

A SHORT REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION “HEINRICH SCHLIEMANN-THE DISCOVERER OF TROY”

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History lovers memorize not only historical figures but also ancient monuments. However, not all those interested in the past associate the monument with its discoverer. This fact is quite natural since the archaeological investigation is not meant to promote the archaeologist but rather the historical monument, which based on the artefacts, represents a landmark in the evolutionary history of mankind.

The fascination of history is not based just on written texts, but also on tangible archaeological objects, some of which are meant to fill the gaps in the written sources. Not all history fans know that behind the process of bringing to light ancient artefacts there are other devoted people, whose passion transforms them into specialists. The efforts and passion of archaeologists is converted in years of study and excavations, sometimes done in unfriendly conditions far from the comfort of modern civilization. Following this effort, the archaeological monuments gradually unveil and after putting together all the gathered information, history pages that fascinate all those intrigued by the past of human civilization are written.

Even if for some of the monuments of human civilizations, the name of the discoverer is hard to remember, there are some discoveries that are undoubtedly linked to the person that investigated them. If we mention the place of Hisarlik, located nearly 30 km southwest of the city of Çanakkale, not all will know the historical monument that is situated there. But if we say Troy we automatically think of Homer and not lastly of Heinrich Schliemann. Ascribing the ruins from Hisarlik to ancient Ilion is not the achievement of Heinrich Schliemann. Not even the first excavations here are his merit.

Then why do people associate Troy with Schliemann? Maybe because he was the first to identify one of the layers of the archaeological site with the legendary town of Troy, whose name reunited in the Homeric poems nearly all the known gods of the Greek pantheon and was an inspiration for millennia of literature creations, paintings and sculptures? Maybe we are associating him with the so-called “Treasure of Priam” or maybe with the questionable methods with which he brought to light these marvels of Turkish archaeological heritage. Just as well, some may know him for his passion and determination that sometimes made him bend the rules in order to achieve his goals. Nonetheless, for some history lovers, Heinrich Schliemann is best known for his decision to donate his entire collection of artefacts to the Museum of Berlin, and consequently to the whole world. Definitely, beside intelligence and determination, Schliemann also had flaws, some of which were dictated by his burning passion for Homeric Greece. At the same time, through his documenting of archaeological layers, Schliemann became one of the pioneers of modern archaeology.

Based on the friendship and partnership relations established during the Romanian-German collaboration during the Cornești-Iarcuri research project, the idea of combining the scientific research with a cultural collaboration seemed natural. A first step was made when the National Museum of Banat and the Museum of Prehistory and Early History from Berlin (Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) decided to bring in Romania an exhibition that combines the personality of a passionate treasure hunter with the fascinating world of the Bronze Age Mediterranean.

An exhibition about Troy and the life of Schliemann was opened almost 10 years ago in Poland¹, enjoying a great success among history and museum lovers.

From 4.01.2016 until 30.06.2016 the Museum for Prehistory and Early History from Berlin commemorated 125 years since the death of Heinrich Schliemann with an exhibition called “Tod in Neapel-Heinrich Schliemann zum 125.Todestag”².

Following numerous ideas of cultural collaborations, during the summer of 2016, the idea of bringing to Timișoara an exhibition dedicated to the life of Heinrich Schliemann was born. This event was meant to be a “preview” of a much larger project intended to bring the entire collection of findings from Troy to Timișoara.

Therefore the idea of bringing to Timișoara the exhibition “Tod in Neapel-Heinrich Schliemann zum 125. Todestag” was transposed into a project by the National Museum of Banat and submitted to the Timiș County Council. After the approval of this project, the exhibition “Heinrich Schliemann – The Discoverer of Troy” was included in the “Minimal project of cultural events 2017”. For organizing this exhibition, the Timiș County Council approved a budget that would fit an event of the highest etiquette.

The main goal of this exhibition was to present the life and personality of Heinrich Schliemann. The artefact selection from Troy, Mycenae, Tiryns, Orchomenos etc. was meant to show a sample of the great archaeologist’s work and also to signal a much more ambitious project, that of bringing the entire collection of Troy to Timișoara.

The basic concept of this exhibition was created by a group of curators from the Museum for Prehistory and Early History from Berlin and was adapted to fit the space of the Maria Theresa Bastion attic. The technical team, coordinated by Andrei Bălărie and Cristine Harnischfeger, managed in a short period of time to ensemble the exhibition space³ (Pl. III).

The structure of the exhibition was built following the wooden beams of the roof, forming a labyrinth shape that represents a reference to the mythology of Aegean world. The walls were painted in contrasting red and black, which represents

another hint towards the dawn of the late Bronze Age civilizations and the beginning of the transition period called “from the fall of the Mycenaean civilization to the rise of the Archaic Greek”⁴ (the so-called Dark Ages of Greece)⁵ (Pl. II/1).

The circuit of the exhibition incorporates 18 “halls” in which the glass cases containing the artefacts and description panels are placed. The 14 glass cases in which personal belongings and artefacts discovered by Schliemann were custom made for this event. The cases were accompanied by 16 boards with images and descriptions. These boards had standard dimensions (75 × 150 cm). In total, 139 objects were displayed, most of them coming from Troy, as well as other sites like Hanai Tepe, Bözüyük (Turkey), Mycenae, Tiryns, Orchomenos and Kamiros (Greece).

The opening of the exhibition took place Friday 10th of November 2017 at 18:00. It was a high-class event at which several political and cultural personalities from Timișoara attended. Managers and colleagues from other culture institutions also honoured the invitation. Among the guest we can mention Mrs. Lidija Milašinović, manager of National Museum from Kikinda (Serbia), as well as Dr. Adrian Ardeț, manager of the Ethnography and Border Regiment County Museum of Caransebeș.

The opening presentation belonged to Dr. Marion Bertram, the deputy manager of the Museum for Prehistory and Early History from Berlin. She was followed by Mr. Adrian Negoiaș, cultural counsellor of Călin Dobra, the president of Timiș County Council. Mr. Ralf Krautkrämer, the German Federal Republic consul in Timișoara and Mr. Claudiu Ilaș, manager of the National Museum of Banat finished the opening ceremony.

The night continued with some special events. Eli Lăslean gave a fashion presentation revolving around themes of Ancient Greece, while Mr. Florin Voica, president of the Romanian Association of Sommeliers (Pl. I, V-VIII) gave a presentation about the role of wine and conviviality in ancient Greece.

The exhibition and opening event were advertised in local media (radio, newspapers and on-line media).

Through this exhibition, the National Museum of Banat tried to elaborate collaborations with the major museums of Europe but also to open the gates for future partnerships that might bring other major exhibitions to Timișoara.

¹ Brzeziński 2006.

² Bertram et alii 2016, 3–4, 36.

³ The organization of this exhibition in such a short period of time was possible due to the collaboration of different departments within the National Museum of Banat. We would like to use this occasion to thank them once more for their effort.

⁴ Snodgrass 1994, 19.

⁵ Snodgrass 1994, 19–21; Pomeroy et alii 2004, 5, 36–60.

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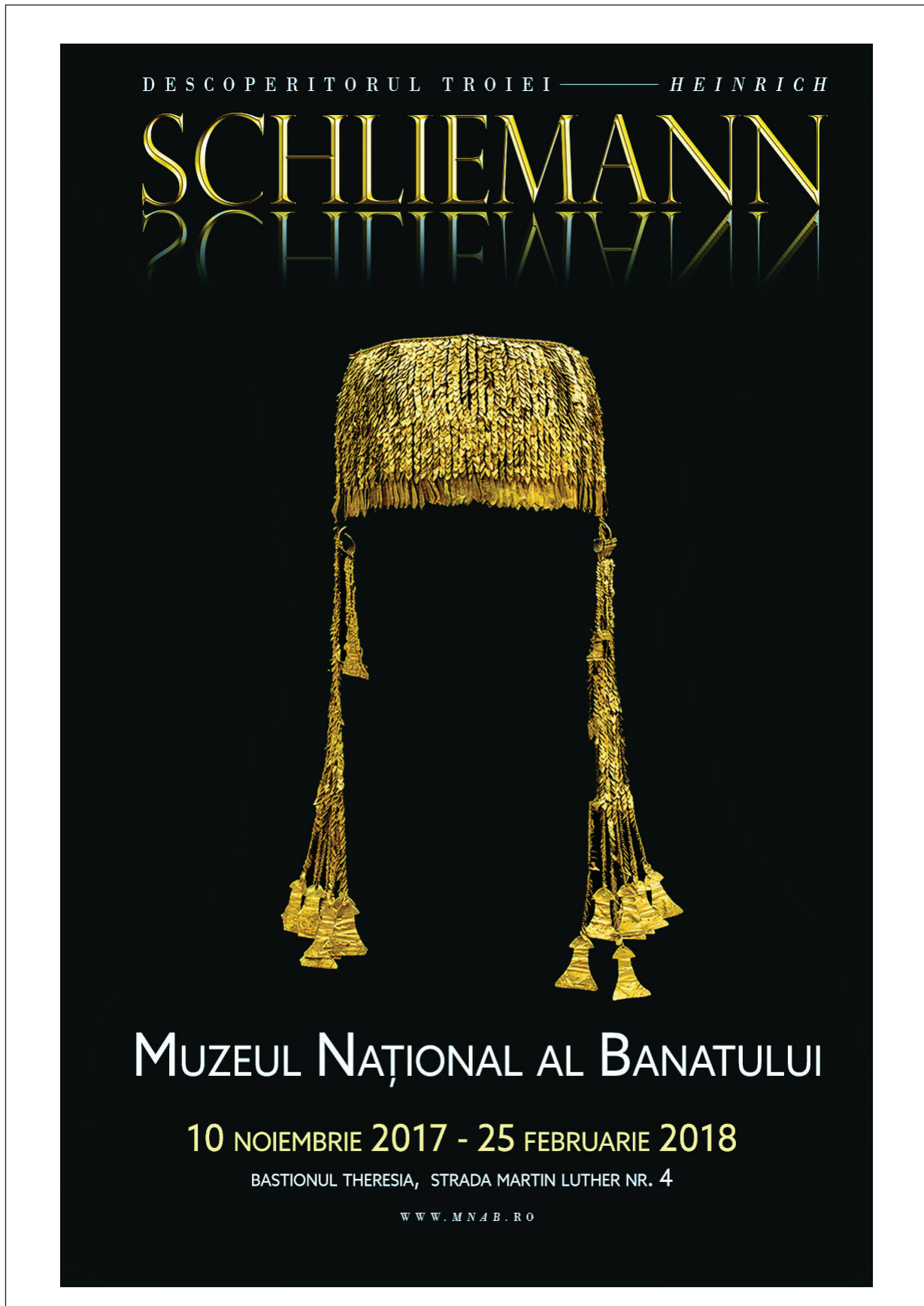
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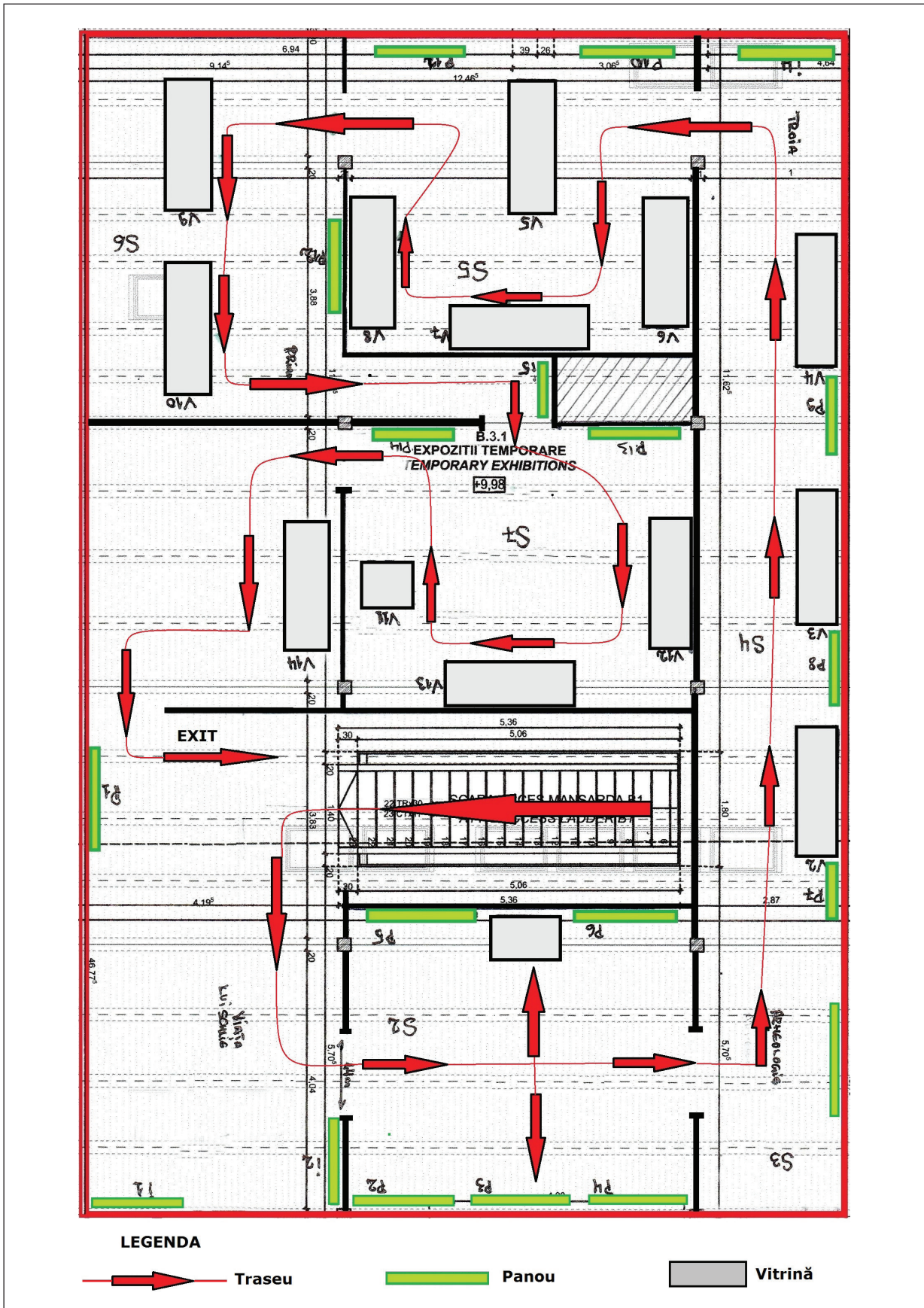
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Pl. I – Poster of the exhibition “Heinrich Schliemann-Discoverer of Troy”



Pl. II: Labyrinth like plan of the exhibition “Heinrich Schliemann-Discoverer of Troy”



Pl. III: 1–3 Preparations for the exhibition.



Pl. IV: 1-Entrance into the exhibition area (source: <http://www.tion.ro/viata-si-activitatea-arheologului-german-heinrich-schliemann-descoperitorul-troiei-prezentate-la-timisoara/1932373>); 2-Details from the exhibition build-up.



Pl. V: 1–2 – Pictures from the opening event (photo Florin Ianăș and <http://www.tion.ro/viata-si-activitatea-arheologului-german-heinrich-schliemann-descoperitorul-troiei-prezentate-la-timisoara/1932373>).



Pl. VI: Aspects from the opening ceremony: Mr. Ralf Krautkrämer, consul of the German Federal Republic in Timișoara (1), Mr. Adrian Negoită, cultural counselor of the President of Timiș County Council (2), Dr. Marion Bertrand, deputy manager of the Museum of Prehistory and Early History from Berlin (3) (Photo Florin Ianăș).



Pl. VII: 1. Moments from the fashion presentation by Eli Lăslean, showing Bronze Age garments in the vision of fashion designer (source: sursa <http://www.opiniatimisoarei.ro/povestile-glorioasei-cetati-troia-aduse-la-timisoara-intr-o-expozitie-impresionanta-la-muzeul-banatului-foto/11/11/2017>); 2. A survey into the history of wine and wine drinking in Protohistoric Greece, presented by Mr. Florin Voica, president of the Romanian Association of Sommeliers (<http://www.tion.ro/viata-si-activitatea-arheologului-german-heinrich-schliemann-descoperitorul-troiei-prezentate-la-timisoara/1932373>).



Pl. VIII: 1–2 – Visiting the exhibition after the opening ceremony (<http://www.ordinezilei.ro/life/arta-si-cultura/p/heinrich-schliemann-descoperitorul-troiei>).

