

Heinrich Schliemann and his references to medicine(philately)

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Deutsche Post, as well as private post offices, issue 2022 stamps commemorating the 200th anniversary of Heinrich Schliemann's birth.

carrier.

1. Schliemann's friendship with Rudolf Virchow



Rudolf Virchow - the Universal Scholar (HU 1989)

findings. This friendship - which also has interruptions (since both are "very convinced of themselves") - lasts until Schliemann's death.

Virchow's importance for the professionalization of Schliemann's scientific work is enormous. Virchow's authority also contributed to Schliemann's acceptance by the public.

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of **Johann Ludwig Heinrich Julius Schliemann**, probably the most famous archaeologist of German origin and who helped the stories of Troy and Mycenae to great fame even among the "normal" population: made them "tangible" - through the excavation of the treasure of Priam (Troy) and the gold mask of Agamemnon (Mycenae). It is probably thanks to this fame that the German Federal Post Office is also issuing a stamp in his honor this year. Already as a child I was fascinated by H. Schliemann, almost as much as Karl May. For me, his life story was an adventure story, an assertion against all odds, even if his methods and his manner were sometimes dubious. His life story will probably be retold many times in this jubilee year. Since this contribution shall not be a copy of all these publications, I will try to concentrate on points that could be relevant for medical philately: his friendship with Rudolf Virchow, his personal health, and his short appearance as a letter



Rudolf Virchow is known to us from the field of medicine as a pioneer of

classical cellular pathology, and is probably one of the most famous physicians of his time. He is strongly involved in socio-politics and is equally successful as an anthropologist, ethnologist and archaeologist. He becomes Schliemann's most important ally and friend at the time when Schliemann is denied recognition by the German professoriate - the educated bourgeoisie. The two met for the first time in 1875 in Berlin, where they exchanged ideas about their finds.

From then on, a lively correspondence developed and Virchow traveled together with Schliemann for months to the excavation sites of Troy and Mycenae, but also through Egypt - always in search of archaeological

Schliemann is famous not only for the excavation of Troy, but also for the discovery of gold in Mycenae (Mask of Agamemnon) (GR 1976)



To discuss this type of double vessel, Schliemann travels to Virchow in Berlin in 1875 (D 1990)



There was and is a big tug-of-war about the treasure of Priamos concerning the ownership rights and its whereabouts. Stamp of a private mail (2012) with the image of Sophia, the second wife of Schliemann, with the Great Hanger (Pendilia) from the "Treasure of Priam").

Academy towards him, and so it is only thanks to the mediation of Rudolf Virchow that Schliemann brings the treasure of Priam to Germany after all. The compromise Virchow negotiates is that Schliemann will give the treasure to Germany if he becomes an honorary citizen of the city of Berlin, and will also be honored accordingly by the German Emperor. The Troy treasure thus becomes the showpiece of the Museum of Prehistory and Early History in Berlin for decades. In the turmoil of the end of the war in 1945, the museum property disappears - for almost 50 years it remains unclear whether it still exists. At the beginning of the 1990s, it is Russian President Yeltsin who announces: The gold is stored as looted art in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. It is shown again for the first time in 1994.

2. The otological problem of Schliemann



Schliemann survived several life-threatening illnesses during his life: Tuberculosis (Bolivar dying of tuberculosis (CO 1980); influenza (self-portrait of Egon Schiele who died of influenza (A 1990)), yellow fever (painting of Blanes: Yellow Fever (UY 1971)), malaria (malaria patient (Djibouti 2016))

and malaria while working in Greece. In the last 25-30 years of his life, he frequently suffers from earaches, progressive hearing loss and burning headaches, without dizziness or tinnitus.

In 1886, his ear problems worsen and he consults his friend Virchow, who notices an external auditory canal closed by swelling and advises him to stop swimming in the sea every day as usual - even in freezing cold. This suggests that Virchow already suspects the presence of exostoses, which can develop under the influence of cold water. Virchow refers him to the famous ENT physician Prof. Hermann Schwartze in Halle. However, since he is feeling somewhat better again, Schliemann postpones this appointment.

This is impressively demonstrated by the inclusion of the figure of Schliemann and Virchow in a dialogue in Fontane's novel *Frau Jenny Triebel*. In a discussion between the high school teachers Willibald Schmidt, who turns out to be open to autodidacticism, and Friedrich Distelkamp, as a defender of education imparted through established institutions, Schmidt remarks of Schliemann: *"You cannot imagine someone who has glued bags and sold raisins digging up the old Priamus, ... But just read what Virchow says of him. And you will let Virchow apply, won't you?"* Schliemann, of course, is not exactly pleased with the attitude of the Berlin



Pushkin Museum in Moscow
(RU 2012)

Heinrich Schliemann went through a series of serious illnesses during his life, from which he recovered completely. As a child he suffers from tuberculosis, and as an adult he contracts influenza during a stay in Russia, yellow fever during a trip to California,



Open water swimming can cause problems with the ears (Benin 2008; AFS)

in which most likely exostoses on the right ear were removed through the auditory canal, while on the left ear a more radical operation was performed through a postauricular approach. It is unknown whether a cholestoma (chronic purulent inflammation of the middle ear with bone destruction) is also present, although a letter from Prof. Jakoby (Halle) suggests this at least for his left ear. The operation on both ears is performed under general anesthesia (chloroform) and lasts one hour and 45 minutes. Unfortunately, complications arise after the operation: his ears become inflamed and are rinsed daily with a carbolic acid solution. Nevertheless, Schliemann leaves the hospital prematurely four weeks after the operation against the advice of his doctors and travels first to Germany (Leipzig, Berlin) and then to France (Paris). In Berlin, he meets his friend Dr. Virchow and hands him bones that had been removed from his ears.



Antibiotics highly likely would have been life saving for Heinrich Schliemann

the age of 69.

While a brain abscess is not in doubt as the cause of death, the exact otological problem of Heinrich Schliemann remains in the dark due to lack of autopsy reports and also lack of surgical records of Mr. Schwartz. It is also not known whether a longer hospital stay could have prevented his death. The likewise circulating story that Schliemann fell victim to a poison attack by the Camorra cannot really be substantiated.

3. Schliemann as postman

And now a small "philatelic" anecdote at the end: When in the 1870/71 war the Prussians were at the gates of the city of Paris and shelled it, Schliemann was frightened. A large part of his fortune is in Parisian houses. He rents out about 270 apartments there. In order to convince himself of their integrity - as he himself later reports - but also to see whether his large library in his own apartment still exists, he devises a ruse to get into besieged Paris. He bribes a letter carrier to give him his uniform. Disguised as a letter carrier, he enters the city and can see for himself that his library still exists, as do most of his apartments.

Quellen: <https://www.zeit.de/2022/02/heinrich-schliemann-archaeologie-pluenderung/komplettansicht>; Skoulakis C, et al., *The otologic problem and death of Heinrich Schliemann*. *Eur Arch Otorhinolaryngol*. 2008 May;265(5):575-80.; <https://freidok.uni-freiburg.de/fedora/objects/freidok:16121/datastreams/FILE1/content>; <https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/heinrich-schliemann-der-schatzsucher-und-seine-beute-100.html>; https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Schliemann; https://www.consilium-philatelicum.de/fileadmin/bilder/digitale_vortraege/schliemann6_9.pdf; <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz38647.html>



Postman (FR 1970)

It was not until the beginning of November 1890 that he went to Halle and underwent one of the most advanced ear operations of that time,

On his way to Greece and while in Naples visiting the excavations at nearby Pompeii, he collapses in the street. Although he regains consciousness, he can no longer speak, and the next day shows signs of gradual right-sided paralysis. When his left ear is opened, the attending surgeon, Dr. von Schrön, suspects that an intracranial complication has already developed that would require deeper exploration with cranial trepanation. However, before this is performed, Heinrich Schliemann dies on December 26, 1890, at