

= King Ottokar 's Sceptre =

King Ottokar 's Sceptre (French : Le Sceptre d 'Ottokar) is the eighth volume of The Adventures of Tintin , the comics series by Belgian cartoonist Hergé . Commissioned by the conservative Belgian newspaper Le Vingtième Siècle for its children 's supplement Le Petit Vingtième , it was serialised weekly from August 1938 to August 1939 . Hergé intended the story as a satirical criticism of the expansionist policies of Nazi Germany , in particular the annexation of Austria in March 1938 (the Anschluss) . The story tells of young Belgian reporter Tintin and his dog Snowy , who travel to the fictional Balkan nation of Syldavia , where they combat a plot to overthrow the monarchy of King Muskar XII .

King Ottokar 's Sceptre was a commercial success and was published in book form by Casterman shortly after its conclusion . Hergé continued The Adventures of Tintin with Land of Black Gold until Le Vingtième Siècle 's forced closure in 1940 , while the series itself became a defining part of the Franco @-@ Belgian comics tradition . In 1947 , Hergé coloured and redrew King Ottokar 's Sceptre in his distinctive ligne @-@ claire style with the aid of Edgar P. Jacobs for Casterman 's republication . King Ottokar 's Sceptre introduces the recurring character Bianca Castafiore , and introduced the fictional countries of Syldavia and Borduria , both of which reappear in later stories . The story was adapted for both the 1956 Belvision Studios animation Hergé 's Adventures of Tintin and for the 1991 Ellipse / Nelvana animated series The Adventures of Tintin .

= = Synopsis = =

Having discovered a lost briefcase in a park , Tintin returns it to its owner , the sigillographer Professor Hector Alembick , who informs the reporter of his plans to travel to the Balkan nation of Syldavia . Tintin discovers secret agents spying on him and follows those responsible to a nearby Syldavian restaurant . An unknown man agrees to meet with Tintin , but is found unconscious . Shortly after , the reporter receives a threatening note and is then the target of a bomb attack ; but survives the latter when police detectives Thomson and Thompson intercept the bomb . Suspecting that these events are linked to Syldavia , Tintin decides to accompany Professor Alembick on his forthcoming visit to the country . On the plane journey there , Tintin notices Alembick acting out of character , and suspects that an imposter has replaced him . Reading a brochure on Syldavian history , Tintin theorises that the imposter is part of a plot to steal the sceptre of the Medieval King Ottokar IV from the current King Muskar XII before St. Vladimir 's Day , thus forcing him to abdicate .

Forcibly ejected from his airplane by the pilot , Tintin informs local police of his fears regarding the plot ; but the police captain is part of the conspiracy , and organises an ambush . Tintin evades this , and escapes as a fellow @-@ passenger of the opera singer Bianca Castafiore . Leaving the car to evade Castafiore 's singing , Tintin is arrested again and survives another assassination attempt before arrival in Klow on foot . There , he meets the King 's aide @-@ de @-@ camp , Colonel Boris ; but Boris is also a conspirator and organises a further unsuccessful assassination attempt aimed at Tintin .

The next morning , Tintin personally warns the King about the plot ; whereupon Tintin and Muskar rush to Kropow Castle , where the sceptre is kept , to find that the imposter Alembick has smuggled it out of the building to his accomplices . With the aid of Thomson and Thompson , who have recently arrived in Syldavia , Tintin pursues the thieves , and is able to prevent the sceptre being carried over the border into neighbouring Borduria . A letter obtained from one of the thieves , reveals that the plot has been orchestrated by Müsstler , a political agitator who means Borduria to annex the country . In Borduria , Tintin commandeers a fighter plane and flies to Klow , but the Syldavian military shoot him down . He continues to Klow on foot , and (with the help of Snowy) , restores the sceptre to the King . In thanks , the king makes Tintin a Knight of the Order of the Golden Pelican ; the first foreigner to receive the honour . Later , Tintin discovers that the imposter was Alembick 's twin brother , when the police arrest Müsstler and rescue Professor Alembick . Ultimately , he and the Thompsons return home by flying boat .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

Georges Remi ? best known under the pen name Hergé ? was employed as editor and illustrator of *Le Petit Vingtième* (" The Little Twentieth ") , a children 's supplement to *Le Vingtième Siècle* (" The Twentieth Century ") , a staunchly Roman Catholic , conservative Belgian newspaper based in Hergé 's native Brussels , formerly run by the Abbé Norbert Wallez , who had subsequently been removed from the paper 's editorship following a scandal . In 1929 , Hergé began *The Adventures of Tintin* comic strip for *Le Petit Vingtième* , revolving around the exploits of fictional Belgian reporter Tintin .

This was not the first Tintin adventure to draw specifically on contemporary events ; Hergé had for instance previously made use of the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria as a political backdrop for the setting in *The Blue Lotus* . Hergé had closely observed the unfolding events surrounding the expansionist policies of Nazi Germany . In producing this story , he was particularly influenced by the Anschluss , the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in March 1938 . The Munich Agreement and the subsequent Nazi invasion of the Sudetenland followed in October 1938 . Three weeks after King Ottokar 's *Sceptre* finished serialisation , Germany invaded Poland . By this point , the threat to Belgian sovereignty posed by Nazi expansionism was becoming increasingly clear .

Hergé claimed that the basic idea behind the story had been given to him by a friend ; biographer Benoît Peeters suggested that the most likely candidate was school and scouting friend Philippe Gérard , who had warned of a second war with Germany for years . Tintin scholars have claimed Hergé did not develop the names Syldavia and Borduria himself ; instead , the country names had supposedly appeared in a paper included in a 1937 edition of the *British Journal of Psychology* , in which the author described a hypothetical conflict between a small kingdom and an annexing power . Reportedly , the paper , by Lewis Fry Richardson and entitled " General Foreign Policy " , explored the nature of inter @-@ state conflict in a mathematical way . Peeters attributed these claims to Georges Laurenceau , but said that " no researcher has confirmed this source " . Instead , a paper by Richardson entitled " Generalized Foreign Politics : A Story in Group Psychology " was published in *The British Journal of Psychology Monograph Supplements* in 1939 , but did not mention Syldavia or Borduria . In any case , given the publication date , it is unlikely that it was an influence on King Ottokar 's *Sceptre* .

Hergé designed Borduria as a satirical depiction of Nazi Germany . Hergé named the Bordurian political leader " Müsstler " from the surnames of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and Italy 's National Fascist leader Benito Mussolini . The name also had similarities with the British Union of Fascists ' leader Oswald Mosley and the National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands ' leader Anton Mussert . Hergé referred to Müsstler 's agents as the Iron Guard , thereby naming them after the real Iron Guard , a Romanian fascist group that sought to oust King Carol II and forge a Romanian @-@ German alliance . The Bordurian officers wore uniforms based on those of the German SS , while the Bordurian planes are German in design ; in the original version Tintin escapes in a Heinkel He 112 , while in the revised version this is replaced by a Messerschmitt Bf 109 . Hergé adopted the basis of Borduria 's false flag operation to take over Syldavia from the plans outlined in Curzio Malaparte 's *Tecnica del Colpo di Stato* (" The Technique of a Coup d 'Etat ") .

Syldavia 's depiction was influenced by the costumes and cultures of the Balkan region , as well as those of neighbouring Romania and Albania . The mosques that appear in Hergé 's Syldavia are based on those found in the Balkans , while the appearance of the Syldavian village , featuring red @-@ tiled roofs and minarets , may have been specifically inspired by the Bosnian town of Mostar . The black pelican of Syldavia 's flag is similar to Albania 's black eagle . Romania is the only European country to which pelicans are native , and Syldavia 's mineral rich subsoil could be taken as a reference to the uranium deposits found under Romania 's Carpathian Mountains . The name Syldavia may be a composite of Transylvania and Moldavia , two regions with historical ties to

Romania . Czech , Slovak , and Bohemian history influenced the Syldavian names , while several medieval Bohemian kings were the inspiration for the name " Ottokar " . The Polish language influenced Hergé 's inclusion of " -ow " endings to Syldavian place names , while Polish history paralleled Hergé 's description of Syldavian history . The Syldavian language used in the book had French syntax but with Marollien vocabulary , a joke understood by the original Brussels @-@ based readership .

However , despite its Eastern European location , Syldavia itself was partly a metaphor for Belgium , with Syldavian King Muskar XII physically resembling King Leopold III of Belgium . Hergé 's decision to create a fictional East European kingdom might have been influenced by Ruritania , the fictional country created by Anthony Hope for his novel *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) and which subsequently appeared in film adaptations in 1913 , 1915 , 1922 , and 1937 . Many places within Syldavia are visually based on pre @-@ existing European sites : the Diplodocus in the Klow Natural History Museum is based on the one in the Museum für Naturkunde , Berlin ; the Syldavian Royal Palace is based on both the Charlottenburg Palace , Berlin and the Royal Palace of Brussels ; and Kropow Castle is based on Olavinlinna Castle , constructed in fifteenth century Savonia - a historical province of the Swedish Kingdom , located in modern @-@ day Finland . For the revised version , Kropow Castle was drawn with an additional tower , inspired by Vyborg Castle , Russia . The United Kingdom also bore at least one influence on Syldavia , as King Muskar XII 's carriage is based on the British Royal Family 's Gold State Coach .

= = = Original publication = = =

King Ottokar 's Sceptre was first serialised in *Le Petit Vingtième* from 4 August 1938 to 10 August 1939 under the title *Tintin En Syldavie* (" Tintin in Syldavia ") . It would prove to be the last Tintin adventure to be published in its entirety in *Le Petit Vingtième* . From 14 May 1939 , the story was also serialised in the French Catholic newspaper , *Cœurs Vaillants* . In 1939 , Éditions Casterman collected the story together in a single hardcover volume ; Hergé insisted to his contact at Casterman , Charles Lesne , that they hurry up the process due to the changing political situation in Europe . The Nazi ? Soviet Molotov ? Ribbentrop Pact was signed the day Hergé delivered the book 's remaining drawings ; finishing touches included the book 's original front cover , the royal coat of arms for the title page , and the tapestry depicting the Syldavian 's 1127 victory over the Turks in " *The Battle of Zileheroum* " on page 20 . Hergé suggested that for this publication , the story 's title be changed to *The Scepter of Ottokar IV* ; Casterman changed this to *King Ottokar 's Sceptre* .

King Ottokar 's Sceptre introduced the recurring character of Bianca Castafiore to the series , who appears alongside her pianist Igor Wagner . It also witnessed the introduction of antagonist Colonel Jorgen , who reappears in the later Tintin adventures *Destination Moon* and its sequel *Explorers on the Moon* . The Alembek brothers ' inclusion echoes the Balthazar brothers ' inclusion in *The Broken Ear* .

After the conclusion of *King Ottokar 's Sceptre* , Hergé continued *The Adventures of Tintin* with *Land of Black Gold* until Germany placed Belgium under occupation in 1940 and forced the closure of *Le Vingtième Siècle* . The adventure *Land of Black Gold* had to be abandoned .

= = = Second version , 1947 = = =

The story was redrawn and colourised in 1947 . For this edition , Hergé was assisted by Edgar Pierre Jacobs , an artist who worked as part of Studios Hergé . Jacobs oversaw changes to the costumes and background of the story ; in the 1938 version , the Syldavian Royal Guards are dressed like British Beefeaters , while the 1947 version has them dressed in a Balkanised uniform . Jacobs also inserted a cameo of himself and his wife in the Syldavian royal court , while in that same scene is a cameo of Hergé , his then @-@ wife Germaine , his brother Paul , and three of his friend 's - Édouard Cnaepelinckx , Jacques Van Melkebeke , and Marcel Stobbaerts . Hergé and Jacobs also inserted further cameos of themselves at the bottom of page 38 , where they appear as uniformed officers . While the character of Professor Alembick had been given the forename of

Nestor in the original version , this was changed to Hector for the second ; this had been done so as to avoid confusion with the character of Nestor , the butler of Marlinspike Hall , whom Hergé had introduced in The Secret of the Unicorn . Editions Casterman published this second version in book form in 1947 .

= = = Subsequent publications and legacy = = =

King Ottokar 's Sceptre became the first Tintin adventure to be published for a British audience when The Eagle serialised the comic in 1951 . Here , the names of Tintin and Milou were retained , although the characters of Dupond and Dupont were renamed Thomson and Thompson ; the latter two names would be adopted by translators Leslie Lonsdale @-@ Cooper and Michael Turner when they translated the series into English for Methuen Publishing in 1958 .

Casterman republished the original black @-@ and @-@ white version of the story in 1980 , as part of the fourth volume in their Archives Hergé collection . In 1988 , they then published a facsimile version of that first edition .

= = Critical analysis = =

Harry Thompson described King Ottokar 's Sceptre as a " biting political satire " and asserted that it was " courageous " of Hergé to have written it given that the threat of Nazi invasion was imminent . Describing it as a " classic locked room mystery " , he praised its " tightly constructed plot " . Ultimately , he deemed it one of the best three Tintin adventures written before World War II , alongside The Blue Lotus and The Black Island . He also thought it noteworthy that in 1976 , archaeologists discovered a sceptre belonging to a 13th @-@ century King Ottokar in St. Vitus Cathedral , Prague . Hergé biographer Pierre Assouline believed that the story had the atmosphere of Franz Lehár 's The Merry Widow , with " added touches " from the films of Erich von Stroheim and Ernst Lubitsch . Fellow biographer Benoît Peeters thought that it exhibited " a political maturity " and " originality " . Further , he felt that Hergé was able to break free from the " narrative limits [of] ... too much realism " by the use of Syldavia as a setting .

Jean @-@ Marc Lofficier and Randy Lofficier called King Ottokar 's Sceptre " a Hitchcockian thriller " which " recaptures the paranoid ambience " of Cigars of the Pharaoh . They compared the pace of the latter part of the story to that of Steven Spielberg 's Indiana Jones films before noting that despite the " horrors of the real world " that are present with Borduria 's inclusion , they do not interfere in " the pure escapist nature of the adventure " . Ultimately they awarded it three stars out of five .

Michael Farr opined that the adventure has " a convincingly authentic feel " due to the satirical portrayal to Nazi Germany , but that this was coupled with " sufficient scope for invention " with the creation of Syldavia . He compared it to Hitchcock 's The Lady Vanishes . Farr preferred the colour version assembled with E.P. Jacobs 'aid , however . Deeming it " particularly successful " , he thought that it was " one of the most polished and accomplished " adventures in the series , with a " perfectly paced and balanced " narrative that mixed drama and comedy successfully .

Literary critic Jean @-@ Marie Apostolidès of Stanford University asserted that the inclusion of the Iron Guard evoked Colonel François de La Rocque 's Croix @-@ de @-@ Feu . Noting that the figure of Müssler was " the Evil One without a face " , he expressed disbelief regarding Hergé 's depiction of Syldavia , as there were no apparent economic problems or reasons why Müssler 's anti @-@ monarchist conspiracy was so strong ; thus , " mass revolution remains schematic " .

Literary critic Tom McCarthy identified several instances in the story that he argued linked to wider themes within the Adventures of Tintin . He identified a recurring host @-@ and @-@ guest theme in Alembick 's visit to Syldavia , and believed that the theme of thieving was present in the story as Alembick 's identity is stolen . Another theme identified within the series by McCarthy was that of the blurring between the sacred and the political ; he saw echoes of this in King Ottokar 's Sceptre as the King has to wait three days before appearing to the Syldavian public on St. Vladimir 's Day , something that McCarthy thought linked to Jesus Christ and the Resurrection . McCarthy also

opined that a number of characters in the book visually resembled Captain Haddock , a character who would be introduced in the subsequent Tintin adventure , The Crab with the Golden Claws .

= = Adaptations = =

King Ottokar 's Sceptre was the first of The Adventures of Tintin to be adapted for the animated series Hergé 's Adventures of Tintin . The series was created by Belgium 's Belvision Studios in 1957 , directed by Ray Goossens and written by Greg . The studio divided King Ottokar 's Sceptre into six 5 @-@ minute black @-@ and @-@ white episodes that diverted from Hergé 's original plot in many ways . It was also adapted into a 1991 episode of The Adventures of Tintin television series by French studio Ellipse and Canadian animation company Nelvana . The episode was directed by Stéphane Bernasconi , and Thierry Wermuth voiced the character of Tintin .

Tintin fans adopted the Syldavian language that appears in the story and used it to construct grammars and dictionaries , akin to the fan following of Star Trek 's Klingon and J.R.R. Tolkien 's Elvish .