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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Graphic novels have spawned a body of literary criticism since their emergence as a specific category in the publishing field, attaining a level of respect and permanence in academia previously held by their counterparts in prose. Salem Press's *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels* series aims to collect the preeminent graphic novels and core comics series that form today's canon for academic coursework and library collection development, offering clear, concise, and accessible analysis of not only the historic and current landscape of the interdisciplinary medium and its consumption, but the wide range of genres, themes, devices, and techniques that the graphic novel medium encompasses.

The combination of visual images and text, the emphasis of art over written description, the coupling of mature themes with the comic form—these elements appeal to the graphic novel enthusiast but remain a source of reluctance to other readers. Designed for both popular and scholarly arenas and collections, the series provides unique insight and analysis into the most influential and widely read graphic novels with an emphasis on establishing the medium as an important academic discipline. We hope researchers and the common reader alike will gain a deeper understanding of these works, as the literary nature is presented in critical format by leading writers in the field of study.

*Independents & Underground Classics* is the second title of the *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels* series, in conjunction with *Heroes and Superheroes*; *Manga*; and *History, Theme, and Technique*. This title collects more than two hundred graphic novels, the majority of which were published since the emergence of the underground comics—or comix—movement of the 1960's. The current volume provides detailed analyses of the major works that have defined the independent and underground graphic novel movement as it has developed over more than half a century, and stories have been compiled and dissected to provide viewpoints that are easily missed during initial readings.

### SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This three-volume set covers over 215 well-regarded works of the independent and underground genre, summarizing plots and analyzing the works in terms of their literary integrity and overall contribution to

the graphic novel landscape. It contains works that are self-published or are from independent houses. The entries in this encyclopedic set also cover a wide range of periods and trends in the medium, from the influential early twentieth-century woodcuts—"novels in pictures"—of Frans Masereel to the alternative comics revolution of the 1980's, spearheaded by such works as *Love and Rockets* by the Hernandez brothers; from the anthropomorphic historical fiction of *Maus*, which attempted to humanize the full weight of the Holocaust, to the unglamorous autobiographical *American Splendor* series and its celebration of the mundane; and from Robert Crumb's faithful and scholarly illustrative interpretation of the *Book of Genesis*, to the tongue-in-cheek subversiveness of the genre mashup *Zombies vs. Robots*.

In writing these essays, contributors worked from original sources, providing new criticism and content aimed at deconstructing both centuries-old themes and concepts as well as nontraditional genres and styles, and portraying the graphic novel as literature. To that end, essays look beyond the popular-culture aspects of the medium to show the wide range of literary devices and overarching themes and styles used to convey beliefs and conflicts. Furthermore, critical attention was paid to panel selection and relevancy, and a particular work's influence on the creators' careers, other graphic novels, or literature as a whole.

The graphic novels field is defined by tremendous complexity; to that end, many important works and creators have been omitted. Lastly, while the series has an international scope, attention has been focused on translated works that have been influential in the development of a specific graphic novel tradition.

### ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT

The essays in *Independents & Underground Classics* appear alphabetically and are approximately 3 to 4 pages in length. Each essay is heavily formatted and begins with full ready-reference top matter that includes the primary author or authors; illustrators and other artists who contributed to the work; and the first serial and book publication. This is followed by the main text, which is divided into "Publication History," "Plot," "Volumes," "Characters," "Artistic Style,"

“Themes,” and “Impact.” A list of adaptations of the graphic novel into film and television are also noted, and a user-friendly bibliography completes the essay. Cross-references direct readers to related topics, and further reading suggestions accompany all articles.

*Publication History* presents an overview of the work's origin and publication chronology. Specifically, dates of first serial publication, first book publication, and first translation into English are provided. Many graphic novels were first serialized in comic book form, often as a limited series, and were later collected or republished in book format, while other graphic novels were conceptualized as novelistic works. In addition, details about the significant awards and honors won by each work are listed.

*Plot* provides an in-depth synopsis of the main story progression and other story arcs. As an aid to students, this section focuses on the most critically important plot turns in the series or work and why these were important.

Where applicable, *Volumes* orients the reader or researcher to the accepted reading order of the work. For series, it lists individual volumes or collections, often comprising different story arcs. The year when each collection was published is provided. Also identified are the issues that were collected within a volume, a synopsis of the volume's main focus, and its significance within the entire collection.

*Characters* presents detailed descriptions of major characters in the story, beginning with the main protagonists and antagonists. The section discusses physical description, character traits and significant characteristics, the character's relationship with others, and the primary role a character plays in advancing the plot of the work or series. To aid readers, descriptions include “also known as” names and monikers.

*Artistic Style* provides analysis of the work's visual content, especially as it relates to characterization, plot, and mood; analysis of the illustrative use of color versus black and white; discussion of any changes in style as the story progresses; and the use of elements and devices such as dialogue, captions, panels, penciling, inking, and backgrounds.

*Themes* identifies the central themes in the work, how they are expressed—for example, through plot or layout—and how they relate to characterization and style. It also discusses, when applicable, whether a

major thematic point is a chronicle of the author's personal development, or a projection of it, and how this may resonate with readers.

*Impact* covers the work's influence on the creators' careers, publishing houses, the medium of graphic novels itself, and literature in general. The section also analyzes the impact of the creation of new characters or series. Of focus is the critical reception of the work or series and whether it was atypical for its historical period.

*Bibliography* lists secondary print sources for further study and examination, annotated to assist readers in evaluating focus and usefulness.

## APPENDIXES AND OTHER SPECIAL FEATURES

Special features help to further distinguish this reference series from other works on graphic novels. This includes appendixes listing major graphic novel awards and a general bibliography. These resources are complemented by a timeline discussing significant events and influential graphic novel predecessors which spans the ancient world through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the present. Another key feature of the essays in this publication is a biographical sidebar on an author or illustrator related to the work profiled. Additionally, the three-volume set features over 250 pictures, including full-page images and panels from the actual work. Four indexes round out the set, illustrating the breadth of the reference work's coverage: Works by Publisher, Works by Author, Works by Artist, and a subject index.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many hands went into the creation of this work, and Salem Press is grateful for the effort of all involved. This includes the original contributors of these essays, whose names can be found at the end of each essay and in the “Contributors List” that follows the Introduction. Special mention must be paid to Lisa Schimmer, who played an invaluable role in shaping some of the reference content. Finally, we are indebted to our editors, Bart Beaty, Professor of English at the University of Calgary, and Stephen Weiner, Director of Maynard Public Library in Maynard, Massachusetts, for their advice in selecting works and their writing contributions. Both are published in the field of comics and graphic novels studies. Beaty is the author of *Fredric Wertham*

*and the Critique of Mass Culture, Unpopular Culture: Transforming the European Comic Book in the 1990s, and David Cronenberg's "A History of Violence."* Weiner is the author or co-author of *The 101 Best Graphic Novels*, *Faster Than a Speeding Bullet: The Rise of the Graphic Novel*, *The Hellboy Companion*,

*The Will Eisner Companion*, and *Using Graphic Novels in the Classroom*. Their efforts in making this resource a comprehensive and indispensable tool for students, researchers, and general readers alike is gratefully acknowledged.

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# ADVENTURES OF TINTIN, THE

**Author:** Hergé

**Artist:** Hergé (illustrator)

**Publisher:** Casterman (French); Little, Brown (English)

**First serial publication:** *Les Aventures de Tintin*, 1929-1976

**First book publication:** 1930-1976 (English translation, 1958-1991)

## Publication History

Belgian comics writer Hergé, born Georges Prosper Remi, created Tintin in 1929 for *Le Petit Vingtième* (*The Little Twentieth*), the children's supplement of *Le Vingtième Siècle* (*The Twentieth Century*), a right-wing Catholic newspaper. At the suggestion of Father Norbert Wallez, the newspaper's managing editor, Tintin's first assignment was to expose the horrors of Soviet Russia; thus, *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets* premiered, first as a black-and-white strip in *Le Petit Vingtième* and next in a newspaper-funded book format. *Le Petit Vingtième* would run Tintin until 1940, but in 1934, beginning with *Cigars of the Pharaoh*, Belgian publisher Casterman took over the book versions and would print all Tintin books thereafter. In 1935, while working on *The Blue Lotus*, Hergé assumed full artistic control of the series.

When Germany invaded Belgium in 1940 and *Le Petit Vingtième* ceased publication, Hergé found a home for Tintin in *Le Soir*, a Nazi-backed Belgium daily. In 1942, Casterman began publishing new Tintin volumes in color and republishing color versions of all the black-and-white volumes.

After Belgium was liberated in 1944, writers who had collaborated with the Nazis were banned from publishing, and this included Hergé, who was halfway through writing *The Seven Crystal Balls*. Two years later, this ban was lifted from Hergé, and he began *Le Journal de Tintin* (*Tintin Magazine*). *Le Journal de Tintin* and Casterman would continue publishing the series right through the last Tintin adventure, *Tintin and the Picaros*, in 1976. During this time, many volumes underwent extensive revisions to update their



*Hergé (George Remi)'s signature.* (By Hergé SD Chéreau, via Wikimedia Commons)

imagery and rework racially insensitive depictions of non-European races.

When Hergé died in 1983, he was one of the world's most revered and influential cartoonists. In 2007, a century after Hergé's birth, an estimated 200 million copies of Tintin books had sold worldwide.

## Plot

*The Adventures of Tintin* relates the adventures of Tintin, a young Belgian reporter who journeys across the planet with his dog Snowy, untangling plots and conspiracies. Though the series' characters and events are fictional, they are often based on real places and events.

In Hergé's first book, *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*, Tintin heads for Russia to expose the harsh conditions behind the Communist Party's upbeat propaganda. Next, Tintin's newspaper sends him to the Belgian Congo, where he foils American mobster Al Capone's scheme to control the diamond trade. Tintin then travels to the United States, where he encounters American Indians and takes out Chicago's notorious gangsters.

In *Cigars of the Pharaoh*, Hergé introduces detectives Thomson and Thompson, who, believing Tintin is a drug kingpin, pursue him across south-central Asia. After a series of wild exploits across Egypt and the Red Sea basin, including a brush with notorious gun-runner Captain Allan, Tintin lands in India, where he learns of the drug-smuggling organization responsible for his travails. In *The Blue Lotus*, Tintin travels on to China and goes up against the corrupt head of the Japanese occupational authority, Mr. Mitsuhirato, who

is in league with Roberto Rastapopoulos, the drug-smugglers' ringleader.

After returning home, Tintin learns of a mystery involving a stolen South American idol and journeys to San Theodoros, a fictional Latin American country, in search of it. There, Tintin serendipitously becomes a colonel in the regiment of General Alcazar.

In *The Black Island*, Thomson and Thompson accuse Tintin of another crime he did not commit, and he is once again forced to flee. Tintin reaches Scotland and ends up on the Black Island, a hiding place for international counterfeiters led by the evil Doctor Müller. After having the counterfeiters arrested, Tintin is lured to Syldavia, a fictional eastern European country. Soon after, foreign agents steal the scepter of Ottokar, without which the Syldavian king cannot rule. After meeting renowned Milanese opera diva Bianca Castafiore, Tintin returns the scepter, thereby foiling an elaborate conspiracy to bring down the Syldavian government and allow a takeover by neighboring Borduria, another fictional land.

*The Crab with the Golden Claws* introduces Captain Haddock, who is so drunk that he is unaware that his cargo hold is filled with Captain Allan's opium. Tintin and Haddock escape the ship in a lifeboat, and after many adventures on the high seas and in the desert, they capture Allan's entire gang.

In *The Shooting Star*, a meteorite with mysterious powers falls into the Arctic Ocean, and Tintin joins the European expedition racing to find it.

The two-part adventure of *The Secret of the Unicorn* and *Red Rackham's Treasure* follows. Tintin buys Haddock a model replica of the ship his ancestor Sir Francis Haddock lost to the pirate Red Rackham, whose treasure sank. Tintin and Haddock set sail to retrieve the treasure, bringing a stowaway, the hearing-impaired inventor Cuthbert Calculus. They unsuccessfully attempt to use Calculus's shark-shaped submarine in their treasure hunt. Heading home, they buy Marlinspike Hall, where they find the treasure had lain hidden all along.

Next, an expedition to the Incan ruins of Peru and Bolivia triumphantly returns to Europe, but one by one,

its members succumb to an Incan curse. Soon after, Calculus is kidnapped and taken to Peru, and Tintin and Haddock rush to his rescue. After a dangerous trek across the Peruvian Andes, the would-be rescuers find themselves prisoners of an Incan tribe that survived Spanish colonization unchanged. Only the timely arrival of an eclipse saves the trio from being sacrificed, and Tintin convinces the Incan priests to lift the curse from the expedition members.

Meanwhile, Europe is plunged into crisis when petroleum starts to explode mysteriously. Tintin subsequently travels to Arabia, where he discovers that the nefarious Doctor Müller is tainting oil wells with an explosive chemical.

Back in Marlinspike, Calculus sends Tintin and Haddock a telegram that leads them to Syldavia, where they help build a spaceship that takes them to the moon. Plagued by treachery and sabotage, the team barely makes it back to Earth alive.

In *The Calculus Affair*, nearly deaf scientist Calculus develops a weapon using sound as a destructive force, and the Syldavians and Bordurians take turns kidnapping him to learn its secrets. Tintin and Haddock put an end to these schemes by rescuing Calculus.

Tintin and Haddock then travel to Arabia to help their friend Emir Ben Kalish Ezab, who has been deposed in a coup. This, they discover, is merely a cover for a flourishing slave trade involving their nemesis Rastapopoulos.

Next, Tintin learns that his old friend Chang was aboard an airliner that crashed in the Himalayas and sets out to rescue him. With Chang safe, Tintin returns to Marlinspike Hall, where he solves the case of Castafiore's stolen emerald.

In *Flight 714*, Rastapopoulos and Allan kidnap Tintin and his multimillionaire traveling companion while they are on vacation.

In his last adventure, *Tintin and the Picaros*, Tintin helps General Alcazar reclaim the presidency of San Theodoros from General Tapioca and saves the imprisoned Castafiore and Thomson and Thompson from execution.

**Volumes**

- *Tintin au pays des Soviets* (1930; *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*, 1989).
- *Tintin au Congo* (1931; *Tintin in the Congo*, 1991).
- *Tintin en Amérique* (1932; *Tintin in America*, 1978).
- *Les Cigares du pharaon* (1934; *The Cigars of the Pharaoh*, 1971).
- *Le Lotus bleu* (1936; *The Blue Lotus*, 1983).
- *L'Oreille cassée* (1937; *The Broken Ear*, 1975).
- *L'Île noire* (1938; *The Black Island*, 1966).
- *Le Sceptre d'Ottokar* (1939; *King Ottokar's Sceptre*, 1958).
- *Le Crabe aux pinces d'or* (1941; *The Crab with the Golden Claws*, 1958).
- *L'Étoile mystérieuse* (1942; *The Shooting Star*, 1961).
- *Le Secret de la licorne* (1943; *The Secret of the Unicorn*, 1959).
- *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge* (1944; *Red Rackham's Treasure*, 1959).
- *Les Sept Boules de cristal* (1948; *The Seven Crystal Balls*, 1963).
- *Le Temple du soleil* (1949; *Prisoners of the Sun*, 1962).
- *Tintin au pays de l'or noir* (1950; *Land of Black Gold*, 1972).
- *Objectif Lune* (1953; *Destination Moon*, 1959).
- *On a marché sur la lune* (1954; *Explorers on the Moon*, 1959).
- *L'Affaire Tournesol* (1956; *The Calculus Affair*, 1960).
- *Coke en stock* (1958; *The Red Sea Sharks*, 1960).
- *Tintin au Tibet* (1960; *Tintin in Tibet*, 1962).
- *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (1963; *The Castafiore Emerald*, 1963).
- *Vol 714 pour Sydney* (1968; *Flight 714*, 1968).
- *Tintin et les Picaros* (1976; *Tintin and the Picaros*, 1976).

**Characters**

- *Tintin*, the protagonist, is a blond-haired teen-aged reporter with a characteristic quiff. His inquisitiveness and concern for humanity entangle

him in dangerous and complex situations, which he overcomes with ingenuity and bravery.

- *Snowy*, a.k.a. *Milou*, a white fox terrier, is Tintin's constant companion and can talk to his master.
- *Thompson and Thompson*, a.k.a. *Dupont and Dupond*, are a pair of blundering detectives who dress in matching black suits and bowler hats and have equally bushy moustaches. Often jumping to hasty conclusions, they initially suspect Tintin of being a nefarious criminal but eventually trust Tintin and team up with him.
- *Roberto Rastapopoulos*, the series' chief villain, appears in five adventures, beginning with *Tintin in America*. This bald, large-nosed, monocle-wearing, cigar-smoking schemer uses his cover as a film tycoon to operate international crime rings, involving drug running, slave trading, and kidnapping.
- *Chang Chong-Chen* is a young Chinese boy with dark, parted hair. After Tintin saves him from drowning, he helps Tintin bring down the opium gang in *The Blue Lotus*. Tintin rescues him later in *Tintin in Tibet*.
- *General Alcazar* is a Latin American with a strong chin, small mustache, and long nose who first appears as president of San Theodoros. Temperamental and headstrong, he leads a rebellion against his rival, General Tapioca.
- *Doctor J. W. Müller*, another of Tintin's nemeses, has an oval face, bald head, and thick black beard. He heads the counterfeiting racket in *The Black Island* and leads the effort to sabotage the world's oil supply in *Land of Black Gold*.
- *Bianca Castafiore*, an opera singer with a beak-like nose, a prominent chin, and curly blond hair, first appears on a Syldavian singing tour in *King Ottokar's Sceptre* and reappears in many of Tintin's adventures thereafter. Tintin restores her lost emerald in *The Castafiore Emerald*.
- *Captain Haddock* is a middle-aged ship's captain with a full black beard and scruffy black hair who sports a blue turtleneck, black pants, and a black sailor's cap. Stubborn, headstrong, and alcoholic, he is deeply faithful to Tintin. He first appears in

*The Crab with the Golden Claws* and becomes Tintin's constant companion.

- *Cuthbert Calculus*, a.k.a. *Tryphon Tournesol*, is short, bespectacled man with tufts of curly hair on a bald head and goatee. A brilliant but sensitive inventor, he mishears most statements because he is partially deaf. After helping Tintin and Haddock in *Red Rackham's Treasure*, he joins them at Marlinspike.

### Artistic Style

Hergé developed a distinct graphic style called "clear line," which features sharply defined lines, a lack of shadows, and classical concepts of proportion and perspective. Every panel possesses a remarkable level of detail precisely copied from original sources. Also, Hergé, among the first European cartoonists to use speech balloons, made them perfect rectangles with neat, draftsman-quality lettering. When color entered Hergé's art in 1942, he used it to deepen his clear-line style, utilizing bright primary colors and light pastels to create an orderly, familiar world.

*Tintin's* realism also derived from Hergé's meticulous research. He kept an extensive file of clippings and photographs to be used in Tintin's adventures. When his files did not yield the right image, Hergé would peruse nearby libraries to find the necessary visual texts or visit museums to sketch objects for a particular panel.

In *The Calculus Affair*, Hergé's clear line reached its apex. Many panels in earlier volumes have solid color backdrops or simple walls with minimal embellishment. By *The Calculus Affair*, both the foreground and background of nearly every panel are brimming with detail. By this time, Hergé was also stretching the boundaries of his meticulous layout. For example, *Explorers on the Moon* uses many nearly full-page or page-length horizontal panels to express the vastness of space, and *The Red Sea Sharks* borders on the surreal when a diver's thoughts appear in the bubbles from his diving mask.

In 1942, Hergé hired assistants, Alice Devos and Edgar P. Jacobs, leading to the formation of Hergé

Studios in 1950. By 1953, Hergé Studios had fifteen members, who together made *Tintin* an internationally popular graphic series.

### Themes

In the beginning, Hergé presented a fundamentally orderly world threatened by forces of corruption and chaos in which, through the efforts of brave, resourceful, and compassionate heroes like Tintin, the chaos is diminished and good triumphs over evil. However, as the twentieth century's geopolitical situation evolved, Hergé's sense of what constituted order and chaos and good and evil changed.

From 1929 to 1940, during Tintin's run in *Le Petit Vingtième*, managing editor Wallez controlled the content of the earliest strips. Thus, the first four volumes present strict Catholic, right-wing values. *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets* is a blistering critique of Russian communism; *Tintin in the Congo* is an unapologetic paean to European colonization of Africa; *Tintin in America* exposes the United States as a materialist nation steeped in sin, greed, and racism; and *Cigars of the Pharaoh* condemns the illegal drug trade.

When Hergé took artistic control of the comic with *The Blue Lotus*, the story's focus shifted. He chose Tintin's destination for the first time and conducted the exhaustive research that became the series' hallmark. For this volume, he relied a great deal on close friend and art student Chang Chong-Chen, who became the basis for Tintin's dear companion in the series and helped redefine the forces of evil Tintin confronts. These forces were no longer solely the opponents of Catholicism but included the more defined political threat of the Japanese occupation in China. This represented Hergé's first open critique of fascism, a theme he took up again in *The Black Island* and *King Ottokar's Sceptre*.

Under Nazi occupation, Hergé avoided antifascist themes, and *Tintin* became more of a pure adventure series, with the only restoration of order coming from Tintin's friends gaining their just rewards. After the war, *Tintin* made its only foray into the paranormal

with the *The Seven Crystal Balls* and *Prisoners of the Sun*.

Starting with *Land of Black Gold* in 1950, Hergé's work directly tackled Cold War tensions, often presenting each side of the conflict as mirroring the darkness of the other. This is best exemplified in *The Calculus Affair*, wherein both Syldavia, representing the West, and Borduria, representing the East, try to acquire Calculus's secret sonic weapon.

For a time, Hergé again left the political arena with the straightforward rescue story of *Tintin in Tibet*, the comic mystery of *The Castafiore Emerald*, and the return of Tintin's longtime nemesis Rastapopoulos in *Flight 714*. However, in Tintin's final adventure, Hergé returns to a political theme but with an uncharacteristically cynical twist. In this adventure, Tintin helps General Alcazar retake the presidency of San Theodoros, which ultimately makes no difference to the nation: The nation's dire poverty remains unchanged, and the police have simply switched from the fascist style uniforms of Augusto Pinochet's Chile to the socialist garb of Fidel Castro's Cuba. Nevertheless, the series' overarching theme remains: Although villains in the world will enslave the weak, steal from the righteous, and disrupt the natural order, there are brave, tireless heroes like Tintin to help restore world order.

### Impact

When *Tintin* appeared in Belgium in 1929, the strip was an immediate success. The charming illustrations, sense of adventure, assertion of traditional values, and appealing characters made the series a national triumph. Then, as the book editions began to appear in 1930, *Tintin's* fame spread to France. After World War II, *Tintin's* fame and influence exploded. Editions began appearing across Europe and the world and became wildly successful in every major market except the United States. An entire genre of adventure comics emerged in the late 1940's directly from *Tintin* and Hergé's clear-line technique. Among these were *Bob et Bobette* (known as *Willy and Wanda* in the United States), *Félix*, *Guy Lefranc*, and *Les Quatre As*. Later French and Belgian comics (*les bandes dessinées*) influenced

by Hergé's clear-line approach include *Blake and Mortimer*, *Alix*, *Hassan et Kaddour*, *Cori le Moussaillon*, *Gaspard de la Nuit*, and *Ray Banana*.

*Tintin's* influence goes well beyond comics. Novelists Frederic Tuten and Françoise Sagan have written novels based on Tintin. Philosopher Michel Serres, anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, and literary critic Jean-Marie Apostolides have examined *Tintin* as a signifier of twentieth-century European culture. French president Charles de Gaulle once called Tintin his only international rival, and the fourteenth Dalai Lama presented Tintin with the Truth of Light Award.

### Films

*The Broken Ear*. Directed by Karel Van Millegham and Anne-Marie Ullmann. Belvision, 1956. This semi-animated film was the first Tintin movie to debut on Belgian television.

*The Crab with the Golden Claws*. Directed by Wilfried Bouchery and Cle Keerbergen-Malines Belg. Wilfried Bouchery et Cie, 1947. This animated film adaptation used marionettes and featured the voices of A. Charles and R. Chrus.

*Destination Moon*. Directed by Yvan Szücs. Belvision, 1959. This full-length feature film was made for French and Belgian television.

*King Ottokar's Sceptre*. Directed by Karel Van Millegham and Anne-Marie Ullmann. Belvision, 1956. This film was the second semianimated Tintin movie to debut on Belgian television.

*Tintin and the Blue Oranges*. Directed by Philippe Condroyer. Alliance de Production, 1964. This live-action film starring Jean-Pierre Talbot as Tintin and Jean Bouise as Captain Haddock follows an original plot rather than any published Tintin books.

*Tintin and the Golden Fleece*. Directed by Jean-Jacques Vierne. Alliance de Production, 1961. This live-film adaptation starring Jean-Pierre Talbot as Tintin and Georges Wilson as Captain Haddock followed an original script rather than any published Tintin stories. Hergé felt this film and *Tintin and the Blue Oranges* failed to capture the spirit of Tintin, and he

refused to place his name on the Casterman publications they inspired.

*Tintin and the Lake of Sharks*. Directed by Raymond Leblanc. Belvision and Dargaud Films, 1972. This animated film starring Jacques Careuil as the voice of Tintin and Claude Bertrand as Haddock is not based on any Hergé volumes.

*Tintin and the Temple of the Sun*. Directed by Eddie Lateste. Belvision, 1969. This animated adaptation featured the voices of Philippe Ogouz as Tintin and Claude Bertrand as Haddock. Based on *The Seven Crystal Balls* and *Prisoners of the Sun*, this film condenses the narrative and invents several new characters. Though Hergé worked on this adaptation, he was disappointed with it.

#### Television Series

*Hergé's Adventures of Tintin*. Directed by Ray Goossens. Télé Hachette and Belvision, 1958-1962. This series starred Georges Poujouly as the voice of Tintin and Jean Clarioux as Haddock. Plots were sometimes drastically changed; Hergé disavowed the series.

*The New Adventures of Tintin*. Directed by Stephen Bernasconi. Ellipse and Nelvana, 1991-1992. This series starring Colin O'Meara as the voice of Tintin and David Fox as Haddock in the English version generally follows Hergé's original adventures but differs in their order.

John Nizalowski

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**See also:** *Asterix; A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge*

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## *AGE OF BRONZE: THE STORY OF THE TROJAN WAR*

**Author:** Shanower, Eric

**Artist:** Eric Shanower (illustrator)

**Publisher:** Image Comics

**First serial publication:** 1998-

**First book publication:** 2001-

### **Publication History**

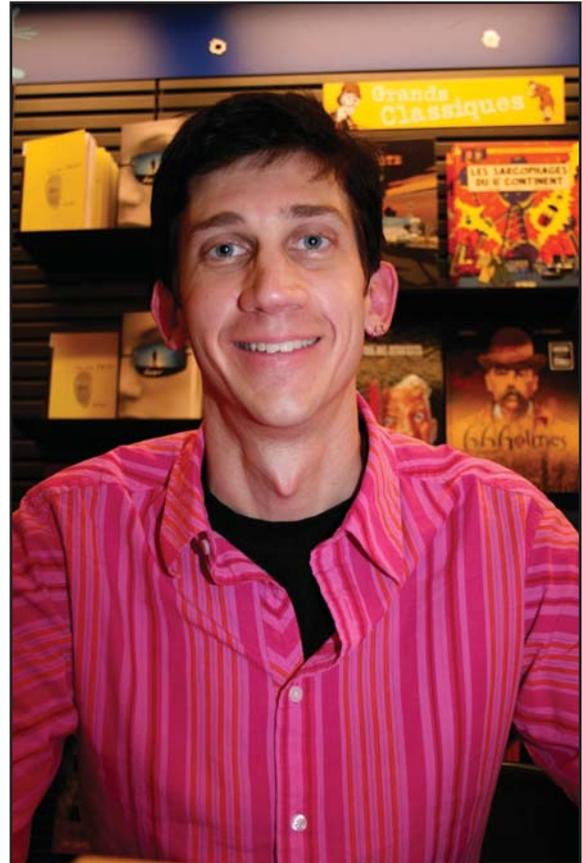
*Age of Bronze* is published serially as a black-and-white comic book by Image Comics and has been collected in hardcover and trade paperback formats. Serial publication began in November, 1998. Two special issues—*Age of Bronze: Special* (1999), which tells the story of the house of Atreus, and *Age of Bronze: Behind the Scenes* (2002)—have also been published. Publication of collected volumes began in July, 2001; creator Eric Shanower plans to release a total of seven volumes. The comic has been translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Croatian, and Indonesian.

Shanower was first inspired to use the comics medium to retell the Trojan War in 1991 after listening to an audio version of Barbara W. Tuchman's book *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* (1985); Tuchman's second chapter covers the Trojan War, focusing on the episode of the Trojan horse.

Shanower's idea was to synthesize every version he could find of the Trojan War story. Thus, his research includes versions of the Trojan War in literature, including ancient and more recent poetry; music, including opera, and the visual arts; architectural and other archaeological remains from the Bronze Age Mediterranean area; and classical scholarship. He decided to have the characters speak "plain, unadorned English" in order to communicate more clearly what he sees as the fascinating interpersonal aspects of the story.

### **Plot**

Out of all of the versions, scholarly investigations, and artistic interpretations of the Trojan War, Shanower's tells not only the general story of the war but also the stories of the political and especially interpersonal



*Autograph session with Eric Shanower at Fnac Saint-Lazare (Paris, France). (By Georges Seguin, via Wikimedia Commons)*

actions leading up to and threaded through the war. The general story is well known: The Greek armies, having assembled as such for the first time, sail to and besiege the city of Troy in order to reverse or avenge the abduction of Helen, rightful wife of the Greek Menelaus, by Paris, prince of Troy. Part of *Age of Bronze's* appeal is Shanower's depiction of these familiar events in exquisitely researched and drafted detail. The interest in the comic is also generated by its focus on interpersonal relations and actions. These human actions, and their underlying psychological motivations, are especially important in light of Shanower's decision to set his version of the story in a vision of the late Bronze

Age Mediterranean that aims at great historical accuracy; he purposely excludes the Greek gods and goddesses as characters.

The increasing military action, which is the story's most general plot, is enriched by many subplots. These intersecting plots may be conveniently broken down by volume. *A Thousand Ships*, whose title draws on perhaps the most famous line from Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1604), focuses on Paris's discovery of his identity as a Trojan prince, his abduction of Helen, the Greeks' discovery of her abduction, and the difficult assembly of their armies and fleet.

*Age of Bronze: Sacrifice* focuses on the Greek fleet's delays and difficulties in setting sail for Troy. A long final scene, more than one-quarter of the volume, shows the Greeks delayed by heavy winds. So that they may set sail, Agamemnon, as High King of the Achaeans, must fulfill a prophecy by Kalchas, priest of the Delphic oracle, by sacrificing his own daughter Iphigenia; this plot draws freely on ancient versions of Agamemnon's conflict with his wife and Iphigenia's mother, Klytemnestra.

The final scene culminates in Iphigenia quietly and propitiously giving herself up. Subplots include the deepening involvement of Odysseus, king of Ithaka and great speaker and strategist, with the Greeks' preparations; predictions by the Trojan prophet Cassandra that Troy is doomed as well as Priam's attempt to bolster Troy's defenses; and a deepening love between Achilles and Patroklos that eclipses Achilles' relationship with Deidamia.

*Age of Bronze: Betrayal* depicts the stepwise advance of the Greek fleet across the Aegean, focusing on landfall, battle, and celebratory feast on the island of Tenedos. Inspired by Achilles' martial valor and courage, the Greeks are successful in battle against the islanders. However, during a celebratory sacrifice, one Greek, Philoktetes, is bitten by the snake of the altar; his incessant cries so disturb his fellows that Odysseus is compelled to leave him on an island. This plot draws heavily on Sophocles' tragedy *Philoktētēs* (409 B.C.E.).

Five issues of the comic book (27-31) have been published serially but not collected into a volume. The primary plot point of these issues is the first battle between the Greeks and the Trojans and its effects on

### Eric Shanower

Breaking into the comics industry shortly after graduating from The Kubert School, Eric Shanower made his reputation in the 1980's and 1990's for his work on the Oz graphic novels, based on the work of L. Frank Baum. The five graphic novels, published by First Comics and Dark Horse Comics, were notable for sophisticated visuals that drew heavily on an aesthetic derived from classic children's books. Shanower is deeply connected to Baum's creation, having written an Oz novel (*The Giant Garden of Oz*) and a collection of short stories (*The Salt Sorcerer of Oz*), as well as collaborating on other Oz projects. In 1991 he began telling the story of the Trojan War as a graphic novel, releasing the first of a proposed seven volumes of *Age of Bronze*. In the three volumes that have been released to date, Shanower depicts Troy's absent gods and mythological figures, bringing a new level of realism to the mythological story. Shanower's clean lines and careful compositions have made him a greatly respected comics illustrator.

relationships between certain pairs and groups of characters. In that battle, Achilles and Hektor meet, and the Trojans are forced to retreat into the fortress. Relationships continue to develop, now distinctly shadowed by the war: For example, the wedding of Hektor and Andromache is interrupted by Cassandra's cries, signifying the arrival of the Greek armies; Helen is made to leave Troy so as to bear her second child away from the fighting; and Cressida, daughter of Kalchas, marries Troilus, a young prince of Troy, only to find herself involved in an exchange of prisoners of war engineered by her father. Forthcoming issues may be expected to continue telling the general story of the war while focusing on interpersonal relationships complicated by the war as well as on scenes made famous in various other versions.

### Volumes

- *Age of Bronze: A Thousand Ships* (2001). Collects issues 1-9. A central theme is the fraught relationship between individual desire and social,

political, or otherwise collective duty; a related theme is the uneven distribution of power in a society, with no necessary correlation between access to power and virtuous action or wisdom.

- *Age of Bronze: Sacrifice* (2004). Collects issues 10-19. A main theme is the human cost of war, as even seemingly incidental and unwarlike individuals are caught up and irrevocably changed by the burgeoning war machine; a related theme is how human action is affected and sometimes limited by tradition.
- *Age of Bronze: Betrayal, Part One* (2007). Collects issues 20-26. A main theme is the “global” effects of a seemingly very “local” conflict, as the war between Greeks (the Achaeans) and the city-state of Troy affects not only their political and military allies but peaceful trading partners and other third parties.

### Characters

- *Paris*, the Trojan prince (son of Hektor), is of noble build and features but is inexperienced in politics and battle. His rash abduction of Helen precipitates the war.
- *Helen* is the wife of Menelaus and later the wife of Paris. She is captivatingly beautiful and full of self-interest, seeming not to understand the gravity of the situation or her role in it.
- *Agamemnon* is great king of the Achaeans who assembles the Greek fleet and struggles to maintain control and morale over the years of preparation, journey, and battle.
- *Menelaus* is the brother of Agamemnon and Helen’s first husband. He is eager for battle on her behalf and for his own wounded pride.
- *Priam* is the king of the Trojans and father to many princes and princesses. He is appropriately regal in his dealings on behalf of the city, alternately solicitous and uncompromising.
- *Hektor* is Priam’s son and the greatest warrior of Troy. He faces Achilles in single combat.
- *Achilles*, son of Thetis and Peleus, is destined from an early age to a tragic choice between either

a long life of peaceful obscurity or immortal fame as the result of a life cut short in battle. Headstrong, proud, and the Achaeans’ greatest warrior, he faces Hektor in single combat.

- *Odysseus*, king of Ithaka, is reluctant to join the Greek fleet. He serves as its greatest strategic and tactical advisor because of his good-natured cunning and convincing rhetoric.
- *Kassandra* is the daughter of Priam. Her prophetic abilities confine her to the palace and discomfit her family and city; she serves as a voice of foreboding and represents a missed opportunity for peace.
- *Iphigenia* is the daughter of Agamemnon and must be sacrificed so that he may fulfill his obligation to the gods and, thus, guarantee the Greek fleet a safe departure for Troy.

### Artistic Style

Shanower is responsible for all of the series’ art, including covers for issues and collected volumes. Color is reserved for covers, while interiors are entirely black and white. The style may be generally described as highly realistic, even “photorealistic.” Characters, actions, and settings are almost all depicted at that same level of highest realism. Little space is given to superfluous fantastical imagery, which is limited to depicting things like characters’ memories and some dreams or fantasies, as well as some mythological stories. Even less use is made of the sorts of imagery that may be considered traditional or conventional to comics or cartoons, although Shanower does use some traditional devices, including motion lines, onomatopoeia, and different thickness of line in fonts for speech at various volumes and emotional pitches.

More particularly, the style is clean and uncluttered. Shanower reports that his favorite artist is John R. Neill, who illustrated more than forty books set in the Land of Oz. Through Neill’s work, a connection may be made to Winsor McCay (*Little Nemo in Slumberland*, 1907), especially in terms of proficient draftsmanship. Shanower is indeed an expert draftsman, meticulously realizing

buildings and household goods; chariots and ships; landscape, including natural features and plants; and even animals.

The series' high realism has remained consistent over the years of publication. Within the framework of that consistent realism, Shanower achieves great dynamism in visual narrative. The dynamic range is great, from visually simple depictions involving few lines (an emotionally revealing close-up on a character's face, for example) to much busier depictions involving many shapes as if in motion (a visually chaotic battle scene, for example). Because of Shanower's clarity of line, even the busiest scenes are not confused but, rather, depict confusion.

The series is given narrative ebb and flow through such devices as careful selection of scenes, deliberate pacing, and framing of "shots," including paneling that varies according to the needs of the narrated moment. Some readers have found the pacing relatively slow; there is a lot of speech, but there is no narration within the story, only in front and back matter.

### Themes

Perhaps the central theme of *Age of Bronze* is the fraught relationship between individual desire and collective duty. Similar to the ancient Greek epics and tragedies that inspired the comics, Shanower explores how the smallest human actions and interpersonal relations are related to the large-scale events in human history, especially military action. Shanower distinguishes his version of the story by focusing not on a single hero but rather on many characters. Given that shifting focus, the status of any one character as a story's "hero" or protagonist becomes problematic. A central effect of Shanower's wide focus on so many characters, then, is to make ironic the importance accorded by tradition to any single character or even set of characters. In this way, the comic emphasizes that all characters are not merely fulfilling public roles but are people with inner lives.

Although many characters are made to suffer unwillingly as a result of decisions made by traditional heroes, all the characters are depicted as being in full possession of their capacities to think and to act. Their

free will is affected not only by larger forces but also by their own personalities and changing moods.

Another central theme is a person's capacity to change. This realistic and modern psychological view distinguishes Shanower's version of the story from those of antiquity, in which characters are subject to emotional forces operating from the outside, including in the form of actions performed by the gods.

### Impact

*Age of Bronze* is an ongoing publication; as a result, any impact is only beginning and, thus, hard to gauge. At the time of its first publication, it was a remarkable departure for Image Comics in content, style, and tone. More generally, it may be considered alongside a trend in comics to adapt classic or otherwise well-known works of literature; it is unclear whether the success of *Age of Bronze* has helped to spur an ongoing revival of interest in that trend. Issue 77 of the original U.S. run of *Classics Illustrated* (1941-1971) adapted the *Iliad* (c. 750 B.C.E.; English translation, 1611). *Age of Bronze* may also be related to an upswing of interest in Greek and Roman classics in the comics field, which began with Frank Miller's *300* (1998).

*Age of Bronze* has been received positively, not only by the comics industry and by the press but also in the more specialized market consisting of students and teachers of the classics. Attention paid to *Age of Bronze* by classicists encourages a consideration of the comic as part of "classical reception," less as influencing other works than as itself part of a broader, popular-culture trend toward the adaptation of classical material into various media and genres. From this perspective, *Age of Bronze* may be considered alongside adaptations of the classics not only into comics but also into motion pictures, such as *Troy* (2004) and *Alexander* (2004), and into television, such as *Rome* (2005-2007) and *Spartacus* (2010- ).

Benjamin Stevens

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**See also:** *The Cartoon History of the Universe; Maus: A Survivor's Tale; 300*