

= Explorers on the Moon =

Explorers on the Moon (French : On a marché sur la Lune) is the seventeenth volume of The Adventures of Tintin , the comics series by Belgian cartoonist Hergé . The story was serialised weekly in Belgium 's Tintin magazine from October 1952 to December 1953 before being published in a collected volume by Casterman in 1954 . Completing a story arc begun in the preceding volume , Destination Moon (1953) , the narrative tells of the young reporter Tintin , his dog Snowy , and friends Captain Haddock , Professor Calculus , and Thomson and Thompson who are aboard humanity 's first manned rocket mission to the Moon .

Developed in part through the suggestions of Hergé 's friends Bernard Heuvelmans and Jacques Van Melkebeke , Explorers on the Moon was produced following Hergé 's extensive research into the possibility of human space travel ? a feat that had yet to be achieved ? with the cartoonist seeking for the work to be as realistic as possible . Hergé continued The Adventures of Tintin with The Calculus Affair , while the series itself became a defining part of the Franco @-@ Belgian comics tradition . Critics have praised the illustrative detail of the book , but have expressed mixed views of the story . The volume was adapted for both the 1957 Belvision animated series , Hergé 's Adventures of Tintin , and for the 1991 animated series The Adventures of Tintin by Ellipse and Nelvana .

= = Synopsis = =

The synopsis continues a plot begun in Destination Moon .

Professor Calculus , Tintin , Snowy , Captain Haddock , and Calculus ' assistant Frank Wolff are aboard an atomic rocket @-@ powered spacecraft leaving the Earth bound for the Moon . Soon after takeoff they discover that the detectives Thomson and Thompson have accidentally stowed away onboard , putting a strain on the oxygen supply . The detectives accidentally turn off the nuclear motor , disrupting the artificial gravity and sending everyone floating until Tintin corrects the problem . They then suffered a relapse of the Formula 14 drug (seen in Land of Black Gold (1950)) , resulting in their hair growing rapidly in multiple colours . Calculus subsequently administers a cure . Haddock , who has smuggled whisky aboard the rocket , gets drunk and takes an impromptu spacewalk , during which he briefly becoming a satellite of the asteroid Adonis (at which point , Professor Calculus humorously says he will tell Earth that Adonis has a new satellite by the name of Haddock) but Tintin is able to rescue him .

The rocket lands in the Hipparchus Crater , with Tintin being the first human to step on the Moon . Three days later , Haddock , Wolff and Tintin take the battery @-@ powered tank to explore some stalactite caves in the direction of the Ptolemaeus Crater ; inside a cave Snowy slips into an ice @-@ covered chasm , but Tintin rescues him . Later aboard the ship , Tintin is overwhelmed by a third stowaway , Colonel Jorgen , a spy who had been smuggled aboard by Wolff , who has been blackmailed by a foreign power for which Jorgen works . With Wolff 's help , Jorgen seeks to hijack the ship and return it to Earth , but through emergency sabotage that cuts power to the engine , is foiled by Tintin .

Due to the strain on the oxygen supplies , the crew decides to abandon most of the equipment and to cut short the lunar stay . The repair work is completed slightly ahead of schedule , and the rocket cleared for lift @-@ off . Halfway to Earth , Jorgen escapes his bonds thanks to the detectives ' bungling and tries to kill Tintin ; Wolff seeks to prevent him , and in their struggle over a gun Jorgen is killed . When it is revealed that there will not be enough oxygen aboard for the crew to survive the journey , Wolff sacrifices himself by opening the airlock and floating out into space to his death . The crew fall unconscious but Tintin wakes long enough to set the rocket to auto @-@ pilot and it arrives back in Syldavia safely .

= = History = =

== Background ==

Hergé first devised the idea of sending Tintin on a mission to the Moon while he was working on *Prisoners of the Sun* (1949) . His decision to move into the field of science fiction might have been influenced by his friendly rivalry with his colleague Edgar P. Jacobs , who had recently had success with his own science fiction comic , *The Secret of the Swordfish* (1950 ? 53) . He decided that it would be a two @-@ volume story arc , as had proved successful with his earlier arcs , *The Secret of the Unicorn* (1943) and *Red Rackham 's Treasure* (1944) , and *The Seven Crystal Balls* (1948) and *Prisoners of the Sun* . He had initially intended on beginning this story after the culmination of *Prisoners of the Sun* , but both his wife Germaine Remi and his close friend Marcel Dehaye convinced him to proceed with *Land of Black Gold* (1950) , a story that he had previously left unfinished , instead .

Seeking advice on the story , Hergé consulted his friend Bernard Heuvelmans , who had authored the non @-@ fiction book *L 'Homme parmi les étoiles* (" Man Among the Stars ") (1944) . In autumn 1947 , Heuvelmans and Jacques Van Melkebeke developed a script for the story , which they gave to Hergé . This version based Calculus ' lunar expedition in a fictional location , Radio City , in the United States . It featured a return of Professor Decimus Phostle , a character who had previously appeared in *The Shooting Star* (1942) , but this time as an antagonist ; Phostle had sold the secrets of the mission in order to attain funds to buy a diamond for the actress Rita Hayworth . In early 1948 , Hergé produced two black @-@ and @-@ white pages of this version of the story before abandoning it . Hergé retained some elements of this original script in his finished version , namely the scenes in which Haddock drinks whiskey in a gravity @-@ free environment and that in which Haddock goes for a space walk and nearly becomes a satellite of Adonis , which appear on pages 5 and 8 of *Explorers on the Moon* . Nevertheless , Heuvelmans thought his influence on the story to be more significant , stating that " In going through the two books we [he and Van Melkebeke] really had the impression that it was what we had originally done at the beginning . In broad outline , that was it . "

Hergé hoped for the story to be as realistic as possible , and sought to eschew fantastical elements . In his own words , it contained " no moonmen , no monsters , no incredible surprises " . To ensure this realism , he collected a wide range of documents about rockets and space travel with which to conduct research . In this he was aided by Heuvelmans , who collected pictures of rockets and atomic research facilities for him . Hergé 's research archive included an article from the American magazine *Collier 's* which discussed how humanity could reach the moon , as well as books by Pierre Rousseau and Auguste Piccard . A further work that he used was *L 'Astronautique* (1950) , a book on putative space travel by the physicist Alexander Ananoff , with whom Hergé began a correspondence in April 1950 . He also visited the *Ateliers de Constructions Electriques de Charleroi 's* Center for Atomic Research , striking up a subsequent correspondence with its director , Max Hoyaux . Hergé incorporated much of this technical information into the story , but juxtaposed it with moments of humour to make it more accessible to his young readership .

According to literary critics Jean @-@ Marc Lofficier and Randy Lofficier , possible fictional influences on Hergé 's story include Jules Verne 's 1870 novel *Around the Moon* and the 1950 American film *Destination Moon* . Hergé was certainly inspired by a number of photographic stills from the *Destination Moon* film which had been published . The computer system at the Sprodj space centre was visually based upon the UNIVAC I , the first computer to be created for non @-@ military purposes . Hergé based his moon rocket on the designs of the V @-@ 2 rocket which had been developed by German scientists during World War II . The red @-@ and @-@ white checker pattern on Hergé 's rocket was based upon an illustration of a V @-@ 2 which Hergé had come upon in Leslie Simon 's 1947 book *German Research in World War II* . He commissioned the construction of a model rocket with detachable parts from his assistant Arthur Van Noeyen . He took the model to Paris where he showed it to Ananoff , asking him if it was a realistic representation of what a moon rocket might look like . He and his assistants then used the model from which to accurately sketch when producing the comic . Hergé introduced into the story the character of Boris Jorgen , who had previously appeared as an antagonist in *King Ottokar 's Sceptre* (1939) . He

added evidence for water on the moon at the advice of Heuvelmans .

= = = Publication = = =

On 7 September 1950 , Hergé broke off the story with the statement " end of part one " . He felt the need for a break from work , having fallen back into clinical depression . He and his wife Germaine went on holiday to Gland in Switzerland , before returning to Brussels in late September . Many readers sent letters to Tintin magazine asking why Explorers on the Moon was no longer being serialised , with a rumour emerging that Hergé had died . On 18 April 1951 , he published an open letter in the magazine explaining his absence as a result of illness caused by exhaustion and included an illustration of himself sprawled out on an armchair . As Hergé planned his return to work , covers of Tintin magazine announced the imminent return of the story . Explorers on the Moon would resume after an eighteen @-@ month hiatus , returning in the 9 April 1951 issue , accompanied with a summary of the story so far . Its final installment appeared on 31 December 1953 .

= = = Republication = = =

Upon the serial 's publication , Hergé faced criticism for including Wolff 's suicide in the story ; suicide was widely viewed as a sin in Catholic @-@ dominated Belgium . In deference to these critics , for the published book version he added Wolff 's line of " perhaps by some miracle I shall escape too " , to make the scene seem a less obvious suicide . Years later , Hergé expressed regret that he had capitulated on this issue . The story was collected together and published by Editions Casterman as On a Marché Sur La Lune in 1954 . Casterman were unhappy with this title , which translates as " They Walked on the Moon " , but Hergé resolutely refused to make a change .

= = Critical analysis = =

Jean @-@ Marc Lofficier and Randy Lofficier believed that the two @-@ part story " belongs " to Calculus as his " cosmic vision moves the story forward " . They further expressed the opinion that Wolff was a unique character in the Adventures of Tintin , suggesting that he is akin to a character from a John le Carré novel . Referring specifically to Explorers on the Moon , they opined that it was " a true epic of the human imagination " , believing that its depiction of the moon has " withstood the test of time " more than other " proto @-@ space exploration novels " . They felt that the moon adventure was " Hergé at his best ... a triumphant achievement on every level " , awarding both halves of the story five stars out of five .

Hergé biographer Pierre Assouline felt that the two moon adventures " mark a stage in the development of Hergé 's work " . Hergé biographer Benoît Peeters praised the " gradual introduction into the story of a real dimension of evil " as being something particularly effective . He also expressed the view that Wolff brings " a tragic note " to the story , comparing him to the characters in the stories of Graham Greene . He was critical of the two @-@ part story arc , stating that they had " neither the liveliness and dynamism " of The Secret of the Unicorn and Red Rackham 's Treasure , " nor the supernatural quality " of The Seven Crystal Balls @-@ Prisoners of the Sun .

Harry Thompson noted that Explorers on the Moon was widely regarded as Hergé 's " greatest artistic achievement " , describing the entire moon adventure as " a technical masterpiece " as a result of its " uncannily accurate " depiction of the moon . Thompson expressed his opinion that Explorers could be compared to the work of science @-@ fiction writers Jules Verne and H. G. Wells . Focusing on the scene in which the Thom (p) sons hair grows rapidly in bright colours , he stated that it provides an abrupt contrast with " the almost scholastic nature of the rest of the story " , and that it " injects a few bright splashes " into an otherwise " carefully restrained colour scheme " . Philippe Goddin praised the depiction of the rocket 's landing as " a magnificent spectacle , well worth the double space spread given by Hergé " , also highlighting what he perceived as the ending 's " unprecedented dramatic tension " .

In his psychoanalytical study of the Adventures of Tintin , the literary critic Jean @-@ Marie Apostolidès praised the Destination Moon @-@ Explorers on the Moon story arc for its " meticulous attention to scientific facts " , but added that this had also resulted in the story 's " rather pedagogical tone " . He added that in these stories , the main division was " no longer Good and Evil " as it had been in previous Adventures , but " Truth and Error " . Apostolidès opined that despite being a " fussy and somewhat ridiculous character " , through his scientific achievements Calculus grows to the " stature of a giant " in this arc , eclipsing Sir Francis Haddock (from The Secret of the Unicorn) as the series ' " founding ancestor " . He goes on to claim that in becoming the " sacred ancestor " , the voyage to the moon becomes " a mystical quest " with science as its guiding religion . Drawing comparisons between this arc and the Prisoners of the Sun story , he drew symbolic links between the scientific centre and the Inca Temple of the Sun , but noted that here Calculus was the " high priest " rather than the sacrificial victim as he had been in the previous story . Moving on to discuss the moon rocket in these stories , Apostolidès described it as a phallic object which penetrated the " virgin territory " of the moon . At the same time , he described the rocket as a " maternal belly " in which the space explorers slept . Commenting specifically on Explorers on the Moon he commented that the protagonists of the story reverted to childhood when exploring the moon , believing that they had treated it like a theme park .

Literary critic Tom McCarthy stated that in the Destination Moon @-@ Explorers of the Moon story arc , Calculus " embodies Hergé 's ... own wartime position , spun out into a post @-@ war environment " , representing a genius driven by his work whose activities are coincidental to national and political causes . He suggested that Explorers on the Moon was " perhaps both the most wildly adventurous and the most contemplative " installment in the series . He felt that the inclusion of Jorgen being smuggled aboard the rocket as a stowaway reflected the idea of the " stranger " penetrating the " home " , something which he thought was present in other Adventures . Commenting on the scene in which Haddock smuggles a whisky bottle inside the Guide to Astrology , he states " the text , in this case , is hollow , smuggling something else " , which he believed was a reversal of the appearance of a parchment hidden within a model ship in The Secret of the Unicorn .

= = Adaptation = =

In 1957 , the animation company Belvision Studios produced a string of colour adaptations based on Hergé 's original comics , adapting eight of the Adventures into a series of daily five @-@ minute episodes . Explorers on the Moon was the second to be adapted in the second animated series ; it was directed by Ray Goossens and written by Greg , a well @-@ known cartoonist who was to become editor @-@ in @-@ chief of Tintin magazine .

In 1991 , a second animated series based upon The Adventures of Tintin was produced , this time as a collaboration between the French studio Ellipse and the Canadian animation company Nelvana . Explorers on the Moon was the fifteenth story to be adapted and was divided into two twenty @-@ minute episodes . Directed by Stéphane Bernasconi , the series has been praised for being " generally faithful " to the original comics , to the extent that the animation was directly adopted from Hergé 's original panels .