

Mount Allison University

Hienrich Schliemann

Submitted to:
Dr. Hans vanderLeest
Introduction to Archaeology

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By
F. Norman Robitza

Bibliography

Daniels, Glyn; A Short History of Archaeology. (Thomas and Hudson Ltd.; London, 1982.)

Daniels writes an overview of Archaeology's history. He talks about several archaeologists and their work.

King, Wellington; Hienrich Schliemann: Heros & Mythos. (Internet site:
<http://ccwf.cc.utexas.edu/~welli/archaeology/schliemann.html>)

This website is devoted to Schliemann's life, and work. It covers many aspects of his career and his life before he started his archaeological career.

The work of Hienrich Schliemann was "not that of a professional scholar but of an amateur who spent most of his early and middle years as a businessman."(1) However, he is still considered to be one of the fathers of modern archaeology and it has been said that he is "the creator of prehistoric Greek archaeology."(2)

Johann Ludwig Heinrich Julius Schliemann was born in a small town in Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Germany on January 6, 1822. He was the son of Ernst and Luise Therese Sophie Schliemann. Hienrich Schliemann claimed he first became interested in Troy "shortly before his eighth birthday with a Christmas gift from his father of Georg Ludwig Jerrer's Weltgeschichte.(The title of this book literally means "world history", but it is called "Universal History" in some works.)"(3) Over the years, he mastered German, Dutch, English, French, Russian, Ancient and Modern Greek and several other languages and this earned him a position as an indigo trader in St. Petersburg, Russia. He would be very successful in this position and moved into other goods. He traveled the world and spent some time in the United States of America. While in the States, he opened a banking house and sold over 1.3 million dollars in gold dust within six months. When he left, California, it was suspected "that he had been involved in underhanded business practices".(4) Schliemann always believed that the events in Homer's sagas were fact and vowed that one day he would prove his beliefs to the rest of the world. He retired from his business career when he was forty-six years old and decided to devote the rest of his life to finding the ancient city of Troy.

Schliemann's quest to uncover Troy saw him travel extensively throughout the Mediterranean. In 1869, he conducted a dig in Itahaka and published a book entitled, Itahaka, the Peloponnese and Troy. He argues, in the book, that the graves of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra were not located outside of the citadel at Mycenae. He believed that they were inside the citadel and he also argues that the city of Troy is not a myth but can be found at Hissarlik on the site of Ilion. Within two years, Hienrich Schliemann began to excavate on this site in western Turkey. He would have four separate campaigns, 1871-73, 1879, 1882-83, and 1889 until his death in 1890, to do subsequent excavations. During his first dig in Turkey, he worked alone with only the assistance of his second wife Sophia, a beautiful, young, Greek woman. He would be joined by an expert in his last two season, when W. Dörpfeld joined his team. Dörpfeld would continue Schliemann's work until his death 1894. Schliemann would show Hissarlik to be a "heavily fortified prehistoric settlement of great antiquity: he distinguished seven cities, identifying the second as Homeric Troy, 'the citadel of Priam'."(5) On the day before the end of his first campaign in 1873, he uncovered a magnificent collection of gold treasures dating from the second city which he claimed to be Priam's treasures. Although, three years after Schliemann passed away, Dörpfeld identified the 6th city to be the Troy of Homer's sagas. Schliemann, however, accomplished his goal "to prove by archaeology the truth of Homer."(6)

Between the first and second seasons at Hissarlik, Schliemann conducted several other archaeological digs. He excavated at Mycenae and Itahaka in 1880, the Treasury of Minyos at Orchomenos, and he worked in Tiryns in 1884-85. Schliemann always was quick to publish his finds and he published several works, Trojan Antiquities in 1874, Mycenae in 1876, Ilios in 1880, Troja in 1884, and Orchomenos in 1887, during this period of his life. His publications were, originally, only available in his native language of German but they were quickly translated

to French and English. The English version even boasted a preface written by the Prime Minister of England.

While in Mycenae, his goal was to locate Agamemnon and Clytemnestra's tomb, and he believed that he did. He dug in the, now famous, shaft-graves in the circle of stones inside of the Lion Gate, where he found the two graves. The contents of these graves were "spectacularly rich"(7). He uncovered vases of gold and silver, inlaid swords of gold, silver, copper, and bronze, finger rings, and bracelets, thin gold ornaments for the clothing of the dead and gold face-masks. He believed he had uncovered the Mycenaean Heroic age of Homer. Scholars were divided over Schliemann's claims. Some believed his finds to be true but, "others said the finds were Byzantine in date or the work of Celts, Goths, Avars, Huns or just, vaguely, 'orientals'."(8) Ernst Curtius, who was extremely jealous of the success "of his non-professional countryman"(9), claimed that one of the gold masks was actually a Byzantine portrait of Christ. Many scholars believed the finds were not Homeric but pre-Homeric, and they were actually correct in their assumption. The discoveries at Mycenae, and at Hissarlik, were from a hitherto unknown prehistoric civilization.

Schliemann's archaeological techniques and methods have been greatly debated. He was the first to use a scientific approach to archaeology, which at the time, was "against the standard practice of archaeology of his time".(10) The archaeologists of the time were mainly concerned with the collection of treasures. Some archaeologists would say, "he was a complete stranger to any archaeological skill."(11) While others claimed Schliemann to be "the first modern archaeologist."(12) His work at the site on Hissarlik, was the first dig conducted on a tell. Sir John Myers said it was "the first large-scale dissection of a dryland settlement unguided by great monuments".(13) Schliemann showed the use of stratigraphy, applied to a mound consisting of occupation levels superimposed onto each other. There was, however, always the shadow hanging over him that he was possibly tampering with his finds to make them appear to strengthen his theories about Homeric epics.

Schliemann came very close to uncovering another great legend as being fact with his attempts to excavate at Crete. The legendary home of King Minos, the Minotaur, and the Labyrinth was Knossos in Crete. Schliemann obtained the rights to dig at Kephala, the site of Knossos. At first, he was unable to find the time to start working on the site. Later, he didn't want to pay the large sums of money that the site's owner requested of Schliemann. At the time of his death in 1890, he was still in negotiations to get permission to dig on the site.

Henrich Schliemann was an amateur archaeologist. He had no formal training in the field, just a love for the stories of the ancient world. Schliemann had a vision, to prove that the sagas of Homer were true by using archaeological methods. He realized his dream and made many profound discoveries on his quest to prove the sagas as truth rather than fiction. His scientific approach to the field was unprecedented at the time and it is still in practice today. His methods earned him the distinction of as a founder of modern archaeology.

1. Daniels, Glyn; A Short History of Archaeology. (Thomas and Hudson Ltd.; London, 1982.)
pg.125
2. Ibid. pg.125
3. King, Wellington; Hienrich Schliemann: Heros & Mythos. (Internet site:
<http://ccwf.cc.utexas.edu/~welli/archaeology/schliemann.html>)
4. Ibid.
5. Daniels, Glyn; A Short History of Archaeology. pg. 126
6. Ibid; pg. 126
7. Ibid; pg. 127
8. Ibid; pg. 127
9. Ibid; pg. 127
10. King, Wellington; Hienrich Schliemann: Heros & Mythos.
11. Daniels, Glyn; A Short History of Archaeology; 127
12. Ibid; pg 127
13. Ibid; pg. 129