

# ARCHAEOLOGY & COMICS

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WHEN WE TALK ABOUT COMIC BOOKS, WE OFTEN THINK OF A PRODUCT TARGETED ON A VERY YOUNG AUDIENCE, IF NOT KIDS.

WHEN THE PUBLISHERS OF "VATIA", I.E. NOT SPECIALIZED IN BANDE DESSINÉE, DECIDE TO GO FOR A COMIC BOOK ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGY...

... USUALLY THEY HAVE THAT TYPE OF READERS IN MIND.

THEREFORE, THE PARADIGM COMIC BOOKS/KIDS IS A DOMINANT ONE AND HARD TO CHALLENGE.



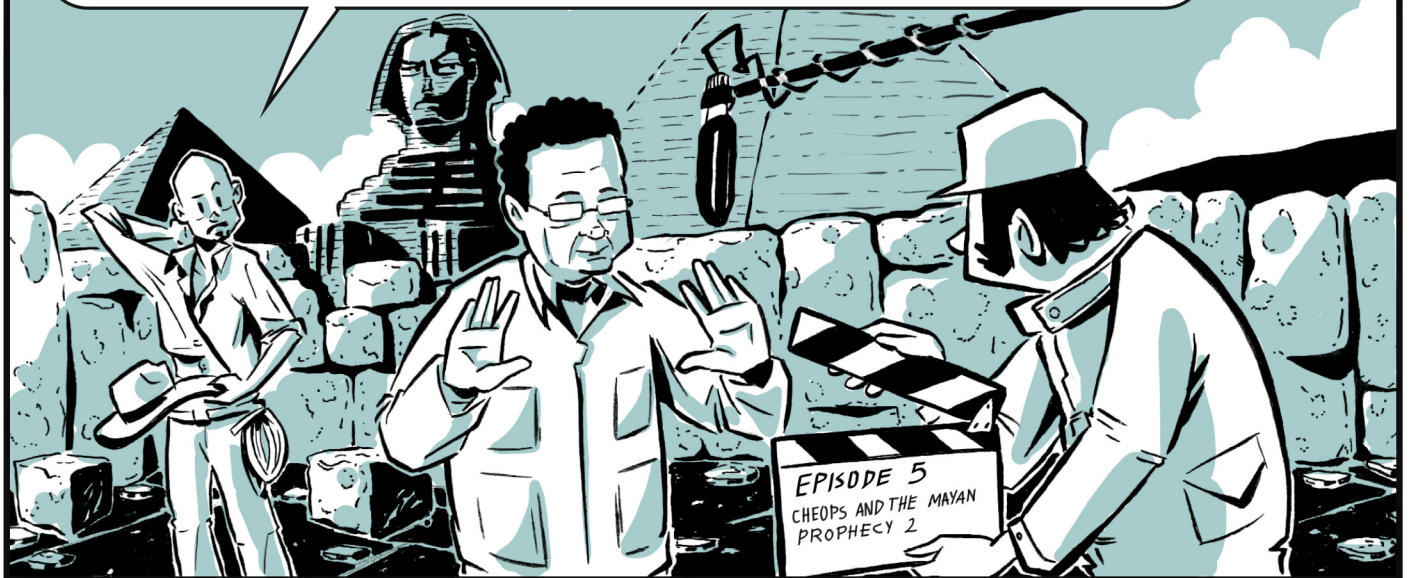
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PUBLIC IMAGINATION OFTEN ASSOCIATES ARCHAEOLOGY TO ICONIC FIGURES, SUCH AS INDIANA JONES...



...THUS VERY RARELY ARCHAEOLOGY IS CONSIDERED AS A SCIENCE, MOST LIKELY AS SOMETHING ADVENTUROUS THAT ANYONE CAN PRACTICE SIMPLY BY READING A COUPLE OF BOOKS.



AS IN THE EQUATION COMIC BOOKS/ KIDS, CONFINING ARCHAEOLOGY TO A NON-SCIENCE ON THE EDGE OF IMPROVISATION IS EVIDENTLY WRONG.



NEVERTHELESS, HOW CAN COMIC BOOKS REALLY HELP TO DISSEMINATE AMONG AN ADULT AUDIENCE THE IDEA OF ARCHAEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE?





OVER THE LAST YEARS, COMIC BOOKS HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE LEADING PUBLISHING UNDERTAKINGS.



GRAPHIC JOURNALISM OR COMIC JOURNALISM, THOUGH I'D RATHER CALL IT "REALITY COMICS"...



... ENABLED US TO SEE, NOT JUST READ, THE WAR IN BOSNIA, THE REAL SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND MOST RECENTLY ALSO IN BOTH SYRIAN AND IRAQI KURDISTAN.



WE CAN THEREFORE ARGUE THAT OVER THE LAST DECADES, AT THE TURN OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM, COMIC BOOKS HAVE RISEN TO THE RANK OF INFORMATION MEDIA.





IT SHOULDN'T THEN COME AS A SURPRISE THAT THE LARGEST BODY OF RESEARCH IN ITALY, THE CNR, COUNTS AMONG ITS PUBLICATIONS A JOURNAL TITLED "COMICS & SCIENCE"...



... EDITED BY ROBERTO NATALINI, DIRECTOR OF THE ISTITUTO PER LE APPLICAZIONI DEL CALCOLO "M. PICONE"...



...AND ANDREA PLAZZI, ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT ITALIAN EDITOR IN THE COMIC BOOKS FIELD.



COMIC BOOKS, THUS, COULD ALSO BE A TOOL TO ILLUSTRATE ARCHAEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE IN ITS MULTIPLE ASPECTS.





A TOOL TO EXPLAIN  
THE METHODOLOGY AND THE  
FIELDWORK



THE PROBLEM  
IS TO FIND AUTHORS  
WITH RELEVANT EXPERTISE  
IN THE FIELD AS WELL AS  
VISUAL COMMUNICA-  
TION-SAVVY...

... BUT ALSO  
ARCHAEOLOGY-SPECIALIZED  
PUBLISHERS OPEN TO INNOVATE  
THEIR EDITORIAL  
CONCEPT.

LUCKILY, WE LIVE  
IN A TIME WHERE WE  
HAVE EASY ACCESS TO THE  
MOST POWERFUL MEANS  
OF COMMUNICATION  
EVER.



THE INTERNET, THE WORLD WIDE WEB, IS THE PLATFORM WHERE TO DEVELOP AND EXPERIMENT HOW TO TELL THE STORY OF AN EXCAVATION THROUGH COMICS WITH A WIDER AUDIENCE IN MIND...

... KNOWING THAT THE PRESENCE OF IMAGES FREE THE AUTHOR FROM THE DESCRIPTION AND ALLOW TO KEEP THE SCRIPT FOCUSED ONLY ON THE INTERPRETATION.



Clearly, this is just an introduction and the real potential of comic books to disseminate scientific research still goes largely untapped.