

GRAY WARE AT TROY IN THE PROTOGEOMETRIC THROUGH ARCHAIC PERIODS

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Abstract: *Gray ware is one of the most challenging wares to study at Troy, primarily because it is extremely difficult to distinguish between Bronze Age, early Iron Age, and Archaic gray ware except for certain distinctive shapes. Recent excavations have documented stratified contexts in sectors D9, K4/5, vw3, and the West Sanctuary (Fig. 1), which have helped to better establish the diachronic development of gray ware, as well providing a more detailed understanding of events at Troy in these time periods¹. Although gray ware does exhibit small alterations from the Late Bronze Age to the Archaic period, it also shows remarkable continuity despite the tumultuous changes at the site.*

The main reason for the difficulty in determining the date of any gray ware sherd at Troy is that gray ware from the Late Bronze Age to the Archaic period has similar fabric and surface treatment. The fabric is usually a gray/brown color with some white quartz inclusions and a little silver mica. Often the core is a different shade than the edges. The surface is usually a medium gray color, and although it sometimes has a slight sheen, it is not highly glossy, and it also does not sparkle with mica like some other types of gray ware found in Anatolia, for example at Daskyleion. NAA analysis has shown that most of the gray ware found at Troy is locally or regionally produced². Occasionally there are pieces with either very dark or very light gray fabric that are probably imported. Some pieces are decorated with incision, usually horizontal or wavy lines and more rarely with knobs, ribs, or ridges.

The similarities between Bronze Age gray ware and Archaic gray ware at Troy had presented a dilemma for scholars, because of the previous understanding of the occupational sequence. According to the interpretation by

¹ ASLAN 2002, 2009 in press, 2009 forthcoming; ROSE 2008; BASEDOW 2006, 2007, 2009 in press; HNILA forthcoming; FISHER 2000.

² MOMMSEN, HERTEL, MOUNTJOY 2001.

Carl Blegen, it was thought that Troy had been abandoned for several hundred years after the Troy VIIb2 period until it was resettled in the Archaic period³. Scholars devised various complicated theories to then explain why Archaic Trojan gray ware looked similar to Bronze Age gray ware, despite the long period of hiatus⁴.

One of the results of the recent excavations is a much better understanding of these phases. As opposed to several hundred years of abandonment at Troy, there is now much more evidence for activity in the Protogeometric and Geometric periods⁵. The ninth century is still somewhat unknown and it is possible that there was a short episode of abandonment or a much reduced population in that phase. There is also a short period in the middle of the 7th century, when again either there was a hiatus or a very small population⁶. Nevertheless, the similarities between Bronze Age and Archaic gray ware can now be explained as a long process of slow change through the centuries.

In order to discuss the development and changes in gray ware at Troy in the early Iron Age and Archaic periods, it is necessary to begin in the Late Bronze Age⁷. In the Troy VIIa phase, gray ware was made for a variety of purposes, both for fine dining vessels, and also for jars, jugs and other utilitarian storage vessels⁸. Gray ware shares many of the same shapes as Tan ware, which is also a very common ware in this period⁹. Both the gray and tan ware Late Bronze Age shapes tend to have sharply defined profiles, with carination. The sharp angles and carination is one of the few distinguishing differences compared with Archaic gray ware shapes, which are usually not carinated and have smoother, sometimes S-shaped profiles. At the end of the VIIa phase, a destruction event severely depleted the population, and in only a few scattered places at the site is there evidence for some survivors in the following VIIb1 phase¹⁰.

Eventually, the population increases again, most likely the result of a migration of people from Thrace, who bring their tradition of handmade ceramics with them. The large amount of handmade coarse ware, which now comprises more than 40% of the assemblage, and the range of shapes indicate that it is most likely the result of migration, not trade¹¹. Petrographic analysis indicates that most of the handmade coarse ware at Troy was made with local clay sources¹².

³ BLEGEN *et al.* 1958, p.146-148.

⁴ LAMB 1931-1932, p.1; BAYNE 2000, p.210-211, 266-267; BLEGEN *et al.* 1958, p.147.

⁵ CATLING 1998, LENZ *et al.* 1998; ASLAN 2002; HERTEL 2008a and 2008b.

⁶ ASLAN 2009 forthcoming.

⁷ The following information comes from my colleagues at Troy who have written dissertations on Late Bronze Age wares at Troy, which will soon be published, see PAVUK 2002a 2002b, PAVUK forthcoming; RIGTER forthcoming; HNILA forthcoming. Also see BLEGEN *et al.* 1953 and 1958; BAYNE 2000.

⁸ For Late Bronze Age gray ware, see PAVUK 2002, PAVUK forthcoming; BLEGEN *et al.* 1958.

⁹ Tan and gray ware together form approximately 70% of VIIa assemblages, see HNILA forthcoming.

¹⁰ HNILA forthcoming; BLEGEN *et al.* 1958, p.10-13, 141-147, 158-159.

¹¹ For the VIIb period at Troy see HNILA forthcoming, BLEGEN *et al.* 1958; BECKS forthcoming; ROSE 2008, p. 409-411.

¹² PINTER 2005.

Interestingly, gray ware continues to be found alongside the handmade coarse ware in quantities of about 30 % of the assemblage, still a significant amount. The variety of shapes decrease, but gray ware production had survived despite the loss of population and the subsequent arrival of a new group. The newcomers readily adopted gray ware, but interestingly not its companion - tan ware, which rapidly decreases in amount¹³. Tan ware never becomes popular again at Troy; although there are a few pieces found in later phases, often they are part gray and part tan and were probably misfired.

The numerous buildings from the Troy VIIb2 period, including ones built around the exterior perimeter of the citadel, show that the site must have had a growing population. Some unknown factor later caused the abandonment of the buildings on the perimeter of the citadel by the end of the VIIb2 phase¹⁴. Perhaps the remaining people moved closer to the interior of the citadel. There is pottery, but few architectural remains from the following Protogeometric period. If the main area of habitation was, in fact, in the center of the citadel, these structures may have been removed by Greek and Roman builders, or by Heinrich Schliemann during his excavations. What is left from this phase consists of trash deposits outside the citadel walls, such as in sector D9 on the southern side of the site, and several pits found in the area known as the West Sanctuary, located outside of the citadel wall on the western side of the site (**Fig. 1**).

The pottery from the Protogeometric phase shows that the inhabitants of Troy began to be involved with trade networks in the Northeastern Aegean, which is manifested by the appearance of Protogeometric transport amphoras and a few other painted imports¹⁵. These imports are still only 3-5% of the assemblage; the handmade and gray wares continue to form the majority of the ceramics. Gray ware comprises about 20-40 % of the assemblage.

Most of the gray ware from the Protogeometric period is quite fragmentary, and it is difficult to know the range of shapes¹⁶. One area that contained a few complete gray ware vessels from this period is the West Sanctuary. There are religious buildings and altars here from the Geometric, Archaic, Hellenistic and Roman periods¹⁷. Several Late Protogeometric pits have been found in the West Sanctuary, located around the ruins of a Late Bronze building (**Fig. 2**, phase 1b)¹⁸. The pits contain unusual ceramics such as fenestrated stands (**Figs. 3, 4**) and kraters (**Fig. 5**) in both gray and painted wares, and it is likely that these pieces

¹³ Pavol Hnila is completing a dissertation on the Troy VIIb period, which will be published as part of the Troia final report series by von Zabern press. I thank him for the previous information from his dissertation manuscript.

¹⁴ HNILA forthcoming.

¹⁵ CATLING 1998, LENZ *et al.* 1998, ASLAN 2002.

¹⁶ Some examples of PG gray ware have also been published from sector D9, see ASLAN 2002.

¹⁷ BLEGEN *et al.* 1958, p. 262-267; For preliminary reports see ROSE 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998. The results of the excavations in the West Sanctuary will appear in a series of final reports published by von Zabern. See also BASEDOW 2006, 2009 in press, ASLAN 2009, 2009 in press.

¹⁸ For preliminary reports see ROSE 1997, 1998. The pits will be published in detail in the final report on the West Sanctuary.

were votives or religious equipment. There are also cups and bowls in gray ware (**Fig. 6**). One of the gray ware kraters is similar in profile to painted kraters from Athens and Lefkandi; Blegen's team had previously found another gray ware krater of similar shape¹⁹. Likewise, some of the gray ware cups have the same shape as painted cups (**Fig. 7**)²⁰. The gray ware imitations of painted shapes from other regions, further contributes to the evidence for increasing outside contacts at this time.

The early to mid Geometric periods are less well known at Troy, and as previously mentioned there may have been either a very small population or even abandonment in the 9th century. By the 8th century, there is a religious building in the center of the West Sanctuary, and perhaps another one located on a platform right next to the Bronze age citadel wall (see **Fig. 2**, phase 2). Part of a small building was also found in sector D9²¹. Some Geometric painted skyphoi began to appear, as well as early forms of what will become G2/3 ware of the early Archaic period. The gray ware from this phase is difficult to characterize, because of the fragmentary preservation and the low quantity of material from these contexts (**Fig. 8, 9**)²². There is a mix of shapes that represent continuity with the Protogeometric period, along with ones that may be early versions of forms, such as straight-sided cups or kantharoi, which become common in the early Archaic period (**Fig. 9**). Gray ware stands or pedestal bases are found in the Protogeometric and Geometric phases, but do not continue to the Archaic period (**Fig 8**, lower right corner).

In the late 8th and early 7th centuries, the population increases at Troy and also generally in the Northeastern Aegean. The characteristic painted ware of this time is called G2/3 ware and is found at Troy, and also at many other sites in the Northeastern Aegean including Samothrace, Lemnos, Thasos, Lesbos, and Tenedos²³. The appearance of this ware at so many sites attests to both a population increase, new settlements, and also shared contacts within the Northeastern Aegean.

In this early Archaic phase, gray ware increases again to form 40-50% of the assemblage. Bronze Age cup forms with carination, which had been lingering into the Protogeometric and Geometric phases, seem to have gone out of use, and the straight-sided kantharos became the common type in both gray and painted wares (**Fig. 10, 11**). Other shapes such as table amphoras (**Fig. 10**) show little change from Late Bronze Age versions. Archaic gray ware kraters and jars (**Fig. 10**) are also difficult to distinguish from the Bronze Age versions, unless a large portion of the profile survives. Bronze age kraters usually have some carination on the body, while the later ones do not.

¹⁹ BLEGEN *et al.* 1958, p. 273-274 and figs. 300, 302, no. 37.1070. For parallels see LEMOS 2002, no. 74.1 (Lefkandi), no. 75.1 (Attica).

²⁰ CATLING 1998, for parallels see LEMOS 2002, p. 27ff, no. 64.1-4.

²¹ ASLAN 2002

²² Also see D9, phase 3, ASLAN 2002.

²³ FISHER 1996, 2000; MOORE 1982; BERNARD 1964; GRAHAM 1978; MUSTILLI 1931-32, MESSINEO 2001, p.123ff.; LAMB 1931-1932; ARSLAN and SEVINÇ 2003. According to NAA analysis of samples from Troy, the ware was locally or regionally produced, see MOMMSEN, HERTEL, MOUNTJOY 2001.

In some areas of the site such as sectors D9 and K4/5, a layer of rubble covers the early Archaic strata. The combined evidence indicates that there was a destruction sometime in the middle of the 7th century at Troy, probably followed by a brief hiatus in occupation or a much reduced population²⁴. G2/3 ware production in the Troad ends, but it is likely that gray ware production continued somewhere else in the Troad, because it is reintroduced when the site is resettled.

In the late 7th century, Troy was reoccupied, and there are dramatic changes in the ceramics and a burst of building activity. New painted wares are introduced including Ionian cups, Wild Goat style, Corinthian, imitation Black figure and various banded wares. Some of these ceramics may have been reaching Troy from the new coastal colonies of the Milesians and Athenians at Sigeion and Abydos. The limited quantity, quality, and types of the imports suggest that Troy may have been receiving only a trickle of the imported pottery that was traded up to the Black Sea region. Again, the gray ware shows a large degree of continuity, despite the influx of the new painted imports and the abandonment of G2/3 ware production.

In the early to mid 6th century, gray ware is lower in quantity, but still forms about 30% of the assemblage (**Fig. 12, 13**). A new cup shape appears in gray ware with a distinctive flat base, sometimes called a karchesion (**Fig. 14**)²⁵. These flat-based cups are most commonly found in the West sanctuary, and perhaps had some type of religious function. In the northern area of the West sanctuary, a new temple is built. Associated with this temple are gray ware pieces that may have been for display or were ritual equipment. These include several kraters, some of which are large and elaborately decorated (**Fig. 15**). There is also a modeled head in gray ware that may have been attached to a krater (**Fig. 16**).

Eventually in the late 6th to early 5th century gray ware shows a decrease in quantity as more and more painted pottery begins to replace it. Finally, probably around 480 B.C. possibly as a result of Xerxes' army passing through the Troad, Troy was abandoned for a time until the late Classical period.

CONCLUSION

At Troy, in the period from the Late Bronze Age to the Archaic period, there were two destructions of the site, possibly two periods of abandonment, and two cases when there was significant migration of a new population into the region. Also during this time, the fine painted wares change several times, and yet gray ware continued to be produced. There are some changes in certain gray ware shapes during this long period of time, but other shapes continue basically unchanged. In general, table amphoras, jars and jug shapes show the most continuity at Troy with the same shape used for centuries. In contrast, cup shapes exhibit the most modifications, most likely because of their display uses, and they often share the same shape as painted forms. The shapes also develop from more angular, carinated vessels in the Late Bronze age to the more gently curving or straight-sided vessels of the Protogeometric to the Archaic periods. With the new

²⁴ ASLAN 2009 forthcoming.

²⁵ LOVE 1964.

knowledge of this period, it is now known that there were not several hundred years of abandonment between the Late Bronze Age and the 7th century, but there were still great changes and events in the region, and it is indeed remarkable that people were able to maintain gray ware production.

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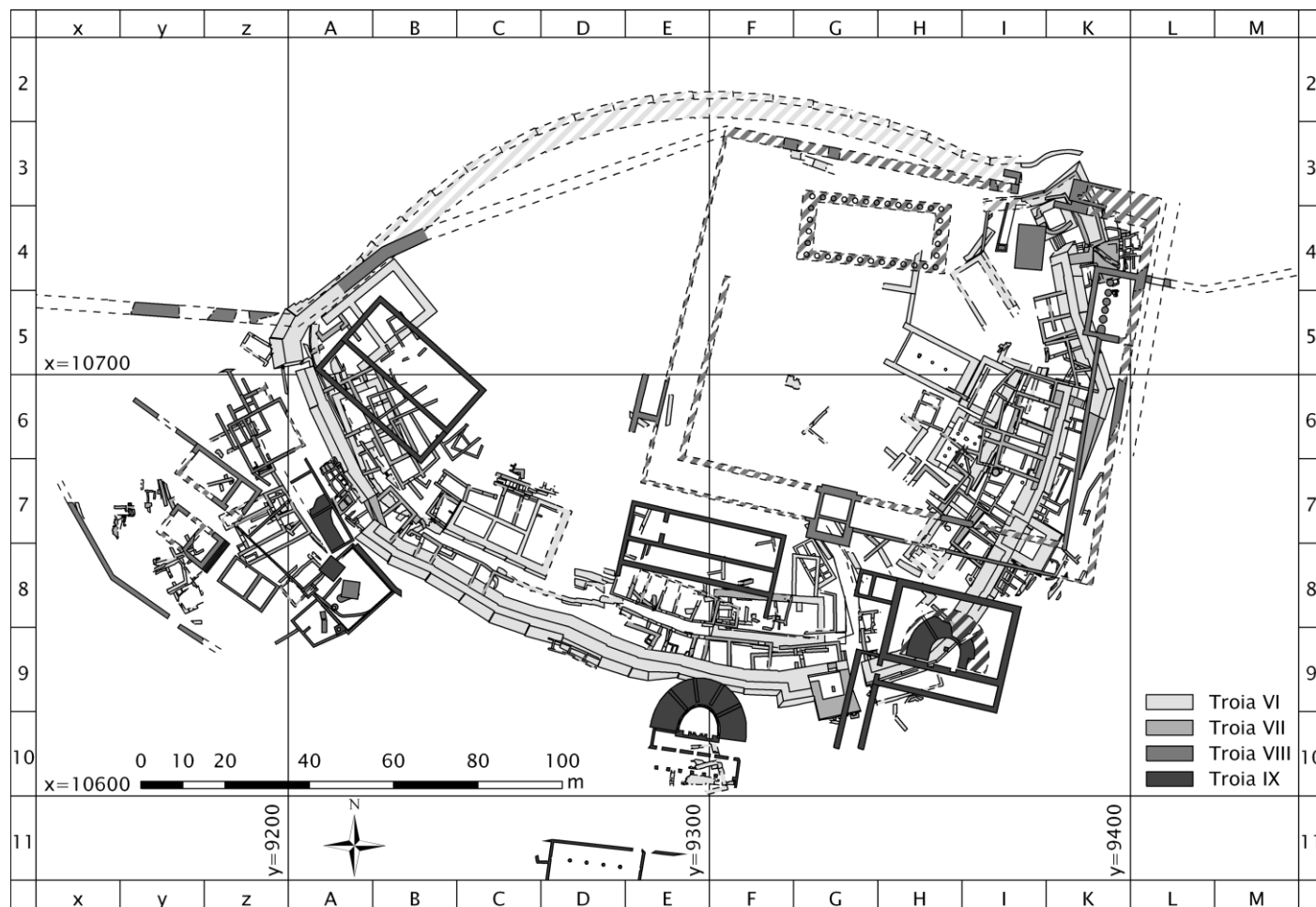


Figure 1 - Plan of Troy (Troia-Projekt image, courtesy of Peter Jablonka).

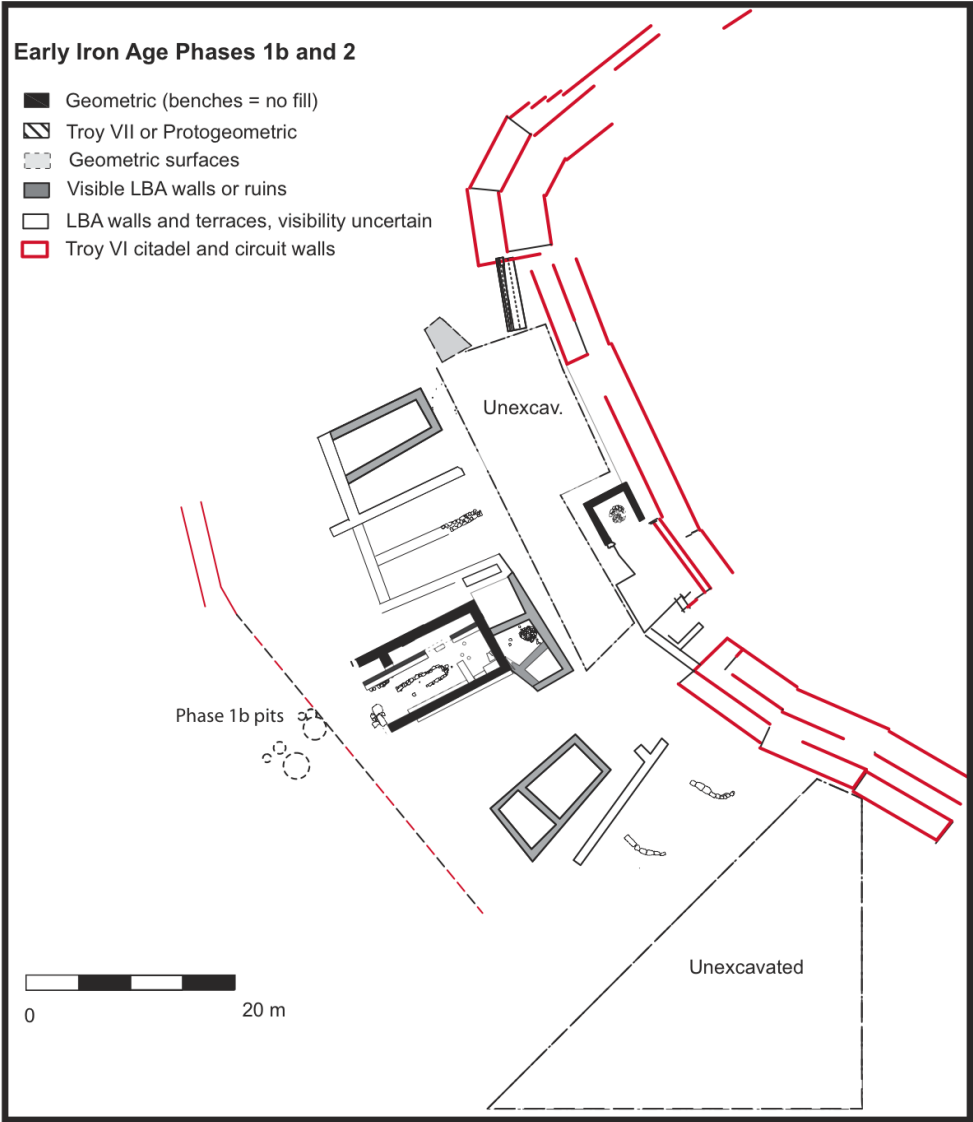


Figure 2 - Plan of the West Sanctuary at Troia showing Iron Age levels 1b and 2: Late PG-Geometric (Troia Projekt image, courtesy of Maureen Basedow).

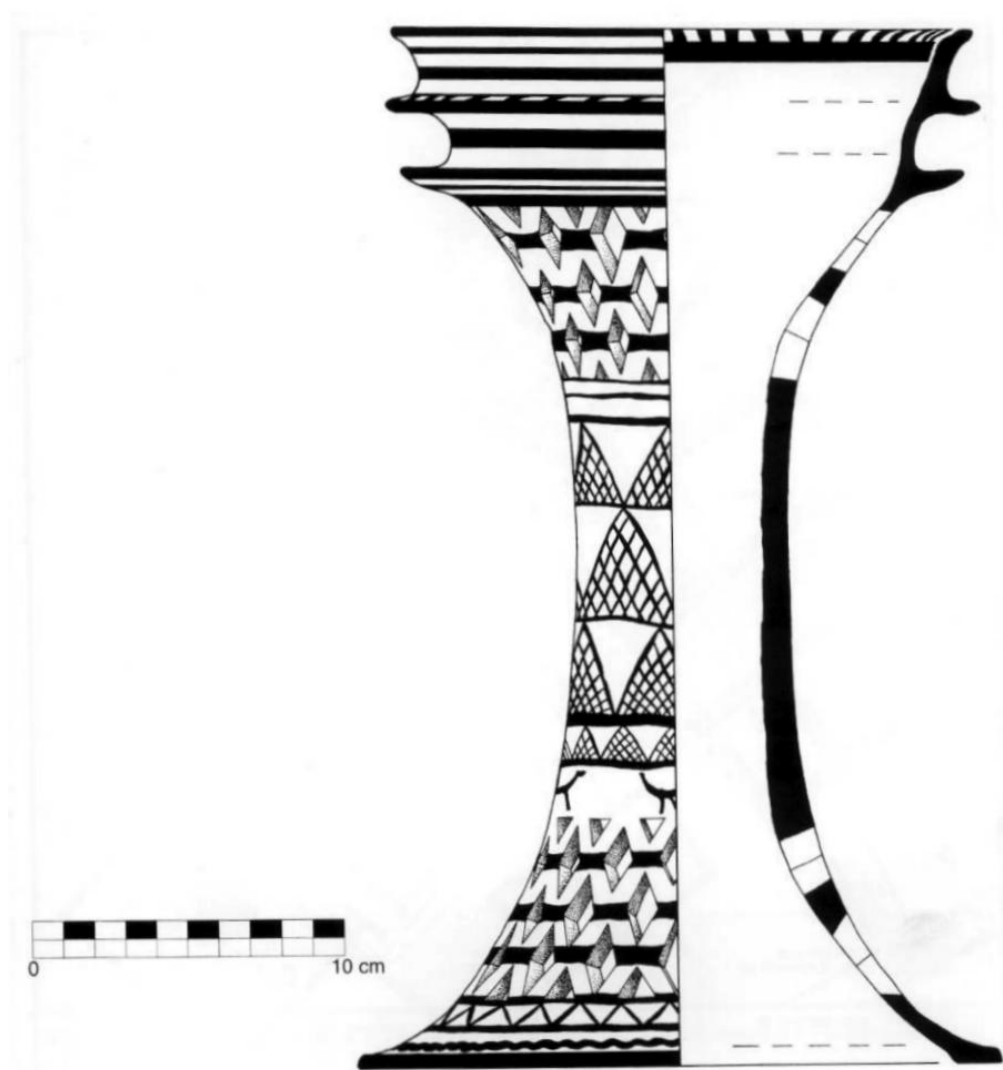


Figure 3: Late Protogeometric painted fenestrated stand
(Troia-Projekt image, P594, drawing by C. Haussner).



Figure 4 - Gray ware fenestrated stand (Troia-Projekt image, z8.583:1, slide no. 39291).



Figure 5 - Late Protogeometric gray ware krater (Troia-Projekt image, P580).



Figure 6 - Late Protogeometric cups and bowls (Troia-Projekt image, yz7/8.444:11,13,14).



Figure 7 - Protogeometric gray ware cup (Troia-Projekt image, P424).



Figure 8 - Late Geometric gray ware from D9 (Troia-Projekt image, slide no. 45032).



Figure 9 - Late Geometric gray ware from the West Sanctuary
(Troia-Projekt image, slide no. 29296).



Figure 10 - Early Archaic gray ware from D9 (Troia-Projekt image, slide no. 45027).



Figure 11 - Early Archaic gray ware from K4/5 (Troia-Projekt image, slide no. 38808).



Figure 12 - Archaic gray ware from D9 (Troia-Projekt image, slide no. 45025).



Figure 13 - Archaic gray ware from D9 (Troia-Projekt image, slide no. 45029).



Figure 14 - Archaic flat-based cup (Troia-Projekt image, z6/7.267:1).



Figure 15 - Archaic krater fragments from the West Sanctuary
(Troia-Projekt image, slide no. 29313).



Figure 16 - Archaic gray ware protome from the West Sanctuary
(Troia-Projekt image, P336).