

~ The Mystery of the Heinzelmännchen ~

by Ginger Gehres



A Rose by any other name... may still smell just as sweet, but these little folk take a dim view at being called names other than their own. Neither gnome nor dwarf, elf, brownie or fairy be ... the Heinzelmännchen are what they are... you see?

Probably not.

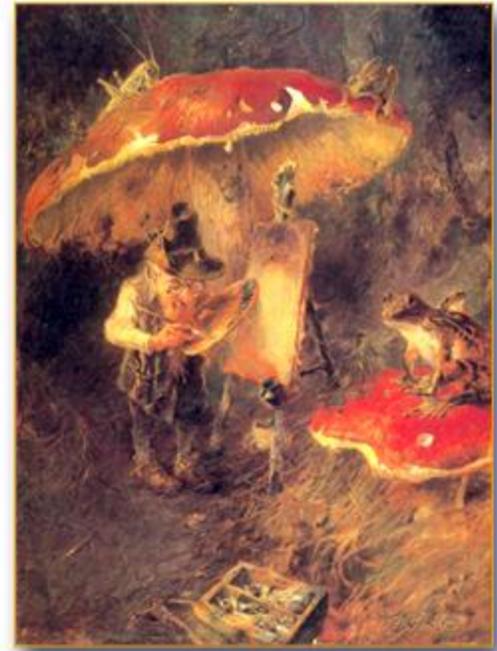
Because these are the secret, hidden people of old:

Die Heinzelmännchen

True, the name can seem a bit daunting to the untrained eye. But break it down, say it a few times out loud and it will become much easier. Honestly, Heinzelmännchen, or *Heinzelmännchen* in new German, is pronounced pretty much like "Hine-tzel-men-shen."

According to tales, theorists, bedtime stories from wise Omas (grandmothers) and more, the Heinzelmännchen originated in Germany and Austria hundreds of years ago. There are often references to their originating from an area deep in a forest in Central Europe that the Romans had been unable to conquer - no matter how hard they tried.

Some believe the Heinzelmännchen are still around. They are the secret people, a highly talented and industrious lot who came out of their hiding places at night to do the work, or chores, of deserving humans. Frequently seen as helpful, they may also appear as mischievous or even mean. Their stature in lore has ranged from that of insect size to the height of a man. Their homes are thought to have been deep in the forests under the roots of trees and underground.



The Painting Dwarf
by Heinrich Schlitt - Wiesbaden Museum

References to Die Heinzelmännchen:

- [Heinzelmännchen by definition](#)
- [Folklore - Cölln \(Berlin\) Connection](#)
- [Postcard from Cologne - Die Heinzelmännchen](#)

Heinrich Schlitt, one of the most popular Mettlach artists of all time, loved portraying these wonderful creatures on steins. He painted in oils and produced artwork for postcards as well. Professor J.A. Schmoll described Heinrich as the "Walt Disney of the 19th Century." He, among many other German artists in a multitude of companies, have helped to "capture" the Heinzelmännchen for future generations to enjoy.

Bibliography

"Heinzelmännchen," *Prosit*, Stein Collectors International, Inc. September, 1990.

"A Rebuttal: Heinzelmännchen," *Prosit*, Stein Collectors International, Inc. June, 1991.

"The Cölln - Cologne Connection," *Prosit*, Stein Collectors International, Inc. December, 1991.

Schmoll, J.A. and Thomas, Therese, "*Heinrich Schlitt 1849 - 1923*", Villeroy & Boch, 1990

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