

= The Adventures of Totor =

The Adventures of Totor , Chief Scout of the Cockshafers (French : Les Aventures de Totor , C.P. des hannetons) is the first comic strip series by the Belgian cartoonist Hergé , who later came to notability as the author of The Adventures of Tintin series . It was serialised monthly from July 1926 to summer 1929 in Belgian scouting magazine Le Boy Scout Belge , with a nine month break in 1927 . The plot synopsis revolved around the eponymous Totor , a Belgian boy scout who travels to visit his aunt and uncle in Texas , the United States . Once there , he comes across hostile Native American tribes and gangsters , each of whom he outwits , before returning to Belgium .

Like the comics of Christophe , which were common in Western Europe at the time , the series is a text comic , consisting of pictures with separate captions , although Hergé had begun to experiment with the use of speech bubbles throughout , something influenced by American comics . In 1929 , Hergé created the character of Tintin for the new story , Tintin in the Land of the Soviets , which would be largely based on Totor . Literary critics have expressed mixed views on the narrative and artwork .

= = Characters and story = =

Totor leaves Brussels to go and visit his uncle Pad Hatt and aunt Save Hatt in Texas , the United States . Along the way he is pulled overboard by a shark and then thrown onto an American submarine which takes him to New York City . Totor is awed by the skyscrapers and is unintentionally hit by a car which flings him into a passing stranger who turns out to be a criminal named John Blood . After Totor receives a \$ 5 @ , @ 000 reward for the gangster he takes a train to his uncle 's ranch in Rolmopcity . His uncle picks him up at the station and on their way back a group of Native Americans hold them up . Totor manages to distract the Natives and the two of them escape . However , a few hours later at the ranch , the same tribe kidnaps Totor in revenge . Standing tied to a torture stake Totor is made into a target for knives , axes and arrows . One of the arrows cut the ropes binding him and when the Chief draws close to scalp the young boy , Totor digs his feet into the Sachem 's stomach and makes a quick getaway into a river , pretending to have drowned . Underwater , he finds an old chest full of countless jewels and buries them at the base of a boulder .

A trapper in a canoe takes Totor up the river . Leaving the trapper , Totor goes back to the ranch to find it deserted . As he searches the place a hand reaches out and pulls him through a doorway where a fierce brawl ensues in the darkness . Totor is victorious , and throws his three captors out of the building . He discovers his uncle tied to a chair ; Totor frees him , and Pad tells his nephew that the bandits kidnapped his aunt Save . Totor suddenly has an idea to use the treasure he found as a ransom for his aunt . The two of them set out to go fetch it , but along the way a criminal steals their map while they sleep . After discovering the loss of their jewels they follow the thief 's unique footprints for a few miles . When they see another set of footprints join the first and then head up into some mountains , Totor continues on his own . Having eluded several Native sentries he spies the chest in the hands of the Chief . After recovering the box and outrunning the Natives back to his uncle , they hurriedly head home . There they find a ransom note from the leader of the bandits , Jim Blackcat , saying to meet them under a big fir tree that day or they would kill his aunt . Totor rushes to the rendezvous where he overwhelms the criminals and orders them to tell him where they are keeping his aunt hostage . After a heroic rescue and an emotional reunion between his aunt and uncle , he finds out that it is time for him to go back to Belgium . Once back , he tells everyone of his adventures and wistfully yearns for more .

= = Publication = =

Aged 12 , Georges Remi ? who later became best known under the pen name Hergé ? joined the Boy Scout brigade attached to Saint @-@ Boniface School in his native Brussels , becoming troop leader of the Squirrel Patrol and earning the name " Curious Fox " (Renard curieux) . With the

Scouts , he travelled for summer camps in Italy , Switzerland , Austria and Spain , and in the summer of 1923 his troop hiked 200 miles across the Pyrenees . His experiences with Scouting would have a significant influence on the rest of his life , sparking his love of camping and the natural world , and providing him with a moral compass that stressed personal loyalty and keeping one 's promise . His Scoutmaster , Rene Weverbergh , encouraged his artistic ability , and published one of Remi 's drawings in the newsletter of the Saint @-@ Boniface Scouts , Jamais Assez (Never Enough) ; his first published work . When Weverbergh became involved in the publication of Boy @-@ Scout , the newsletter of the Federation of Scouts , he published more of Remi 's illustrations , the first of which appeared in the fifth issue , from 1922 . Remi continued publishing cartoons , drawings and woodcuts in subsequent issues of the magazine , which was soon renamed Le Boy @-@ Scout Belge (The Belgian Boy Scout) . During this time , he experimented with different pseudonyms , using " Jérémie " and " Jérémiades " before settling on " Hergé " , the pronunciation of his reversed initials (R.G.) , a name that he first published under in December 1924 .

Les Aventures de Totor , C.P. des hannetons began serialisation in Le Boy @-@ Scout Belge in July 1926 , and would continue to appear in the magazine until July 1929 . The meaning of the name has been translated differently ; Hergé biographer Pierre Assouline translated it as " The Adventures of Totor , C.P. of the June Bugs " , while Tintinologist Harry Thompson instead translated it as " The Adventures of Totor , patrol leader of the Cockchafer " , but conversely , biographer Benoît Peeters had it as " The Adventures of Totor , patrol chief of the Scatterbrains " . (" hanneton " is French for Cockchafer , a type of beetle , but also the French for " scatterbrain ") . Hergé had hoped that being the author of an ongoing comic strip would improve his job prospects , for at the time he was beginning to develop a reputation as a designer of postcards , stationary , and advertisements . Rather than representing an example of a comic as the medium would come to be understood in the following decade , The Adventures of Totor consisted of square boxes containing illustrations with the captions written separately underneath , as was the style found in French comic creator Christophe 's works La Famille Fenouillard (The Fenouillard Family) and Sapeur Camembert (Sapper Camembert) . Initially using four boxes per page , as the series progressed this was increased to six and then eight , with each page ending on a cliffhanger .

Hergé did not make use of speech bubbles to convey into the comic , an innovation that was yet to become widespread in Europe , and instead his captions were accompanied by captions of three to five lines long . He would begin to add simple speech bubbles into the series , stating simple comments like " Eureka ! " , " Bang ! " , and " Hip ! Hip ! Hip ! Hurrah ! " . Hergé later noted that " From time to time ... I risked a timid question mark , or perhaps a few stars , when , for example , a character was punched . I must have seen that in L 'Étante or Les Belles Images , the illustrated papers of the time . " Hergé had come under the influence of other comic strips , such as those of the French author Alain Saint @-@ Ogan , and British comic magazine The Rainbow . He was also influenced by the contemporary American comics that reporter Léon Degrelle had sent back to Belgium from Mexico , where he was stationed to report on the Cristero War . These American comics included George McManus 's Bringing Up Father , George Herriman 's Krazy Kat and Rudolph Dirks 's Katzenjammer Kids . Totor 's button nose was influenced by the illustrations in Bringing Up Father .

In creating the series , he was also heavily influenced by the films of Charlie Chaplin and Harry Langdon , which he had enjoyed in childhood . This influence was evident in his decision to sign some of the images with the signature " Hergé Moving Pictures " or " Hergé , Director " , and giving many of them titles such as " United Rovers presents a great comic film : Les Aventures de Totor , C.P. des hannetons " and " United Rovers presents a stupendous film . " He had continued writing and drawing installments in the series during his military service in 1926 , but in early 1927 ceased producing the series for nine months as he focused on other projects , only returning to it in late 1927 , when he included a résumé of the series at the start .

Gaining work for the conservative newspaper Le Vingtième Siècle (" The Twentieth Century ") , in January 1929 he began serialisation of Tintin in the Land of the Soviets , the first of The Adventures of Tintin , in the newspaper 's children 's supplement , Le Petit Vingtième (The Little Twentieth) . Tintinologist Michael Farr described the character of Totor as a " natural prototype " for Tintin , while

literary critic Jean @-@ Marie Apostolidès thought that Hergé " adopted his former hero to the new circumstances " . The Tintinologists Jean @-@ Marc and Randy Lofficier thought that graphically , Totor was " virtually identical " to Tintin . The early installments of Tintin in the Land of the Soviets and The Adventures of Totor were contemporary with each other . Hergé decided that he wanted to focus on the new character , bringing the Totor story to an end in July 1929 , when he had the main character return to Belgium . In all , the series had lasted for 26 pages . The Adventures of Totor would continue to influence his new series , as the encounters with cowboys and Native Americans would subsequently be reused in the third installment in The Adventures of Tintin , Tintin in America , although Thompson commented that the latter was " a great improvement " on Totor .

= = Critical analysis = =

Tintinologist Harry Thompson described Totor as " a brave , resourceful young character " , noting that in several years he would " metamorphose " into Tintin . He nevertheless thought that the text was " slightly rambling and uninspired . " Hergé biographer Pierre Assouline described the Totor story as being " very Boy Scout in spirit and clearly a prefiguration of Tintin . " He nevertheless had mixed views of the illustrations , commenting that the lines were " awkward , hesitant , incomplete , but the movement , rhythm , and above all , the humor is apparent . " Another biographer , Benoît Peeters , thought that the intrigue of the series was " extremely fragmented " because the main goal was to string gags and fight scenes together rather than to develop a plot . He commented that although by the early 21st century it appeared " puerile " , being " a long way " from the formula of The Adventures of Tintin , it was nevertheless " an important step toward the modern comic strip " .

Tintinologist Phillipe Goddin considered the series to be " a milestone " , describing it as " full of promise " and containing " plenty [sic] of humour , rich in developments " . The Tintinologists Jean @-@ Marc and Randy Lofficier commented that " Everything that made Tintin what it later became was seminally present in Totor " , including the artistic style , the pace of the story , the use of humour , and the manner in which it imitated motion pictures . They also commented that Totor read like " an adult was retelling one of those early American western serials ... to a group of children . On the one hand he is exciting the children , but on the other he is winking at the adults as if to say , " you and I know this is not serious . " "

= = Hommages and pastiches = =

An artist named Stoko created a comic series titled Les Nouvelles Aventures de Rotor : C.P. des Hameçons (The New Adventures of Rotor : Patrol Leader of the Hooks) .