Marta Pszczolińska, "Entry on: The Dream of Troy [Der Traum von Troja] by Heinrich Joachim Friedrich Karl Hans Stoll [H. A. Stoll] ", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Katarzyna Marciniak. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2023). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1563. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Heinrich Joachim Friedrich Karl Hans Stoll [H. A. Stoll]

The Dream of Troy [Der Traum von Troja]

GDR (1956)

TAGS: Agamemnon Archaeology Athens Crete Helen Homer Iliad Ithaca Mycenae Odysseus / Ulysses Odyssey Orchomenus Priam Tiryns Trojan War Troy



A map published in *Troja: Ergebnisse meiner neuesten Ausgrabungen auf der Baustelle von Troja, in den Heldengraebern, Bunarbaschi und anderen Orten der Troas im Jahre 1882* by Heinrich Schliemann, retrieved from Universität Heidelberg Digital Library, public domain.

General information	
Title of the work	The Dream of Troy [Der Traum von Troja]
Country of the First Edition	Germany
Country/countries of popularity	Germany, countries of the former Soviet Bloc, Spain
Original Language	German
First Edition Date	1956
First Edition Details	Heinrich Alexander Stoll, *Der Traum von Troja. Lebensroman Heinrich Schliemanns.* Leipzig: Paul List Verlag, 1956, 519, [4] pp., [30] pp. ill., maps

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

ISBN	N/A
Genre	Biographies, Fiction, Novels
Target Audience	Crossover (children, teenagers, young adults, adults)
Author of the Entry	Marta Pszczolińska, University of Warsaw, m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl
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Creators

Portrait available at Liberarius.de (accessed: February 15, 2023).

Heinrich Joachim Friedrich Karl Hans Stoll [H. A. Stoll] , 1910 - 1977
(Author)

Heinrich Alexander Stoll was born in 1910 as the son of a sergeant and grew up in the Mecklenburg region, at the time called the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. He graduated in Protestant Theology from the University of Erlangen–Nuremberg and Art history from the University of Rostock. He served as a vicar until 1935, when he was suspended and banned from church services for political reasons: he was active within the anti-Nazi Confessing Church [German Bekennende Kirche]. In 1937, he left Mecklenburg and lived in Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland and finally, Italy, where he studied Classical archaeology and wrote articles for Swiss newspapers. After the war, Stoll returned to his hometown of Parchim, within the Soviet occupation zone, where he was arrested in 1946 by the NKVD and detained in a Special Camp for two years. In 1949, he was arrested again, released, and in 1950, he disappeared – he was sentenced without a trial to ten years of forced labour and sent to a gulag in Siberia. After Stalin's death, Stoll and other political prisoners were released from the labour camp; he returned to his hometown again. In 1957, he was arrested once more, and after being released, he moved to Brandenburg. He died in Potsdam in 1977.

He was the author of over 30 novels, often aimed at young readers. They include biographical works (about Theodor Kliefoth, Heinrich Schliemann, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Johann Heinrich Voss), historical fiction novels set in classical antiquity and books popularising history, classics and classical archaeology. His works include: *Der Tod des Hypathos. Novelle* (1942), *Der Traum von Troja* (1956), *Winckelmann, seine Verleger und seine Drucker* (1960), *Griechische Tempel* (1961), *Die Brücke am Janiculus* (1962), *Johann Heinrich Voß* (1962, 1966), *Der Ring des Etruskers* (1963), *Götter und Giganten* (1964), *Die Antike in Stichworten* (1966), *Tod in Triest* (1968). He also worked as a publisher; he edited many ancient myths,* German legends and folk stories,** and/or co-edited/co-authored works aimed at wide audiences.*** In 1963, he was awarded the Winckelmann-Medaille and, in 1975, the Theodor-Fontane-Preis des

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Bezirkes Potsdam (with Ilse Fisher), an art and literature prize in the GDR.

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* E. g., Schwab, Gustav, *Kampf um Troja. Die schönsten Sagen des klassischen Altertums. Band I. Bearbeitet von Heinrich Alexander Stoll*, ill. John Flaxmann, Berlin: Der Kinderbuchverlag, 1963, 183 pp.; Schwab, Gustav, *Irrfahrten des Odysseus. Die schönsten Sagen des klassischen Altertums. Band II. Bearbeitet von Heinrich Alexander Stoll*, ill. John Flaxmann, Berlin: Der Kinderbuchverlag, 1963, 215 pp.; Schwab, Gustav, *Die Taten des Herakles. Die schönsten Sagen des klassischen Altertums. Band III. Bearbeitet von Heinrich Alexander Stoll*, ill. Helmut Kloss, Berlin: Der Kinderbuchverlag, 1963, 192 pp.; Stoll, Heinrich Alexander, *Die Novellen und Anekdoten des Herodotos. In Zusammenarbeit mit Norbert Jankowski verdeutscht und hrsg. von Heinrich Alexander Stoll*, ill. Werner Klemke, Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang 1968, 365 pp.; Schwab, Gustav, *Prometheus und andere griechische Sagen. Bearbeitet von Heinrich Alexander Stoll*, ill. Volker Pfüller (Robinsons billige Bücher 150), Berlin: Der Kinderbuchverlag, 1969, 161 pp.; Stoll, Heinrich Alexander, ed., *Auf den Spuren der Antike. Heinrich Schliemanns Berichte und Entdeckungen in der griechischen Welt. Mit Beiträgen von Rudolf Virchow und Wilhelm Dörpfeld. Ausgewählt und eingeleitet von Heinrich Alexander Stoll*, ill. Ruth und Rudolf Peschel, Berlin, Verlag der Nation, 1974, 2. Aufl., 591 pp.

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Source:

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Additional information

Translation

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Russian: *Шлиман: мечта о Трое* [Shliman: mechta o Troe] (Zhizn′ zamechatel′nykh li□u□deĭ 416), trans. A. Popov and Al'fred Engel'bertovich Shtekli, Moskva: Izdatel′stvo T□S□K VLKSM "Molodai□a□ gvardii□a□", 1965, 430 pp.

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Summary

The novel tells the story of the life and work of Heinrich Schliemann, whose entire life was dedicated to the realisation of his childhood dream – discovering the city of Troy and proving that Homer was not

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just a storyteller but also a reliable source of historical truth. The novel is divided into seven books of three chapters and ends with a concluding epilogue.

Book one, *Der Traum eines Dorfjungen* [The dream of a village boy], depicts Heinrich's childhood at the Ankershagen vicarage. The boy is fascinated by antiquity. His best Christmas present ever was *Die Weltgeschichte für Kinder* [History of the World] by Georg Jenner* he received in 1829. It inspires his big dream – the boy promises himself: "When I grow up, I will dig out Troy."** The Trojan War becomes the base for games; Minna Meincke, Heinrich's friend, also shares his dream. After his mother dies, Heinrich is sent to his relatives in Kalkhorst. He attends a *gymnasium* (grammar school) in Neusterlitz, where he studies well and writes a Christmas essay on the Trojan War in Latin. Unfortunately, after his father's dismissal, poverty forces the boy to attend ordinary *Realschule* (vocational school). As he cannot afford further studies, he works in Fürstenberg as a merchant apprentice. Five years pass by without hope for a better life; the young man decides to quit his job.

Book two, *Der schiffbrüchige Odysseus* [The shipwrecked Odysseus], describes Schliemann's life in the big cities of Rostock and Hamburg: poverty, sickness, and growing desperation leads him to board a ship to Venezuela in search of a better future. Unfortunately, Heinrich doesn't reach his destination – after a shipwreck, he settles in Amsterdam, learns many languages using his method, and is able to become a clerk. He is appreciated when it turns out that he can communicate in Russian. He helps with the indigo dye trade for the eastern market and is sent to St. Petersburg to install and develop Schröders' company there.

Book three, *Die goldenen Stufen* [The golden steps], depicts the successful transformation of Schliemann into a rich merchant and businessman worthy of childhood friend Minna Meincke's hand. Unfortunately, she has already married another man, and Heinrich embarks on a trip to Europe and then leaves for America. In Sacramento, he founds a gold miners' bank and doubles his fortune. Having returned to Russia, he marries Ekaterina Lyzhina, who proves to be an unhappy choice. After the Crimean War, during which he makes more money as a military contractor, he is rich enough to "waste" his time learning Greek. He decides that the time to realise his dream is near.

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Book four, *Bilanz eines Kaufmanns* [Balance sheet of a merchant], describes Schliemann's trips in Europe, the Near and Far East, and his increasing hunger for knowledge. Before even attempting to prove that Homer was right, he writes his first book, *La Chine et le Japon au temps présent* [China and Japan in the present day], and humbly studies history, art and archaeology in Paris to be well prepared for his quest.

Book five, *Der Traum wird Wahrheit* [The dream becomes reality], presents Schliemann's first steps in Greece as an archaeologist. In Ithaca, he takes Homer's geographical indications seriously and excavates Odysseus' palace with the roots of the olive tree resembling the hero's bedroom. Then he goes to Peloponnesus and finally to Bunarbaschi (Pınarbaşı) on the Trojan Plain, a place believed then to be the site of the city of Troy. Having failed to reconstruct *in situ* a day from the *Iliad*, Schliemann rejects the possibility that it could be the correct location. Instead, he focuses on the Hissarlik hilltop, according to him, the most promising place. He publishes *Ithaque, le Peloponnese, Troie. Recherches archeologiques* [Ithaca, the Peloponnesus, Troy. Archaeological research] and graduates *in absentia* from the University of Rostock. He divorces his Russian wife according to American law (as an American citizen) and plans to marry a Greek woman, equally enthusiastic about Homer. In Athens, he is introduced to the young Sophia Engastrōménou, his bride-to-be, who shares his passion for digging up Troy. The excavations begin in 1871, resulting in the discovery of the remains of the city buildings from many layers (e.g., what Schliemann calls Bulwark of Lysimachos, Pergamos of Troy and Skaian Gate) and many artifacts, including the so-called Priam's Treasure, and at the same time raising more questions. Smuggling Priam's gold out of Turkey causes a lawsuit and legal problems. In 1876, Heinrich Schliemann starts excavating Mycenae, another site connected to Homeric characters. He follows Pausanias and obtains extraordinary results nobody expected. An unknown world emerges, raising awe and sparking a dispute. Heinrich Schliemann is positive he has found the tombs of Agamemnon, Cassandra, Eurymedon and their companions.

Book six, *Der Faden der Ariadne* [Ariadne's thread], describes further successes and failures within the scholarly society and further excavations in Troy with professional support (Burnouf, Virchow, Dörpfeld), which bring new discoveries. The excavations in Orchomenos and Tiryns allow Schliemann to see the extraordinary similarity of artifacts and objects. He thinks they must be part of a

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wider culture: all points to Crete as a key location worth further exploring. He intends to excavate in Knossos, but the price of a hundred thousand francs for digging a hill demanded by a greedy Cretan landowner forces him to quit, and political troubles in Crete preclude future fieldwork.

In book seven, *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* [The return of Odysseus], Schliemann returns to places of his childhood. He saw his homeland as "a hundred times more beautiful than Mycenae"***. He meets many friends and finds pleasure in speaking the Mecklenburg dialect again. Later on, he embarks on a journey to Egypt. After an attack by Ernst Bötticher, who claimed that the most important of Schliemann's discoveries had been, in fact, a necropolis and not a city burnt to the ground after a siege, Schliemann replies by organizing an international conference at the archeological site of Troy in 1899 to show it to scholars and to prove the truth about the city. However, after twenty years of excavations, the chapter of Troy has not yet closed. Hissarlik revealed a new wall, undeniably Mycenaean, believed to be the Homeric one potentially.

Opisthodomos – an epilogue set in Naples depicts the circumstances of Schliemann's death. In addition, the book contains photographs and maps.

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* See: Der Trojanische Krieg, Achil und Hektor, Die Groberung von Troja, ff., 138–174.

** — "Wenn ich groß bin, will ich Troja ausgraben."

*** "Hundertmal schöner als Mykene."

Analysis

Stoll presents the young reader with the exciting and adventurous life of his Mecklenburg fellow in the form of a fictionalized biography, based, however, on Schliemann's biography,* a romantic picture not free from deceptive and self-serving elements.

The boy's dream to touch the reality of the Homeric epic is presented here as a leitmotif of all the stages of his life as it is at the origin of further actions, projects and businesses he undertakes. Heinrich

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Schliemann's life is paralleled in the novel by Odysseus' journey, who perseveres in pursuing his ultimate goal: a reunion with his family and returning to his homeland. Similarly, Schliemann subordinates his entire life to proving the Trojan myth and its truth despite many obstacles, like, e.g., the shipwreck, constant attacks by the press and scholars or problems with Ottoman firmans, officials and crew.

As Schliemann always had Homer and his legacy in mind, almost in his hand, Stoll purposefully introduces Homeric quotations as mottos. The novel begins with "Tell me, O Muse, of the man of many devices, who wandered full many ways after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy"** and two more quotations from the *Odyssey*. Also, the chapters' titles allude to Greek myths to tie the protagonist with the mythology he intended to show was a historical reality. Since the moment Schliemann starts to realize his dream, the chapters are as follows: *Das Bett des Odysseus* [Odysseus' bed], which refers to research on Ithaca, *Der Schatz des Priamos* [Priam's treasure], which refers to excavations in Troy, *Agamemnon und die Seinen* [Agamemnon and his people], which refers to discoveries in Mycenae. In book six, *Ariadne's Thread*, the chapters are *Die Stadt* [The city], *Die Burg* [The castle], and *Das Labyrinth* and refer to the archaeological sites of Troy, Orchomenos, Tiryns and Knossos, places that Schliemann connected as witnesses of the same civilization, unknown before his excavations. The last book, *The Return of Odysseus*, refers to the places and characters known from the *Odyssey* and contains *Das Schiff der Phaiaken* [The Phaeacians' ship], *Der freundliche Aiolos* [Friendly Aeolus], and *Melantheus, der Hirt* [Melanthios the shepherd]. Stoll uses Greek names as metaphors. Schliemann used to call his co-workers and friends by Homeric names and compares Bötticher, who made him much trouble, to Melanthios, who had been mocking Odysseus.

All these parallels, quotations and omnipresent Homeric names and events establish a permanent connection between Homer and the poet's ardent believer, Schliemann; they are easy to remember and create space for the young reader to deepen their knowledge about classical and pre-classical antiquity. A special place in the novel is reserved for the Greek language. Schliemann had no possibility of learning ancient Greek at school because his father could not afford it. However, he was a great admirer of everything Greek and Homeric. He recollects the moment he could listen in absolute awe to a drunk quoting Homer in the original, despite the fact his Greek was poor, full of mispronunciations and errors. Because of that reverence for the

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Homeric language, ancient Greek is the last language he studied during his merchant career and the first that he learned not for a commercial purpose but to fulfill his heart's need.

Schliemann's constant thirst for learning as a tool to fulfill his childhood dream can also show the reader the power of dreaming. The discoverer of Troy, here, is a romantic hero, a role model for whom determination and hard work become a key to obtaining what others believed unreachable: to prove the value of Homeric epic as a reliable source, to discover the distant past of Greek heroes' civilization from the bronze era, to show to the public a lost world of mythical places, to restore the myth to shine with its many facets and faces. The reader remains unaware of the damage that the amateur archaeologist had made within the archaeological sites before he learned how to excavate properly. The destruction of strata and the removal of valuable material is barely mentioned; if so, words of excuse follow as if nothing had happened because the goal – finding Homeric Troy and Homeric heroes – was more significant. Stoll's approach makes his protagonist become a mythical hero himself, a persistent and successful pioneer of a discipline, and a discoverer of worlds, almost like Midas who, by digging any chosen site, extracts precious and unmeasured treasures. However, the legend Stoll creates for his fellow from Mecklenburg may disappoint the reader when confronted with a much less appealing reality. Even though the depiction of Heinrich Schliemann and his wife finding Priam's gold together is false because Sophia was at the time absent from the excavation site, the image of the Schliemanns shown as treasure seekers displays a strong mysterious and dramatic quality. It makes a lasting impression on the reader, reinforcing, in children's imagination, the persona of an archaeologist as someone inspiring and passionate, rewarded with extraordinary and fascinating discoveries.

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* Schliemann, Heinrich, Sophia Schliemann, ed., *Heinrich Schliemann's Selbstbiographie*, Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1892.

** Trans. A. T. Murray.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs,

Agamemnon Archaeology Athens Crete Helen Homer Iliad Ithaca Mycenae Odysseus / Ulysses Odyssey Orchomenus Priam Tiryns

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Characters, and Concepts	Trojan War Troy
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adolescence Adventure Adversity Authority Boys Child, children Conflict Death Desires Divorce Emotions Family Heritage Historical figures History Humanity Identity Intellect Journeys Joy of reading Knowledge Learning Parents (and children) Past Rejection Respect Science Tale vs reality

Further Reading

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This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.