

Heinrich Schliemann

Heinrich Schliemann was born of his parents Ernst and Luise on January 6, 1822 in the small village of Neu Buckow, Germany. Heinrich's father, a Protestant Minister, fostered Schliemann's interest in Homeric Troy. On Christmas his father gave Heinrich a book entitled: *An Illustrated History of the World*, by Ludwig Jerrer.

When Schliemann's mother died in 1831, he was sent to live with his uncle, Frederick. Heinrich concentrated on school, which among others, he attended the Gymnasium at Neu Strelitz. When his father was accused of embezzling church funds, he was no longer able to pay for Heinrich's Private Academy education, and so Heinrich was forced to attend Realschule, a "common school." Despite his academic achievement, he was again forced to leave school when his father fell into even further financial problems.

Forced to make a living of his own, Heinrich Schliemann found work at Herr Holtz, a Grocers in Furstenburg. He loathed everything about his job, with the exception of his friendship with a young miller, who could recite 100 lines of Homer in ancient Greek. Though he could not understand it, Schliemann believed that the words inspired him and he prayed to God that he would take on the language, himself one day.

After leaving the store, Heinrich found employment in Prussia with the F.C. Quien Company. Fueled by his motivation for knowledge and hope to become wealthy, he dedicated his life towards that goal. Schliemann educated himself and used his money only toward the advancement his education.

Next, his true intelligence was made apparent when he taught himself the languages of Dutch, English, French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, all in two years.

On March 1844, Schliemann took another job with the Herr Schroder Office, a large import and export business. Heinrich was stationed in Russia in 1846 and traveled throughout Europe. Though his dream of becoming wealthy was at hand, when Schliemann learned that his childhood sweetheart Minna, had married someone else, he descended into a state of depression, and vowed to some day be rich enough to have any woman he wanted.

On December of 1850, Heinrich left for America, determined to increase his fortune even further. In early 1851, he arrived in Sacramento and became a buyer of gold-dust. Although his wealth increased, he found little satisfaction in it. In 1852, he liquidated his business and returned to Russia. Swathed in riches but tormented by loneliness, he finally married Ekaterina Lishin on October of 1852. But Heinrich was soon disappointed in Ekaterina. Schliemann returned to Russia and invested in the Indigo market, which he soon controlled. He began to earn more money than ever; and temporarily Ekaterina became more affectionate towards him and bore him a son, Sergey. He would have a total of three children with her.

Heinrich traveled extensively. Among his visits were: India, Singapore, China, Japan, Nicaragua, Havana, Mexico, France, and his beloved Greece. He finally settled in Paris where he tried to convince Ekaterina and the children to live with him, but they refused. So in 1868, Schliemann sailed back to America where he made arrangements to officially divorce Ekaterina.

Next, he returned to Paris and in the summer of 1868 he traveled to Greece to do Archaeological work. Once arriving at Ithaca, he went to work to find the Palace of Odysseus. Using legends from the locals' and of Homer as his guide, he began his excavation on the isthmus of the island, uncovering a group of over 20 vases, each filled with ashes, a sacrificial knife, a clay goddess figurine, and animal bones.

Schliemann sent a letter to a friend of his. The letter stated a request to find a poor, beautiful, dark-haired, well-educated, Greek woman who also had interest in Homer. A response came and

at the end of July, 1869, Schliemann went to visit Sophie Engastromenos in Colonus; whom he later married on September in 1869.

Excavations at Hisarlik hill started in 1871. On June in 1872, Schliemann uncovered a relief of the Sun God, Apollo riding the Four Horses of the Sun. Most likely, it came from the Ptolemaic Era, (a much later period than the time of the Trojan War). Though Schliemann had promised to give the Turkish government half of his found treasure, he and his aide Calvert smuggled the findings out of the country. Where it later ended up adorning Schliemann's garden.

Shortly after that find, came another one of Schliemann's discoveries. He found treasures near the Scaean Gates. Hoping to keep his find a secret, he told the crew to take the rest of the day off. Then he and Sophie quietly excavated the artifacts, of which contained: a copper shield, cauldron, and vase, two golden cups and a silver goblet, seven double-edged daggers, lance-heads, and more; of which they were certain were the treasures of King Priam.

Though he never wrote down the exact date of the discovery, it was known that he smuggled it off the site. He split the artifacts up and hid them with friends all over Greece. With the treasure spread out, he knew neither the Greek nor the Turkish Government could claim ownership of it. Upon discovering Schliemann's hidings, the Turkish Government demanded the treasure back. Refusing, Schliemann attempted to offer it up to the Greek Government, if they would let him excavate at Mycenae and Mount Olympus. They refused and Schliemann was left in constant conflict. The Greek officials later agreed to let him excavate at Mycenae if officials from the Greek Archaeological Society would work with him.

In 1878, Schliemann found a small cache consisting of twenty gold earrings, gold spiral rings, two Electrum Bracelets, eleven silver earrings, 158 silver rings, and gold beads. This time, Schliemann was able to keep only one-third of his findings. The Imperial Museum at Constantinople claimed the rest.

Heinrich built himself a house in Athens where he mocked a Grecian lifestyle. His messages were sent to him in ancient Greek, he insisted that Greek be spoken at the dinner table, and he also renamed all his servants after the characters of Greek mythology. He wrote about his excavations at Hisarlik in a work entitled *Ilios*.

In May 1881 Schliemann returned to Hisarlik, determined to find something that proved the hill was Homeric Troy. He found very little but a slab of marble which he claimed were the ruins of Zeus' throne.

In 1890, Schliemann returned to Athens and traveled to Halle for an operation on his ears, which had become infected. Ignoring the Doctors' advice, Heinrich left the hospital and traveled to Leipzig, Berlin, and Paris. He had planned to return to Athens in time for Christmas, but the condition of his ears became even worse. Too sick to make the boat ride from Naples, Schliemann remained there, but squeezed in a journey to the ruins of Pompeii. On Christmas day he collapsed in the Piazza della Santa Carita. Shortly after, he died in a hotel room on December 26.

Heinrich Schliemann was brought back to Athens where his funeral took place. He was buried in a cemetery, south of the Ilissus, in a great mausoleum, that he had built for himself. The inscription he created formerly, above the entrance read: For the Hero, Schliemann.

Adapted from Holly Schwichtenberg, 'Heinrich Schliemann' *The Minnesota State University, Mankato EMuseum's mission* www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/information/biography/pqrst/schliemann_heinrich.html
(Acces date 8 March 2007)