Archeology as Spectacle: Heinrich Schliemann’s Media of Excavation

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The German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann staged his life as a spectacle producing himself into an archaeological hero, pioneer, and adventurer. But he also used the spectacle as a scholarly mode of historical representation and employed rhetorical strategies associated with the visual techniques of mass media (Baedeker, panorama, photography). These “spectacular” strategies communicate a spatial and commodified view of history informed by modern tourism. Schliemann’s approach to history, thus, broke with the historicist tradition of “grand narrative” in representing the ancient Greek past and opened up new non-narrative conceptions of history in the field of archaeology.

The nineteenth-century German archeologist Heinrich Schliemann was a master of staging the past—that of his own persona as well as that of ancient Greece. From his career as a poor apprentice to a business millionaire, his autodidactic studies, his obsession to excavate Troy, to his graecophile lifestyle with his wife and his children Andromache and Agamemnon, Schliemann made himself into an archeological legend during his lifetime. No other German archeologist was ever so much in the spotlight of newspapers, public and scholarly debates. He shaped his life and work into a spectacle,1 staging his persona as an adventurer, archeologist, pioneer, and entrepreneur.

Yet for Schliemann the spectacle was more than a desire to put on a show. It was a vital rhetorical strategy in his scholarly writing and interpretation of history.2 In cultural and literary studies the term “spectacle” has been crucial to analyze the production, circulation, and function of images in modern society. Guy Debord’s The Society of the Spectacle (1967) has been a trajectory for many theories on the spectacle as a critical category to analyze the role of mass media in modern society.3 My analysis of the spectacle in Schliemann’s writing is inspired by Debord’s connection between mass media and the production of images as entertainment and commodity. However, whereas Debord’s concept of the spectacle interlinks with a critique of ideology, I focus on the spectacle in Schliemann’s context as a specific form of historical representation. In Schliemann’s pragmatic-historical approach to archeology and his tour de force of unearthing what he believed was the ancient city of Troy, he used a variety of popular media, such as the Baedeker travel guide, the panorama, and photography.4 All these mass visual practices “spectacularized” Schliemann’s representation of the past and thus projected a model of history that went
against the grain of philology and classical archeology. Instead of representing history as a grand narrative, which tells about the past of ancient Troy under the auspices of temporality, teleology, and continuity, Schliemann's spectacle promoted a different view: the spectacle showed ancient Greece as a location shaped by the gaze of a modern tourist and, in this way, conveyed a sense of presence, availability, and accessibility.5

This investigation of the spectacle, however, does question Schliemann's status as a professional archeologist, as it has become so fashionable in recent years. Many scholars have recognized his pioneer role in prehistoric archeology and, thus, endorsed his status as a scholarly archeologist.6 Manfred Korfmann, for example, who performed excavations in Troy during the 1980s, lauds Schliemann for his role in developing archeology into an academic discipline through his use of new methods and excavation techniques.7 He cites Schliemann's technique of deep digging and his focus on pottery as a cue in his excavation project as important innovations. However, Schliemann's rejection of classical philology and the Winckelmann tradition of scholarly archeology shocked his contemporary colleagues like Ulrich Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, and damaged his credibility.8 Schliemann abandoned the Platonic image of the poet as a liar and read Homer's Iliad and the Odyssey as epics based on real events and locations. He treated Homer's texts as historical documents and believed that their fictional worlds could be dug up out of the dirt—no matter if it cost him a fortune, his health, and the Homeric question. His way of reading Homer and his unconventional ways of excavating and presenting his research are reasons that the academic world has often considered him a liar, treasure hunter, and egomaniac.9 But he was more. By his use of the spectacle in his archeology he opened up perspectives in portraying the past beyond the historicist paradigm of narrativity and communicated a spatial view on history informed by modern tourism.

Schliemann's Baedeker to Ancient Greece

On July 6, 1868 Schliemann first set foot in Ithaca. He was 47 years old, had a long career as a businessman behind him, and had just returned from a two-year journey around the world. He was studying archeology (among other subjects) at Sorbonne University in Paris. He mentions in the introduction to his Ithaka, der Peloponnes, und Troja. Archäologische Forschungen (1869), which he wrote during his journey to Ithaca, Mycenae, Argos, Tiryns, and Troy, that it was now that he came to realize his childhood dream: to show that the legendary figures of Homer's epos had once lived in our world and that they were not just literary inventions. During his two-year journey he had explored the cultural and historical landscape through the Iliad and the Odyssey: "Jeder Hügel, jede Quelle mahnt uns an Homer und die Odyssee, und mit einem einzigen Sprunge fühlen wir uns über 100 Generationen hinweg in die glänzende Epoche griechischen Rittertums und griechischer Dichtkunst versetzt."10 Homer's texts
guided Schliemann’s eyes from sight to sight of ruins, mountains, and rivers. He identifies, for instance, a washing spot that, according to him, minutely matched the descriptions in the Odyssey:

Endlich nach einer halben Stunde beschwerlichen Marsches, sehe ich zwei plump behauene Steine, welche die Tradition als den Waschplatz der Einwohner der alten Stadt Korcyra bezeichnet und als den Ort, wo Nausikaa mit ihren Dienerinnen die Wäsche gewaschen und Odysseus empfangen hat. Die örtliche Lage entspricht vollkommen der Beschreibung Homers; denn Odysseus landet an der Mündung des Flusses. (Ithaka 8)

Schliemann provided numerous such identifications between the real world of Ithaca and the fictional world represented in Homer’s poetry. When he found clues about the climate, the location of rivers, moors and mountains, or archeological hints in the Iliad or the Odyssey, he used all these indications to show his unprecedented belief in the historical accuracy of Homer’s poetry. Schliemann correlated archeological objects with Homer’s descriptions. This in turn rid the epos of its mythological character. With his archeological findings Schliemann sought to prove that Homer’s writing was not mythical, but were concrete geographical, historical, and cultural references. This provided archeological and historical evidence for Schliemann’s findings. The literary text enabled the detection of these archeological objects that in turn illustrated the epos. Through the poetic strategy of using literature as a source of historical evidence, Schliemann developed a circular process of reality effects: Homer’s texts contained historical evidence, because Schliemann found the matching archeological artifacts; these artifacts referred to actual historical events, because they fit exactly into Homer’s texts. Schliemann did not reflect on the circular rhetoric of his writing. Instead he was convinced, “dass es wirklich ein Troja gab, dass dieses Troja aufgedeckt ist und dass den Homerischen Gesängen wirkliche Tatsachen zugrunde liegen.” He regarded Homer’s text as a historical document that proved the actual existence of Troy and contained information about its culture, history, and social organization.

Schliemann upset philologists, archeologists, and historians of the time in particular with his deliberate ignorance of the Homeric question. Not only was his reading of Homer’s texts highly unconventional, but his mode of representing his archeological theses, proofs, and conclusions also did not fit the scholarly rhetorical paradigms of the time. Instead of following a philological tradition of analyzing the sources, practicing their exegesis, and conducting careful hermeneutic interpretation in the archives, he traveled to the sources and saw them with the eyes of a modern tourist. He organized his Ithaka as a travelogue and inserted episodes about personal experiences with natives, the beauty of the landscape, the local customs, and the hospitality of the people. His travel account invited the reader to join him on his journeys, where Odys-
seus and his world became alive. Not only for his writing were the aesthetics of traveling crucial, but he also read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as if they were travel guides. Note the following quote in which Homer’s text is used as a manual to fend off dangerous Ithacan dogs:

Als ich [Schliemann] aber an diesem Tage in einen Bauernhof im Süden der Insel eintreten wollte, stürzten mit aller Wuth vier Hunde auf mich los [...] In dieser schrecklichen Lage fiel mir zum Glück ein, was Odysseus in einer ähnlichen Gefahr gemacht hatte. [...] “Sobald die bellenden Hunde den Odysseus sahen, kamen sie heulend herbeigelaufen; Odysseus setzte sich kluger Weise auf die Erde und ließ seinen Stab aus der Hand fallen.” Ich folgte also dem Beispielen des weisen Königs, indem ich mich getrost auf die Erde setzte und mich ganz still verhielt. (Ithaka 56)

Of course, Schliemann’s attempt to tame the dogs with Homer’s help was successful. This is only one of many examples of how Schliemann employed the epos to remedy problems encountered in traveling. He also accepted Homer’s advice on winds, climate, physical sickness, and local customs. He even used it as a temporary sleeping aid, as he explained: “Meine Schiffer ruhten im Boote, ich legte meine müden Glieder auf den Felsen, wobei mir Homer als Kopfkissen diente” (Ithaka 71). Through this implementation of Homer’s epos for the practical needs of traveling, the time of ancient Greece was no longer coded with the aesthetics of classical idealism, which celebrated this time as an *Epoche* of high culture. Rather, Schliemann portrayed ancient Greece as a space that promised entertainment. It became a spectacular travel location, which suggested the experience of great sites, attractions, and sensations. His perception as well as his self-perception as a traveler remind us of the historical and cultural modes of understanding in the popular *Baedeker* travel guide.

The first *Baedeker* was published in 1829 and in the course of the nineteenth-century it became Germany’s most sold travel guidebook. It was available in numerous editions and languages and covered all kinds of travel destinations, such as Britain, Italy, and France. The *Baedeker* was a product (as well as perhaps one of the generators) of the booming interest for travel in nineteenth-century Germany. *Baedeker* was acclaimed for its accuracy about historical facts, which Rudy Koschar describes its representation of knowledge as similar to that of a collector: “Just as the collector gloried in the details of his purchases, the tourist, as imagined by *Baedeker*, studied maps, itineraries, historical accounts, travel brochures, price lists, beautiful vistas, pictures of historical landmarks, and topographical descriptions.” This collecting of data resulted in a type of encyclopedic knowledge about the past that aimed to be accurate, but did not convey the complexities of historical interpretation. Instead the collected data served a self-referential function in endorsing the credibility of the *Baedeker* as a reliable travel guidebook.
Reading Schliemann’s observations of the sites and the landscape in Ithaca and other places on this journey could also evoke an interest in factual knowledge similar to that in the *Baedeker* guide. Schliemann, for example, eagerly measured the distance between the sources of the river Scamander, which in turn should indicate the position of the Greek army mentioned by Homer (*Ithaka*, 169). He also gave exact measurements of the temperatures of water sources (*Ithaka*, 128), the dimensions of riverbeds (*Ithaka*, 138), and the exact height of what Schliemann presumed to be the graves of Hector (*Ithaka*, 145). Schliemann and Baedeker shared a belief in factual knowledge, which served to endorse the impression of scholarly accuracy.

The suggested factuality in Schliemann’s writing also promoted ancient Greece as a spectacle by making it into a tourist attraction whose existence could be easily proven and thus be explored by the individual traveler. One of *Baedeker*’s goals was to make the history and culture of other countries accessible in order to promote self-guided tours and give practical tips. Its mission was that traveling would no longer be reserved for wealthy and well-educated people, but attract a larger audience among the German middle class. Schliemann was a man from the poor German middle class, who had worked himself up from apprentice to rich businessman. His success was not built on the financial help of institutions; he financed his own research and supported such scholars as the famous archeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld. In his prefaces to *Ithaka*, he styled himself an example of the powerful “self-made man” of the nineteenth century who relies on his own energy to realize his goals. Like the *Baedeker* program, Schliemann also aimed to make culture and history accessible to a mass audience. In this “massification” of ancient Greece, historical time and culture lost their specific signatures and became available for consumption and entertainment. His presentation of ancient Greece in the fashion of the *Baedeker* suggested that Homer’s world was no longer reserved for the intellectual elite. The self-guided tour enabled everyone to explore this picturesque travel location. The aesthetics of the picturesque refers to the next example of spectacularizing the past: the optics of the panorama.

**Schliemann and the Medium of the Panorama**

Robert Barker invented the genre of panoramic paintings and in 1787 developed and patented a new technique that suggested an all-encompassing perspective. Set on gigantic, circular canvases, these paintings were exhibited in rotunda-shaped architectural spaces, which could admit hundreds of spectators at the same time for a small entrance fee. The audience was placed on an elevated platform, from which they could have a 360° overview of the represented scene. Barker’s invention developed quickly into a popular mass medium and many painters copied his idea elsewhere in Europe. By the last third of the nineteenth century, panorama paintings were popular attractions in
Germany, usually located in the bigger cities Berlin, Munich, and Frankfurt.\textsuperscript{14}

Besides cities, landscapes, and historical events, panoramas specialized in showing famous sights like breathtaking views of the Alps, the architectural feats of Italy, and the pyramids of Egypt. Their primary function was to entertain audiences and show great spectacles of popular locations. In doing so, they cultivated a collective gaze of modern tourism. Similar to the \textit{Baedeker} travel guide, panoramas showed the picturesque character of foreign cultures, architecture, and landscapes. They aimed to deliver spectacular views of sights for those who could not or did not want to travel. Often such representations presented an “exotic” gaze on the other culture by portraying clichés and stereotypes of cultural perception in order to make the other culture available for consumption and entertainment.

This panoramic gaze also influenced representations in literature and academic history. Gert Sautermeister shows that Hermann Fürst Pückler Muskau’s travelogues \textit{Briefe eines Verstorbenen} (1830/31) contained numerous landscape depictions that integrated romantic picturesque themes such as ruins, castles, harbors in moonlight, and mountain and valley contrasts.\textsuperscript{15} Pückler Muskau’s texts featured great views similar to the optics of the panorama. The aesthetics of the panorama were also used for the representation of landscape and culture in travel literature by Goethe, Börne, Heine, and Chamisso.\textsuperscript{16}

The aesthetics of the panorama also connect Schliemann’s archaeological writings to the \textit{Baedeker} travel books. In his book \textit{Ithaka}, for example, Schliemann often used the word “Rundsicht” in titles for his subchapters [i.e. “schöne Rundsicht auf die Ebene von Trojas”] \textit{(Ithaka, X)}. However, he not only used the trope of the panorama explicitly to characterize his observations of the landscape but also simulated a panoramic gaze in his descriptions of cultural history. Note the following passage from Schliemann’s description of his archaeological findings recorded in his book \textit{Tiryns: Der prähistorische Palast der Könige von Tiryns} (1886):

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

The passage describes a panoramic gaze around the historical landscape of Tiryns and connects it to a cascade of (remembered) panoramic vistas from all over the world. The doubling of the panoramic gaze in this passage had several effects. As in the optical media of the panorama, the text suggested
that the viewer has an all-encompassing vista of the landscape. Except for the horizon, the gaze does not encounter any limits and borders; the eye can wander in any direction. Schliemann used the words “schön” and “prachtvoll” to characterize the panoramic experience; the landscape and its historical and cultural markers are picturesque. However, this is not the same conception of the picturesque as the romantic sublime found, for example, in the historical novels by Sir Walter Scott. Rather, the images in the quotation convey beauty through the visual vocabulary of tourism. The eye that hovered over the landscape commodified the landscape into a location that promised excitement, attractions, and pleasantness. It is precisely the gaze of a modern tourist who travels mostly for leisure and entertainment. Schliemann compared the panoramic view of the citadel with the many other spectacular panoramas in the world. Through this comparison, the citadel panorama came to represent the superlative of all panoramas as the most beautiful location in the whole world. This tone connected with the aesthetics of the panorama, which also aimed to give the most impressive and monumental perspectives possible.

Schliemann’s mode of representing the cultural landscape of ancient Greece affected his interpretation of the past. In this collective tourist gaze the landscape became an allegory for history since the past was written into all these places Schliemann intended to discover. By portraying the landscape as a panoramic visual spectacle, an “Augenweide” (feast for the eyes), the history of this landscape and cultural space turned into a spectacle. Through the panoramic gaze Schliemann expanded the past into a spatial dimension and set it onto the topography, the surface, and the geography in Greece. This spatialization of history is, of course, a key moment of archeology as a discipline. However, what is different from other archeologists of the time is that Schliemann fixated history as picturesque location, which conveyed the viewing habits of the modern tourist and his or her desire for the spectacular. Thus, Schliemann’s panoramic images did not promote history as a grand narrative based on temporality, teleology, and progression towards the future. Instead, history gained a spatial dimension, which was projected onto a grand picture, which was described rather than narrated. Schliemann’s gaze on history was that of a tourist, a self-made man, and an individualist, who was not only possessed by the idea that Homer’s fictional world really existed, but also wanted to convey ancient Greece as a commodity of the present; an image that is also crucial for the next media he used: photography.

Schliemann and the Medium of Photography

Schliemann was a pioneer in using the medium of photography for his research. When he started his excavation project in Hisarlik, described in Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Troja in den Jahren 1871–1873, he hired the photographer Panagos Zaphyropoulos, who made over 100,000 pictures. Schliemann selected
only 270 for his *Atlas trojanischer Alterthümer: Photographische Abbildungen zu dem Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Troja von Dr. Heinrich Schliemann* (1874) that accompanied his *Bericht*. He considered the quality of the rest of the images too poor to be included in his picture atlas. Nevertheless, even though he was disappointed by the medium, he never worked without a photographer and he used photographs to create drawings and steel etchings. The atlas presents pictures of Schliemann’s findings such as terracotta, jewelry, and weapons. They are listed in numeric fashion and one can read an appendix that provides individual short descriptions of the pictures.

**Fig. 1: Priam’s Treasure (1874)**

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How did the photos and their textual descriptions represent the past of ancient Troy? The photograph titled *Trésor de Priam* (Fig. 1), Priam’s treasure, from Schliemann’s *Atlas* can provide some answers. The picture is only one example; one could make similar references to many pictures in the atlas.

The photo shows a bracelet, cups, and vases. Their arrangement, their numbering, the indication of their proportion, and finding location endorse a scholarly setting. This is enhanced through an accompanying description, which minutely lists weight, size, shape, and material of the objects. However, already the title of the picture, *Trésor de Priam*, integrates a fictional element. The title suggests that the spectator should see the photographic proof that the legendary King Priam has existed. The audience can see with its own eyes that these are the belongings of the king; therefore the king must have existed and thus Schliemann’s thesis about Troy had to be true. The logic has the same circularity when Schliemann identified washing spots with the help of Homer’s epos in his work *Ithaka*. However, through the photo and the text, the reality effect is even intensified. Note the following text passage that belongs to the picture 202:


The passage shows Schliemann’s interest in facts and uses information about size, weight, and form to suggest a professional description of archeology. However, he also suggests that it is the cup that once Homer had mentioned. Thus the objects on the photos are to prove the reality of a fictional discourse. This paradoxical intertwining of reality and fiction turns Schliemann’s representation of the past into a spectacle. His photo and text composition suggest that this is *really* the original cup from which King Priam drank in the *Iliad*. Not only did King Priam become alive, but Schliemann even found his household objects. Schliemann’s composition stages the past into a happening, which gains its spectacular quality through the merging between fiction and fact. This “spectacularity” of the past is even more enhanced through the ways in which Schliemann lists the qualities of the objects in his description. With aesthetic judgments on beauty (“herrlicher Becher”) and references to value and material, the photo and text composition is similar to the aesthetic design of a catalogue for merchandise. The cup used by King Priam, the gold and silver
jewelry, and the fantastic mug are all described as they would be on sale. They convey the idea that these are goods from antiquity, which have an exchange value and can be bought, sold, and traded. As it is well known, Schliemann was an excellent businessman and his keen sense of selling, trading, and profiting reflects the composition of his picture atlas.

Even though the picture atlas was printed in very few editions, it suggests a representational mode that appeals to a mass audience. In his *Bericht*, Schliemann described Priam's treasure and the sensational way in which it had been found, battling the heat, diseases, and thieves. He also mentioned his wife, who was with him all the time and endured the hardship just like him. The press eagerly followed his discoveries and often ridiculed him in similar ways as his colleagues did. During the finding of the treasure, the media reported and published a photo that made Schliemann even more famous.

The photo shows Schliemann's wife Sophia wearing the jewelry of King Priam's treasure. (Fig. 2) She is adorned with the ancient jewelry and the image conveys a spectacular scene. Not only can one see the presumed treasure of King Priam in the newspaper, but it is also personalized by Sofia Schliemann. His wife, who aims to look royally under all the earrings, chains and bracelets, embodies the remote past in the presence of a daily newspaper. The photo not only stylized the Schliemanns into the archeological heroes of the time, but also brought Homer's world into the entertainment and popular culture of the nineteenth century. The ancient world could now be worn as a fashion accessory. The picture made people want to have such jewelry. The effect was much like a fashion magazine's. In Schliemann's *Vogue* of ancient history, the past was no longer a remote and sacred time; it could be seen, touched, and even worn.

The Spectacle vs. the Grand Narrative of History

The examples of the *Baedeker*, panorama, and photography illustrated that Schliemann staged the past of ancient Greece as spectacle and thus perceived the past through a collective gaze practiced in these media. This spectacularization of ancient Greece popularized the past into a commodity that addresses the taste and desires of a mass audience. However, I would like to take this observation a step further and show that, precisely by the means of spectacularization, Schliemann's model of history gains a critical dimension. Debord defined spectacle in the context of the circulation of images in modern capitalist societies, where images are promoted according to the rules of exchange, market value, and commodification. According to Debord this circulation of images creates spectacles, which not only alienate mankind from nature and society, but also from history. In *The Society of the Spectacle*, Debord writes: "The spectacle, being the reigning social organization of a paralyzed history, of a paralyzed memory, of an abandonment of any history founded..."
Fig. 2: Sophia Schliemann with “Priam’s Treasure” (1890)
in historical time, is in effect a false consciousness of time.”20 According to this passage, the spectacle has the power to extract history and suggests what Debord considers a “false” consciousness of time. In contrast to this abandonment of time in capitalist society, Debord suggests a cyclical model of time, which follows the rhythms of nature, and thus gains for him a “non-alienated” quality. According to Debord this “authentic” model of time is destroyed by capitalist ideology.

Rather than following Debord’s critique of ideology, I would like to historicize his theory by extracting a model of history that in many respects suits Schliemann’s construction of historical time.21 All three media (Baedeker, the panorama, and photography) that Schliemann used portray history as a space rather than as a temporal process. Homer’s world appeared in Schliemann’s writing not so much in stories as in topographies, descriptions of space, and landscape. This historical space had the quality of a commodity shaped by the aesthetics of modern tourism. Of course, the aspect of spatiality is intrinsic to the discipline of archeology and its focus on excavation. However, Schliemann not only regarded archeology as a discipline that practiced digging as its primary task, but also identified archeology with traveling to the sources. This led him to interpret the past in a way that went against the grain of philology and its emphasis on textual criticism. Suzanne Marchand summarizes this challenge in Down from Olympus: Archeology and Philhellenism in Germany: “Archeology is also important in having launched a methodological challenge to the hegemony of philology; as it developed means of “reading” objects rather than texts it threatened philology’s monopoly on the interpretation and even definition of culture, heretofore an attribute only possessed by literate civilizations.”22 Marchand specifically refers to Schliemann in this connection. However, he not only questioned the discipline of philology by implementing the paradigm of digging in archeology, but he also precipitated through his use of the spectacle a whole media shift away from a textual model of archeology to visual practices. He did more than criticize the dominance of philology; he burrowed the Homeric question under the debris of his excavations and his circulation of images. His works point to modes of interpreting the past beyond historical text.23 His aesthetics of the spectacular showed that there were non-narrative and even non-textual forms of historical imagination at stake, inspired by the existences of new optical media, popular genres, and mass culture.

His visualization and “spectacularization” not only undermined his scholarly reputation, but also positioned his archeology into a completely different sphere of instrumentalization. With his emphasis on images, his representation of history no longer primarily utilized the grand narrative, which is the central mode of representing the past in academic historicism. According to Reinhart Koselleck, historians often write history as a story founded on a collective singular making sense out of history.24 In nineteenth-century historicism this
collective singular was usually defined by the concept of nation. Academic historiography as well as scholarly archeology had the purpose of legitimizing the German nation state, and its scholars often understood themselves as implementers of this national task. Gustav Droysen, for example, drew many parallels to the Prussian military state in his history on Alexander the Great and positioned Germany as a political and cultural descendant of ancient Greece. Ernst Curtius, as the national archeologist, not only excavated with great passion the so-called temple of Zeus for Winckelmann but also sought to find the German Geist in the ruins of the Olympia.

Schliemann was not interested in this politicization for national goals. He was never enthusiastic about Winckelmann and only decided to give his findings of Troy to the Germans after long hesitation and many rejections from other countries. Perhaps Schliemann was simply too egocentric and too profit-oriented to be interested in practicing national archeology. In his work he celebrates spectacular images—of himself, of ancient Greece, and of the legendary heroes of Troy. This inclination towards the visual not only spatialized historical time but it also commodified history. His use of photography showed this commodification most poignantly. By staging his archeological findings in the fashion of merchandise catalogues and journals, he presented the past no longer as something actually in the past. In this sense, Debord’s idea that the spectacle abandons time is crucial. Rather than representing the history of ancient Greece, the pictures advertise their actuality and eternal presence. The objects on the pictures suggest the pleasures of consumption, which dissociate ancient Greece from the past and integrates it into the dynamic of the market.

This is not to stigmatize Schliemann once more for not being scholarly. It is rather to demonstrate how popular media shaped Schliemann’s modes of representing the past and portraying the history of ancient Greece as a spectacle. Schliemann’s spectacularization of the past was not unique. In the works of classical academic historians one can find many traces of the spectacular. Thus Leopold von Ranke used the optics of the panorama as a mode of representation by means of bird’s eye perspective and the aesthetics of the picturesque. The art historian Jacob Burckhardt worked closely with his collection of 10,000 photographs and integrated the aesthetics of photography in his historical interpretation. Reading the works of these historians and archeologists “spectacularly” can evoke alternative imaginations and representations of history. The narrative paradigm was never the whole story.
For this aspect of the term spectacle, see Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm Vol. 10.2 Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, ed. (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1963): “Spektakel, m., in älterer sprache n., schauspiel, schaustellung, aufsehen erregender vorfall, dann schimpf, schande, zuletzt lärn.” (2131-34).


Popular media are in this context understood as media that aim to reach a large audience and are not necessarily professional tools of an academic discipline. The analysis of Schliemann’s use of popular media has been made by Christiane Zintzen Von Pompeij nach Troja: Archäologie, Literatur und Öffentlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert (Wien: Universitätssverlag, 1998) and Michael Siebler, Troia: Mythos und Wirklichkeit (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001). Both have shown that Schliemann’s role in the public sphere was constitutive for his archeological work. However, by focusing on the spectacle I would like to go beyond their works and show that the spectacle as a form of visual representation shaped Schliemann’s interpretation of history.

For the notion of the grand narrative in historiography see, Robert Berkhofer, Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995.)

See Joachim Herrmann, Heinrich Schliemann: Grundlagen und Ergebnisse moderner Archäologie 100 Jahre nach Schliemann’s Tod (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992); Donald Easton, Schliemann’s Excavations at Troia, 1870–1873 (Mainz am Rhein: Von Zabern, 2002).


Wilamowitz disguised himself at a Christmas Party of the German Archeological Institute in Rome as Madame Schliemann and ridiculed Schliemann’s retrieval of Priam’s Treasure in front of a large academic audience. For more information on this incident and on Schliemann’s reception within the philological discipline, see Calder.

This image of Schliemann shapes, for example, William Calder and David Traill in Myth, Scandal, History: The Heinrich Schliemann Controversy and a First Edition of the Mycenaen Diary, William Calder and David Traill, eds. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986).


14 For the development of the panorama into a mass medium as well as its technical feature and painters, see Stephan Ottermann, *Das Panorama: Geschichte eines Massenmediums*, (Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat Frankfurt, 1980).
23 Schliemann’s efforts to find non-narrative forms of representing the past have parallels in the fields of German anthropology, ethnology, and pre-history. Rudolf Virchow and Adolf Bastian, the two scholars most responsible for the foundation of these disciplines in Germany, sought to eschew the historicism of the academy and find new, non-narrative approaches to the history of humankind. See H. Glenn Penny *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).