elaborated pin (Bernabò-Brea 1964: 284–92). In addition to this cache, bronze weaponry, and silver, gold, electrum, lead and bronze

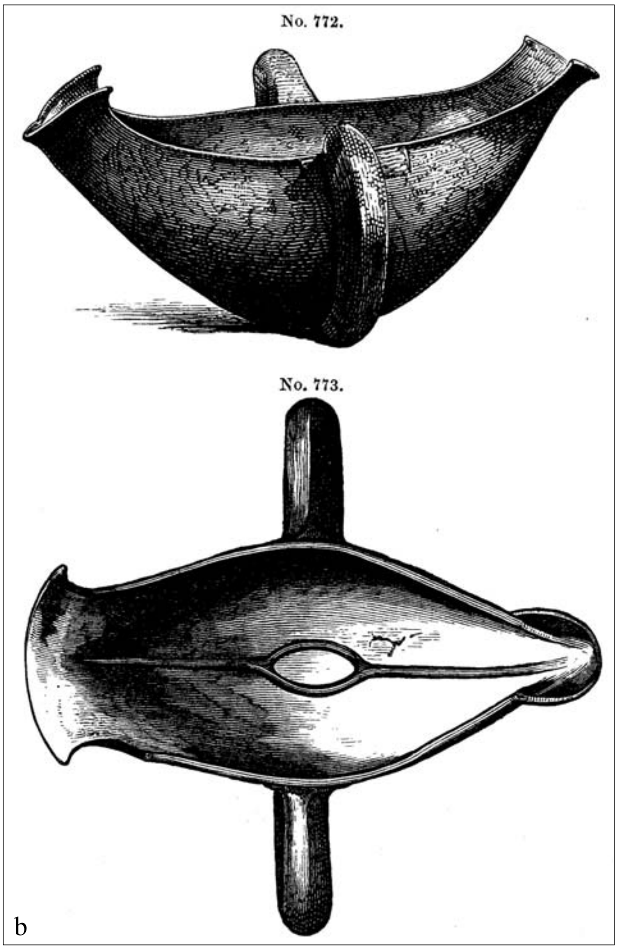


Fig. 6. Silver anthropomorphic flasks (a) and a gold 'sauceboat' (b) from Treasure A ([a] after Schliemann 1880: nos 783–84; [b] after Schliemann 1880: nos 772–73)

jewellery were identified (though not very well recorded) in several additional deposits in the Giallo settlement (Bernabò-Brea 1964: pls 235–39; Branigan 1974: 153). Like late Troia II–III, less investment in architectural infrastructure was commensurate with increasingly extravagant depositional behaviour at Poliochni.

Similar activities may be observed in the 'EB III burnt house' hoard of Eskiyapar in north-central Anatolia, which was filled with jewellery as well as silver and electrum banqueting equipment (Özgüç, Temizer 1993) and 'frying pans' of a similar style to those identified in Treasure A at Troy (Özgüç, Temizer 1993: fig. 50). Unfortunately, very little from the Early Bronze Age excavations at Eskiyapar has been published; certainly not enough to comment on architectural developments there. Nevertheless, I suggest that this ostentatious and competitive behaviour may be one consequence of a larger pattern of élite display across towns and citadels in Early Bronze Age Anatolia and the east Aegean islands, most observable at Troy, when the institution, stratagems and whims of ruler personages had eclipsed a more religiously-sanctioned authority of the previous period.

But why did this transformation occur in the first place? I suggested above that the monumentalising projects of Troia II/7a–f (phase IIc–e) were related to strategies of political consolidation in a region that was just beginning to be socio-economically transformed by expanding industries and networks of communication. These strategies had either failed or were considered irrelevant and worthy of forgetting in the circumstances during late Troia II–III. If the strategies failed, a social fragmentation in the region of Troy may have resulted in one social group destroying the Troia II/7f (phase IIe) citadel and overcoming the previous élite group with a new regime and expression of power. If the strategies had become irrelevant, a kind of evolution occurred on the citadel whereby a continuous élite social group adopted new strategies in a changing socio-economic and political climate.

Evolutionary scenarios highlighting the decline of religious authority and decreasing monumental grandeur have been widely reconstructed in the life-cycles of states (for references, see Kolb 1994: 533). Here, a unifying ideology and the construction and observance of monumentality perform a more salient role in the early stages of political centralisation (see above). With political consolidation, the unifying stratagems of mobilising corvée labour towards monumental projects become less of a priority and new strategies based on the aggrandisement of ruling élite personages are engaged. Resources that were originally invested in building projects are now channeled into person-focused activities like extravagant banqueting and material sacrifice (Kolb 1994: 531).

A smooth transition appears not to have occurred on the Troia II–III citadel and this raises the question of whether a continuous élite social group existed through the duration of this period. The political unification and relative social order required for these evolutionary transformations was almost certainly never achieved. The story of Troia II–III is one of competition and conflict, from beginning to end. The destruction and abandonment of the central megaron complex and monumental hearth probably represents the eradication of social memory by a new generation of élites, who chose to implement a different style of rule that prioritised self-aggrandisement over collective works. These individuals in late Troia II–III clearly held similar tastes to the earlier Troia II élite (in ceramic consumption, some aspects of banqueting and choice of bodily adornment) and should not be considered as too far removed from their predecessors. It is worth considering whether the dramatic developments of Troia II–III were played out to some extent by local and competing lineages. The late Troia II–III approach to social power nevertheless fueled socio-economic instability and it is worth concluding the paper with a consideration of the decline of Troia III and the termination of the *Maritime Troia-Kultur*.

The final destruction of Troia III and the end of the Early Bronze Age in Anatolia

I suggested above that the sumptuary codes of Troia II were broken in increasingly extravagant events that included the deposition of large volumes of metal and other precious objects. This mobilised a contagion of competitive consumption that reduced to irrelevancy previous consolidating ideologies related to the hearth and megaron. Within two centuries a conflagration (in Troia III/4d) terminated the flourishing Early Bronze Age phase of the citadel (and the *Maritime Troia-Kultur*) (see Mansfeld 2001). The destruction was but one manifestation of a series of calamities that overtook the region of western Anatolia, Thrace and the east Aegean islands (Mellink 1986: 151; Şahoğlu 2005: 354–55). Here the Early Bronze Age met a violent end.

The profound instability was contemporary also with the collapse of the Akkadian Empire (fig. 2). The social economies that sustained the broad region of Western Asia were clearly no longer viable; and the most concentrated and contentious investigations of cause and effect of this period have focused on the fate of the Akkadians. Explanations of Akkadian collapse range from the imperial overextension and callousness of the Sargonid dynasts (Yoffee 1988: 46–49) to abrupt changes in climatic conditions that resulted in increasing aridity and devastation of the agrarian economies that supported the urban centres of Syro-Mesopotamia (Weiss, Courty 1993: 141–50). Alternatively, ineffective agricultural strategies in Syro-Mesopotamia have been suggested as the primary agent of decline (Wilkinson 1997). We might also consider instabilities caused by the increasing importance of maritime exchange in this period (Sherratt, Sherratt 1991: 367–68), creating new networks that bypassed traditional caravan arteries across Syria and Anatolia. Regardless of the causes (which were more than likely multiple and might include all of the above hypotheses), the effect was high levels of instability observable in the archaeological record, as, for example, in northern Syro-Mesopotamia. Numerous sites in the Khabur region were abandoned ca 2200 BC; and, further west, several centres, including Ebla, were destroyed in conflagrations, or were either reduced to much smaller-scale settlements or abandoned altogether in the last centuries of the third millennium (Peltenburg 2000).

Implications for a climate-induced ecological disaster are equally relevant to the subsistence economies of Anatolian societies, though considerations of the collapse of a World System-like dynamic are more germane to the general thesis of this paper. Fragmenting socio-economic conditions in Syro-Mesopotamia would have had certain repercussions in Anatolia. In this scenario, a fundamental source of legitimacy for the élites of Anatolia would have been undermined in the disruption of material flow – namely their self-serving manipulation of the exchange, circulation and consumption of metal, some of which flowed towards consumers in Syro-Mesopotamia, and the exchange, circulation and consumption of distantly-procured commodities and materials, much of which arrived via Syro-Mesopotamia.

The self-aggrandising social strategies of the élite of late Troia II–III put greater demands on local production and long-distance exchange than the strategies of their predecessors. Élite legitimacy in the later phase was necessarily more vulnerable to fluctuations in the flow of resources. The climate of competition and conflict fostered by self-aggrandising ruler personages would also have weakened regional social and political resilience against potentially destabilising socio-economic developments. In the last decades of the Early Bronze Age the excesses of this extravagant, consumptive and competitive activity would have only hastened the decline of societies that were inherently unstable across Anatolia, foreshadowing a wave of agonistic behaviour that swept across the greater region, ending a cosmopolitan and prosperous period in the prehistory of Anatolia.

Conclusion

I have reconstructed contexts of intentional metal deposition on the citadel of late Troia II–III in an effort to highlight two divergent and temporally distinct strategies of élite agency. The earlier initiative in Troia II involved mobilising corvée labour towards monumentalising projects like the construction of Gate FM, the strengthening of the citadel fortifications and the construction of the central megaron complex. The construction and observance of monumentality can serve to integrate socially and politically a regional population and thus may be interpreted as an élite move towards consolidation. Social and political stability was nevertheless not achieved, as the destruction and abandonment of the monumentalising projects of Troia II/7a–f testify. The central megaron complex was not reconstructed and this may be interpreted as the deliberate erasure of a previous symbol of the earlier Troia II citadel.

Monumentality declined, though depositional activities on the citadel had become much more extravagant. I am particularly interested in the agency of the Trojan treasure deposits and suggest that this activity occurred within events akin to 'tournaments of value'. The treasures continue a tradition begun in Troia II/7a (phase IIc) of formally depositing banqueting equipment and paraphernalia. Metal had begun to be consumed in Troia II/7d (phase IId) banqueting contexts in Blegen's 'curious pits' and culminated in the treasure deposits of late Troia II–III. The consumption of metal in banqueting events has been reconstructed as a prestige-elevating gesture that succeeds in negotiating both the resources that are consumed and the status of the consumer.

I observe a close relationship between the destruction and abandonment of the monumentalising central megaron complex and the intensification of the deposition of metals on the citadel. This development highlights a shift from a more religiously-sanctioned or civic authority in earlier Troia II contexts towards the self-aggrandising strategy of a ruler personage in late Troia II–III. I interpret this transition as born out of a conflict (probably between local lineages), rather than an evolutionary kind of transformation within a single and continuous élite social group.

Similar social strategies to those observed in the treasure deposits of late Troia II–III can be observed in other extravagant deposits across contemporary Anatolia and the north Aegean. I describe these practices as a contagion of competitive consumption that had the ultimate effect of destabilising the societies that participated in them, heightening their vulnerability to the profound disruptions (climatic, socio-economic or otherwise) that menaced the end of the Early Bronze Age in Anatolia.

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