TYCHE

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Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Band 3, 1988

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber



Auflösung der Abkürzungen im Index von Tyche 3

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ТҮСНЕ

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DAVID A. TRAILL Bloedow on Schliemann's Accusers

In the first volume of Tyche Edmund F. Bloedow attempts to rescue Schliemann from his detractors¹. In particular, he seeks to refute the charge that in his accounts of the discovery of 'Priam's Treasure' Schliemann falsified the evidence². While considering Easton's responses to my articles 'in large measure, effective', Bloedow does not wholly agree with Easton either³. He insists repeatedly that the question of Schliemann's veracity needs to be viewed 'within a wider context'⁴, a view with which I wholeheartedly sympathize. In what follows I will make repeated recourse to the wider context. Bloedow concludes that on the basis of Easton's arguments and the new evidence he himself presents 'one can reject Traill's hypothesis with even greater confidence'⁵. I have already addressed Easton's arguments elsewhere⁶. Let us now examine the new evidence adduced by Bloedow.

Location of Findspot

Bloedow refers to letters to Friedrich Schlie and C. T. Newton, dated 19 and 26 July, 1873, respectively, in which Schliemann states that the treasure was found *on* the wall. Since these were written after Schliemann's final version of the discovery was sent to Brockhaus on 5 July⁷, it is not surprising that they are consistent with it in the location of the findspot. Their value as evidence is minimal. They merely confirm the decision regarding the findspot that Schliemann seems to have reached between 25 June and 5 July, when he changed the findspot from a room in the palace to somewhere *on* the city wall⁸.

Before pursuing further the issue of the findspot, let us consider the wider context of Schliemann's final report of the discovery (D). The report is clearly fraudulent in that Schliemann claims that he was assisted by his wife, Sophia, whereas it is now firmly established that she was in Athens at the time. In a letter to C. T. Newton in December 1873 Schliemann confessed that she was not present at the discovery of the treasure⁹. This did

⁵ Bloedow (supra n. 1) 40.

⁶ D. Traill, Schliemann's Mendacity: A Question of Methodology, AS 36 (1986) 91-98.

⁷ See H. Schliemann, Briefe, ed. Ernst Meyer, Berlin 1936, 132 n. 3.

⁸ Version C seems to have been begun on 25 June; see Traill, JHS 104 (1984) 99—101. It opens (C2) by placing the treasure in a room of the royal palace; later (C13) it states that the treasure was found *on* the wall.

⁹ This letter has now been published in *Myth, Scandal, and History*, edd. William M. Calder III and David A. Traill, Detroit 1986, 110 and 117.

¹ E. F. Bloedow, Schliemann on his Accusers, Tyche 1 (1986) 30-40.

² See D. Traill, Schliemann's Discovery of 'Priam's Treasure': A Re-Examination of the Evidence, JHS 104 (1984) 96—115 and a shorter version of the same article in Antiquity 57 (1983) 181—186.

³ D. F. Easton, Schliemann's mendacity — a false trail? Antiquity 58 (1984) 197—204 and 'Priam's Treasure', AS 34 (1984) 149—169.

⁴ Bloedow (supra n. 1) 30, 34, 40.

not prevent him from writing to Max Müller on 22 February 1878, after the publication of Borlase's article, and begging him to refute the testimony of Yannakis, an unnamed source at the Dardanelles, and 'a gentleman holding a high and responsible position in European archaeological circles', all of whom held that Sophia was not present at the discovery¹⁰. He called Frank Calvert, Borlase's presumed source at the Dardanelles, 'a foul fiend', who 'has been libelling me for years'. In all editions of *Ilios* (1881 onwards) he persisted in stating that Sophia *was* present at the discovery of the great treasure.

I adduce these facts here because they demonstrate clearly: (1) that the whole framework of version D is false insofar as it casts Sophia in a leading, indeed, as Schliemann says, indispensable, role; (2) that Schliemann did not hesitate to ask a distinguished academic to write a public denial of what he (Schliemann) knew to be true; (3) that he had no qualms about impugning the veracity and character of witnesses whom he knew to be speaking the truth. It is in the light of this wider context that we must examine the other discrepancies in Schliemann's account of the discovery. Let us for a moment consider a hypothetical situation. If we found inconsistencies regarding a critical findspot in the writings of an archaeologist who was known to have a strict regard for truth, we would naturally be inclined to look for some innocent explanation. However, how would we feel about these inconsistencies once it became clear that he or she was lying over some other important aspect of the discovery? In the case of an individual as unscrupulous as Schliemann, we have no choice, it seems to me, but to regard all inconsistencies with the utmost scepticism, especially in a context where we know him to be lying. To stretch credulity in an effort to find an innocent explanation for these inconsistencies is both naive and unscholarly.

For these reasons I have preferred the testimony of the only other eyewitness whose testimony is available to us, Nikolaos Yannakis. Also important is the testimony of two of Schliemann's assistants: Adolphe Laurent, who drew up the plans, and Polychronios Lempessis, the artist¹¹. Reasons for believing the testimony of these three sources, which places the findspot outside but adjacent to the city wall, include: (1) their testimony is unanimous and apparently independent from one another; (2) the veracity of Yannakis is confirmed by his insistence that Sophia was in Athens; (3) their location of the findspot, together with Yannakis' description of it, makes much better archaeological sense than Schliemann's version in TR.

Bloedow finds, however, 'that the evidence points towards the conclusion that the Treasure was found *on* the wall'¹². The only real evidence in support of this conclusion is Schliemann's revised version of the findspot, as first put forward in the latter part of C, since Dörpfeld's opinion is based on what Schliemann told him. Bloedow prefers Schliemann's later explanation as to how it got there. This was first put forward in *Troja* in

¹⁰ E. Meyer, *Schliemann's Letters to Max Müller in Oxford*, JHS 82 (1962) 97–99. The relevant section of Wm. Borlase's article is at Fraser's Magazine n. s. 17 (February 1878) 235–236. The distinguished archaeologist is now seen to be C. T. Newton.

¹¹ See Schliemann's grateful comments on their work for him at *Troy and its Remains* (hereafter *TR*) 357. The relevant plans are: plan 2 of *TR* (at end of book) and the plans at *TR* 306 and 347 (= *Atlas* pls. 214, 216 and 215 respectively). The relevant illustration is shown in pl. XIII of *TR* (= *Atlas* pl. 212).

¹² Bloedow (supra n. 1) 39.

1884 and later refined by Dörpfeld in *Troja und Ilion*¹³. Personally, I see little to recommend Dörpfeld's romantic theory that the treasure might have been hidden in a hollow recess in the mudbrick wall which he believed had been built on top of the stone circuit-wall of Troy II. That would appear to be a most unsafe and foolish hiding-place for a king's treasure. More fundamentally, it seems to me to be methodologically unsound to prefer the shifting testimony of a witness we know to be lying over the consistent and unanimous testimony of three witnesses whose credibilty we have no reason to doubt.

Bloedow is anxious to avoid what he sees as an unfortunate conclusion reached by Easton, namely, that 'Priam's Treasure' belongs to a Troy III or possibly even a Troy IV grave dug down into the ruins of Troy II (or III)¹⁴. But let us consider what is gained by the finding that 'Priam's Treasure' belongs to Troy III or IV. Easton is in effect proposing an ingenious solution to an immensely complex problem that has long plagued Anatolian scholars: the date of the end of Troy II. In simple terms the debate can be summarized as follows. Easton and J. Mellaart have proposed an early date (ca. 2600 B. C.); most scholars, now supported by the new calibrated C¹⁴ evidence, have followed Blegen's date of 2200 B. C.; M. S. F. Hood and K. R. Maxwell-Hyslop have argued for a date of 2000 B. C. or later¹⁵. Some of the pieces in 'Priam's Treasure', notably the granulated earrings and the 'frying-pan', have provided the best arguments for a late date. If 'Priam's Treasure', is to be attributed to Troy III or IV, the case for a late date is substantially weakened and the cases for an intermediate or early date correspondingly strengthened¹⁶.

Bloedow's main argument for keeping 'Priam's Treasure' as a Troy II find (and therefore *on* the wall, not in a grave outside the wall) is that Blegen found 1, 481 gold pieces in Troy II and none in Troy III, IV or V^{17} . Of the 1, 481 pieces found in Troy II, 1, 478 were found in IIg. Bloedow infers from this (with Blegen) that 'Priam's Treasure' should be assigned to IIg and triumphantly concludes: 'Let us hear no more about a cumulative treasure !'¹⁸ Stated baldly, the figures are very impressive, but they did not convince Easton, who knows far more about Trojan archaeology than either Bloedow or myself, that ''Priam's Treasure'' must belong to Troy II. Why not? Of the 1, 478 gold pieces found in IIg, 1, 286 (1, 281 of them gold beads) were found in a single cache in Room 252; a further 189 gold beads came from Room 206, apparently from a single necklace; the remaining five

 14 Bloedow (supra n. 1) 40. This is what he appears to mean, though the quotation from Easton at this point is garbled.

¹³ Schliemann, Troja, London 1884, 57-58; W. Dörpfeld, Troja und Ilion, Athens 1902, 8.

¹⁵ For a recent discussion of the debate and the C¹⁴ evidence see H. Quitta, Zur Chronologie der frühbronzezeitlichen Trojaschichten in the exhibition catalogue Troja und Thrakien, Berlin/DDR 1982, 21–27. Bloedow's observation (p. 40 n. 67) that Maxwell-Hyslop and Hood have 'shown that Treasure A fits excellently into Troy II' misrepresents their studies; see the summaries at BICS 26 (1979) 125–129. The provenience of Treasure A was not an issue in 1979. They take it for granted that Treasure A is an authentic Troy II find and use some of its pieces along with other evidence to argue for a late date for the end of Troy II.

¹⁶ I do not wish to suggest that Easton's motive for removing 'Priam's Treasure' to a later level was to promote his own case for an early end to Troy II. The attribution of the treasure to Troy III or IV follows naturally from Yannakis' testimony. While I still believe that 'Priam's Treasure' is most probably a composite of a number of finds from a variety of Early Bronze Age levels at Troy, I fully agree that if it is to be viewed as a single find, then it should probably be assigned to Troy III or IV for the reasons given by Easton.

¹⁷ Bloedow (supra n. 1) 35.

¹⁸ Bloedow (supra n. 1) 36.

gold finds comprise a modest gold pin, a tiny washer-shaped disk and scraps of wire and gold leaf¹⁹. Seen in this light the Troy IIg gold finds are much less impressive — five very small separate finds, a necklace, and a single cache of jewellery.

Blegen ascribed 'Priam's Treasure' to IIg because that appeared to be stratigraphically appropriate and because he had found IIg to be the richest of the Troy II strata. Though Blegen found no gold himself in Troy III, IV or V, he clearly thought it possible that some of the smaller treasures found by Schliemann should be attributed to these levels. After deploring the imprecision in Schliemann's reports of the stratigraphical information for the treasures he writes: 'In many works treating of Trojan chronology, moreover, there has been a tendency, understandable enough in view of Schliemann's and Dörpfeld's publications, to ascribe to Troy II most of the finer objects which Schmidt in the catalogue assigns only generally to Settlements II to V. The danger of such an ascription has been demonstrated by our excavations which have shown clearly that Troy III, IV, and V were rather more than "miserable villages" — indeed, each was a substantial establishment in its own right'²⁰. The attribution of just one of the larger of these treasures to Troy III would give that level more gold than Blegen found in IIg²¹.

Blegen had no idea of the unreliability of Schliemann's testimony in general and in the case of 'Priam's Treasure' in particular and so had no reason to question its attribution to Troy II. He was also unware of Schliemann's practice of combining finds to create more impressive 'treasures'. When I postulated that 'Priam's Treasure' was so put together, I had no proof that Schliemann had ever resorted to this behaviour. Easton has since demonstrated this behaviour for several of the more significant 1872 finds²². Given Blegen's strictures against the tendency to ascribe all the Early Bronze Age finds to Troy II rather than to Troy III, IV or V, it seems reasonable to suppose that in light of the new evidence he would have no objection to the view that 'Priam's Treasure' either properly belongs to Troy III or IV or is a composite of smaller finds from several of the Early Bronze Age levels at Troy.

Date of Discovery

Bloedow cites a letter to C. T. Newton dated 26 July, 1873, which implies that the treasure was found in June. He confesses that he is unable to solve the problem of when the treasure was discovered but considers that this new evidence weakens the case for 31 May. In fact, it has not significant bearing on the problem. Schliemann's diary report of 31 May (unmistakably a Gregorian date from its position in the diary) gives us the first description of the treasure and a *terminus ante quem* for its discovery. Reports dating the discovery in June are therefore mistaken or worse. The only issue is whether the discovery date is 31 May itself or a day or two earlier. The July letter to Newton in no way weakens the case for 31 May as the discovery date²³. It is simply irrelevant.

¹⁹ Blegen, Troy I 214, 351, 359, 367, 371, 376.

²⁰ Blegen, Troy I, 208-209.

²¹ H. Schmidt, *Heinrich Schliemann's Sammlung Trojanischer Altertümer*, Berlin 1902, 225–247 ascribed Treasures B, D, E, F, M, O, R and S to levels II–III and Ha to levels II-V.

²² Traill, JHS 104 (1984) 111. D. Easton, Antiquity 58 (1984) 200-202.

²³ For new evidence indicating that 31 May was the discovery date, see my forthcoming article in Boreas, *Hisarlik, 31 May, 1873, and the Discovery of "Priam's Treasure"*.

Finally, Bloedow makes a great fuss over what he calls a 'quagmire of ambiguity' in my article²⁴. First, I should point out that in the JHS article I was concerned to point out that Schliemann's standard account of the discovery of "Priam's Treasure" was fraudulent and that there were good reasons for suspecting that the find was a composite of numerous smaller finds. I deliberately refrained from putting forward a coherent account of how and when he had set about assembling 'Priam's Treasure'. The reason for this is simple. It is one thing to prove that a witness to a given incident is lying and quite another to provide an accurate account of what actually happened. When there is very little testimony other than that of the discredited witness, reconstruction of what happened is bound to be highly speculative. I tried to avoid speculation as much as possible. Accordingly, anyone trying to extract from the JHS and Antiquity articles a 'Traill theory' of what happened is trying to extract something that is not there. In a forthcoming article I plan to publish more evidence that will, I hope, shed further light on the events of 31 May²⁵. I did suggest in the JHS article, however, that the account of Yannakis was 'as close as we are likely to get to the truth'26. This implies, as Bloedow correctly infers, that I do believe that a substantial find was made at the end of May. Where then is the ambiguity? Bloedow finds it in the close juxtaposition of the above statement with the following sentence (which he quotes in truncated form): 'The discrepancies in findspot, discovery date, the jewellery, and the gold sauceboat suggest that Schliemann's various accounts of his discovery of "Priam's Treasure", like his interview with President Fillmore and his "eyewitness" report of the 1851 fire of San Francisco, are sheer fiction, with the later accounts more elaborate and colourful than the first'. Bloedow argues: 'If, therefore, everything that Schliemann wrote about Treasure A is total fabrication, as such an allegation seems unequivocally to imply, Schliemann, presumably, could not have found anything on "31 May", 1873'27. If this is what 'sheer fiction' means in the above context, I must also have been alleging that the 1851 fire of San Francisco did not take place and that President Fillmore and Heinrich and Sophia themselves were mere figments of Schliemann's fertile imagination. Bloedow did not venture into this wonderland. Nor shall we.

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²⁴ Bloedow (supra n. 1) 32 n. 16.

David A. Traill

²⁵ See note 23.

²⁶ JHS 104 (1984) 110.

²⁷ Bloedow (supra n. 1) 31.