Imagination is a very important qualification for an archaeologist to possess... but in proportion to the strength of this power, a counterpoise of judgement is necessary, otherwise the imagination gets loose and runs riot. Dr Schliemann is undoubtedly an able man; but he must be credited with a vast amount of this sort of unbalanced imagination in order to explain the creations which he has produced out of the explorations of Hisarlik.

Williamitolase, Fraser's Review (1878)

In the summer of 1868, at five in the morning on 14 August, to be precise, an unlikely-looking visitor picked his way on horseback through the sandy riverbed and marshy thickets of the Menderes river in the north-west corner of Turkey, by the Dardanelles. He was a little man with a round, bullet-like head (as a friend described him), very little hair and a reddish face with spectacles; 'round-headed, round-faced, round-hatted, great-round-goggle eyes', as another said. At 10 a.m. he came to an extensive rubble-strown plateau, the site of the classical city of New Ilium. He walked its 1 ½-mile circumference, noting the traces of its circuit wall. Finally he ascended a smaller hill, called Hisarlik, 'place of the fort', in the north-western corner, about 100 feet above the plain, 30 feet above the spur of the plateau; there he inspected an excavation made earlier by its owner, who had laid bare part of the podium of a temple. The site, he later wrote,

fully agrees with the description Homer gives of Ilium, and I will add that, as soon as one sets foot on the Trojan plain, the view of the beautiful hill of Hisarlik grips one with astonishment. That hill seems destined by nature to carry a great city... there is no other place in the whole region to compare with it.

As the afternoon sun started to sink over the Dardanelles he headed for the coast to find lodgings for the night, trudging his way on foot through the marshy flats along the lower river.

On leaving Hisarlik I moved on to the town of Yenisheri at Cape Sigeum... here one can take in a splendid panorama of the entire Trojan plain. When, with the Iliad in hand, I sat on the roof of a house and looked around me, I imagined seeing below me the fleet, camp and assembles of the Greeks; Troy and its Pergamus fortress on the plateau of Hisarlik; troops marching to and fro and battling each other in the lowland between city and camp. For two hours the main events of the Iliad passed before my eyes until darkness and violent hunger forced me to leave the roof. ... I had become fully convinced that it was here that ancient Troy had stood.
IN SEARCH OF THE TROJAN WAR

This account, largely a fiction, written in Paris the following autumn, marks the start of the most amazing story in archaeology.

A biographical problem

It is often said that we know so much about Troy today because of one man's obsession, indeed of his childhood dream which he made come true. However, this is only so if we can believe his personal account of his early life. Schliemann's is the most romantic story in archaeology and should be read in his own words in his great books Ilios, Mycenae, Tiryns, but it should be read with a large pinch of salt, for with Schliemann, as with the story of Troy, it is not always possible to distinguish myth from reality. The material about his life is copious, for like many geniuses Schliemann was a compulsive hoarder of all the outpourings of his life. There are eleven books, the so-called autobiography, eighteen travel diaries, 20,000 papers, 60,000 letters, business records, postcards, telegrams and all sorts of other ephemera; and there are also 175 volumes of excavation notebooks, though forty-six more are missing, including important ones from Troy, Orchomenos and Tiryns (three lost albums of plans, drawings and photographs from Mycenae came into the hands of an Athens bookseller some years ago). Add to all this the vast amount of parallel material in the work of scholars who knew him, collaborated with him or argued with him, the newspaper files, the inevitable new finds (like the five letters found in 1982 in Belfast, of all places) and you have an idea of the size of the task involved in trying to disentangle fact from fiction in Schliemann's life.

It is a task beyond the scope of one lifetime, for Schliemann was a man of colossal energy, addicted to words and ideas, a correspondent in a dozen languages. Many books have been written about him since he began his dig at Troy—Hissarlik, but as yet there is no reliable biography; it is the main gap in our imperfect knowledge of Troy, and clearly now it will take a prodigious effort to reconstitute his finds. So the reader who is fascinated by the remarkable story of one of the most extraordinary people of the nineteenth century—a genius, let no one be in any doubt over that—needs to be wary of accepting the myth Schliemann put forward about himself, and which the world swallowed so willingly, for, as he himself admitted, 'my biggest fault, being a braggart and a bluffer... yielded countless advantages.' Addicted to hyperbole, braggadocio, and often downright lies, Schliemann presents us with the curious paradox of being at once the 'father of archaeology' and a liar.

We cannot, for instance, even be sure of the truth of his famous tale about his childhood, which is accepted unquestioningly even by his critics. At the age of eight, he recounts in Ilios, published in 1886, he received from his father a Christmas present of Jerris's Universal History which contained the story of Troy with an engraving of Aeneas escaping from the burning towers of Troy.

'Father, Jerris must have seen Troy,' [Schliemann says he said] 'otherwise he could not have represented it here.'

'My son,' he replied, 'that is merely a fanciful picture'...
'Father!' retorted I, 'if such walls once existed they cannot have been completely destroyed: vast ruins of them must still remain, but hidden away beneath the dust of ages'.

In the end we both agreed that I should one day excavate Troy.

This story first appears in a less developed form, and with differences of fact, in *Ithaque, la Péloponèse et Troie*, written in 1868 when Schliemann was forty-six: this is the first mention in any source of what Schliemann claimed had been a lifelong obsession, namely to uncover the ruins of Troy and prove the truth of Homer's story. But is it true? In December 1868 he wrote a letter to his eighty-eight-year-old father regarding the new book:

In the foreword I have given my biography, I have said that when I was ten... I heard the tale of the Trojan War from you... I have said that you were the cause of this [i.e. the thirty-six-year obsession] because you often told me of the Homeric heroes, and because that first impression received by me as a child lasted throughout my life.

The sceptic might infer that this was the first old Schliemann had heard of it, and indeed a cool look at his son's correspondence suggests that the story of Schliemann's obsession is indeed an invention. After a childhood in Mecklenburg Schliemann became a wealthy businessman in St Peters burg and the United States. He was often involved in unscrupulous dealings – for instance he cornered the salt market for gunpowder in the Crimean War, bought gold off prospectors in the California gold rush, and dealt in cotton during the American Civil War – at least, that was his story. In the late 1850s he seems to have wanted to break away from his business career into more intellectual pursuits in order to gain respectability. His first hopes were to become a landed proprietor, devoting himself to agriculture. When this failed, he wanted to turn to some sort of activity in a scientific field, perhaps philology, but was soon discouraged: 'It is too late for me to turn to a scientific career,' he wrote... 'I have been working too long as a merchant to hope I can still achieve something in the scientific field.' (Letters, I, nos 62 and 67, 1858–9.) Like many European people in the nineteenth century he knew Homer and loved his tale, but it was probably only his visit to Greece and Troy in the summer of 1868 – and his meeting with Frank Calvert – which gave Schliemann the inspiration to turn to archaeology, and the idea of discovering Homer's Troy by excavation.

This kind of textual criticism has revealed other discrepancies about incidents in Schliemann's career; for instance his story of the San Francisco fire (which he says he witnessed), his alleged meeting with President Fillmore, and now even the find of the so-called 'Jewels of Helen' at Troy, which Schliemann has been accused of forging or buying on the black market and planting on site. These doubts have now reached such fever pitch that a request was submitted in 1983 to the National Museum in Athens to test the gold of one of the masks Schliemann found at Mycenae, implicitly suggesting that he faked part of the Mycenaean treasures too. It must be said that such allegations are not new: in his own lifetime he was accused of 'fixing' his evidence, and some who met him were suspicious. The poet Matthew Arnold thought him 'devious' and Gobineau, a French diplomat, called him a 'charlatan'. Ernst Curtius, the
excavator of Olympia, thought him 'a swindler'. However, these criticisms do not tell the whole truth, as, for example, in the case of the 'Jewels of Helen', whose find circumstances can be plausibly established. But there are still some serious discrepancies which make a proper biography all the more desirable. For instance, one question bearing on the archaeology is the disturbing revelation by his contemporary William Borlase that Sophie Schliemann was not present, as her husband alleged, at the discovery of the 'Treasure of Priam'. She was not even in Turkey! If Schliemann could he (or fantasise) about this—he said he did it 'to encourage her interest in archaeology by including her'—could he have lied about the finds themselves? We know enough about him to say that he could indeed be unscrupulous; he cheated and lied to get his way; he was sly and cunning; he sometimes dug in secret and purloined material; he smuggled his Trojan treasures abroad rather than give them to the Turks; he desperately craved acceptance by the academic world as a serious scholar and archaeologist, and yet, we now know, he lied about something as trivial as the provenance of some inscriptions he had bought in Athens. All this is admitted—and may be thought damning enough. But set against this are the record of the finds in the books and journals and the brilliant letters to The Times, and of course the amazing finds themselves in the Mycenaean room in Athens Museum. Wayward, na"ive, enthusiastic, unashamedly romantic, easy to hurt and anxious to learn, Schliemann is a bundle of contradictions; but judgement on him should be made on the basis of his finds. It was his luck—or skill—to achieve the greatest archaeological discoveries ever made by one person. But before we turn to the tale of Schliemann's incredible finds there is one more question we must ask: why did he turn to archaeology in particular, rather than, say, philology? The story of the search for Troy is inextricably bound up with the beginnings of archaeology as a science.

Archaeology: the beginnings of a new science

In Schliemann's time the very word 'archaeology' had only recently begun to be used in its present meaning. It would need a whole book to sketch the intellectual background of mid-nineteenth-century prehistoric scholarship. Without a definitive biography of Schliemann we remain uncertain as to how much contemporary scholarship he had imbibed. For instance, what was he reading in Paris when he was a 'mature student' there in the late 1860s? Certainly in the following twenty years he shows an astonishing breadth of reading, especially in archaeological and antiquarian studies, but also ranging far and wide in linguistics and comparative ethnology. He also made it his business to visit all the major museum collections for the purpose of comparison with the often perplexing finds at Troy. If his thought lacked true scholarly discipline ('industrious but not clear-thinking,' said his schoolmaster) and if his theories were often far-fetched, he was usually thinking in the right direction. His ideas became clearer as his career progressed because he enlisted the help of specialists—Virchow, Sayce, Müller, Dörpfeld and so on, many of them the most
distinguished scholars in their own field. Today it is customary to deride Schliemann's archaeological technique as well as his character, but it is worth remembering that, in terms of the general study of the past, the period of Schliemann's adult life, 1850–90, was perhaps the most revolutionary in the history of science. In 1859, the year of Schliemann's first visit to Athens and the islands (a brief account of his travels appears in The Times of 27 May that year), Charles Darwin published The Origin of Species and created an entirely new climate for the study of man, history and the development of civilisation. (Interestingly enough, one of the first scholars to praise Darwin's work in public was the English antiquary John Evans, father of the excavator of Knossos – Schliemann, incidentally, would come to know them both.) At this stage the very idea of prehistory had barely entered into the language of science. The word itself only came into common currency in Europe with Daniel Wilson's Prehistoric Annals (1851) and John Lubbock's Prehistoric Times, published in 1865: it was Lubbock who coined the words Palaeolithic and Neolithic to describe phases in prehistory. Lubbock visited Schliemann at Troy in 1873 and Schliemann used his book when writing Hiss, of 1880. Lubbock's crowning work, The Origin of Civilisation (a title intended to echo Darwin), came out in 1870, six years before Schliemann's dig at Mycenae would alter forever our perceptions about the origins of European, and especially Aegean, civilisation.

At the time of Schliemann's maturity, before he dug Troy, most western intellectuals viewed 'civilisation' as meaning their own culture: a Christian, western, capitalist, bourgeois, imperialist democracy. Their texts were the classical writers and the Bible, and empires such as the British and German were seen as the logical culmination of ancient culture, whose traditional components were Rome (for its government and law), Israel (for religion and morals) and Greece (for intellectual, artistic and democratic ideals). This was 'civilisation', and hence 'history' was simply a matter of the Greek, Roman and Hebrew ideas shaping the western tradition. But from the middle of the century archaeology started to reveal the riches of civilisations far more ancient – Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Sumerian – which, when their languages were deciphered, turned out to have had an incalculable influence on the development of the 'younger' civilisations of the Mediterranean. In the century which has followed The Origin of Species we have become almost blasé about our state of knowledge: the discovery of the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Hittites and Minoans were all important steps forward, to be followed in the twentieth century by the non-western civilisations of India, China and pre-Columbian America. And so was born the science of archaeology, an old word which in the seventeenth century referred to the study of history in general, but which appears in the strict modern sense, as the scientific study of the material remains of prehistory, in Wilson’s Prehistoric Annals in 1851. Only thirty years later, in 1880, R. Dawkins could write in Early Man: 'The archaeologists have raised the study of antiquities to the rank of a science.' This was essentially the achievement of Schliemann, as Virchow wrote: 'Today it is pointless to ask whether Schliemann started from right or false premises when he began his
IN SEARCH OF THE TROJAN WAR

studies. Not only did success decide in his favour but also his scientific method proved a success.'

Schliemann and romanticism

Juxtaposed with Schliemann's craving to be a serious scholar was another aspect of his intellectual and temperament make-up which deserves mention. Indeed if we read him right, it was his crucial emotional 'trigger' - it was romantic philhellenism, the love of things Greek. This may seem hard to understand now, but Schliemann's birth and youth coincided with an event which had a decisive effect on many European artists and thinkers: the Greek War of Independence.

Between the day in 1823 when Cyriac of Ancona rode into Constantinople by the side of Mehmet II when the city was conquered by the Turks, and the day Lord Byron died in the malaria swamps of Missolonghi, an extraordinary development had taken place in western European culture, whose effects are still very much with us. Of course the liberation from the Turks was chiefly achieved by the Greeks themselves, inspired by western-educated Greeks who worked in European intellectual circles. But it was not simply a matter of the way Greeks looked at themselves; the way the west looked at Greece was also important. Such was the incredible impact in the Renaissance of the rediscovery of classical Greek civilisation that, as we have seen, the idea of the rebirth of a Hellenic nation was first conceived in Greece in the fifteenth century. But it was precisely then that Greece fell to the Ottoman Empire and became one of its most impoverished provinces, economically and culturally. From that time the idea of Hellas reborn was maintained outside Greece and it is fascinating to see how the War of Independence in the 1820s was preceded by a great outpouring of books by western Hellenists on the history and culture of ancient Greece. As perceived by Piretto and Cyriac in the fifteenth century, the development of nationalism and that of archaeology went hand in hand. So to read what travellers and artists of the time wrote - a poet like Byron, or, slightly later, a musician like Berlioz, composer of The Trojans - is to sense some of the romantic philhellenism which evidently inspired the self-educated Schliemann, even if he actually acquired it late in life in the classroom in Paris; 'making my beloved Greece live again', as he put it, was a common goal for nineteenth-century intellectuals and artists, and inevitably the new science of archaeology did not escape such feelings - how could it? At one level it is the most romantic of all sciences since it involves the actual physical reconstitution of the lost past. In a sense, then, the physical recovery of ancient Greece, which began with the digs at the classical sites of Olympia and Samothrace in the 1860s and was followed by Troy, Mycenae and the rest under Schlieman in the 1870s, was the logical culmination of nineteenth-century philhellenism; only this can explain Schlieman's seemingly genuine desire to 'prove the truth' of the ancient stories, even more than to find treasure. His time, after all, was deeply troubled, plagued by revolutions and war, by colonialism and imperialism,
culminating in the terrible Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 (of which Schliemann had a first-hand glimpse – neighbouring houses in his street in Paris were blasted by gunfire). The great practical achievements of nineteenth-century 'civilisation' were in the eyes of many tainted by the prospect of future horrors. What more enticing idea than to discover an almost limitless prospect: a recoverable history stretching back deep into lost time? Progress – that great goal of nineteenth-century thinkers – progress to a culture of noble aspirations, simple moral grandeur, could indeed be made, but by journeying backwards. Though outside the scope of this book, this aspect of Schliemann and his contemporaries should not be overlooked. 'I have lived my life with this race of demigods; I know them so well that I feel they must have known me,' wrote Berlioz of the Homeric heroes; many passages in Schliemann's books show that he felt exactly the same.

*Where was Homer’s Troy?*

No stone there is without a name.

Lucan

The site of classical Ilion (in Latin: Ilium Novum) occupies the north-west corner of a low plateau between the Menderes river (classical Scamander) and the Dümreç Su (Sinois). The Greek and Roman city was quite extensive – its walls enclosed an area of about 1,200 by 800 yards – but at its north-west extremity there is a mound about 700 feet square which falls away sharply to the plain on the west and north; this mound rose about 30 feet above the adjacent plateau and about 130 feet above the plain before Schliemann began his dig, though it may have been higher and steeper in the Bronze Age before classical builders levelled it off. This mound, known as Hisarlik, the ‘place of Hisarlik before Schliemann’s devastations: a reconstruction of the hill prior to excavation, from sketches by Wilhelm Dörpfeld and Charles Maclaren. 'To me the eminence seemed nearly square and its breadth little more than a furlong, say 700 feet ... with a few scattered trees,' wrote Maclaren. 'It was strewed with innumerable small morsels of pottery and tile, and some bits of marble, and bone, in patches, in the first week of May 1847, a miserably thin crop of wheat or barley.'
The site of Troy in 1836: a detail from Spratt's map. Charles Maclaren thought 'Troy had extended over the whole plateau with the acropolis on the south-west ridge (under the word 'ILICUM'). It was Frank Calvert who narrowed the search to what we call Hisarlik today, the oval eminence below the words 'Large building'.

The fort, had been the acropolis of the classical city, site of civic buildings and a temple of Athena. No one had paid much attention in the debate over the lost site of Homer's Troy; it was first noticed by travellers in the 1790s, when part of the circuit wall built in Alexander the Great's day was still visible amid the undergrowth and olive trees. By 1810, when Edward Clarke went to the spot, the foundation blocks were being plundered by local Turks; they had gone by the 1830s and now even the line of the circuit is difficult to trace. From these signs, and from the coins he found there, Clarke rightly concluded that this ancient citadel on its elevated spot of ground, surrounded on all sides by a level plain, was 'evidently the remains of New Ilium'. But although some scholars accepted the proposition made by the armchair topographer Maclaren in 1822, that this must also be the site of Homeric Troy, no attempt was made to test the hypothesis by the spade until Frank Calvert and Schliemann.

Such was the meagre archaeological background to this famous place when Frank Calvert turned to it. At this stage the Troy-Bunarbash theory still held the field, but after excavations there in 1864 had drawn a blank, Frank Calvert was finally able to dig on Hisarlik. It was a site he must have known since childhood, and he acquired from a local farmer a field which contained the northern
part of the mound. As we have seen, he began to excavate in 1865 and immediately uncovered remains of the Athena temple and the wall of Lysimachus, the beautifully built classical city wall whose remains were to be swept away by Schliemann. Calvert also struck Bronze-Age levels, and realised that Hisarlik was deeply stratified, in places with 40 or 50 feet of accumulated debris.

Schliemann first visited the Troad in August 1868. From Calvert's letters we can be certain that at this time Schliemann espoused Lechevalier's Bunarbashi theory, and he poked around there for a couple of days. Hisarlik evidently had made no impression on him - contrary to the fiction on page 47. It was only when he met Calvert at Çanakkale on his way back to Constantinople that he heard details of Calvert's excavation, and his theory that Hisarlik was an artificial mound with 'the ruins and debris of temples and palaces which succeeded each other over long centuries', a theory Calvert had formulated as long ago as Newton's visit in 1853. Schliemann was immediately convinced by Calvert that this was the site of Homer's Troy, as he says in his first book, published in French the next year: 'After carefully examining the Trojan plain on two occasions, I fully agree with the conviction of this savant [Calvert] that the high plateau of Hisarlik is the position of ancient Troy, and that this hill is the site of its Pergamos.' In fact Schliemann entirely owed this idea to Calvert, and an extraordinary letter written to Calvert from Paris that October shows that Schliemann had only the dimmest recollection of what Hisarlik had actually looked like! So much had his attention focused on Bunarbashi. In passing, he asked Calvert everything from why he thought the hill artificial to what was the best type of hat to wear, and 'Should I take an iron bedstead and pillow with me?' Calvert provided all the answers to the questionnaire with patient detail. Later Schliemann would deny Calvert's inspiration and help, and in 1875, in a letter to the Manchester Guardian, Calvert was forced to quote Schliemann against himself: 'Had anyone else proposed for me to dig away a hill at my cost, I would not even have listened to him!' So Calvert was the 'only begetter' of the idea, and Schliemann was later unwilling to share his glory.

There was still the problem of permission. Schliemann was in an independent country and from the mid-1860s, when their imperial museum was founded, the Turkish government were increasingly concerned to preserve their ancient remains. Persuasive as ever, Schliemann had no trouble getting his firman, his permit, but its conditions were clear: the finds would be divided, with half going to the Turkish archaeological museum; ruins he uncovered should be left in the state in which they were found, and existing structures should not be demolished; lastly, Schliemann should foot the bill. The last of these was the only one he observed; indeed his cavalier treatment of the Turks, his destruction of many walls on the site, and especially his theft of treasure from Troy, have resulted in a permanent mistrust of foreign archaeologists in Turkey. Clearly Schliemann found it difficult to abandon a lifetime's habit of fast operating, and lied and cheated relentlessly to get his own way.

He began a preliminary excavation in April 1870, and over 1871–3 made
On the south-east side of the city Schliemann unknowingly broke through the wall of Troy VI, leaving this hole. On the north side he removed the remains of the wall completely, though this, if any, was the city of the Trojan War.

three major campaigns totalling over nine months' work with anything from eighty to 160 workmen on site each day. Although Calvert counselled a network of smaller trenches, rather than immense platforms, Schliemann decided to drive vast trenches through the mound, removing hundreds of tons of earth and rubble, demolishing earlier structures which stood in his way. Among the walls which went forever were, as we have seen, parts of the beautiful limestone city wall of Lysimachus, and, in two places behind it, an earlier wall of finely worked limestone blocks which Schliemann considered too fine to be early; in fact, we now know Schliemann had unwittingly struck part of the city which, if anything, was Homeric Troy.

The results of Schliemann's initial deprivations can still be seen today; what is left is the ruin of a ruin. By 1872 Calvert had withdrawn his agreement for Schliemann to dig his part of the mound, and the two had – temporarily – fallen out. It is not hard to see why.
The fact is that Schliemann was completely perplexed by the complexity of the mound, baffled by the stratification. Fortunately he was wise enough to accept advice: 'Only the exact findspot of an object in the excavation can accurately indicate the epoch. Take good heed of that!' the French architect Burnouf wrote to him in 1872. He did well to insist, for nothing so complex had ever been excavated, and Schliemann had to learn his technique as he went along. It is futile to criticise Schliemann for this: other digs of the time were simpler sites, as at Samothrace, or done like 'digging for potatoes', as Müller said of the British dig at Carchemish, near the Syrian border, in 1878–81. Gradually, however, in the course of these three seasons he succeeded in identifying four successive strata or 'cities' below the classical Ilium, and he came to the conclusion that the Homeric one was the second city from the bottom, which had been destroyed in a great conflagration. His claim that this tiny place – 100 yards across – was the Homeric Ilium, with its towers and 'great walls', did not excite much belief, despite his enthusiastic exaggerations in his reports and letters. Schliemann was especially infuriated by an article by Frank Calvert in the Levant Herald (4 February 1873) in which Calvert acknowledged Schliemann's prehistoric strata below the Roman, but brilliantly observed that 'a most important link is missing between 1800 and 700 BC, a gap of over 1000 years, including the date of the Trojan War, 1193–1184 BC, no relics of the intervening epoch having yet been discovered between that indicated by the prehistoric stone implements and that of pottery of the Archaic style'. In other words the Trojan War was not there! Blind to the implications of Calvert's argument, Schliemann lashed out hysterically, accusing Calvert of stabbing Schliemann's Troy diary for 26–7 June 1872. Typically, he made copious records of all the objects, but he was weaker on architectural detail.
in search of the trojan war

31 May 1873

In my diary, 31 May 1873, I noted that I walked to Troy on 15 May and arrived in the afternoon. We left late that afternoon, but I was asked to return on the following day. The next day, we walked to Troy, and I noted that we arrived late in the afternoon. The next day, we walked to Troy again, and I noted that we arrived late in the afternoon.

I came upon a large copper article of the most remarkable form, which attracted my attention all the more and I thought I saw gold behind it. I cut out the treasure with a large knife, which it was impossible to do without the very greatest exertion and the most fearful risk of my life, for the great fortification-wall, beneath which I had to dig, threatened every moment to fall down on me. But the sight of so many objects, every one of which is of inestimable value to archaeology, made me foolhardy, and I never thought of any danger. It would, however, have been impossible for me to have removed the treasure without the help of my dear wife, who stood by me ready to pack the things which I cut out in her shawl and to carry them away.

him in the back, and later calling him a 'foul fiend ... a libeller and a liar'. Within weeks, however, Schliemann found his justification, in his Troy (II), when at the very end of his final season, probably 31 May 1873, he made the first, and most controversial, of his famous discoveries of treasure – the so-called 'Treasure of Priam'.
The 'treasure', so Schliemann alleged, comprised copper salvers and cauldrons inside which were cups in gold, silver, electrum and bronze, a gold 'sauceboat', vases, thirteen copper lanceheads, and, most beautiful of all, a mass of several thousand small gold rings and decorative pieces, with gold bracelets, a gold headband, four beautiful earrings, and two splendid gold diadems, one of which comprised over 16,000 tiny pieces of gold threaded on gold wire. This last, which became known as the 'Jewels of Helen', was the headdress in which Sophie Schliemann was later photographed, one of the most famous images of the nineteenth century.

The find caused a sensation: in fact it was this more than anything that helped Schliemann's claims to be taken seriously. But we now know that, at the very best, Schliemann greatly embellished his account for effect. Recently

The so-called Treasure of Priam. Still the subject of controversy, it vanished in Berlin in May 1945

Sophie Schliemann wearing the 'Jewels of Helen'
Schliemann's 'great ramp' of Troy II. The treasure was probably found just outside the wall at left centre in a stone-lined cist grave dug into the ruins of Troy II from above. (Taken 1893)

Some scholars have even argued that the treasure itself was fabricated and planted, but it was certainly of the right date for its context, which recent research suggests was possibly a cist grave dug into Troy II layers from Troy III, though Schliemann's account is too imprecise to be sure. We also now know that gold had been found sporadically at this level earlier in the year, including a major find of similar jewellery in illicit digging by his workmen. Also, when the Americans re-excavated this area in the 1930s they found scattered gold in almost every room, as if the inhabitants of Troy II had fled in panic before the onslaught which engulfed their city: so Troy II remains a possibility for the 'Jewels of Helen'. There seems reason, then, to believe that Schliemann did find these marvellous things, but probably over several weeks rather than in one sensational hoard. This he had kept under wraps to smuggle out of Turkey at the end of excavation, and he wrote it up in Athens where the confused post-dating in his journal led modern investigators to think the whole thing a concoction. As for Sophie's help, she was in Athens at the time, as Schliemann admitted to the English visitor Borlase, but this white lie need not (in my opinion at least) vitiate the find as a whole. Unfortunately, the treasure itself, which might have provided a few more answers, vanished in Berlin in 1945, so today the pauper survivors of the gold of Troy are a pair of beautiful earrings, a necklace, rings and pins, part of the finds made later by Schliemann in 1878.
and 1882; these can still be seen in Istanbul Museum, along with missshapen gold ingots, the remains of a priceless treasure of the third millennium BC. Other gold finds from the 1870s were doubtless melted down in the villages near Hisarlık. And that, we must assume now, is the fate of the Berlin treasure, the 'Jewels of Helen' and the rest, though there are persistent rumours that it lies sealed in a vault in Leningrad, or even in the collection of some Texan oil millionaire. (In a novel by Anthony Price, The Labyrinth Makers, it turns up under an East Anglian airfield: this is ironic, for had the British Museum coughed up the £100 to Calvert (see p. 44), the treasure might still be safe in Bloomsbury!)

Back in Athens, with furious Turkish agents on his trail, Schliemann was jubilant. The treasure was the kind of luck he had needed in his campaign to persuade the world of scholarship that his costly obsession was well-founded, that he had located the world of the heroes, and that it did indeed have high material culture - and gold, as Homer said. For him the wall where the treasure lay was clearly Priam's palace, and the pieces themselves 'hurriedly packed into the chest by some member of the palace of the family of King Priam'. He could not resist a jibe at the doubters: 'This treasure of the supposed mythical King Priam, of the mythical heroic age which I discovered at a great depth in the ruins of the supposed mythical Troy, is at all events an event which stands alone in archaeology.'

It was, but writing in English to Newton he was more circumspect:

Troy is not large: but Homer is an epic poet and no historian. He never saw either the great tower of Ilium, nor the divine wall, nor Priam's palace, because when he visited Troy 3000 years after its destruction all those monuments were for 3000 years covered up with its ten feet thick layers of the red ashes and ruins of Troy, and another city stood upon that layer, a city which in its turn must have undergone great convulsions and increased that layer considerably. Homer made no excavations to bring these monuments to light, but he knew them by tradition for Troy's tragic fate had ever since its destruction been in the mouth of the rhapsodes. Ancient Troy has no Acropolis and the Pergamum is a pure invention of the poet. (My italics.)

Such would not have been the impression gained by the public from Schliemann's book.

As he admitted privately, what still nagged Schliemann was the question: was this indeed Homer's Troy? Two facts in particular perturbed him: First, the size of the prehistoric settlement - too yards by 80 at the maximum - seemed far too small for the great city Homer portrays. Where were the wide streets, towers and gates depicted by the poet? Moreover there was no sign that the settlement extended on to the plateau as he and Calvert had expected. Second, deep though they were, the prehistoric strata had produced obscure and primitive pottery which seemed far too primitive for the age of heroes to which Schliemann would assign them: where, for instance, was the elaborate palace decoration Homer mentions? Of course much of it had only ever existed in Homer's imagination, but Schliemann had also been unlucky. Much, though not all, of the top of the hill, with its Bronze-Age layers, had been sliced off in antiquity by the builders of Ilium Novum; so, attacking from the north,
Schliemann had virtually no chance of finding Mycenaean material which might have given him—or a visitor like Newton—a ‘fix’ against pottery already found in Rhodes and Attica. He was confused and confounded, so much so that as early as 1871, when a party of eminent German scholars had visited the site and declared that Homer’s Troy was not here but at Bunarbashi after all, Schliemann bowed to their wisdom (with his habitual deference to professional scholars) and came to doubt his intuition after all. That autumn he wrote in his journal that he had ‘given up all hope of finding Troy’. Perhaps, he thought, it had only ever existed in the mind of the poet. In November he went so far as to open an excavation at Akça Köy, the site proposed by Frank’s brother Frederick: Hisarlik ‘perplexes me more and more every day,’ he wrote to James Calvert. ‘I can dig there [Akça] more next spring in order to see whether I cannot discover there Troy if I do not find it at Hisarlik.’

So much of what Schliemann found was new to scholarship as a whole, not just to him, that his confusion was understandable: he begged everyone for advice. His first major publication of his finds in 1874 consisted of field reports with a great loose album of over 200 sketches, plans and photographs ‘in the hope that my colleagues might be able to explain points obscure to me…[for] everything appeared strange and mysterious to me’. Such was the reality of Schliemann’s ‘new world of archaeology!’ That, and the discomfort, the malaria, the scorpions and insects, the fevers when the rains came, the fierce wind from the north which ‘drives the dust into our eyes’ and blew through the chinks in the dig hut at night (it soon ceased to be gratifying to the romantic Schliemann that Troy was indeed as Homer said, ‘very windy’). He fought off constipation with a ‘bottle of best English stout every day’, but he and Sophie were often so ill that ‘we cannot undertake the direction [of the dig] throughout the day in the terrible heat of the sun’. Such physical hardships simply do not happen in archaeology today, and Schliemann stuck it for twelve seasons over the next twenty years at huge personal expense. The motive was hardly fame. Or gold. Even if Schliemann himself took time to realise it, he kept going back because he still had questions to answer.

Schliemann had considered the 1873 dig his last on the site. In his initial flush of enthusiasm he claimed the ‘Treasure of Priam’ as proof that he had indeed found Homer’s Troy. But true to his underlying honesty, he realised that he had not solved the key problems satisfactorily, and his thoughts soon went back to Hisarlik. He began to negotiate for a new permit to dig there. But the Turks, furious about the theft and smuggling of the treasure, turned him down. When he finally got permission in 1876 (with a large cash payment) his mind was elsewhere. He had decided to dig at the site of the stronghold of Agamemnon, leader of the Greek forces at Troy: Mycenae.

_Mycenae rich in gold_

Though it had been deserted for well over 2000 years, Mycenae had never been forgotten. As we have seen, Thucydides had visited its ruins and was
happy to agree with Homer's account of its pre-eminence at the time of the Trojan War - as the 'capital' of the Mycenaean 'empire'. In the ancient world everybody accepted that this was the place to which Agamemnon had returned to be murdered after the sack of Troy, and it was the general belief that he and the other kings of the Achean dynasty had been buried there. Although abandoned after the destruction by Argos in 1200 BC, Mycenae still had impressive ruins to show, its Cyclopean walls and the tremendous 'beehive' or tholos tombs which were thought to be the burial places of the ancient kings. These were visited by the Greek traveller Pausanias in the second century AD, and he describes the Lion Gate and the tholos tombs said to be of Atreus and Agamemnon. But in comparison with Troy and many of the sites of Greece and Crete, Mycenae was unvisited by postclassical travellers and there seems to be no first-hand account of it between Pausanias and the Frenchman Fauvel in 1780. The site, though, was never lost, appearing on Italian maps from the seventeenth century onwards, and the remains of its great walls were always visible above ground.

When John Morritt of Rokeby, Walter Scott's friend, went there early in 1795 after visiting the Troas to participate in the Bryant controversy (see p. 41), his is the first detailed account since Pausanias (in fact he used Pausanias' writings as his guide). Morritt was a keen traveller, ignoring hardships at a time when few travelled and fewer explored. Led by a 'country labourer', he reached the Lion Gate, admiring its 'rudely carved bas-relief'. Mycenae, he thought, could have changed but little since Pausanias; in that he was probably right. Morritt also forced his way into the choked Treasury of Atreus and described the massive lintel block ('beyond anything we have seen') which he compared to the lintel at Orchomenos, another tholos tomb associated with the Homeric Age.

Morritt's journal was made available to a number of scholars who followed him to Mycenae in the next thirty years. First and most controversial was Thomas Bruce, Lord Elgin, now notorious for his removal of the Elgin marbles. In the summer of 1802, while the marbles were being taken down from the Parthenon in Athens, Elgin made a tour of Greece searching for other antiquities; when he visited Mycenae he was so impressed by the ruins that he immediately began excavation there under cover of a permit from the Turkish government, which then controlled Greece. In the half-blocked entrance to the Treasury of Atreus he uncovered a number of pieces of the red and green marble friezes which had fallen from the façade of the tomb; he also found (perhaps in one of the other tholos tombs) two massive monumental fragments of a bull relief in hard black limestone which can be seen today in the British Museum. Elgin also removed the main portions of the green marble decorated zigzag half-columns which in 1802 still flanked the door of the tomb; the remainder were taken by the Marquis of Sligo in 1810 and set up at Westport House in County Mayo, to be given to the British Museum in 1905; that they are not today on the monument for which they were created (and of which they were an integral part) is greatly to be regretted. Elgin even cast covetous eyes on the magnificent
The entrance to the Treasury of Atreus in the early nineteenth century

relief on the Lion Gate itself, but decided regretfully that it was too heavy and too far from the sea to be transported away.

Other visitors in those last two decades before Greek independence took a more constructive attitude towards the antiquities of the prehistoric age. Chief among them were English scholars, who examined, measured and drew the Treasury and the Lion Gate. Edward Clarke, whom we have already met at Troy, went there. William Leake, in his *Travels in the Morea*, set the standards for nineteenth-century classical topography with what is still one of the best descriptions of the site. Charles Cockerell made a small excavation on the outside of the roof of the Treasury of Atreus to establish the nature of its 'beehive construction'. Edward Dodwell attempted to define Cyclopean architecture in a lavish folio volume which included the first illustrations of the walls and tholoi of Mycenae and Tiryns. William Gell, in the course of extensive itineraries all over Greece, sought out further fragments of the decorations and described the Lion Gate as the 'earliest authenticated specimen of sculpture in Europe'. All these were significant steps in the growth of modern understanding of the Mycenaean civilisation; some, like Leake and Clarke, still deserve reading in their own right as marvellously observant travel books: Leake's indeed, at least in my eyes, is one of the best archaeological travel books ever written.
These writers knew their classical sources, their Homer and Thucydides; it is thanks to them that, from the start of modern archaeological inquiry, these ruins were assumed to date from the prehistoric, 'heroic' age of Greece, and also that progress had already been made in piecing together ideas about the style of 'Cyclopean' architecture. The way had been prepared for Schliemann, and he carefully studied all these books before and during his dig at Mycenae.

Before we go to Mycenae with Schliemann, though, two other visitors who preceded him should be noted, for their discoveries were potentially of the greatest importance in the progress of Mycenaean studies. In 1869 Thomas Burgon visited Mycenae 'south of the southernmost angle of the wall of the acropolis', and picked up some fragments of Mycenaean pottery which he published with a colour plate in 1847 as 'An attempt to point out the Vases of Greece proper which belong to the Heroic and Homeric Age'. It was this simple but revolutionary article which Charles Newton had in mind when he visited Lechevalier's Troy at Bunarbashi in 1853 with Frank Calvert (see p. 44): if this hill has ever been an acropolis we might expect to find those fragments of very early pottery which, as was first remarked by the late Mr Burgon, are so abundant on the Homeric sites of Mycenae and Tiryns. Of such pottery I saw not a vestige, ...
Mycenae from the east, published by Dodwell in 1834: 'I approached [it] with a greater degree of veneration than any other place in Greece has inspired. Its remote antiquity, enwrapped in the deepest recesses of recorded time, and its present extraordinary remains, combined to fill my mind with a sentiment in which awe was mingled with admiration.'

Burgon and Newton's observations lie at the root of all the present-day studies of the chronology of the Mycenaean world, and in fact when he saw Schliemann's pottery from Mycenae Newton was also able to advance a rough absolute chronology for the Heroic Age at Mycenae, by the simple device of a comparison with similar pottery found in Egypt which could be dated to around 1375 BC.

It was Schliemann's discussions with Newton which made him assert his dependence on pottery dating (as in Mycenae, 1886), though the implications of Newton's conclusions for his Troy dig seem to have eluded him to the last.

It was natural that the Lion Gate and the Treasury of Atreus should have attracted the main attention of the nineteenth-century investigators just as they had done in Pausanias' day. But of course it was the interior of the citadel, if anywhere, which was likely to provide answers about the early history of the place, and this had attracted little interest before Schliemann. Few travellers had even bothered to look around it, though Leake provided a rough map and described the overgrown slopes inside the gate, with traces of terraces and wailing. Dodwell's engraving suggests that the whole area was overgrown, with no major structures visible; likewise a watercolour done in 1834 shows that even the Lion Gate itself was completely choked with rubble and bushes, the bastions on either side ruined and covered with earth. This is what Schliemann had seen when in 1868 he first set eyes on the legendary stronghold of Agamemnon, the city 'rich in gold', as Homer had said. Schliemann's guides from Corinth...
had never heard of Mycenae, but a farm boy from Charvati who took him to the site knew the citadel as 'the fortress of Agamemnon' and the Treasury of Atreus as 'Agamemnon's tomb'. For Schliemann this was virtual confirmation of the ancient myths. Eternal romantic that he was, his response to such stories was no different from that of the musicians and artists of his day, as for example the artist von Stackelberg, who actually went to Mycenae to paint:

I sat for hours in solemn solitude in front of the gigantic ruins, and while my pen reproduced their bold outlines I thought about the gigantic figures of the Greek heroes in this memorable place, the heroes who, murdering and murdered, were sacrificed to their inexorable fate.

Now in the summer of 1876 Schliemann was about to cap the imaginings of his fellow romantics. At Mycenae he would do no less than bring the Heroic Age to life.

The Mask of Agamemnon

The key to Schliemann's incredible success at Mycenae lay in a passage in Pausanias' book describing the tombs of the murdered Agamemnon and his companions as lying inside rather than outside the walls. Scholars had always assumed that Pausanias was referring to the great tholos tombs, including what we today call the Treasury of Atreus, and therefore that the walls of which he spoke were those of the outer circuit which lies well beyond the citadel. Schliemann was certain the scholars were wrong, and had been laughed at for saying so in print in the book he wrote after his 1868 trip. He insisted that Pausanias meant the great Cyclopean defences of the citadel, and that the heroes of Troy lay inside the Lion Gate itself. Preposterous, said the scholars — where was there room for a cemetery within this small citadel on its steep hill, and in any case, they argued, since when did the ancients bury their dead within their cities? Determined to prove his point, in early September 1876 Schliemann cleared the Lion Gate of debris and started digging a great trench just inside, cutting through several feet of wreckage that had fallen or been washed down the hillside. The end of Schliemann's trench can still be seen gouged into the side of the hill at the foot of the stairs which face the visitor immediately inside the gate. This trench he drove westwards across a small flat terraced area inside the Cyclopean walls; there he immediately struck the remains of a series of upright stone markers which formed a circle nearly 90 feet in diameter. The ground had clearly been carefully levelled in antiquity, and within this space Schliemann found a carved upright stone resembling a grave monument; his excitement grew as others soon followed, bearing the clearly distinguishable images of warriors in chariots. The sensational discoveries which ensued are now part of archaeological legend, but the fresh breath of discovery can still be read in Schliemann's letters to The Times (reprinted in English in Briefwechsel II) and in his great book Mycenae.

By now the November rains were turning Schliemann's trenches to mud. When he reached the bedrock he found the top of a shaft cut down into the
rock. It was the first of five rectangular grave shafts in which he uncovered the remains of nineteen men and women and two infants: they were literally covered in gold. The men's faces were covered with magnificent gold masks so distinctly modelled as to suggest portraits; on their breasts were extraordinary decorated 'sunbursts' of thick gold leaf impressed with rosettes; two women wore gold frontlets and one of them a diadem; around the bodies lay bronze swords and daggers, with elaborate gold hilts and gold and silver inlay on the hilts and blades - in two cases wonderfully vivid scenes of hunting and fighting were inlaid in gold, silver and lapis lazuli on the ridges of the dagger blades. There were gold and silver drinking cups, gold boxes, ivory containers and plaques, and hundreds of gold discs decorated with rosettes, spirals, animals and fish: these had perhaps been sewn on to the clothes and the shrouds. The artistic accomplishment was simply dazzling - exemplified best, perhaps, in some of the least significant articles, such as a decorated ostrich egg or (to choose an item from a later excavation) an exquisite little bowl of rock crystal adorned with a bird's head and neck: a thing of fragile, translucent beauty to set beside the grim, golden, bearded warlords and their arsenal of weapons.

For Schliemann, of course, there was no doubt: this was the world of Homer and the Iliad, and these were the graves of Agamemnon and his companions. Pausanias had mentioned five graves and Schliemann had dug five; tradition even insisted that Cassandra had two infant twins who were killed with her - and there were two infant burials in one of the shafts! The climax of his search came in the fifth and, for him, last tomb, where, as with the 'Jewels of Helen', Schliemann found exactly what he had wished so passionately to find. There were three male bodies, richly adorned with inlaid war accoutrements, gold coverings on their breasts, and gold face masks. The first two skulls were in such a state of decomposition that they could not be saved, but the third

had been wonderfully preserved under its ponderous golden mask ... both eyes perfectly visible, also the mouth, which owing to the enormous weight that had pressed upon it was wide open and showed thirty-two beautiful teeth ... the man must have died at the early age of thirty-five. ... The news that the tolerably well preserved body of a man of the mythic heroic age had been found ... spread like wildfire through the Argolid, and people came by thousands from Argos, Nauplia, and the villages to see the wonder.

So ran Schliemann's own thrillingly evocative account, published in 1880 in Mycenae. As usual it was probably embellished in the retelling. The dispatch to The Times dated 25 November 1876 is more prosaic: 'In one of these [the gold masks] has remained a large part of the skull it covered.' Nothing more! As for the famous and often told story, that he sent the King of Greece a telegram saying: 'I have gazed upon the face of Agamemnon,' we can at least say that, though he did not say it, the sentiment was in character. (Schliemann, incidentally, made efforts to preserve the body by pouring on it alcohol containing dissolved gum, but it has not survived. The painting made at the time by a local artist has, however, recently resurfaced in one of Schliemann's lost albums.) Schliemann's interpretation of this discovery, perhaps the single most remark-
able one in the history of archaeology, was characteristically to the point:

For my part, I have always firmly believed in the Trojan War; my full faith in the tradition has never been shaken by mode and criticism, and to this faith of mine I am indebted for the discovery of Troy and its treasure. ... My firm faith in the traditions made me undertake my late excavations in the acropolis [of Mycenae] and led to the discovery of the five tombs with their immense treasures. ... I have not the slightest objection to admitting that the tradition which assigns the tombs to Agamemnon and his companions may be perfectly correct.

Needless to say, the finds at Mycenae caused a sensation and also brought Schliemann world fame. He was feted in high society of Europe; the British Prime Minister Gladstone, a classical scholar himself, wrote the preface to the English edition of Mycenae; Schliemann lectured to learned societies all over Europe. There were, of course, still many critics: some claimed the graves were a post-Roman, barbarian cemetery with "Scythian" masks; others even said they were Christian, Byzantine; but most accepted them as 'Homeric', that is, pertaining to a Bronze-Age heroic world which had some connection with
IN SEARCH OF THE TROJAN WAR

Homer's tale — for had not Schliemann found depictions of boar's-tusk helmets such as Homer had described? On the inlaid dagger blades there were representations of 'tower shields' such as Ajax carries in the Iliad; there were, too, 'silver-studded' swords like the one given by Hector to Ajax. At last the new science of archaeology had done what had previously been impossible: it had demonstrated some kind of connection between the world of Homer and real history. And Schliemann could no longer be dismissed as a mere crank. The great Oxford Sanskrit scholar Max Müller wrote:

I am delighted to hear of your success, you fully deserve it. Never mind the attacks of the Press in Germany... Your discoveries are open to different interpretations — you know how much I differ from your own interpretation — still more from Gladstone's. But that does not affect my gratitude to you for your indefatigable perseverance. I admire enthusiasm for its own sake, and depend upon it the large majority of the world does the same. You are envied — that is all, and I do not wonder it.

Had Schliemann really found Agamemnon? Alas, no! This is not the place to analyse Schliemann's finds and their real dating. Suffice to say that the shaft graves date from the sixteenth century BC, long before the possible date for the Trojan War in the thirteenth or twelfth century BC — it is not even certain that they are from the same dynasty as Agamemnon's, if he existed, though they may be. Nor were the six shaft graves (the last found by Stamatakis in 1877) all from the same time, as Schliemann thought; rather, they were added to over a number of generations. (A second grave circle was found in 1950 with equally fabulous riches.) We now know that the great architectural achievements of the Mycenaean period — the Lion Gate, the Cyclopean walls and the great 'treasuries' of Atreus and Clytemnestra — date from the thirteenth century BC, and that it was at this time that the area of ancient royal tombs of the shaft graves was refurbished and enclosed as an object of public cult. Some of Schliemann's misconceptions were evident at the time; as we have seen, it was Charles Newton who brilliantly observed to Schliemann that the thousands of fragments of stirrup jars — the most typical Mycenaean pottery — found by Schliemann in 1876 could be compared with pottery found at Ialysus in Rhodes, which by association with Egyptian material found in the same levels could be dated to the early fourteenth century BC; near enough to the traditional dating of the Trojan War. In his publication of his finds Schliemann very fully and commendably set out the comparisons with the Rhodes material. But as far as the connections he really wanted were concerned, connections between his finds at Mycenae and at Troy, all he could point to was the 'champagne glass' of a kind he had here, and had seen at Tiryns (and from the Rhodian tomb), and the goblets 'found by me in Troy at a depth of 50 feet'. The more he found, the more his 'Homerian Troy' appeared backward and strangely isolated.

Golden Orchomenos

Of all the hundreds of places mentioned in the Iliad, Homer singles out only three as being 'rich in gold'. For Schliemann, two of them, Troy and Mycenae.
had lived up to the epithet sensationally. It was inevitable that he should be
drawn next to the third 'golden city', and with the permission of the Greek
government he undertook a small excavation at Orchomenos, a ruined site in
central Greece which had occupied a long hill above Lake Copais. According
to the legends Orchomenos had once ruled even mighty Thebes, the city of
Oedipus. Pausanias told how in the Heroic Age the people of Orchomenos --
the Minyans -- had constructed a great dyke system to drain Lake Copais; it was
one of the chief centres which sent ships to Troy, according to Homer's catalogue
of the ships; its wealth was proverbial -- 'not for the riches of Orchomenos,'
says Achilles in the Iliad. Furthermore there was Pausanias' reference to the
great tholos tomb there:

The Treasure House of Minyas is one of the greatest wonders of the world, and of Greece. It is
built in stone, circular in shape ... they say the topmost stone is a keystone holding the entire
building in place. Greeks are terribly prone to be wonderstruck by the exotic at the expense of
home products: distinguished historians have explained the Pyramids of Egypt in the greatest
detail and not made the slightest mention of the Treasure House of Minyas, or the walls of
Tiryns, which are by no means less marvellous!

The site of Orchomenos had never been lost, neither had the name: we find it
in the journal of Cyprianus: Ancona who sniffed around there in the 1440s. In
more recent times Gell, Morritt and Leake had searched out the place, a five-
hour horse ride from Athens, along the malarial plain of Copais; Lord Elgin
too had come, looking for objets d'art.

Like those before him Schliemann found the great tholos collapsed, though
enough survives today to see what a masterpiece it was; virtually identical in
measurement to the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae, it may well have been
planned by the same architect (as was suggested to Schliemann on site by the
twenty-seven-year-old Wilhelm Dörpfeld, then the architect for the German
archaeological team at Olympia, soon to become Schliemann's invaluable col-
laborator). But trial excavations on the citadel brought Schliemann no gold
this time; in fact there was tantalisingly little sign of the legendary wealth of
Homeric Orchomenos, and Schliemann soon gave up. There was, however,
one bonus. In the tomb chamber of the tholos Schliemann and Sophie found
many fragments of carved greenish slate plates which seemed to have covered
the ceiling of the tomb, which had collapsed only years before. The relief
comprised beautifully interwoven spirals of leaves and rosettes which the
Schliemanns were able to reconstruct, and today's visitor to Orchomenos may
once again walk into the tomb chamber and see the ceiling in place. It is,
incidentally, likely that the entire chamber was originally decorated in this
way: inspection of the earth debris in the corners of the chamber shows that
small fragments of the slate plaques are still in position on the side walls.

So Schliemann left Orchomenos after a few weeks. One enigma about his
dig there remains unsolved. It is, we now know, supremely important in the
search for Troy and the Trojans. He had turned up large quantities of a strange
monochrome grey pottery -- thrown and glazed -- which he called Grey Minyan,
after the ancient people of the site. He had already found a very similar kind
of pottery in an upper level of Troy, far above his 'Homer Ilum'. Why did Schliemann not see the significance of the parallels between them? Had he known it, the answer to the riddle of Troy lay there. But Schliemann's eyes were elsewhere, on a site he had known for some years: Tiryns.

'Tiryns of the great walls'

Rising like a ship from the plain of Argos, Tiryns lies 9 miles south of Mycenae, on a low, rocky promontory now about a mile from the sea. In the Bronze Age the sea came only 100 yards from the western walls, and Tiryns must have been a port. From here, says Homer, King Diomedes took eighty black ships to Troy. Tiryns' position probably enabled it to dominate the plain, for from its gates prehistoric roads went south to Nauplia, south-east to Asine, east to Kasarma and Epidavros, north-east to Midea, north to Mycenae and Corinth, and north-west to Argos. From the top Tiryns is seen to be completely encircled by mountains, in the foothills of which the great natural fortresses of Argos and Midea stand out; Mycenae is tucked away in its valley to the north. The panorama is particularly splendid, as Schliemann himself remarked:

I confess that the prospect from the citadel of Tiryns far exceeds all of natural beauty which I have elsewhere seen. Indeed the magic of the scene becomes quite overpowering when in spirit one recalls the mighty deeds of which the theatre was this plain of Argos with its encircling hills.

Like Mycenae, Tiryns was a ruin in classical times, deserted when Pausanias came there and made his famous remark about the Cyclopean walls - 'by no
means less marvellous than the Pyramids of Egypt. In medieval times there was an impoverished little village below the acropolis, doubtless the reason for the existence of a small Byzantine church and cemetery on top of the ruins, the traces of which Schliemann removed in his excavation. The medieval settlement lasted from the tenth century to around 1400. Many early travellers found their way to Tiryns when the Morea became open to foreigners in the seventeenth century; since it lay on the road from the main port, Nauplion, to Argos, the site was easily accessible where Mycenae was less so. The first modern visitor was a Frenchman, Des Moucheaux, in 1668, who described the vaulted galleries and the construction of the Cyclopean walls. After him came the Venetian Pacisco, but it was again the English travellers, Gell, Leake, Clarke and Dodwell, who laid the foundations for modern archaeology, and Dodwell in particular who made the first plan and engravings of the fortification.

Despite the increase of interest in these monuments there was no attempt to dig at Tiryns before Schliemann, apart from a one-day affair by the German Thiersch in 1831. For Schliemann it was an obvious choice: unable to locate Homeric Pylos or Sparta, it was the other great mainland palace in Homeric tradition. Schliemann had inspected the place on his visit to Greece and the Troad in 1868, and to him its great history in legend betokened a truly ancient centre, possibly, as he would assert, 'the oldest town in Greece'. He dug trial shafts in the summer of 1876 (causing much damage), and in 1884 set about the place in earnest. Unfortunately, once again, his finds were vitiated by his failure to record finds spots, depth and context. It may be that he was led more
by architectural considerations: having uncovered 'palace' or 'temple' buildings at Troy, he hoped to compare them with a Mycenaean citadel which he thought contemporaneous. Fortunately, however, Dörpfeld was with him, otherwise he would very possibly have demolished the Mycenaean palace buildings on top, which were immediately below the Byzantine church. In the event Schliemann seems to have left Dörpfeld to it, and as a result the vast building complex the visitor can see today emerged without being wrecked. If anything Tiryns represents Schliemann’s archaeological maturity, forged on by Dörpfeld, and their publication, Tiryns, was very much a joint effort. It is interesting that at this time Schliemann and Dörpfeld still supported the widely held view that the Phoenicians were the founders and builders of the Mycenaean citadels. Adler, co-director of the excavations at Olympia, wrote an appendix to Schliemann’s book in which he denied this, saying that he was convinced that these were Bronze-Age Greeks. Though Schliemann himself was privately attracted to this idea, he was perhaps reluctant to go publicly against the academic orthodoxy, the Phoenician theory.

What was remarkable about Tiryns was that here Mycenaean palace civilisation came to life with some very close parallels with Homer’s descriptions, and it is somewhat surprising that Schliemann refrained from evoking them (perhaps he was being encouraged to be less hasty in jumping to conclusions!). As any visitor to the site today knows, Tiryns gives a particularly vivid impression of the world of the Bronze-Age warlords: the ascent up the ramp to the main entrance, flanked on the right by an immense tower of Cyclopean stones, and on the left by corbelled galleries to give covering fire; the massive entrance passage leading to a main gate which must have looked much as the Lion Gate at Mycenae; then the colonnaded outer hall and courtyard which led into a magnificent columned inner court facing the royal hall, the megaron (royal hall) with its porch, ante-room and throne-room, the throne-room itself with a large circular hearth in the centre, its walls decorated with alabaster and inlaid with a bordering of blue glass paste (just as Homer mentions); all this could be recovered from the foundations and debris which lay only inches below the remains of the Byzantine church. Particularly exciting for Schliemann were fragments of frescoes showing battle and hunting scenes, and one extraordinary depiction of a youth leaping a bull (a theme already known for signet rings). The layout of the palace, the hearth, the bathroom, the blue glass kyanos, all seemed reflected in Homer’s portrayal of the Heroic Age. ‘I have brought to light the great palace of the legendary kings of Tiryns,’ wrote Schliemann, ‘so that from now until the end of time... it will be impossible ever to publish a book on ancient art that does not contain my plan of the palace of Tiryns.’ Typical Schliemann hyperbole – but he was not, this time, indulging in pure fantasy: one learned critic called his book ‘the most important contribution to archaeological science that has been published this century’.

*  *  *

82
The 'Palace of Minos' at Knossos:
'The original home of Mycenaean civilization'?

After the deserved success of the Tiryns dig, with the book finished and ready to come out, Schliemann fretted after other fields to conquer, and wrote in March 1885:

I am fatigued and have an immense desire to withdraw from excavations and to pass the rest of my life quietly. I feel I cannot stand any longer this tremendous work. Besides, wherever I hitherto put the spade into the ground, I always discovered new worlds for archaeology at Troy, Mycenae, Orchomenos, Tiryns - each of them have brought to light wonders. But fortune is a capricious woman, perhaps she would now turn me her back; perhaps I should henceforward only find fiascos! I ought to imitate Rossini, who stopped after having composed a few but splendid operas, which can never be excelled.

And it must be said that the last ten years of Schliemann's career form an anti-climax to the sensational discoveries of the 1870s. How could they not? In the main, though, it was a question of luck, as so much archaeology is. Schliemann's instinct did not fail him. Behind it, as always, lay the simple assumption that behind the Homeric world was a real prehistoric Aegean world; that the places Homer says were important dynastic centres were in fact palace sites of the Bronze Age. This simple assumption may seem obvious now, but it is only through archaeology that it has been possible to demonstrate it. (Remember, too, that in the nineteenth century no one knew, as we have since 1952, that Greek was the language of the palaces: very few scholars would have bet on this in Schliemann's day.)
Late in 1888 Schliemann headed for the southern Peloponnese and searched in vain for King Nestor’s palace at Pylos, which had provided the second biggest contingent in the Trojan War. He had already visited the area in 1874, looking for the ‘cave of Nestor’ on the steep acropolis of Koryphasion near Pylos Bay; there in a cavern he found sherds of the ‘so-called Mycenaean type’, the first such find on the western coast. But at Pylos he found no royal graves, and the location of the palace itself – a famous conundrum since antiquity – evaded Schliemann. It was not until roadmaking activities started in the year of his death that the first hints were gathered of the whereabouts of the palace on Englianos hill; subsequently tholos tombs were found in the vicinity in 1912 and 1926, prior to the dramatic uncovering of the palace in 1939 (see p. 119).

Following the track of the heroes, Schliemann explored the Evrotas valley in Sparta, looking for the palace of Menelaos and Helen herself. He ascended the Menelaion hill at Therapne, overlooking the modern town of Sparta, where the massive plinth of the later classical shrine to Helen and Menelaos still stands. Again disappointed, Schliemann declared that there were no remains from the Bronze Age on the site. Ironically enough, it was only months afterwards that the Greek archaeologist Tsountas (who had followed Schliemann at Mycenae) noted signs which did indeed point to Mycenaean occupation of the Menelaion site; in 1910 an important building was excavated by the British only 100 yards from the shrine, and dramatic new finds in the 1970s suggest that the main palace site in Lakonia at the time of the Trojan War was indeed on this site (see p. 146): Helen, if she existed, may well have lived here.

Many other sites were suggested to Schliemann by his growing army of admirers. Perhaps the most interesting in the light of future discoveries was that of the English scholar Boscawen who was working on Hittite inscriptions, then an absolutely new field. On 14 January 1881 he wrote to Schliemann: ‘We have often expressed the wish that some day you would cast a favourable eye on the pre-Hellenic remains in Asia Minor, especially those at Boghaz Kevi and [Ağva]eyuk on the Halys.’ Boghaz Köy indeed would turn out to be one of the greatest of all Bronze-Age sites in the Mediterranean (see p. 170). But Schliemann’s eye was on Crete. There he hoped to crown his achievement.

Many scholars of the time thought Crete might provide the link between the Aegean world and the great civilisations of the Near East. For Schliemann the attempt to obtain permission to dig there became one of the obsessions of the last ten years of his life. ‘My days are numbered,’ he wrote as early as 1883, ‘and I would love to explore Crete before I am gone.’ His collaborator Virchow agreed: ‘No other place is apt to yield a way station between Mycenaean and the East.’ So Schliemann’s visit to Knossos in the spring of 1886 was exciting, even for him (legend has it that on his landing he scandalised the local Turks by falling on his knees and offering a prayer of thanks to Dictean Zeus!).

There had in fact already been an excavation at Knossos in 1878 by a local man, the aptly named Minos Kalokairinos, who was probably inspired by Schliemann’s dig at Mycenae. Schliemann knew of his finds, for they had been published by his correspondent Fabricius and had provoked much interest.
Kalokairinos showed Schliemann the finds in his house in Heraklion and then took him out to the site, where rooms were still exposed to a height of 6 or 7 feet, one still 'coated with two broad bands of deep red colour'. What he saw there so excited Schliemann that he wrote from the spot to his friend Max Müller (in English), on 22 May 1886:

Dr Dörpfeld and I have examined most carefully the site of Knossos which is marked by pearls and ruins of the Roman time. Nothing is visible above ground, which might be referred to the so-called heroic age - not even a fragment of terracotta - except on a hillock, almost the size of the Pergamos of Troy, which is situated in the middle of the town and appears to us to be altogether artificial. Two large, well-wrought blocks of hard limestone, which were peeping out from the ground indeed Mr Minos Kalokairinos of Heraklion to dig here five holes in which came to light an outer wall and part of walls with a part of a vast edifice similar to the prehistoric palace of Tiryns, and apparently of the same age, for the pottery in it is perfectly identical with that found in Tiryns.

Schliemann resolved to dig there:

By its splendid situation close to the Asiatic coast, its delicious climate and its exuberant fertility, Crete must have been coveted from the first by the peoples of the coastlands; besides the most ancient myths refer to Crete and especially to Knossos. I should therefore not at all wonder if I found here the virgin soil and the remnants of a civilization, in comparison to which even the Trojan War is an even of yesterday.

Schliemann once again could hardly have been closer to the mark, for this was precisely what Arthur Evans would uncover in 1900. Max Müller’s reply to this remarkable letter, written from Oxford on 5 June, gives an added twist: ‘Crete is a perfect rookery of nations, and there, if anywhere, you ought to find the first attempts at writing, as adapted to Western wants.’ (My italics.)

There have been few more brilliant predictions in the history of archaeology, for it was at Knossos that Linear B was discovered, the script of the Aegean Late Bronze Age. Indeed it is possible that before he died Schliemann saw a single Linear B tablet which was found in Kalokairinos’ excavation, the first known find in modern times.

The fascinating materials in Kalokairinos’ collection (which was destroyed in the liberation of Crete in 1898) only fuelled Schliemann’s ambitions: “I would like to conclude my life’s work with a great undertaking in the to me familiar field of Homeric geography, that is to say, with the excavation of the prehistoric palace of Knossos.” He was back in Crete negotiating for the purchase of the site in spring 1889, still hoping to dig “this palace so similar to that of Tiryns”. But the following year, unable to agree terms, he abandoned the project and returned to Troy. He was never to return to Crete, and deeply regretted his failure; writing in the last months of his life he admitted that it had been at Knossos that “I hoped to discover the original home of Mycenaean civilization”.

Return to Troy

During these years Troy was still the central theme of Schliemann’s career as an excavator. Twenty years had now elapsed since he had first set foot in the
IN SEARCH OF THE TROJAN WAR

Troad, and still the central driving mystery remained unsolved. Had Homer's Troy stood at Hisarlik? If so, which level was it? Where were the indications of cultural contact with the world he had uncovered at Mycenae? Where was the Heroic Age? To examine these questions we must go back in time.

Flushed with his triumphs at Mycenae, Schliemann had returned to Troy in 1878 and 1879 for two major campaigns. He surveyed the plain and believed that he had 'blown up' the ancient and modern theory that at the time of the Trojan War there was a deep gulf in the plain of Troy. As for the city itself, closer inspection of the strata enabled Schliemann to recognise two further 'cities': one, the sixth, he hesitantly thought a pre-Greek settlement founded by the Lydians (this was the level of the Grey Minyan pottery like that at Orchomenos); the other was in the older, prehistoric, levels and caused him to raise his Homeric city from second to third from bottom. The basic stratification had now taken shape and Schliemann seems to have felt his work on Hisarlik done: 'I think my mission accomplished and in a week hence I shall stop forever excavating Troy,' he wrote on 25 May 1879. The 1879 campaign was followed by the book which has justly been called his masterpiece, Ilios, remarkable not merely for its description of the finds and its thoroughgoing account of the literary sources, but for its scientific appendices by Schliemann's friends and collaborators. It was, by the standards of the time, a considerable achievement by one who had on his own admission started out an amateur. As Rudolf Virchow wrote in the preface, 'The treasure digger has become a scholar.'

With typical élan Schliemann wrote to his American publisher: 'There is no other Troy to excavate... this my present work will remain in demand as long as there are admirers of Homer in the world, nay as long as this globe will be inhabited by men.' But privately his doubts were still there. Had he really found Priam's palace? If Mycenae and his Troy were contemporary, where were the connections? Now that he had excavated a mainland Mycenaean royal cemetery and knew what its culture looked like, the cultural isolation and backwardness of his Troy seemed all the stranger. So though his book claimed finality—such are the demands of publishers as well as Schliemann's own bent—he could not disguise his own underlying concern. The facts simply did not fit. Indeed the only solution was that Homer had lived so long after the event that he had magnified a tiny kernel of fact into the great legend:

The imagination of the bards had full play; the small Illus grew great in their songs... I wish I could prove Homer to have been an eyewitness of the Trojan War! Alas, I cannot do it... My excavations have reduced the Homeric Illus to its real proportion.

In November 1879 he wrote to his German publisher, 'Now the only question is whether Troy has only existed in the poet's imagination, or in reality. If the latter is accepted, Hisarli must and will be universally acknowledged to mark its site...?' (My italics.) But of course, to admit that the glaring discrepancy between Homer and the archaeological fact was the product of poetic fantasy was but a short step from suggesting the whole thing was fiction. Within three years of the 1878-9 dig he wrote,
I thought I had settled the Trojan question forever... but my doubts increased as time wore on. ... Had Troy been merely a small fortified borough, a few hundred men might have taken it in a few days and the whole Trojan War would either have been a total fiction, or it would have had but a slender foundation.

In the back of his mind was the thought that either Hisarlik was somehow refusing to give up its secrets, or he had got the wrong place.

Still perplexed by the mystery that he had found no apparent relationship between the Mycenaean world and Troy, he went back to Turkey in May 1881 and spent fifteen days trekking on horseback, alone but for local guides, re-examining all the other sites in the Troad; if he was looking for another possible site for Troy he did not say, nor did he find one. But in 1882 he came back for another season. This time, as we have seen, he had lured Wilhelm Dörpfeld away from the team at Olympia, and the young man's fine eye for architectural detail soon clarified the mess Schliemann had left from earlier campaigns. 'I regret now not having such architects with me from the beginning,' he wrote, 'but even now it is not too late.'

Schliemann now thought — going back on his previous dig — that Troy II, the burned city, was after all 'perfectly identical with Homer's Troy'. Dörpfeld had been able to distinguish the circuit wall of Troy II, identify two of its gates, and show that it had been a fortified prehistoric palace-residence with megaron-type buildings and formidable ramparts, parts of which are still standing today. Schliemann jumped at this and at the end of 1882 pronounced:

I have proved that in remote antiquity there was in the plain of Troy a large city, destroyed of old by a fearful catastrophe... this city answers perfectly to the Homeric description of the site of sacred Ilios... My work at Troy is now ended forever... How it has been performed I now leave finally to the judgement of candid readers and honest students....

More than ten years had passed since Schliemann's siege of Troy had begun in earnest.

No more than on previous occasions, however, was Schliemann's work at Troy finished. This time it was his detractors who drove him back. From 1883 an army captain, Ernst Bötticher, had been producing pamphlets claiming that Hisarlik was not a city at all, but a necropolis, a city of the dead, and that, worse, Schliemann and Dörpfeld had misled the public by withholding and faking evidence. The charge was of course preposterous (though interesting, as such allegations are once more coming to the fore), but Schliemann felt he had to acquit himself by digging a new sector of Hisarlik with independent witnesses. As early as January 1887 he was writing to Calvert about preparations for his last great campaign, which lasted from autumn 1889 to August 1890, and it was then, with Schliemann tired and ill, that the crucial discovery was made.

Near the western border of the mound, 25 yards outside the great ramp of Troy II, the excavators uncovered a large building closely resembling the megaron (the royal hall), found at Tiryns. Here Dörpfeld's assistant Brückner found the peculiar Grey Mycenaean pottery of the mysterious sixth city which Schliemann had never been able to identify for certain; but here too he found
1890: Schliemann's last campaign. The old man, now ill, sits with Dörpfeld's hand on his shoulder. To the right, standing, is Frank Calvert, then aged around seventy, bearded and patriarchal to him Schliemann owed much of the glory

pottery with the unmistakable Mycenaean shapes and decorations so familiar to them from Mycenae and Tiryns, especially the now well-known stirrup jars. In retrospect this discovery was truly sensational and epoch-making. In fact (for those who believed that the event happened at all) this would be seen as the long-awaited sign that Hisarlik was indeed Troy. For Schliemann the discovery must have been tremendously exciting, and yet a great shock, for it forced him to reconsider all that he had thought and published about the Homeric city; indeed it called into question the validity of all the conclusions he had reached about the chronology of the seven cities, and of course his identification of Priam's Troy. His 'Lydian' city had been the one in touch with Mycenaean Greece; the burned city of Troy II, his city of Priam, was not merely earlier but 1000 years earlier!

For a sick man it must have been a staggering blow to face the collapse of the whole intellectual structure he had built up with so much toil, discomfort and expenditure in 'this pestilential plain'. But he took it with fortitude and, typically, resolved to continue his excavations in 1891 on a still more ambitious scale in a determined effort to discover the truth. In any plea for a more balanced appreciation of Schliemann it is surely greatly to his credit that he continued to wrestle with the problems of this complex site for twenty years, trying to solve them by excavation, often in great physical hardship; after all, the needs of fame and status had long been satisfied. So 1891 was to be the final attempt. Schliemann never lived to fulfill his plans. At Christmas 1890, while Dörpfeld was at his desk penning the last words of their joint report on the new discoveries, Schliemann died miserably in Naples, collapsing in the street with a stroke and carried speechless and apparently penniless into a hotel foyer on the Piazza Umberto where, by one of those quirks of history, the Polish novelist Sienkiewicz observed a scene which, if Schliemann had told it of himself, we would doubt-
less have accused him of fabricating. Homer’s Troy – and with it the Trojan War – eluded his perturbed spirit to the last.

That evening, a dying man was brought into the hotel. His head bowed down to his chest, eyes closed, arms hanging limp, and his face ashen; he was carried in by four people. . . . The manager of the hotel approached me and asked, ‘Do you know, Sir, who that sick man is?’ ‘No.’ ‘That is the great Schliemann!’ Poor ‘great Schliemann’! He had excavated Troy and Mycenae, earned immortality for himself, and – was dying . . .

_Let.ter from Africa_ (1901)

**Wilhelm Dörpfeld: Homer’s Troy found?**

Just over two years after Schliemann’s death, in spring 1893, Wilhelm Dörpfeld returned to Troy; he was now in charge of the excavations, which were paid for by Sophie Schliemann and by the Kaiser. The dig of 1893–4 is one of the landmarks in archaeology. Acting on the assumption that the house found in 1890 lay inside a Bronze-Age city which lay far outside Schliemann’s city, Dörpfeld opened up the southern side of Hisarlik in a great curve around the hill, and immediately struck walls far more magnificent than anything Schliemann had found. Over those two seasons he uncovered 300 yards of the city wall, sometimes buried under as much as 50 feet of earth and debris and overlain by the ruins of later cities. In the north-east corner there was an immense angular watchtower, still standing 25 feet above the rock; originally it had been at least 30 feet tall with a vertical superstructure of brick or stone as high again. Sticking up like the prow of an old battleship, this must have dominated the plain of the Dumrek Su. Built of well-dressed blocks of limestone, this bastion was astonishingly like later classical work, which helps explain why Schliemann had demolished similar walling on the northern side. The city wall itself was beautifully made in sections, each of which ended in a distinctive offset, and each of which had a pronounced batter – perhaps, thought Dörpfeld, the ‘batter’ or ‘angle’ of the wall mentioned in Homer when Patroclus tries to scale the face of the wall. There was a gate on the east, protected by a long overlapping wall, near to which was the base of a large square tower built of beautifully fitted limestone blocks. On the south was an important gate with another massive tower fronted by stone bases – presumably where idols of the gods were displayed; on the western side, immediately below the house discovered in 1890, Dörpfeld found that one inferior section of the previous circuit had not been replaced by the city’s builders, and even the most cynical critic did not blame him for pointing out that Homer describes one section of the wall being weaker than the rest, ‘where the city is easiest to attack’.

Inside the city Dörpfeld found the remains of five large, noble houses whose ground plans could be recovered, and others that were more badly damaged, and from this he was able to deduce that the city had risen in concentric terraces with the front outer faces of the houses slightly wider than their backs, as if to achieve an effect of perspective narrowing towards the summit; this impression was reinforced by a beautiful house whose outer face reproduced
The great eastern bastion of Troy VI, with Dörpfeld standing at the base. 'We can now be sure,' he wrote, 'that the imposing remains of the real city of Priam and Hector have once more seen the light of day.' At heart, Dörpfeld was as much a romantic as Schliemann.
the offsets of the city wall. Certainly, thought Dörpfeld, a master architect had planned the city and his scheme had been followed in the gradual replacement of almost the whole circuit: the latest additions to the beautiful walls were the great north-eastern bastion and the towers on the south and south-east, whose masonry is of the highest quality. Everywhere he found Mycenaean pottery: in its last phase this city, Troy VI, clearly had close contacts with the Mycenaean world. It had lasted, so Dörpfeld thought, from around 1500 to 1000 BC, near enough to the traditional date of the Trojan War in the twelfth century BC, and it had ended in violence: in many places debris was heaped up, walls had fallen, and there had been a 'great fire'. Surely, this was the city reflected in the epic – a 'well-built' city with wide streets, beautiful walls and great gates just as the Iliad had told. Even the weak wall and the 'angle' fitted. This, at last, must be the Troy of the Trojan War.

Our master Schliemann would never have believed, or even dared to hope, that the walls of Sacred Ilios of which Homer sang, and the dwellings of Priam and his companions, had been preserved to so great an extent as was actually the case.... The long dispute over the existence of Troy and over its site is at an end. The Trojans have triumphed.... Schliemann has been vindicated.... the countless books which in both ancient and modern times have been published against Troy have become meaningless. The appearance of the citadel must have been known to the singers of the Iliad, though perhaps only the singers of the older layers of the Iliad actually saw the citadel of Troy.

_Troja und Ilium, 1902_

The academic world was full of passionate philhellenes and lovers of Homer who were all too ready to agree. The English Homerist Walter Leaf wrote in _Homer and History_:

A fortress was found to have stood on the very spot where Homeric tradition placed it, a fortress which had been sacked and almost levelled by enemies.... From it follows the historical reality
The great walls of Troy VI with their distinctive 'angle', Dörpfeld standing on top of them. 'His solution of the riddle [of Homer's Troy] ranked with the greatest feats of scientific divination,' said Walter Leaf.

of the Trojan War... We shall therefore not hesitate, starting from the fact that the Trojan War was a real war fought out in the place, and at least generally in the manner, described in Homer, to draw the further conclusion that some at least of the heroes whom Homer names as having played a prominent part in that war were real persons named by Homer's names, who did actually fight in that war.

Of course the 'proofs' furnished by archaeology were actually very much more limited than Leaf's declaration of faith would have us believe; such conclusions did not, could not, 'follow' from Dörpfeld's discoveries, but of course these discoveries caused a sensation at the time. Leaf was only voicing the general view when he declared that this was the long-awaited proof that Hisarlik was Troy: 'The discovery of the Mycenaean Troy was... the definitive epoch in the history of the Homeric question.' And indeed, whatever the truth of that (there were doubters), a revolution had overtaken the history of the Bronze-Age Aegean in a very short time. George Grove's History of Greece, 1846–56, perhaps still the greatest work of its kind, could show no authority for the Bronze Age in Greece, the 'Heroic Age'; its myths were an unchronicled chasm unusable by the historian. Yet in 1884 the English scholar Sayce could write that 'hardly ten years have passed since the veil of an impenetrable seemed to hang over the beginnings of Greek history.' Now, with Troy, Mycenae and Orchomenos, Schliemann's energy and perseverance had begun the recovery of the lost past:

The heroes of the Iliad and Odyssey have become to us men of flesh and blood... It is little
wonder if so marvellous a recovery of the past, in which we had ceased to believe, should have awakened from controversies and wrought a silent revolution in our conceptions of Greek history. (My italics.)

As for the 'controversies', and Schliemann's many critics, Sayce continued,

It is little wonder if at first the discoverer who had so rudely shocked the settled prejudices of the historians should have met with a storm of indignant opposition or covert attack . . . (but) today no trained archaeologist in Greece or Western Europe doubts the main facts which Dr Schliemann's excavations have established; we can never again return to the ideas of ten years ago.

For Walter Leaf, too, Schliemann was epoch-making in this branch of study,

. . . and it is not for epoch-making men to see the rounding off and completion of their task. That must be the labour of a generation at least. A man who can state to the world a completely new problem must be content to let the final solution of it wait for those that come after him.

Indeed today the work Schliemann began is still nowhere near completed, though a coherent picture has emerged.

However, pleasant as it is to give Schliemann credit where credit is due 100 years on, when he is once more under a storm of opposition as a charlatan and a faker, in 1894 the Trojan question was not finished, as Dorpfeld thought it was. In fact, even before Dorpfeld's finds at Hisarlik were published, they were overtaken by sensational discoveries at the site Schliemann had coveted for so long: Knossos.