

# **Art and Archaeology in the American Funny Pages**

## **Part VII**

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**Frontispiece:** Charles Schulz, *Peanuts*, 13 Oct., 1968.

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## Part III. Archaeology in American Cartoons and Comic Strips

### Introduction

#### Cavemen and Dinosaurs



Fig. 741. Paul Trap, *Thatababy*, 22 Feb., 2015.

To repeat a John Glaves-Smith observation I quoted in the Part I “Webcomics and Internet Memes” essay (cf. Fig. 51):

With the exception of precocious schoolboys and other specialists in the field, most of us find it hard to differentiate between the vast wastes of prehistory. While we do not really believe that early man hunted the brontosaurus, we tend to see them as part of the same world, distance having marred our powers of making distinctions. What the cartoonist does is to make a clarified image of our own confusions.

Many people view the past as if looking through the wrong end of a spyglass—it all looks so far away that it is hard to see what is closer in time to us and what is farther away. Many of us, like the mother in Paul Trap’s *Thatababy* comic strip (Fig. 741), are knocked off our feet when confronted with the immensity of evolutionary timespans.

I am not quite as sanguine as Glaves-Smith is in asserting that everyone knows early humans did not coexist with dinosaurs (cf. two Mike Peters “intertextual” references to the American television show, *The Flintstones*, Figs. 742–743). Nor do I think that cartoonists merely “make a clarified image of our own confusions” about antiquity. Cartoonists and comic strip artists have had much greater agency in creating

and perpetuating erroneous views of the past, such as the coexistence of cavemen and dinosaurs (cf. **Figs. 51, 54**), or cavemen inventing the wheel (cf. **Fig. 194**), or Paleolithic mating rituals involving cavemen knocking cavewomen over the head with clubs.



**Fig. 742.** Mike Peters, Editorial, *Dayton Daily*, 24 Feb., 2010.



**Fig. 743.** Mike Peters, *Mother Goose and Grimm*, 18 Nov., 2013.



Although we will explore these cartoon clichés about the Paleolithic past in greater detail in the “Nutty Stone Age” essay below, now that the issue of the coexistence of early humans and dinosaurs has come up, we continue with that here, straying into literature, movies, and comic books before coming back to cartoons.

The belief that humans had once interacted with prehistoric monsters seems to be a feature of nearly all human cultures. As Adrienne Mayor has suggested, many of these myths may have been sparked by the discovery of fossilized bones of extinct dinosaurs and other creatures. For example, a depiction on an ancient Greek vase of Herakles and Hesione battling the Trojan Ketos—a sea monster sent by Poseidon to

plague the people of Troy because their king had refused to honor the sea god—shows Herakles shooting arrows and the king's daughter Hesione throwing stones at what looks like the fossilized skull of an extinct Miocene giraffe (**Fig. 744**).



**Fig. 744.** Detail of the “Hesione Vase,” Late Corinthian column krater, ca. 550 B.C.E. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Such mythological stories aside, it is important to note that it was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that we began to understand the true antiquity of the earth and the relative dates of dinosaurs and humans. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the British geologist James Hutton introduced the concept of uniformitarianism—the idea that the same rate of geological change we see today was at play in the creation of the observable geological record. As popularized by Charles Lyell’s 1830 *Principles of Geology*, uniformitarianism implied that the earth was much older than the then generally accepted Biblical account of the earth being created in a single event, which the Bishop Ussher had calculated in 1650 as occurring on Oct. 22, 4004 BC. As this revolution in geological science was going on, the systematic study of “fossilized giant lizards” led to the pioneering paleontologist Richard Owen recognizing that many belonged to the same *taxa*, which, in 1842, he labeled “dinosaurs.” Along with this, the discovery of fossilized remains of Neanderthals in 1856, followed by the discovery of fossils of even earlier hominids in Africa and Asia, created the popular image of our earliest ancestors as “cavemen.” On the heels of these blows to Biblical creationism, Charles Darwin’s 1859 publication of *The Origins of Species*, followed by his 1871 *Descent of Man*, introduced the concept of evolution through natural selection, implying that the human species had slowly evolved from ape-like ancestors over a considerable time span.

It is within the context of this mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup>-century overturning of established beliefs about our human past that the genre of prehistoric fiction arose. [For an annotated bibliography of prehistoric fiction, cf. Trussel, 2009; cf. also Sétrin and Pozo, 2017.] As the literary historian Nicolas Rudrick has noted, prehistoric fiction explores our anxieties about the nature of human nature—our inherent aggressiveness, the emergence of our racial diversity, and the relationship of the sexes. Prehistoric fiction invariably depicts early humans as living in a dangerous world where they have to battle extinct monsters as well as having to contend with more primitive, ape-like, tribes. Such depictions of our human past as being a brutish, dog-eat-dog world reversed a view derived from Classical and Biblical sources which held that our modern world has degenerated from a “Golden-Age” Eden; these prehistoric fictions, instead, posit modernity as an on-going progression toward civilization from a barbaric past.



**Fig. 745.** Édouard Riou, Illustration for Jules Verne, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, 1864.



**Fig. 746.** Gilbert Gaul, Illustration for James De Mille, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, 1888.





**Fig. 747.** Robert L. Mason, Illustration for Frank Savile, *Beyond the Great South Wall*, 1901.



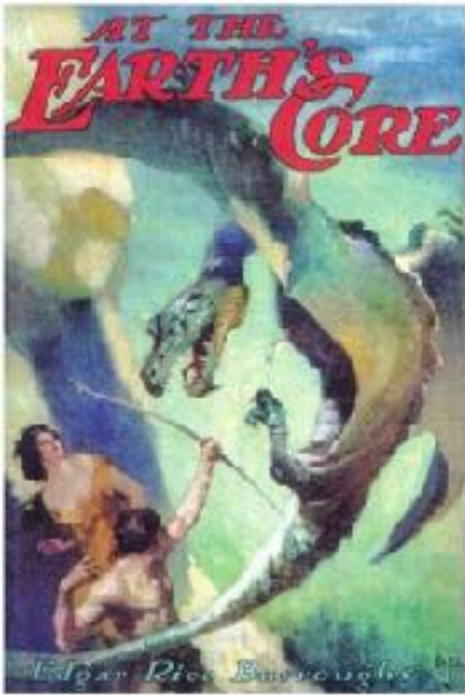
**" THE LOST WORLD."**

The Leader of the Explorers, with some of their Adventures.

**Fig. 748.** Harry Rountree, Illustrations for Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World*, 1912.

Given that the field of paleoanthropology—the study of fossilized human remains—originated in France, it is not surprising that the genre of “lost world” prehistoric fiction was pioneered by French authors. One of the earliest of these “lost world” stories was Jules Verne’s 1864 *Voyage au centre de la Terre* (translated as *Journey to the Center of the Earth* in 1871) in which the protagonists descend down volcanic tubes in Iceland to discover a subterranean world where, among other marvels, Jurassic-period ichthyosaurus and plesiosaurus continue to exist (**Fig. 745**); in keeping with Verne’s Catholicism and his desire not to appear to endorse Darwinian anti-creationism, the modern travelers to this “lost world” do not encounter early humans, other than to glimpse a 10-foot tall man herding mammoths. In contrast, in his 1888 story-within-a-story *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, the Canadian novelist James De Mille has his protagonist—a shipwrecked British sailor who chances (also via a volcanic tunnel) upon a lost world—encounter both prehistoric monsters as well as a band of death-worshipping primitive humans (**Fig. 746**). In a similar fashion, the British author Frank Savile’s 1901 novel *Beyond the Great South Wall*, has a group of explorers discover

a “lost world” of Mayans—inexplicably living in the Antarctic—who worship a carnivorous brontosaurus fond of human sacrifice (**Fig. 747**). In perhaps the best known work of prehistoric fiction, Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1912 *The Lost World*, also has British explorers chance upon a “lost world” inhabited by dinosaurs and humans, in this case a hidden plateau in the Amazon where a tribe of primitive humans is at war with a race of ape-men (**Fig. 748**).



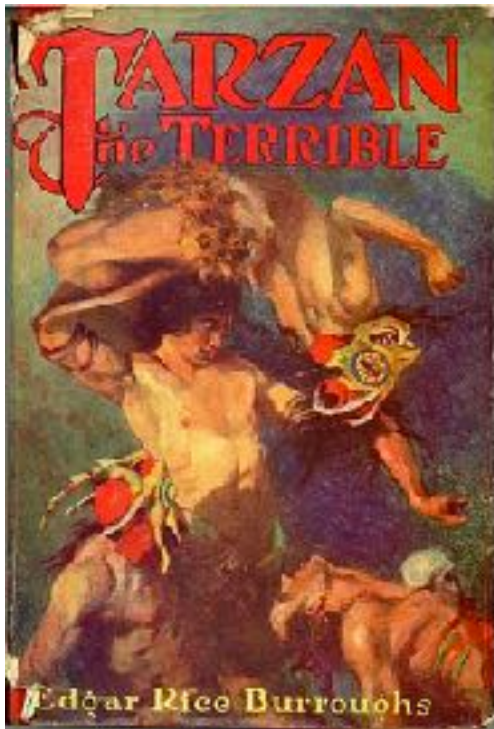
**Fig. 749.** J. Allen St. John, Cover art, Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *At the Earth’s Core*, 1922.



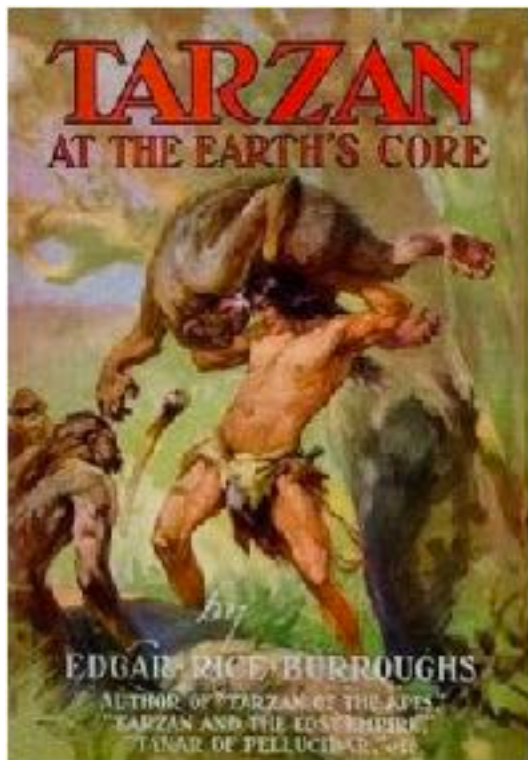
**Fig. 750.** J. Allen St. John, Cover art, Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *The Land that Time Forgot*, 1924.

Soon after Doyle’s novel was published, the American adventure writer Edgar Rice Burroughs used Jules Verne’s motif of a hidden world in a hollow earth for his *At the Earth’s Core*, the first in his Pellucidar series (**Fig. 749**) which was originally serialized in 1914 in the pulp magazine *All-Story Weekly* where Burroughs’ *Tarzan of the Apes* had appeared two years previously; in Burroughs’ Pellucidar, human miners drill deep into the earth to discover a world where a race of evil, intelligent flying dinosaurs, with the help of their ape-like servants, enslave primitive humans—including an attractive woman, Dian the Beautiful of Amoz, whom David Innes, the leader of the modern miners, weds after rescuing her from the clutches of the evil suitors Jubal the Ugly One and Hooja the Sly One. Following up on the success of his Pellucidar series, Burroughs penned *The Land that Time Forgot*, the first of a trilogy originally serialized in the *Blue Book Magazine* in 1918, in which a band of British sailors capture a German

U-boat only to be stranded on a South Pacific island where they encounter dinosaurs and primitive humans (Fig. 750).



**Fig. 751.** J. Allen St. John, Cover art and illustration for Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan the Terrible*, 1921.

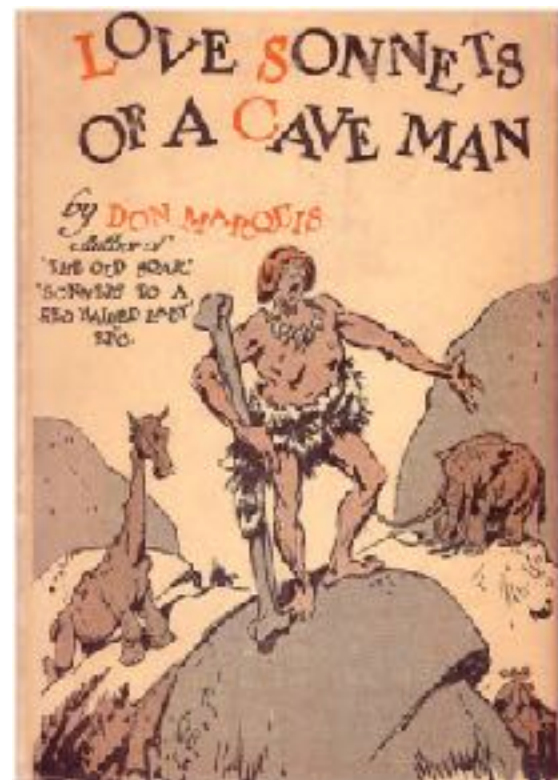


**Fig. 752.** J. Allen St. John, Cover art and illustration for Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, 1930.

In 1921, Burrough's introduced a "lost world" into his Tarzan series with *Tarzan the Terrible*, the eighth published Tarzan book; in this story, Tarzan tries to rescue Jane from her German captors and comes upon Pal-ul-don, a lost valley in Africa filled with dinosaurs and two different human races: the hairless and white skinned, city-dwelling Ho-don and the hairy and black-skinned, hill-dwelling Waz-don (Fig. 751). Nine years later, Burroughs combined his Tarzan and Pellucidar series with the cross-over novel *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, the fourth in the Pellucidar series; in this story, Tarzan is enlisted by Jason Gridley to rescue David Innes, the leader of the initial expedition to Pellucidar. Arriving at Pellucidar through a natural opening between the outer and inner world located at the North Pole, Tarzan and Gridley have to struggle with the prehistoric creatures and primitive tribes of the inner world; along the way, Gridley wins the love of a native cavewoman, Jana, the Red Flower of Zoram (Fig. 752).



**Fig. 753.** John Taine (Eric Temple Bell), *The Greatest Adventure*, 1929. (Ace Book edition, 1960).



**Fig. 754.** Don Marquis, *Love Sonnets of a Cave Man*, 1928.

Jumping on the pulp fiction prehistoric "lost world" bandwagon, the CalTech mathematician Eric Temple Bell, who wrote popular fiction under the pseudonym John Taine, published his 1929 *The Greatest Adventure*, a story featuring a beautiful young

woman aviator who joins her father’s scientific expedition to Antarctica that discovers traces of a lost civilization destroyed by its own monstrous creations (**Fig. 753**). In the previous year, the newspaper columnist, playwright, and humorous poet Don Marquis had taken a different tack, making fun of the prehistoric fiction genre with a series of satirical poems, *Love Sonnets of a Cave Man* (**Fig. 754**). One of his Petrarchan sonnets lampoons the cliché of the caveman physically subduing his mate:

When first I chased and beat you to your knees  
 And wried your arm and marked your temple bone  
 And wooed you, Sweet, and won you for my own,  
 Those were not hairless-chested times like these!  
 Wing’d saurians slithered down the charnel seas  
 And giant insects glistened, basked, and shone,  
 And snag-toothed ape-men fought with knives of stone –  
 And wise she-spouses mostly aimed to please!  
 But were not you the Primal Feminist  
 Ten hundred thousand years ago, my Love,  
 When we were first incarnate? I will say  
 Women Expressed themselves e’en then, Sweet Dove!  
 I do recall as if ‘twere yesterday  
 That time your teeth met through my dexter wrist.



If the idea that early humans and dinosaurs once intermingled was first promulgated in late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century “lost world” prehistoric fiction, the misconception firmly took root in American popular imagination when prehistoric humans and dinosaurs appeared together in the movies.



**Fig. 755.** Two stills from D. W. Griffith, *Brute Force* (Primitive Man), 1914.

“Dinosaurs” first hit the big screen in the U.S. in 1914 with the release of Winsor McCay’s animated cartoon *Gertie the Dinosaur* (**Figs. 796–797** below) and D. W.

Griffith's 1914 film *Brute Force* (also known as *The Primitive Man*), a story about a modern-day man who falls asleep after his girl friend leaves a party with another man and dreams of ". . . the good old days of brute force and marriage by capture!"—a dream in which the puny hero ("Weak Hands") invents stone-hafted clubs and the bow and arrow to rescue his woman ("Lily White") from "Brute Force" and the hairy apemen who had captured her; notable in this silly tale about our brutish past are the two "dinosaur" cameos (**Fig. 755**)—one using the so-called "Slurpasaur" technique of fitting out a crocodile with wings and a paper mache horn, the other using a crude stop-motion animation of a carnivorous *Ceratosaurus* that is inexplicably eating a tree.



**Fig. 756.** Still from Willis O'Brien, *RFD 10,000 BC*, Conquest Pictures, 1917.



**Fig. 757.** Still from Willis O'Brien, *Prehistoric Poultry*, Conquest Pictures, 1917.

The following year, Willis O'Brien went on to further develop stop-motion animation in a short film entitled *The Dinosaur and the Missing Link, a Prehistoric Tragedy*. O'Brien then came to the attention of Thomas Edison, who employed him to make two short films in 1917: *RFD 10,000 BC*—a silly tale of a prehistoric mailman, Henry Saurus, who delivers stone letters with a brontosaurus-drawn cart and who contends with Johnny Bearskin for the favors of the cavewoman Winnie Warclub (**Fig. 756**); and *Prehistoric Poultry*—an equally silly story of how a dinornis ("the ancestor of our modern chicken. It had long legs and a kind face") comes to the rescue of its owner (**Fig. 757**).



Fig. 758. Movie poster for *The Lost World*, First National Pictures, 1925.

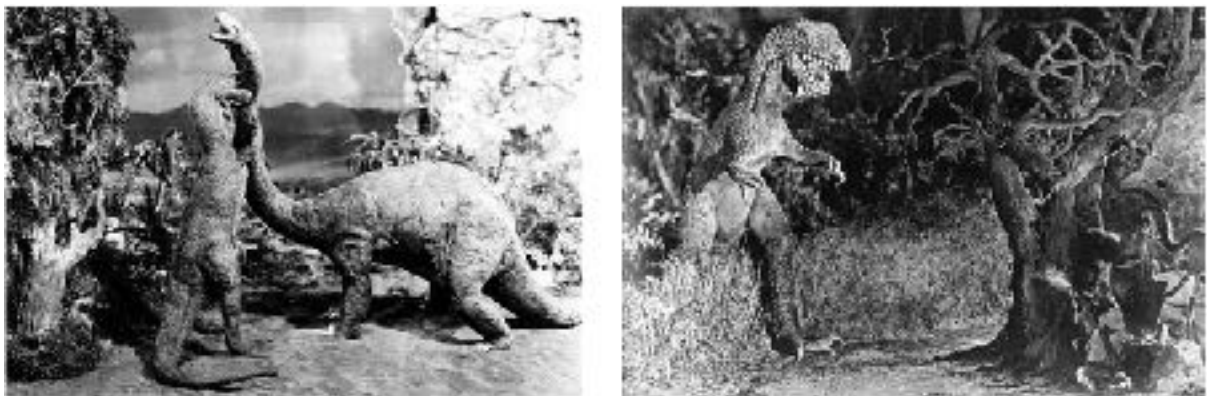


Fig. 759. Two stills from *The Lost World*, First National Pictures, 1925.

Following these successes, Willis O'Brien was employed to create the stop-motion animation for Harry O. Hoyt's 1925 film adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (Figs. 758–759). Whereas, for his earlier stop-motion animations, O'Brien had used manikins for his humans, in *The Lost World* he was able to combine his animations with re-projections of live-action shots—a technique that he would go on to use to great effect in the 1933 RKO movie, *King Kong* (Fig. 760), including scenes where the mighty Kong battles a Tyrannosaurus in front of a prone Fay Wray.



**Fig. 760.** Two still from *King Kong*, 1933.



**Fig. 761.** Two stills from the Buster Keaton 1923 movie, *The Three Ages*.

A stop-action animated dinosaur had also appeared in Buster Keaton's 1923 silent comedy movie, *The Three Ages*, where a brontosaurus carries him off at the end of the first part of a film which intertwines segments set in the prehistoric past, in ancient Rome, and in the Roaring Twenties—in each of which the scrawny Keaton overcomes the handsome bruiser Wallace Berry to win the favors of the winsome Margaret Leahy (**Fig. 761**). [We will return to the cliché of the caveman dragging off a cavewoman by the hair in the “Nutty Stone Age” essay below.]





**Fig. 762.** Movie Poster and production photograph, *One Million B.C.*, Hal Roach Studios, 1940.



**Fig. 763.** Tom Chantrell, Movie poster for *One Million Years B.C.*, Hammer Film Productions, 1966.

By affording the opportunity to titillate audiences with exotic dinosaurs—not to mention scantily clad starlets—movies set in a prehistoric past became perennial favorites in Hollywood. The cheesy 1940 Hal Roach Studios movie *One Million B.C.* used actors in rubber suits for its dinosaurs (**Fig. 762**) while the equally cheesy 1966 British Hammer Film Productions remake *One Million Years B.C.* (**Fig. 763**) used stop-action animation. Both films featured early humans battling a host of different types of hostile

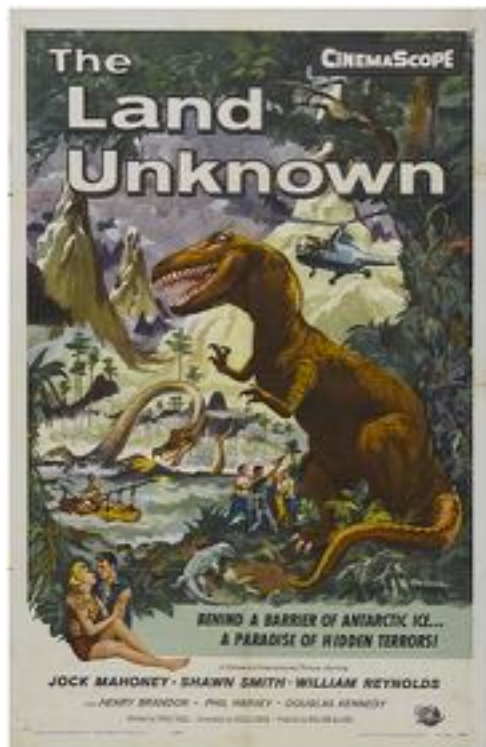
dinosaurs; in both, all of the members of the dark-haired primitive Stone tribe and the more advanced blond-haired Shell tribe are fully modern humans, in spite of the fact that the earliest *homo sapiens* did not emerge in Africa until around 200,000 years ago.



**Fig. 764.** Movie poster for *Unknown Island*, Universal Studios, 1948.



**Fig. 765.** Movie poster for *Two Lost Worlds*, Sterling Productions, 1951.



**Fig. 766.** Movie poster and promotional photograph for *The Land Unknown*, Universal Pictures, 1957.



In an age before CGI, making a dinosaur movie was both technologically challenging as well as expensive, and the raft of “B” movies made in the late 1940’s and in the 1950’s which featured “dinosaurs” consistently cut corners to bring their prehistoric monsters to the big screen. Universal Studio’s 1948 *Unknown Island* used actors in rubber suits for its dinosaurs (**Fig. 764**) in a story about another mysterious South Pacific island where dinosaurs still roamed and where, of course, a beautiful actress is threatened as her torn clothing becomes more and more revealing. The 1951 Sterling Productions *Two Lost Worlds* took an even cheaper route by reusing footage from the 1940 *One Million B.C.* film to portray the dinosaurs in its story about another dinosaur-infested island where a love triangle plays out as the men try to rescue the beautiful actress kidnapped by pirates (**Fig. 765**). For its story about an expedition to Antarctica where the crew’s helicopter crashes into a dinosaur-infested volcanic crater, and where, of course, the beautiful female reporter has to be rescued, Universal Studio’s 1957 *The Land Unknown* portrayed its dinosaurs using men in suits, lizard “Slurpasaur” stand-ins, and a mechanical puppet that cost so much that the film had to be shot in black-and-white rather than in color (**Fig. 766**).



**Fig. 767.** Movie poster for *The Lost World* 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1960.



**Fig. 768.** Movie poster for *The Land that Time Forgot*, Amicus Production, 1975.

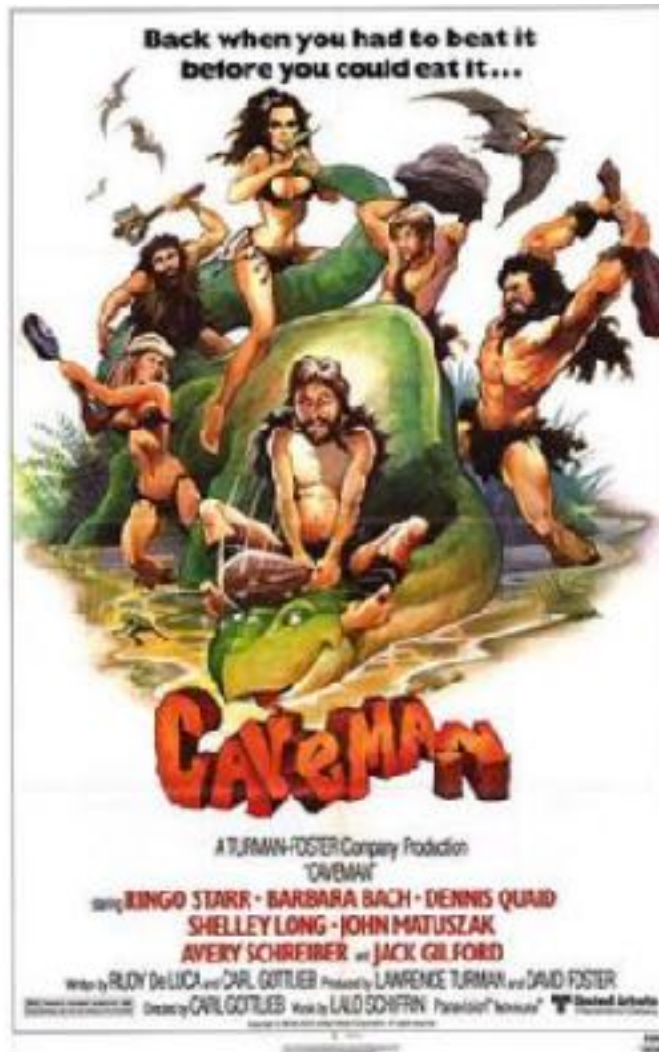


**Fig. 769.** Movie poster for *At the Earth's Core*, Amicus Production, 1976.



**Fig. 770.** Movie Poster for *Quest for Fire*, Cinema International Company, 1981.

Not surprisingly, movie studios have repeatedly adapted earlier works of prehistoric fiction, thus saving on the expense of creating original screenplays as well trying to cash in on the popularity of those works. In 1960, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox remade Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (**Fig. 767**); although Willis O'Brien was hired to create the animation for this film, budget constraints forced him to use live "Slurpasaur" lizards, iguanas, and crocodiles with attached miniature horns and fins rather than recreating the stop-action animation he had used in his 1925 version of the story. In 1975 and 1976, the British movie company Amicus Production put out adaptations of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Land that Time Forgot* and *At the Earth's Core* (**Figs. 768–769**). In 1981, the Canadian-French production company Cinema International adapted the Belgian author J. H.- Rosny's influential 1911 novel *La Guerre du Feu* (translated into English as *The Quest for Fire* in 1967), a story about the Ulam, a tribe of cavemen that has to contend with tribes of ape-like savages and primitive cannibals, although not with dinosaurs; the 1981 *Quest for Fire* film (**Fig. 770**), directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, was notable for the Ulam's prehistoric language invented by Anthony Burgess as well as for the movie's nudity and many sex scenes that were not part of the original novel.



**Fig. 771.** Movie Poster for *Caveman*, Turman-Foster Company, 1981.

The slapstick comedy *Caveman* (Fig. 771), which might be considered the death knell for popular prehistoric movies, came out in the same year that the *Quest for Fire* appeared. This comedy lampooned the genre with a film set in "One Zillion BC – October 9th," in which a scrawny outcast (played by Ringo Starr) and his band of misfits encounter hungry dinosaurs and an abominable snowman in a "nearby ice age," and along the way discover sedative drugs, learn how to make fire and use weapons, and invent cooking and music; naturally, in the end, the Ringo Starr character, after learning how to walk fully upright, gets the girl.



Dinosaurs and humans have also met each other in the pages of action comic books, where, as with most prehistoric fiction and movies, dinosaurs are depicted as hostile, threatening creatures. One such early example is the 1927 *Amazing Stories* version of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Land that Time Forgot* (Fig. 772).

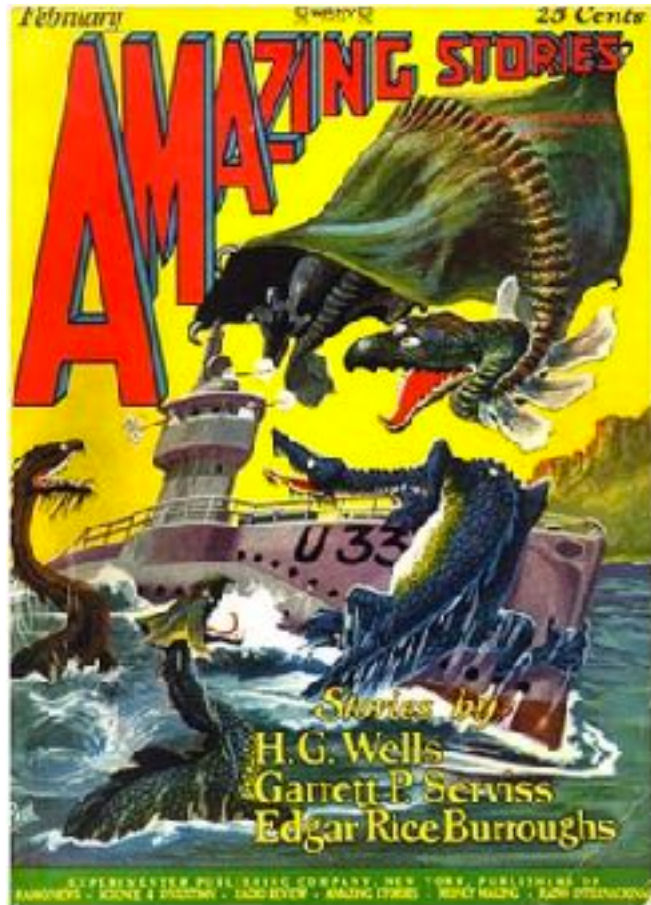


Fig. 772. Frank R. Paul, Cover art for *Amazing Stories*, Feb., 1927.

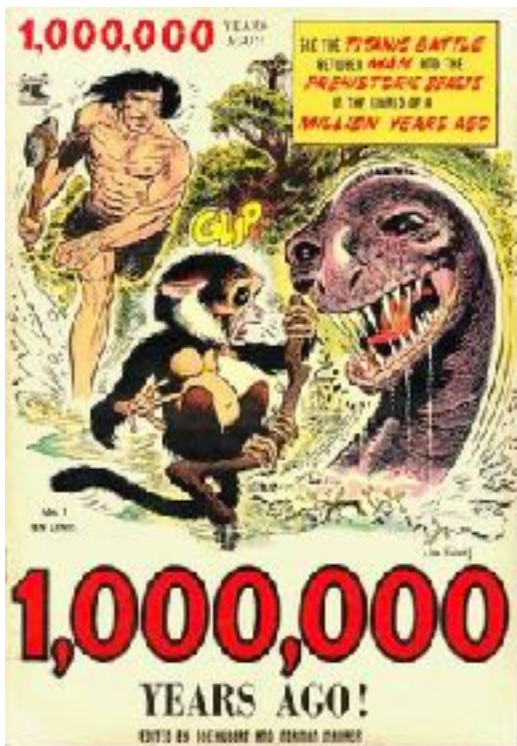


Fig. 773. Joe Kubert, Cover art for *One Million Years Ago!*, St. John's, 1953.



Fig. 774. Joe Kubert, Cover art for *Tor*, D.C. Comics, 1974.

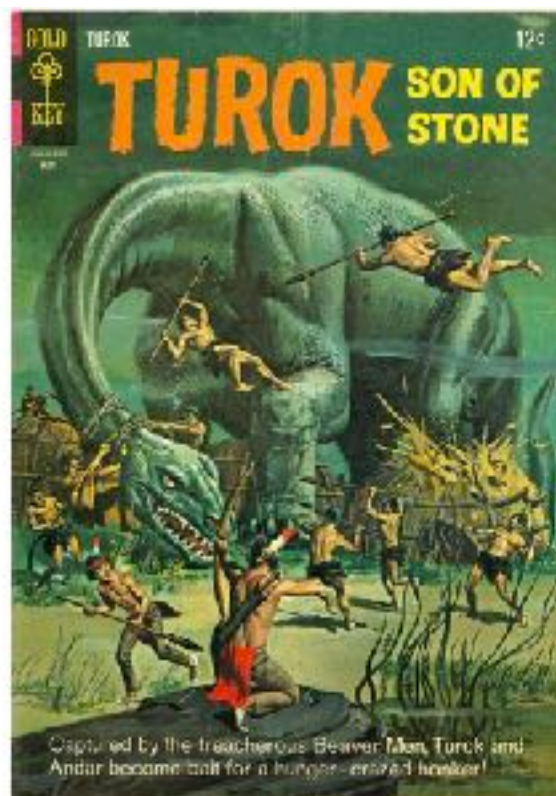
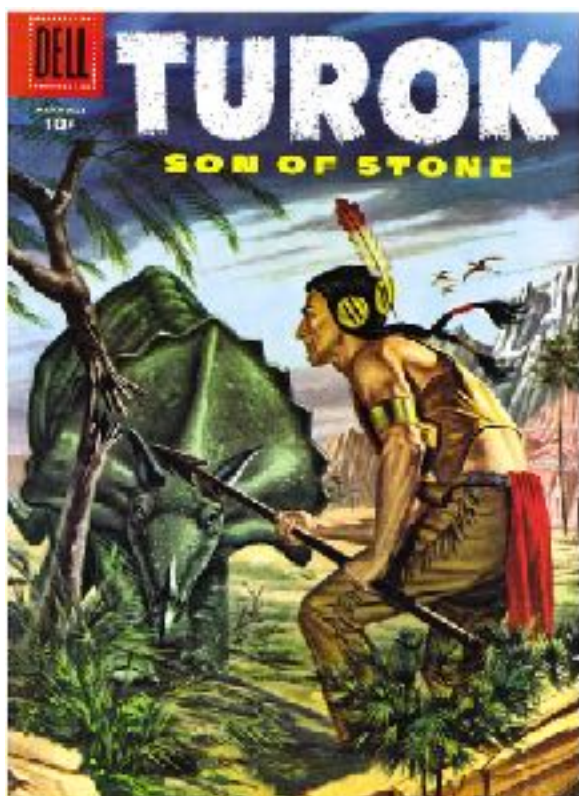


Fig. 775. *Turok, Son of Stone*, Dell Comics, 1956, and Gold Key Comics, 1966.

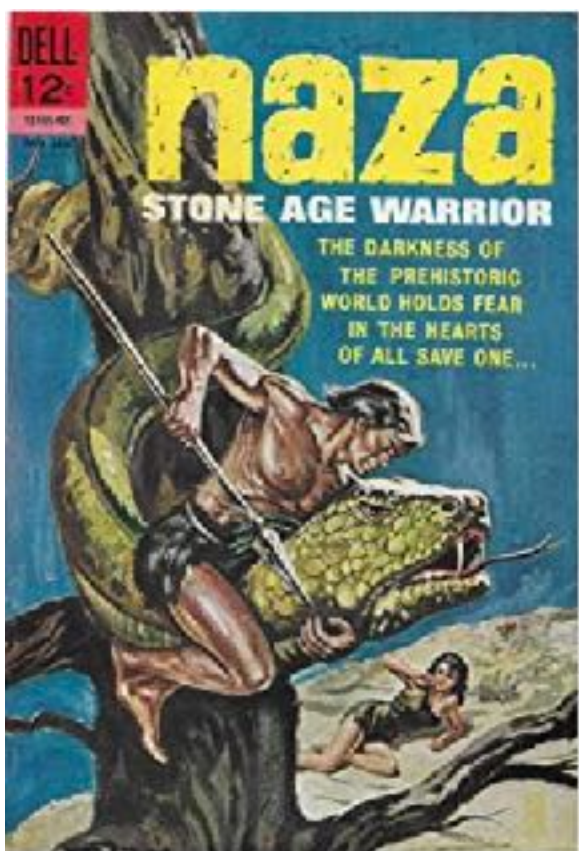


Fig. 776. Jack Sparling, Cover art, *Naza, Stone Age Warrior*, Dell Comics, 1964 and 1966.

By the 1950's, every major American comic-book publisher felt that it had to have a series with humans battling dinosaurs. The short-lived St. John Publication's of Joe Kubert's *One Million Years Ago!* comic book (**Fig. 773**) featured a noble savage, Tor, and his pet monkey Chee-Chee living among threatening dinosaurs. After a brief experiment of publishing it as a 3D comic book, St. John Comics stopped producing Kubert's *One Million Years Ago!* in 1954, although it was later picked up by D.C. Comics, which issued six editions of the retitled *Tor* from 1974 to 1975 (**Figs. 774** and **965**). The Western Publishing Company also jumped into the noble-savage-battling-prehistoric-monsters game in 1956 with *Turok, Son of Stone* (**Fig. 775**), a pre-Columbian Native American lost with his brother in a dinosaur-infested, isolated valley in the region of Carlsbad, New Mexico. After Western Publishing ended its relationship with Dell Comics in 1962, it continued to publish *Turok* under its new Gold Key label; in later years, Valient Comics repurposed *Turok* and his brother as 18<sup>th</sup>-century Native Americans fighting demons, dinosaurs, and aliens in a "Lost Land." (*Turok* was also made into a popular video game in 1997 and an animated cartoon in 2008.) In the meantime, Dell Comics, anxious to make up for its loss of *Turok*, published, between 1964 and 1966, nine issues of *Naza, Stone Age Warrior* (**Fig. 776**)—a tale of a pre-Columbian Native American warrior who tries to rescue members of his tribe—including, of course, a beautiful love interest—who were enslaved by another tribe. Not to be outdone, in 1964 Western Publishing's Gold Key label began publishing versions of Edgar Rice Burroughs *Tarzan the Terrible* (**Fig. 777**), which it put out again in 1968, together with a version of Burroughs' cross-over Pellucidar novel *Tarzan at the Earth's Core* (**Figs. 778–779**). For its entry into the dinosaur comic book market, DC Comics, on the other hand, employed Robert Kaningher and Ross Andru to create a new fantasy fictional world, "The War that Time Forgot,"—a story of World War II American soldiers fighting dinosaurs on a remote South Pacific island, published by DC in its *Star Spangled War Stories* label from 1960 to 1968 (**Fig. 780**).



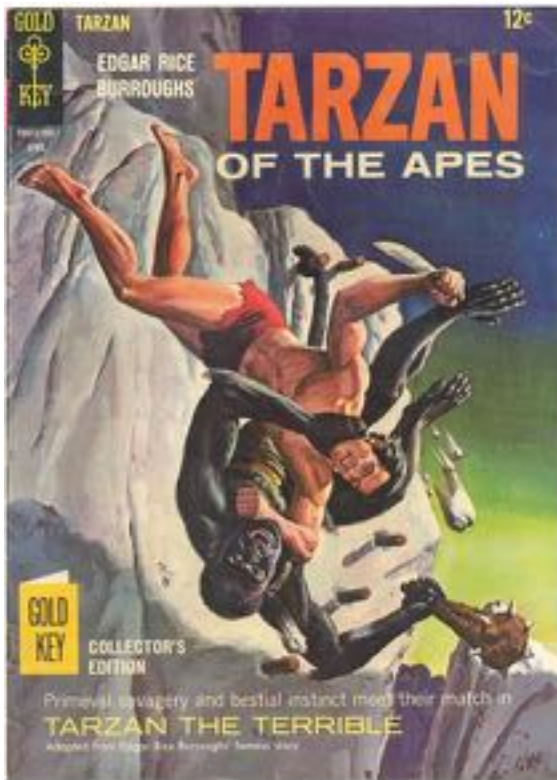


Fig. 777. *Tarzan of the Apes*, Gold Key Comics, No. 142 (June, 1964) and No. 146 (Oct., 1964).

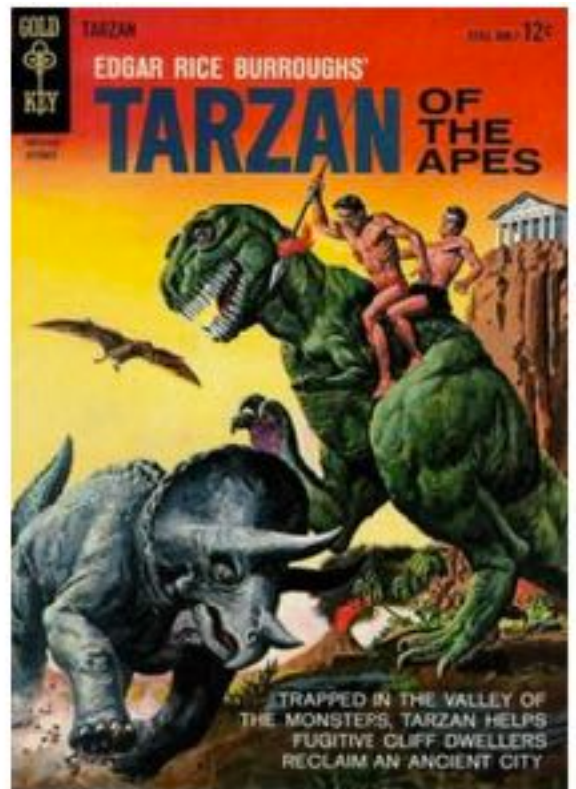


Fig. 778. Russ Manning, Cover art, *Tarzan of the Apes*, Gold Key Comics, Nos. 166-167 (July-Sept. 1968).



**Fig. 779.** Doug Wildey, Cover art, *Tarzan of the Apes*, Gold Key Comics, Nos. 179–181 (Sept.–Dec., 1968).

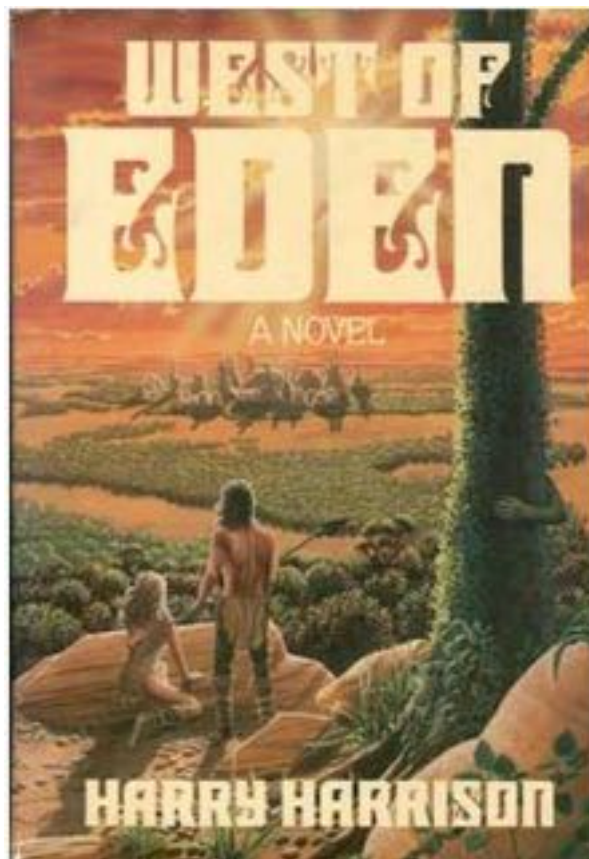


**Fig. 780.** Ross Andru and Mike Esposito, Cover art, *Star Spangled War Stories*, No. 92 (Sept. 1960), No. 103 (July, 1960), and No. 125 (March, 1966).



Before we turn to cavemen and dinosaurs in cartoons and comic strips after this perhaps overly-long excursus into literary, cinematic, and comic-book depictions of human-dinosaur interactions, a few general comments: One of the issues facing someone writing about early humans and dinosaurs is the setting. Some works, such as the *One Million BC* movies or the *Quest for Fire* novel and film, merely set their tale in a distant past. Most of these stories, however, take the form of a “Lost World” discovered in a remote part of the globe, usually in the South Pacific or Antarctica. Others, such as

the *Brute Force* movie, access the distant past through a dream—a premise that Jack London had used in his novel *Before Adam*, serialized between 1906 and 1907, and Charlie Chaplin had used in his 1914 comedy *His Prehistoric Past*. Harry Harrison, in his 1984 science-fiction novel *West of Eden* (**Fig. 781**), took a different tact, creating a “uchronía” alternate history; the premise of Harrison’s *Eden* trilogy is that the meteor which caused the Late Cretaceous extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago never hit the earth, and that, in Harrison’s alternate universe, a species of intelligent dinosaurs dominates the earth and threatens a hominid species evolved from New World monkeys.



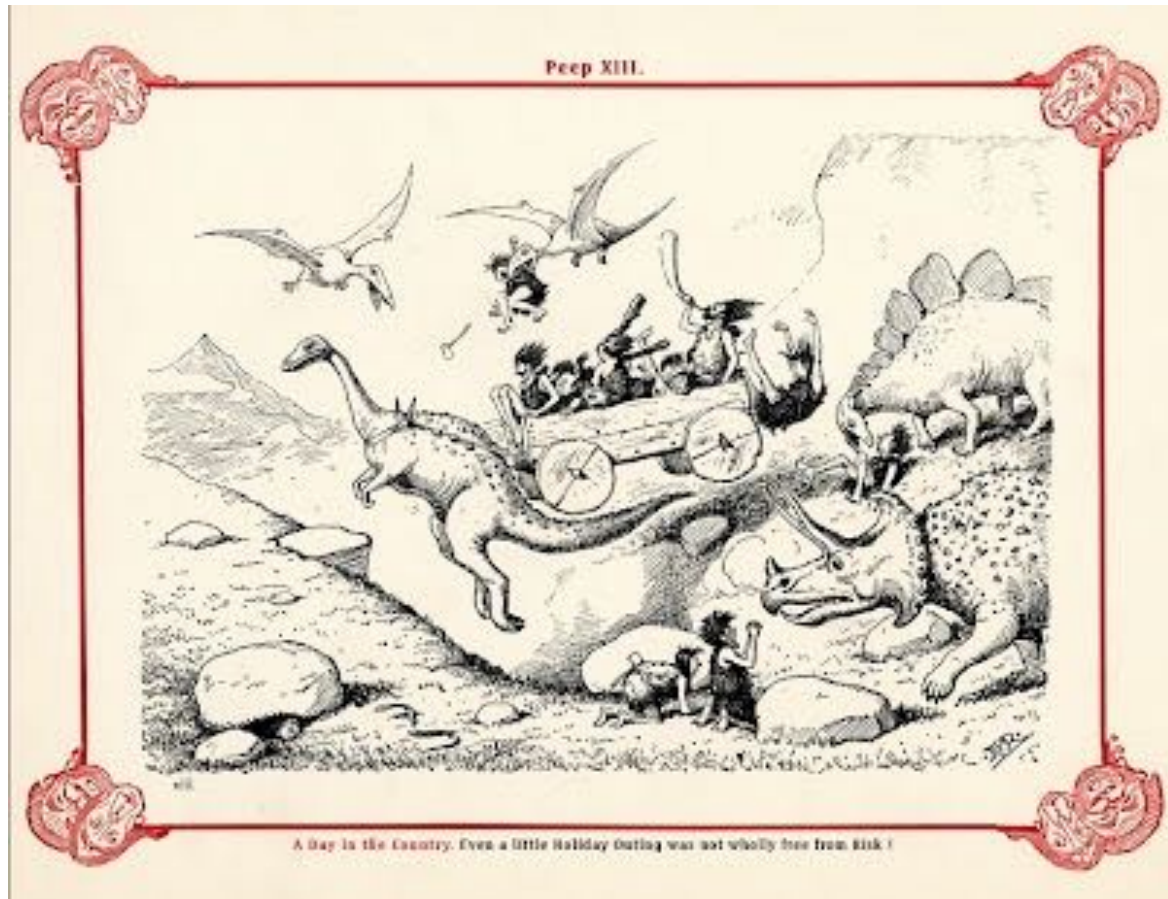
**Fig. 781.** David Schleinkofer, Cover art for Harry Harrison, *West of Eden*, 1984.

Another issue facing authors of prehistoric fiction is the plot; almost all opt for the format of boy-meets-girl/ girl-is-stranded-and-threatened-by-dinosaurs-and/or-primitive-tribemen-while-most-of-her-clothing-is-torn-off/ boy-rescues-girl. And then there is the question that most concerns us here—verisimilitude. While we might hope that most people are aware that dinosaurs went extinct tens of millions of years before the evolution of humans, most of us are willing to suspend disbelief as we do with any science fiction. As [Ray Harryhausen](#), the stop-motion animator of the *One Million Years*

B.C. movie, put it “I didn’t make the film for professors . . . who probably don't go to see these kinds of movies anyway.”



Unlike how human-dinosaur interactions are normally portrayed in other media, cavemen with dinosaurs is a cartoon cliché that, since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, has invariably been used for humorous effect.



**Fig. 782.** E.T. Reed, *Mr. Punch's Prehistoric Peeps*, 1894.

In what are perhaps the first cartoons about dinosaurs, Edward Tennyson Reed populated his “Prehistoric Peeps” vignettes—which originally appeared in *Punch* magazine and were later republished in book form in 1894—with a variety of dinosaurs alongside cavemen. Just as E.T. Reed did not expect that this chronological impossibility would detract from his satires of contemporary British culture, he also did not expect that his viewers would be disturbed that his dinosaurs—like those in the Trapp father’s mind-blowing timeline—come from widely different time periods. E.T. Reed’s Peep XIII, “A Day in the Country. Even a little Holiday Outing was not wholly free from Risk!” (**Fig. 782**), for instance, gives us an incongruously domesticated, cart-pulling, dinosaur that

appears to be some type of a Middle Jurassic megalosaurus (ca. 160 million years ago), around which we also see contemporaneous Jurassic-period pterodactyls (150.8 to 148.5 mya) and a stegasaurus (163.5 to 100.5 mya), together with a Cretaceous-period triceratops (68 mya)—the latter two herbivores incongruously attacking the early humans. [This cartoon may also be the earliest example of the erroneous cartoon cliché that cavemen invented the wheel!]



**Fig. 783.** Oskar Andersson, “Urmänniskan och Urhunden,” 1900.

Another early comic showing a caveman with a dinosaur is Oskar Andersson’s 1900 *Urhunden*, a set of humorous cartoons about a primitive man (“Urmänniskan”) and his pet dinosaur who somehow find themselves living in the modern world. The gags in these Swedish cartoons revolve around how the dinosaur *Urhunden* (“Ur Hound”), which the man passes off as an ancient type of dog, eats everything in sight. In **Fig. 783**, for instance, the caveman and dinosaur go into a museum, where the dinosaur devours a door, a statue, the chandeliers, a column, and a table and chair while the caveman tries to eat the cigar he is served at the café; after a guard comes to escort the pair out, the dinosaur disgorges everything he had eaten and tamely walks out just skin and bones.



**Fig. 784.** Thomas Starling Sullivant, "Missed the Boat," *Life Magazine*, 15 June, 1899.



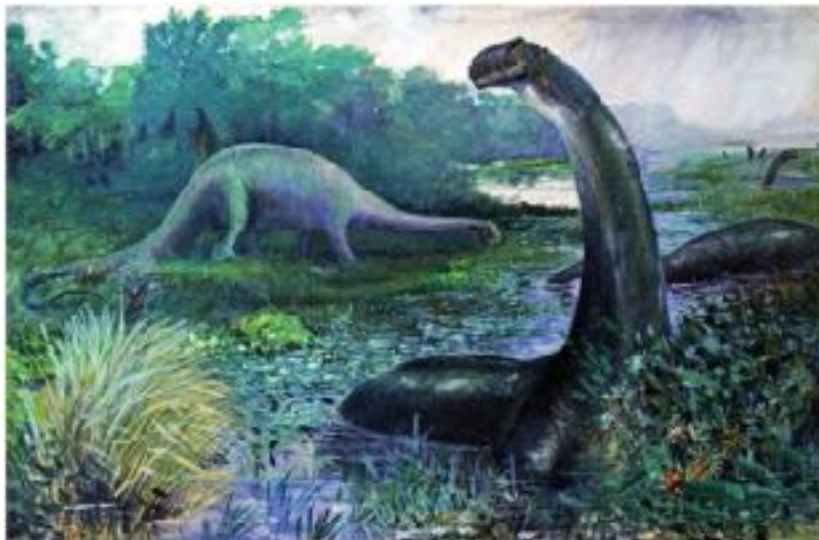
**Fig. 785.** Dan Regan, Hallmark Cards, 2009.



**Fig. 786.** NAD (Mark Godfrey), *Wildlife Cartoons Australia*, 2013.

An 1899 T. S. Sullivant *Life Magazine* cartoon (**Fig. 784**) humorously addresses the creationist's concern about the demonstrated antiquity of dinosaurs. Sullivant's suggestion—that dinosaurs went extinct because they were not included on Noah's Ark—is still held by some religious conservatives more than a century later! A Dan Regan Hallmark cartoon (**Fig. 785**), for instance, has been widely distributed on conservative religious websites and blogs; the Australian Mark Godfrey has given us a similar cartoon (**Fig. 786**), which, like Regan's Hallmark card, follows a common Noah's Ark cartoon cliché established by the century-old *Life* cartoon.

As Ulrich Merkl noted in his 2015 study *Dinomania*, the brontosaurus in Sullivant's cartoon are accurately rendered (although they would not have been able to scale cliffs!). Merkl attributes the change in how cartoon dinosaurs were depicted to the growing popularity among the general public of dinosaur displays and to the paintings of Charles R. Knight that were mounted in the New York Museum of Natural History and in Chicago's Field Museum (**Fig. 787**); whereas earlier depictions of dinosaurs resemble medieval dragons (e.g. Gilbert Gad's 1888 illustration, **Fig. 746**), later 20<sup>th</sup>-century cartoon dinosaurs tend to more closely conform to a scientifically accurate depiction.



**Fig. 787.** Charles R. Knight, Brontosaurus (*Apatosaurus*) and Diplodocus, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1898.



**Fig. 788.** Frederick Opper, Frontispiece to *Our Antediluvian Ancestors*, 1903.

Apparently influenced by E. T. Reed's "Prehistoric Peeps" cartoons, Fredrick Burr Opper created the first American caveman-dinosaur cartoons, "Our Antediluvian Ancestors," which initially appeared in William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* in July, 1900. And like Reed, Opper published a collection of his caveman-dinosaur comics in book form, the 1903 *Our Antediluvian Ancestors*. Opper's dinosaurs are sometimes just figures in the background, such as in the frontispiece to his book (**Fig. 788**). More often, however, Opper's dinosaurs are threatening creatures menacing his prehistoric cavemen (**Fig. 789**).





ILLUSTRATION NUMBER TWELVE

"I see Swooshnik's theory didn't work!"  
 ("But you tried!")  
 "Why, he claimed that the lowest Hominoids could be tamed by the power of his theory, and he said he was going to try it."



ILLUSTRATION NUMBER FIFTEEN

"Swooshnik is the most famous man in Ciffville!"  
 "Is that so?"  
 "Yes. He's started a 'Society for the Preservation of Grudly to Prehistoric Animals.' There he is now, sending Bismarper for 'Meat for His three Dinosaurs.'"



ILLUSTRATION NUMBER EIGHTEEN

"Poor Hominoid has had luck, hasn't he?"  
 "How so?"  
 "Why, his doctor ordered him to take sea baths for his health, and every time he goes he is chased out by one of those Hominoids!"



ILLUSTRATION NUMBER TWENTY ONE

"The professor says Swooshnik, Jerry, and all those other Hominoids are going to your cave!—I will cut up your whole family! What on earth are you laughing at?"  
 "Ha, ha, ha! There's nobody at home but my (cousin)!"

Fig. 789. Frederick Opper, Selection of *Our Antediluvian Ancestors*, 1903.



**Fig. 790.** Frederick Opper, “Our Antediluvian Ancestors,” 3 April, 1904. Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum, Ohio State University.

On other occasions, Frederick Opper seemed to have channeled Oskar Andersson’s *Urhunden* in presenting non-threatening, comic dinosaurs. An April, 1904, “Our Antediluvian Ancestors” comic strip (**Fig. 790**), for instance, gives us a humorously hungry dinosaur that, like Andersson’s *Urhunden*, devours a marble statue—in this case the armless Venus de Milo that Opper incongruously suggests had been sculpted some 20,000 years before the famous 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BCE statue now in the Louvre Museum. [Note that, in addition to telling the joke with speech bubbles and a labeled sign, Opper felt that, in this early example of the comic-strips format, it was necessary to number each of the panels and to use rhyming couplets to narrate his gag.]



**Fig. 791.** Willian A. Rodgers, *Harper's Weekly*, 11 Jan., 1902.

It is not clear if Winsor McCay had ever seen an *Urhunden* cartoon—Oskar Andersson committed suicide in 1906 at the age of 29—but McCay certainly knew Frederick Opper, especially after McCay had jumped ship from the *New York Herald* in 1911 to go work for William Randolph Hearst, for whom Opper had been working since 1899. Apparently caught up in the dinosaur craze Opper had started in the Hearst newspaper empire (**Fig. 791**), McCay also came up with a dinosaur that eats everything in sight. As McCay was developing his innovative techniques to create cartoon animations that he used to accompany him on his vaudeville shows, he drew a May, 1913, *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend* strip (**Fig. 792**) where a hunter, after eating cheese sandwiches, dreams of shooting at a tree-eating dinosaur which responds by swallowing a pile of boulders that it shoots back at him. A few months later, McCay followed this up with a number of *In the Land of Wonderful Dreams* strips (the title that copyright issues forced McCay to use to continue his *Little Nemo in Wonderland* strips after he left the *New York Herald*) where Flip, the African Imp, the Princess of Slumberland, and Nemo visit the island of pigmies, a “Land of the Antedivulians” populated by offensively stereotyped natives where Flip tames a “Distacuteus Mastadonius” and where brontosaurus-looking dinosaurs are used as taxis/elevators (**Figs. 793–795**).



# DREAM OF THE RAREBIT FIEND



IS THAT A BEAR STICKING HIS NOSE OUT FROM BEHIND THOSE BOULDERS?



NO, IT ISN'T. WHAT IN THE WORLD IS IT, ANYHOW?



YEP! I WILL KILL HIM JUST ONCE, FOR LUCK!



THIS WILL FINISH HIM!



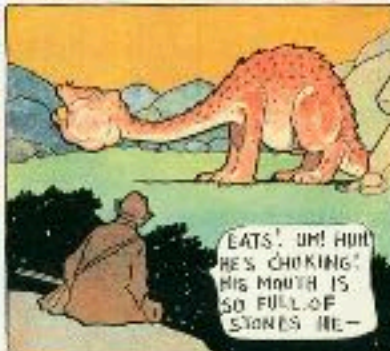
ILL HIT HIM IN A DIFFERENT SPOT!



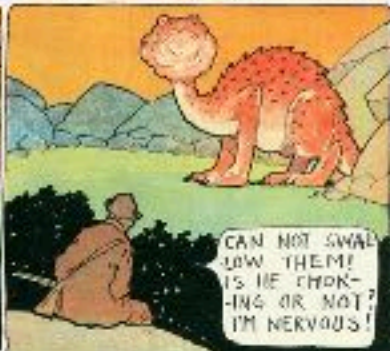
NOW, HE'S EATING THE LOOSE STONE LAYING AROUND. WILL I SHOOT?



AGAIN OR NO? NO, I WON'T! I'LL WATCH WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO AFTER HE—



EATS! UM! HUH! HE'S CHOKING! HIS MOUTH IS SO FULL OF STONES HE—



CAN NOT SWALLOW THEM! IS HE CHOKING OR NOT? I'M NERVOUS!



OH, HE'S BLOWIN' EM AT ME! OH!!!



OOOH! OWWWW! I'M SLEEPY! I THINK I'LL GO BACK TO CAMP. THAT CHEESE SANDWICH HAS MADE ME DROWSY!

SILAS

Fig. 792. Winsor McCay, *Dreams of a Rarebit Fiend*, 25 May, 1913.

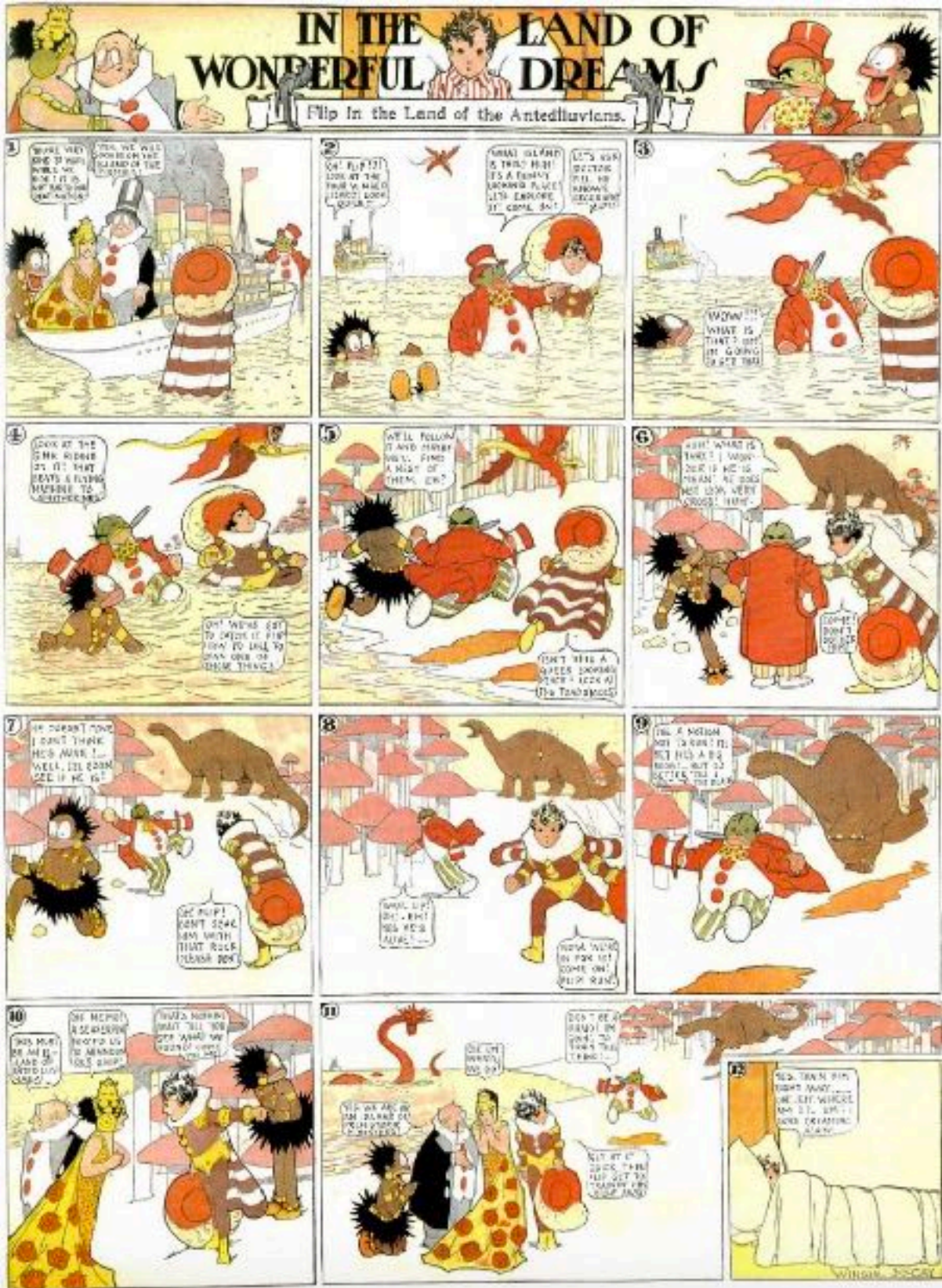
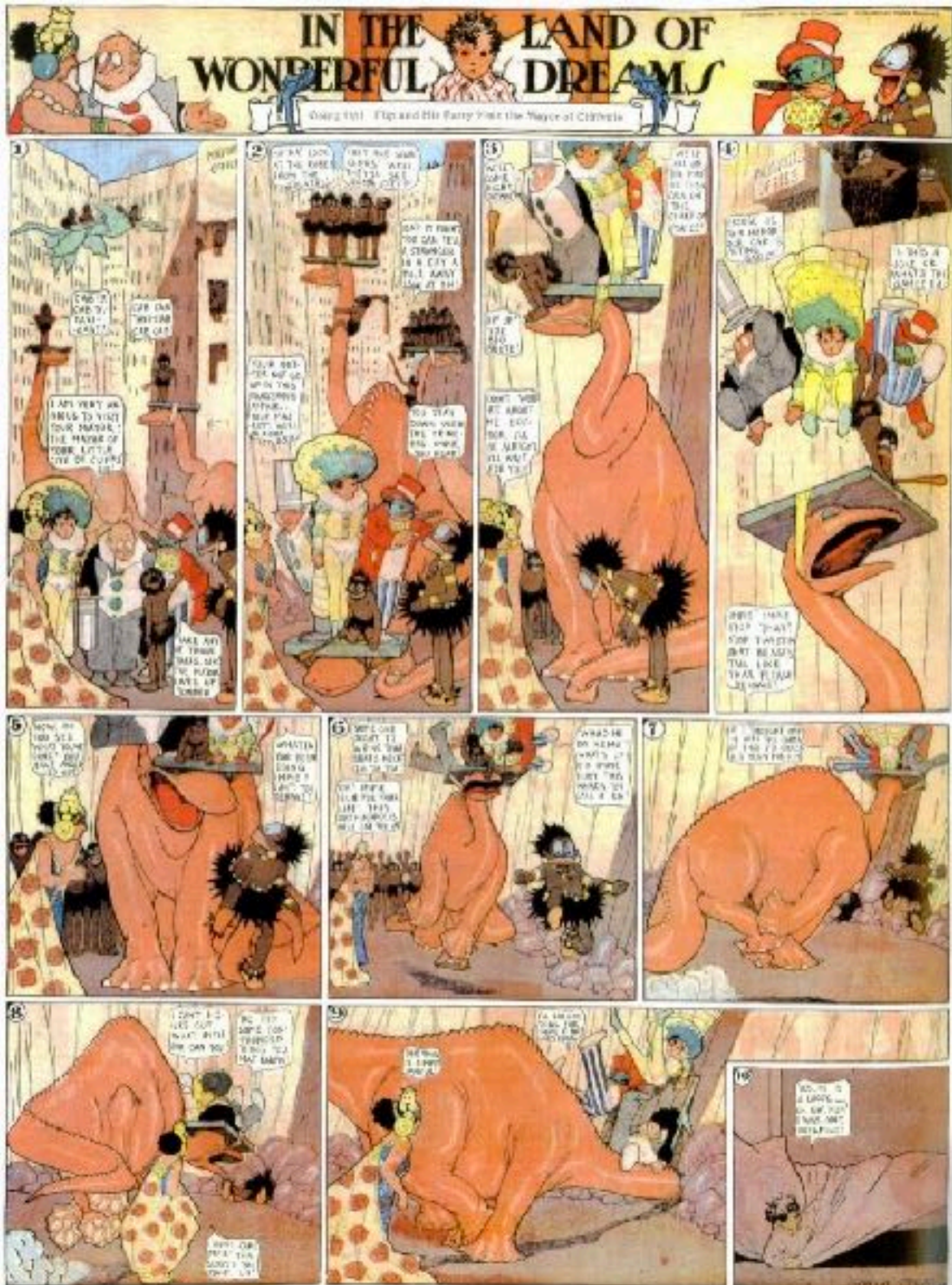


Fig. 793. Winsor McCay, "Flip in the Land of the Antediluvians," *In the Land of Wonderful Dreams*, 21 Sept., 1913.



**Fig. 794.** Winsor McCay, "Flip Educates a Distacuteus Mastadonius," *In the Land of Wonderful Dreams*, 5 Oct., 1913.



**Fig. 795.** Winsor McCay, "Going Up! Flip and His Party Visit the Mayor of Cliffville," *In the Land of Wonderful Dreams*, 12 Oct., 1913.

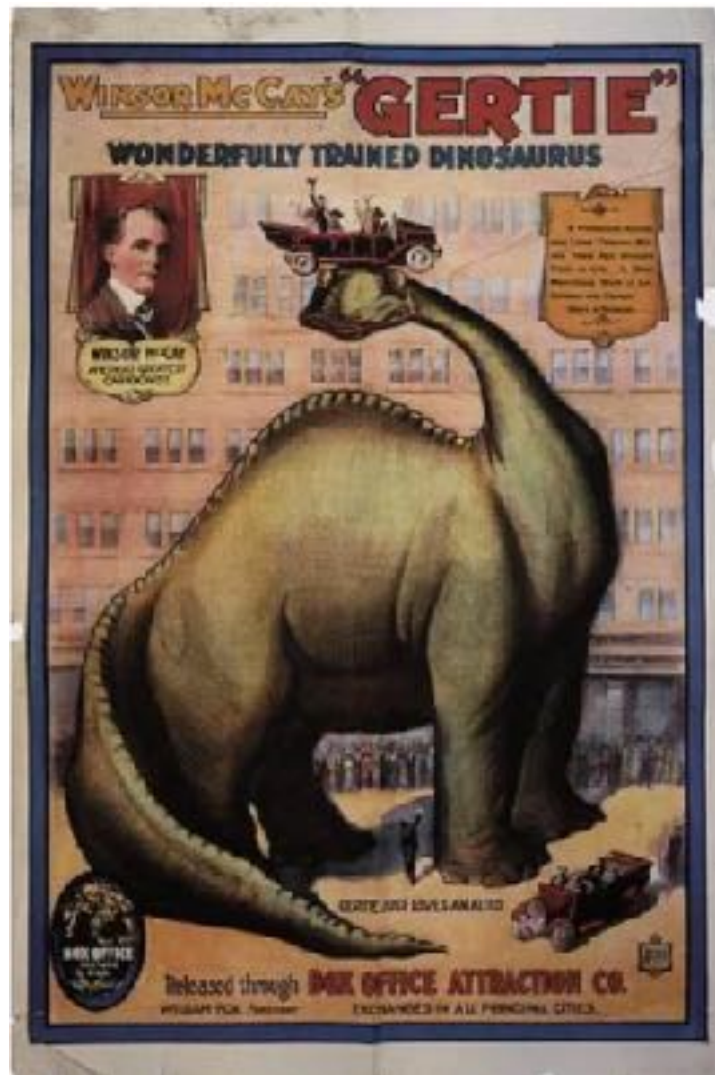
By Feb., 1914, McCay had finished his *Gertie the Dinosaur* animated cartoon, which featured a similar, though less aggressive, tamed brontosaurus-like dinosaur whose realistic movements McCay created in consultation with the staff at the New York

Museum of Natural History. McCay toured with this original version of *Gertie* in a vaudeville act where the animated dinosaur would appear to follow his commands; at the end of his show, McCay would walk off the stage only to appear on screen, where *Gertie* would carry him off in its mouth (Fig.796). After William Randolph Hearst stopped Winsor McCay from continuing with his vaudeville career, McCay created a silent film version of *Gertie the Dinosaur*, adding a live-action prologue and intertitles to replace his vaudeville patter; the new Fox studios brought this silent-film version to movie houses in Dec., 1914 (Fig. 797).



Fig. 796. Winsor McCay. Poster and animation cell from *Gertie the Dinosaur*, 1914.





**Fig. 797.** Poster for Fox Studio's *Winsor McCay's "Gertie"*, 1914.

Although Winsor McCay continued to produce comics until his death in 1934, he seems to have gotten the dinosaur bug out of his system in 1914.

Or so we thought until Ulrich Merkl uncovered some previously unknown and unpublished *Dino* comic strips signed by "Bob McCay" that Merkl convincingly demonstrated had been drawn by Winsor McCay (**Fig. 798**). As Merkl maintains, Winsor McCay had planned to use the pseudonym "Bob McCay" as a way to avoid restrictions placed on him after he left the Hearst newspapers in 1924, and also as a way of bolstering the career of his son Robert, who was unsuccessfully attempting to follow in his father's footsteps as a professional cartoonist even though he was a mediocre illustrator at best. Merkl also showed that when Robert McCay attempted to revise the *Little Nemo in Wonderland* strips under the name "Winsor McCay, Jr.," he copied earlier dinosaur images penned by his father (compare the dinosaur in the title panel of **Fig. 798** to the first panel in the last row of **Fig. 799**).



Fig. 798. Robert McCay (Winsor McCay), *Dino*, 1934. Top half, private coll.; bottom half, Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum, Ohio State University. From Merkl, 2015, pp. 16-17.



O'Brien's 1917 films (**Fig. 756**) and in the animated dinosaur in Buster Keaton's 1923 *The Three Ages* (**Fig. 761**).

While caveman-dinosaur interactions were first depicted in prehistoric fiction and later taken up by Hollywood, the mistaken belief that dinosaurs lived at the same time as early humans and were domesticable beasts happy to carry those humans around on their necks was especially promulgated by cartoons and comic strips; and no comic associated cavemen and dinosaurs more than V.T. Hamlin's *Alley Oop*.



**Fig. 800.** V. T. Hamlin, First *Alley Oop* comic strip, 5 Dec., 1932.

Ironically, Hamlin himself would have been aware that dinosaurs and humans had never lived at the same time, having developed a keen interest in paleontology from talking with geologists when he was working as an illustrator for a western US oil-company publication in the 1920's. When Hamlin began drawing his *Alley Oop* strip in 1932 (**Fig. 800**), he certainly knew that dinosaurs were no longer around "a million years ago" when Alley Oop appeared "dropping in on you out of the pre-historic past." Hamlin's *Alley Oop* is clearly meant to be a brutish Neanderthal, in keeping with the then current view of *homo neanderthalensis* as sub-human savages. [Hamlin could not have known that we now date the divergence of Neanderthals from an earlier sub species of archaic humans, *homo heidelbergensis*, to only around a half a million years ago.] As his comic strip progressed, however, Hamlin began to have Alley Oop and the other denizens of the prehistoric kingdom of Moo act more like modern humans, especially after he introduced in 1939 Dr. Elbert Wonmug's time machine that transported Alley Oop to the 20th century and other time periods; this more "civilized"

interpretation was in line with the “pass-the-subway-test” view of Neanderthals as essentially modern humans trapped within archaic bodies, a view that was just emerging in 1939 (cf. the above discussion with Figs. 47–48).

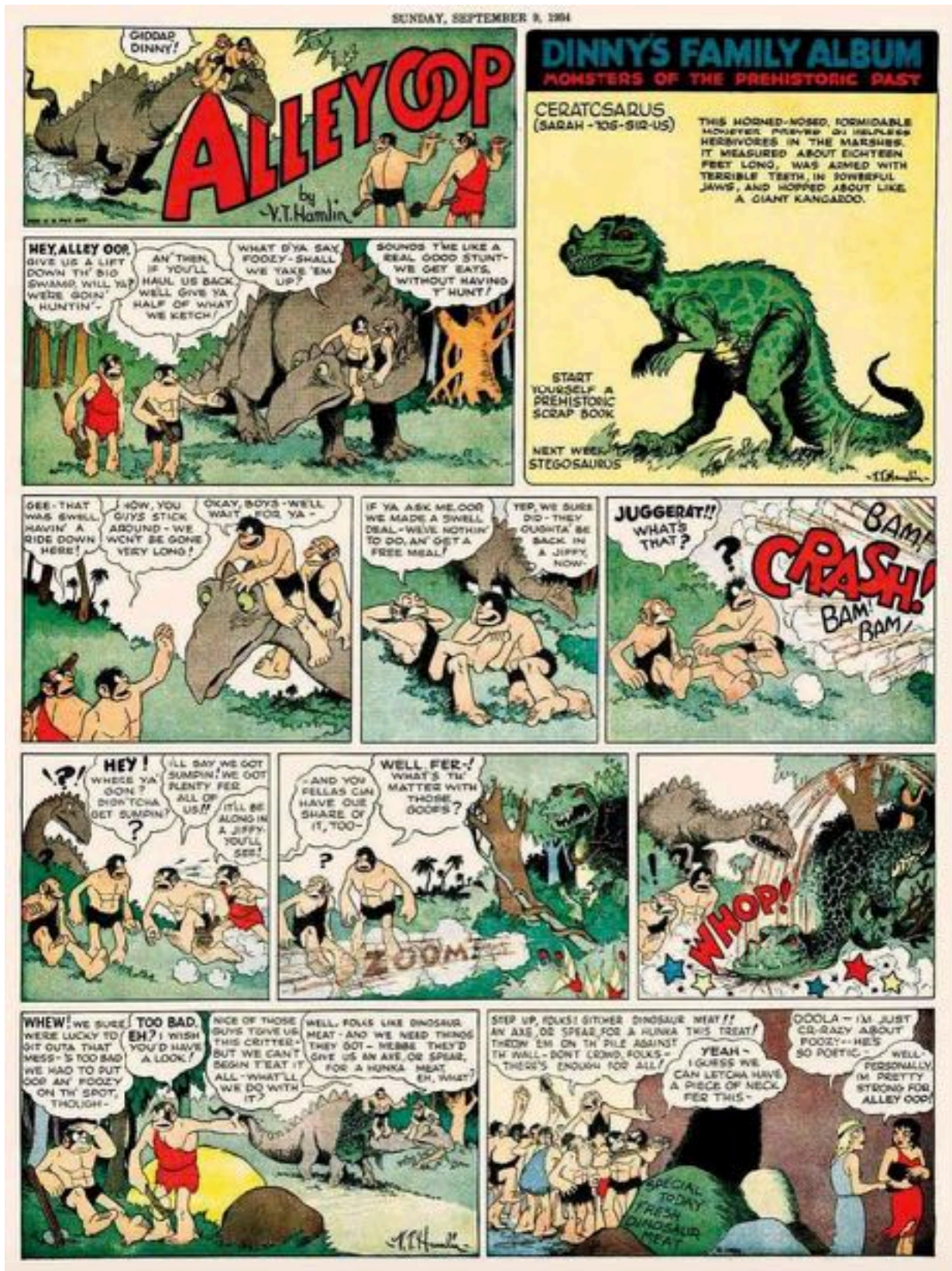


Fig. 801. V. T. Hamlin, *Alley Oop*, 9 Sept., 1934.

The minor cartoon syndication company with which Hamlin first worked went bankrupt in 1933 after having published only five months of his strip, and *Alley Oop* was then picked up by the larger NEA syndicate, which introduced a full-color Sunday version of the strip in 1934. In the first of these Sunday editions (**Fig. 801**), Hamlin began his “Dinny’s Family Album” collectable insert panels that provided information about real dinosaurs, although he did not use the occasion to point out that tens of millions of years separate dinosaurs and early humans; we might note that the Late Jurassic (ca. 150 mya) *Ceratosaurus* (misspelled by Hamlin) did not actually jump like a kangaroo nor would have stood upright with its tail trailing on the ground behind it. In the rest of this initial Sunday *Alley Oop* strip, we can see Hamlin using his fanciful prehistoric setting as a way to satirize contemporary American life. After comically chancing upon a windfall of dinosaur meat, Oop and his friend Foozy decide to turn it into a commodity to trade for axes and spears, with Foozy poetically hawking the goods in front of a painted sign. Off to the side in the final panel, Ooola—Alley Oop’s Betty-Boop lookalike girlfriend (modeled after Hamlin’s wife Dorothy)—and her friend are oohing and aahing over the two cavemen. Note that the two women, attired in short Jazz Age Flapper dresses, are depicted as fully modern *homo sapiens*.

[One wonders if Jean Auel got the idea for *Clan of the Cave Bear* from *Alley Oop*!]

A month later, Hamlin submitted an *Alley Oop* Sunday strip (**Fig. 802**) in which the “Dinny’s Family Album” insert panel correctly states that dinosaurs had disappeared millions of years before the woolly mammoth. In the storyline to this strip, Hamlin continued to use his prehistoric setting to satirize contemporary American life, in this case women’s concern with their physical appearance: the beautiful Ooola is being stalked by the decidedly homely princesses Wootietoot who wants to know Ooola’s beauty secrets; after Ooola says that she “tries to keep myself looking nice” and uses a reflecting pool to check how she looks, Wootietoot bends over the pool—in a radically offset panel reminiscent of Narcissus peering at his reflection (cf. **Fig. 217**)—only to be shocked that her appearance does not match the ideal of 20<sup>th</sup>-century American feminine beauty.



Fig. 802. V. T. Hamlin, *Alley Oop*, 21 Oct, 1934.



**Fig. 803.** Jon St. Ables Cover art, *Lucky Comics*, Aug.–Sept., 1945 and Feb.–March, 1946.

In 1944, the Canadian cartoonist Jon St. Ables began his *Piltdown Pete* comic strip, which appeared in the Maple Leaf Publishing comic book *Lucky* (**Fig. 803**). Like V.T. Hamlin’s *Alley Oop*, St. Ables’ *Piltdown Pete* is populated with domesticated dinosaur transport, hairy Neanderthal men, and gorgeous *homo sapiens* women—Yot, the woman of Pete’s dreams, resembles a Dorothy Lamour pin-up girl in a leopard-skin two piece. [We might note that “Piltdown Pete” is a reference to the supposed “missing link” half-a-million-year-old early hominid “Dawn Man” that Charles Smith Woodward claimed to have uncovered in 1912 in Pleistocene gravel beds at Piltdown in East Sussex and that was not proven to be a hoax until 1953.]



As we have seen with the cartoons of E. T. Reed and Oskar Andersson (**Figs. 782–783**), the caveman-dinosaur connection has also long been a feature of European comics. While it is outside of the scope of these essays on American comics about the ancient past to dwell in any detail on these European caveman-dinosaur cartoons and comic strips, we might be excused for presenting a few examples here:





**Fig. 804.** Albert Robida, “Une bonne partie de chasse à l’époque tertiaire,” ca. 1900.

The French illustrator, caricaturist, and novelist Albert Robida drew a turn-of-the-century satire of a hunting party in “l’époque tertiaire” that features a dragon-looking dinosaur (**Fig. 804**). The dinosaur in Georges Léonnec’s erotic 1912 *La Vie parisienne* cartoon (**Fig 805**), on the other hand, is decidedly more friendly and Gertie-like.

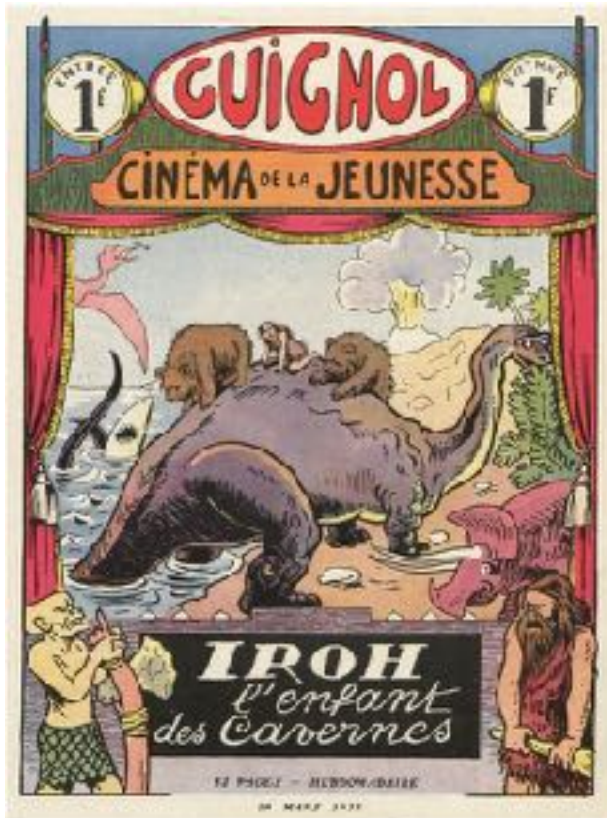


**Fig. 805.** Georges Léonnec, “L’Histoire gallant: Le Chapitre des baignoires,” *La Vie parisienne*, 1912.

Dinosaurs have also appeared in European youth magazine stories about the Paleolithic past. For instance, Maurice Cuvillier’s “The Adventures of Ra and Ta, Stone Age schoolchildren” (**Fig. 806**) and Pouf’s, “Iroh, l’enfant des cavernes” (**Fig. 807**), published in the French magazine *Guignol Cinema de la jeunesse*, are populated with some not so terribly threatening dinosaurs. The 1933 “Cave-Boy Erek” story by the Scottish adventure author Dugald Matheson Cumming-Skinner (who wrote under the pseudonym Douglas Dundee), has a tamed dinosaur that can be ridden (**Fig. 808**).



**Fig. 806.** Maurice Cuvillier, Detail from “The Adventures of Ra and Ta, Stone Age schoolchildren,” *Guignol Cinema de la jeunesse*, 6 May, 1928.



**Fig. 807.** Pouf, "Iroh, l'enfant des cavernes," *Guignol Cinema de la jeunesse*, 19 May, 1933.



While Tala beat off the cave-men who swarmed up the strange monsters back, Erech slashed at the vine ladder hanging down the cliff face. He meant to bottle his enemies up in their homes.

**Fig. 808.** Douglas Dundee (Dugald Matheson Cumming-Skinner), "Cave-Boy Erech," *The Triumph, The Boys' Best Story Paper*, 1933.



**Fig. 809.** Michael Maslin, *The New Yorker*, 14 April, 2008.



**Fig. 810.** Frank Cotham, *The New Yorker*, 13 April, 2020.



**Fig. 811.** Max Garcia, *Sunny Street*, 2013.



**Fig. 812.** Bill Abbott, *Spectickles*, 27 Aug., 2019.



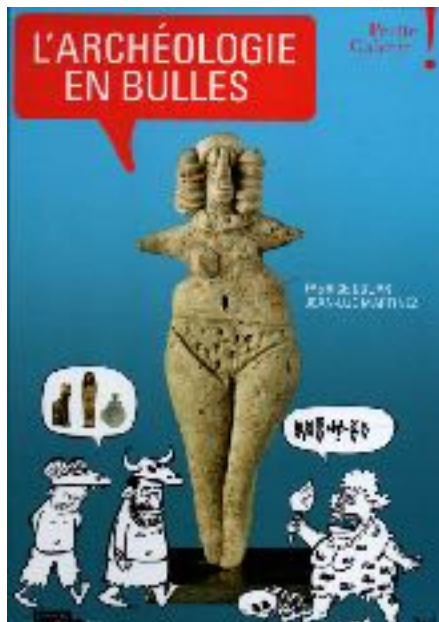
**Fig. 813.** Mark Anderson, *Andertoons*. From "KoProFagO" 2020.

For better or worse, the cartoon cliché of 100 million-year-old dinosaurs living with 20,000 year-old cavemen seems to be here to stay, from the threatening dinosaurs in Michael Maslin's and Frank Cotham's *New Yorker* cartoons (**Figs. 809–810**) to Bill Abbott's domesticated pet (**Fig. 812**, wearing the angled glasses typical of Abbott's cartoons) and Max Garcia's turn-the-tables cartoon (**Fig. 811**), where the dinosaur, dressed in shirt and tie and outfitted with pocket-protector and briefcase, is the owner and the saber-toothed tiger is the pet leaving a dead caveman on the doorstep. Occasionally, we find cartoonists like Mike Peter (**Figs. 742–743**) and Mark Anderson (**Fig. 813**) who help to correct this mistaken belief that their fellow cartoonists perpetuate.

### The Representation of Prehistory in Comics



**Fig. 814.** Photograph of the exhibition, *Prehistòria i Còmic*, Museu de Prehistòria de València, 14 June, 2016–8 Jan., 2017.



**Fig. 815.** Front cover to Fabrice Douar and Jean-Luc Martinez, *L'Archéologie en bulles*, Musée du Louvre, 2018.



**Fig. 816.** Poster for exhibition *Archéo-BD, A la croisée de l'archéologie et de la bande dessinée*, Service Archéologique de Melun, 2018–2019.

How prehistory has been represented in comics has recently become a hot topic both in archaeological and in comics studies academic circles, especially in Europe [cf., e.g., Ruiz Zapatero (1997), Ruiz Zapatero (2005), Toussaint (2011), Swogger (2012), Blanc-Hoáng (2014), Moreels and García Arranz (2017), Sétrin and Pozo (2017), and Douar and Martinez (2018).] The topic has even penetrated into the museum world, with a traveling exposition on the subject, *Prehistòria i Còmic*, held at various locations in Valencia, Spain, between 2016 and 2019 (Bonet Rosado and Pons Moreno, 2016, **Fig. 814**). Related museum exhibitions on the relationship between comics and archaeology include *L'Archéologie en bulles*, a show mounted in the Petite Galerie of the Louvre in 2018 (**Fig. 815**), and *Archéo-BD, A la croisée de l'archéologie et de la bande dessinée*, held in Melun, France, between Nov., 2018 and Jan., 2019 (**Fig. 816**).

Much of recent scholarship on comics and archaeology has been directed to an examination of how antiquity has been misrepresented in comics—such as we have seen with our survey of cartoons about cavemen and dinosaurs. One example of this reevaluation relevant to our study is Obelix, the super-strong Gallic warrior from René Goscinny's and Albert Uderzo's long-running comic *Astérix le Gaulois* who sculpts and delivers his own menhirs (**Fig. 817**); as Didier Pasamonik has noted, creating menhirs—the megalithic standing stone monuments erected across northwestern Europe (especially in what is now France) in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE—is an anachronism in

a cartoon about the Roman Gallic Wars of 50 B.C.E. The expropriation of prehistoric menhirs as Gallic creations is in line with what Henri-Simon Blanc-Hoáng has identified as *Astérix's* nationalist “Gaulists/sovereignists” attitude towards the foundational myth of the French nation-state.



**Fig. 817.** Obelix, from *Astérix le Gaulois*, created by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo.

Another main trend in contemporary scholarship has been an examination of the role that comics can play in accurately representing what we know about the prehistoric past from the archaeological record. Not surprisingly, given the high regard in which *bande dessinée* are held in France and given that country’s rich Paleolithic archaeological record, French comics artists have taken a lead role in this endeavor. Of particular note are the *Chroniques de la nuit des temps*, (“Chronicles of the Night of Times”) comics created by André Houot between 1987 and 1994 (**Figs. 818–819**), which have received high praise for the accuracy in their portrayal of life in the Paleolithic and Mesolithic ages.



**Fig. 818.** From André Houot, *Chroniques de la nuit des temps*, 1. *Le Couteau de pierre* (“The Stone Knife”), Fleurus, 1987.



**Fig. 819.** From André Houot, *Chroniques de la nuit des temps*, 3. *On a marché sur la terre* (“We Walked on Earth”), Le Lombard, 1990.



**Fig. 820.** From Priscille Mahieu and Éric Le Brun, *Ticayou, Chasseur de la préhistoire* (*Prehistoric Hunter*), Totem, 5 Nov., 2009.

Also notable is the work of Éric Le Brun, who, beginning in 2009, worked with the comic artist Priscille Mahieu to create *Ticayou* (**Fig. 820**), a series of children’s comic books that humorously portrays the life of “un petit Cro-Magnon” child in a manner that avoids inaccurate cartoon caricature clichés about the Paleolithic world. Le Brun went on to create three volumes of *L’art préhistorique en bande dessinée* between 2012 and 2018 (**Fig. 821**), which uses cave art from Chauvet, Lascaux, Altamira, and other sites to



present in comic-book form accurate portrayals of the Aurignacien, the Gravettien and Solutréen, and the Magdalénien periods of the Paleolithic.



Fig. 821. Covers to Éric Le Brun, *L'art préhistorique en bande dessinée*, (Glénat, 2012–2018).

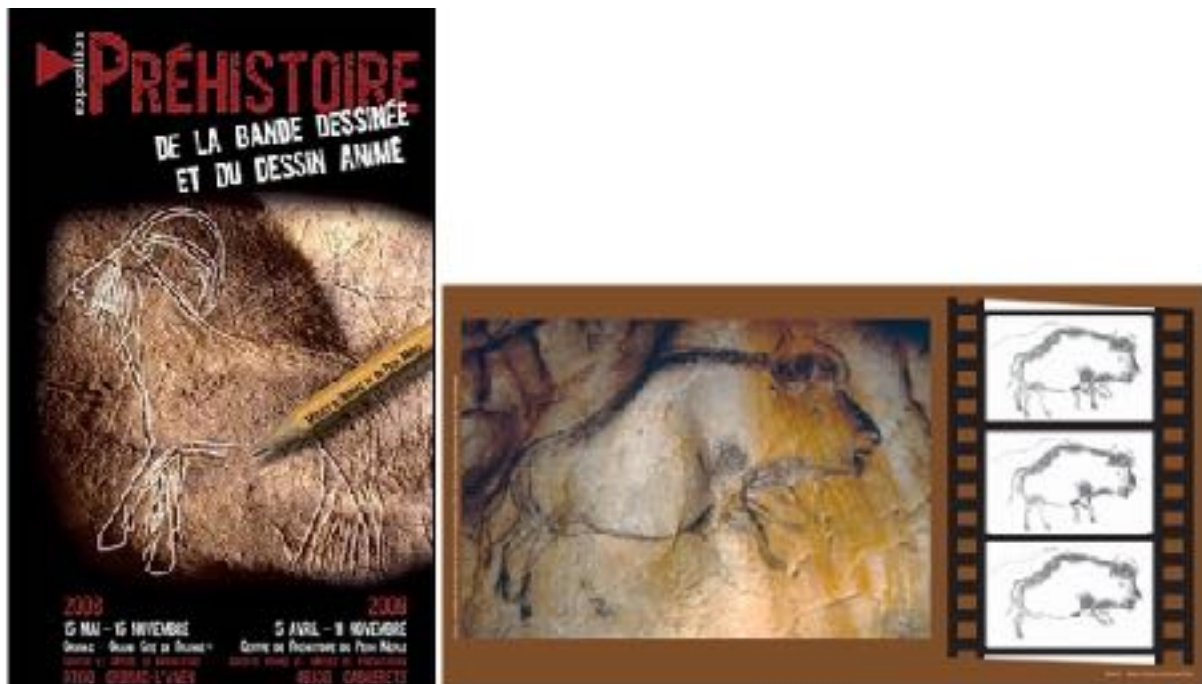
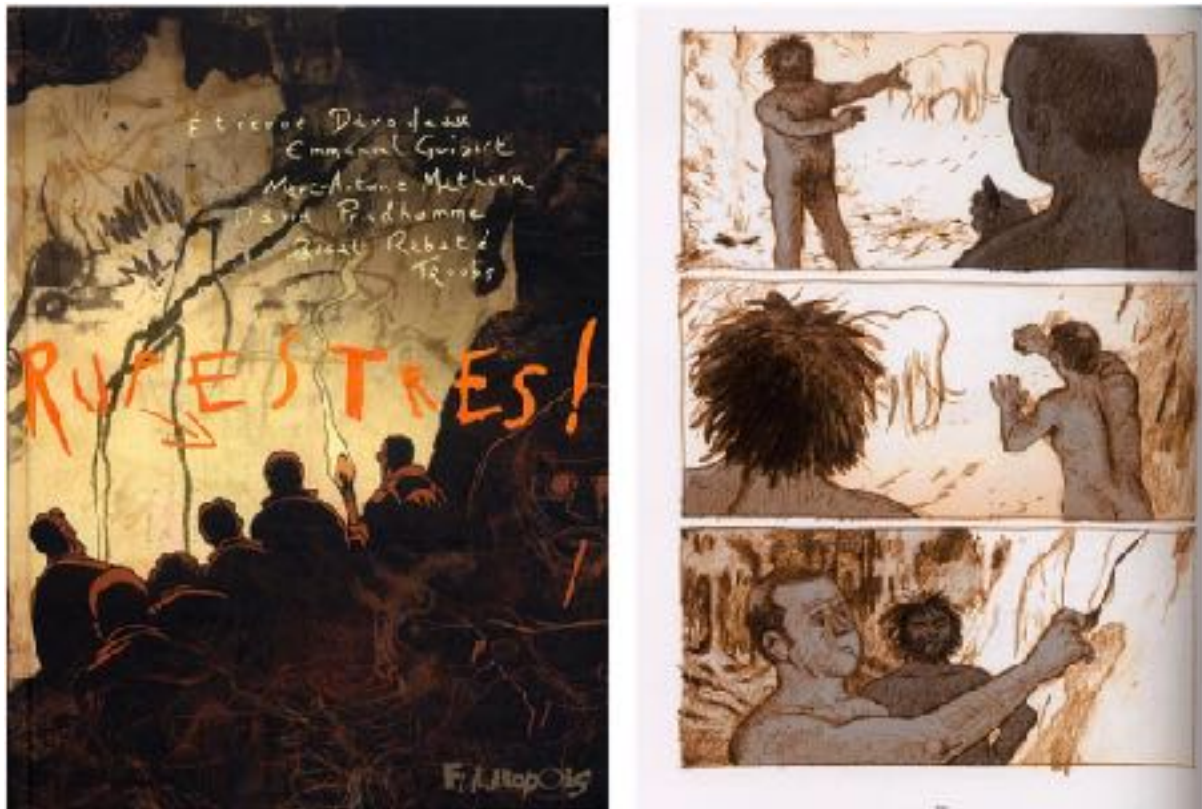


Fig. 822. Cover and page from David Prudhomme, Emmanuel Guibert, Pascal Rabaté, Jean-Marc Troubet, Marc-Antoine Mathieu, and Etienne Davodeau, *Rupestres*, Futuropolis, 2011.

Yet another significant French comic book series about the Paleolithic is *Rupestres!*, a Futuropolis publication by six comics artists—David Prudhomme, Emmanuel Guibert, Pascal Rabaté, Jean-Marc Troubet, Marc-Antoine Mathieu, and Etienne Davodeau—who produced their interpretations of Paleolithic art after they had banded together to visit a number of French caves (Fig. 822).



**Fig. 823.** Poster and panel from *Préhistoire de la bande dessinée et du dessin animé*, 2008–2009.



**Fig. 824.** Engraving of an ibex, from the rock shelter of Colombier (Ardèche) and a carved plaque with a horse, from Le Marche, after Azéma (2008).

Another significant development in the exploration of the intersection of comics and Paleolithic art is the work of Marc Azéma, the French prehistorian who examined the multiple representations of animal body parts on engraved Paleolithic rock art and suggested that they were meant to represent movement. Using line drawings of these multiple body-part representations, Azéma created animations that he presented at an exhibition, *Préhistoire de la bande dessinée et du dessin animé*, held at Orgnac-L-Aven in 2008 and at Cabrerets in 2009 (**Fig. 823**). Azéma's animations, which depict bisons,

ibexes, and horses running and nodding their heads (Fig. 824), are quite convincing, resembling Eadweard Muybridge's pioneering photographs of animal locomotion, and one can imagine that, if one were in a cave or rock shelter looking at these carvings by the flickering light of a Paleolithic animal-fat lamp, the multiple representations would indeed have conveyed a sense of motion.



Marc Azéma's suggestion that Paleolithic engravings were an early form of cartoon animation brings up the issue of what Thierry Groensteen has called the "Lascaux hypothesis"—the notion that the origin of comics are to be found in Paleolithic cave paintings. In an article printed in a special 2017 edition of *Yale French Studies* (*Bande Dessinée: Thinking Outside the Boxes*), Groensteen takes issue with Gérard Blanchard's 1969 book *La bande dessinée. Histoire des histoires en images de la préhistoire à nos jours* ("Comics: History of picture images from prehistory to the present"), which posited a continuum of "picture stories" from Paleolithic cave paintings, to the Egyptian Book of the Dead, to the bas-reliefs on Trajan's Column, to the Bayeux Tapestry, to medieval woodcuts, and all the way to comics. Groensteen disagrees with "... the assertion, not theoretically justified, that since all picture stories are in a direct line of descent, we have to go back to the origins of art in order to grant comics their rightful place within that line." Groensteen maintains that the "... delving back into the 'distant past' for antecedents assumed to bolster the cultural status of comics" is motivated by an inferiority complex: "... long confined within children's publishing, vilified by educationalists and lacking cultural recognition, comics have logically sought compensation by latching onto anything that could get them out of their rut." [For more on the "high/low art" debate about comics, see the "High Art Lowdown" section in the above "Comic Art in Museums and Museums in Comic Art" essay.] Groensteen's main criticism of the "Lascaux hypothesis" is that lumping all "picture stories" together denies assessing comics as a distinct form of art in its own right.



Fig. 825. Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 1993. p. 141.

In primitive times, the teller of stories in a clan or tribe served as entertainer, teacher and historian. Storytelling preserved knowledge by passing it from generation to generation. This mission has continued into modern times. The storyteller must first have something to tell, and then must be able to master the tools to relay it.



The Story of Storytelling

Fig. 826. From Will Eisner, *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*, 2008 (1996), p. 1.

Within English-language comics scholarship, the “Lascaux hypothesis” has been promulgated by Scott McCloud (**Fig. 825**) and Will Eisner (**Fig. 826**), both of whom view prehistoric cave art as a form of visual story-telling. [Note that, much like Harry Bliss’ 1999 *New Yorker* cover (**Fig. 193**), McCloud has lumped together scenes from Lascaux, dating to the early Magdalenian period (ca. 17,000 years ago) together with much later Spanish Levantine rock-shelter paintings, which date to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (ca. 10,000 to 5,500 years ago); Eisner’s cave painting is more purely in the style of Spanish Levantine rock-shelter art, although his hairy, bow-legged story-teller looks more like a Neanderthal, which went extinct 20,000 years earlier.]

Naturally, cartoonists have found ways of poking fun at the “Lascaux hypothesis.” The Chilean cartoonist Gojko Franulic (aka Sefhko), for instance, ridicules the idea that older is always better (**Fig. 827**), while Reza Farazmand (**Fig. 828**) and Mick Steven (**Fig. 829**) lampoon the idea that cave paintings were early forms of cartoons.



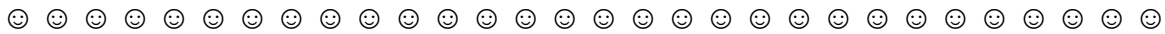
**Fig. 827.** Sefhko (Gojko Franulic), 4 Nov., 2014.



Fig. 828. Reza Farazmand, *Poorly Drawn Lines*, 18 Aug., 2014.



Fig. 829. Mick Steven, *The New Yorker*, 22 Dec., 2014.



As long as we have strayed into the “Lascaux Hypothesis,” I might be permitted another short excursion about a possible ancient analogue to the sequential narrative form of comics that has not been mentioned in comics scholarship literature to date. In doing so, I do not want to suggest that there is any sort of direct connection between ancient visual narration and the comic form. As is now firmly established within comics scholarship, the earliest form of comics were the captioned caricatures published by Rodolphe Töpffer in 1837, from whence a direct line can be traced to the full development of the comic strip form with the publication of Richard Outcault’s *Yellow Kid* in 1895. As Jennifer Babcock put it in her 2012 *International Journal of Comics* article about the connection of comics to ancient Egyptian figured ostraca:

Although there are many parallels between modern day comics and the parodic ostraca, one should not be quick to label [them] as “comic art.” Instead, one should recognize that these objects and images at least serve as a good analogy to our conception of comics . . . Furthermore, to label these images as “comics” rather than as analogies to modern day comics is also unfair to comics scholarship, since it would further muddle current and future attempts to understand what makes the comics medium unique.

Although visual narration in the art of Classical Greece and ancient Rome has been a subject of intense scholarly interest of late, this aspect of classical scholarship has not crossed over into comics scholarship, which, among works of classical art, has singled out only Trajan’s Column as a possible precursor of the comics form. It is understandable that, in looking at classical art for precursors—or at least analogues—to the comic strip, comics scholars would have turned to Trajan’s Column, which has been on continual public display in the central area of Rome since Trajan erected it in his new forum in 113 C.E. to celebrate his victories in the Dacian Wars (and after it was repurposed in 1587 by Pope Sixtus V to support a statue of St. Peter). It is less clear why the Telephos Frieze—the Hellenistic (ca. 180-160 BCE) marble sculptural relief panels that formed part of the Great Altar of Pergamon and that have been on display in the Pergamonmuseum of Berlin since 1901—has not been mentioned by comics scholars; this oversight is particularly surprising as the Telephos Frieze figures so prominently in the work of classical scholars examining the origins of continuous visual narration (cf. Pollitt, 1986, Stewart, 1996, and Seaman, 2020).



**Fig. 830.** A mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E. “Homeric” bowl in the Antikensammlung Staatliche Museum zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz (3161n). Top, from Mertens, 2019, p. 156, fig. 14; bottom, drawing after Roberts 1890, p. 8, fig. A.

While the social context of monumental sculpted marble reliefs sponsored by kings and emperors is clearly not analogous to modern comics printed on ephemeral paper, another class of ancient Greek material culture is: the so-called “Homeric” bowls of ca. 175-125 B.C.E. (cf. Sinn, 1979). A sub-class of mold-made relief ware known by the misnomer Megarian bowls, “Homeric” bowls were formed by pressing clay against the inside of pre-made molds—a technique which allowed for the mass production of figural decoration, in contrast to the much more laborious earlier technique of hand-painting the decoration on a vase prior to its firing. Recognized as a class by Carl Robert in 1890, “Homeric” bowls feature figural decoration in low relief and lines of text—some



with verses from Homer and other with lines from Greek tragedy. An example from the Antikensammlung Staatliche Museum in Berlin (**Fig. 830**), for instance, shows scenes of Odysseus slaying the suitors after his homecoming to Ithaca, together with snippets of dactylic hexameter verses from Book XXII of the *Odyssey*. The German scholar Ulrich Hausmann has suggested that these “Homeric” bowls are inexpensive terra-cotta versions of now lost silver bowls with incised decoration; Hausmann believes that the images on these silver originals derived from painted decorations on papyri scrolls.

The parallels between “Homeric” bowls and comics are striking. “Homeric” bowls are “multimodal,” combining texts and images. Like modern day comics, they were intended for a literate consumer—in this case, one who had a “culturally bound background knowledge” of centuries-old Homeric and tragic poetry. As inexpensive objects of little intrinsic value, “Homeric” bowls could be tossed away when broken, just as most comics end up in the recycling nowadays; the only complete examples of “Homeric” bowls that have survived until today are those that had been placed in tombs. [One wonders if, in the distant future, some comics might similarly survive if they had been put in a buried time capsule!]

As intriguing as these parallels between “Homeric” bowls and comics are, it is important to reiterate that, as with other forms of ancient visual narration, the resemblances are merely coincidental and that there is no historical connection between “Homeric” bowls and comic strips. “Homeric” bowls are *not* ancient comic strips: while there is a narrative content involved, the bowls do not “tell” a story. Instead, they are merely visual and textual references to a story that the consumer already knows. As such, they more resemble the coffee mugs, action figures, tee shirts, and other “merch” produced under license by comic book companies like Marvel Comics or D.C. Comics and sold to fans of their comic books and movies.

### Comics and Archaeology

Comics and archaeology should be natural cousins. . . . What is perhaps surprising is how limited a role comics have so far played in either formal or informal archaeological discourse – particularly given the fact that archaeology is a highly visual science, and the presentation of archaeology depends to a great extent on visualising specialist concepts and practices. . . . [Archaeology uses] the language of visual explanation, and it is used just as much in professional discourse as public presentation.

Thus John G. Swogger begins his “The Sequential Art of the Past: Archaeology, comics and the dynamics of an emerging genre” 2012 post in the *Comics Forum* web site. The familial relationship posited by Swogger, a British archaeological illustrator and comics artist, encompasses both how the past is represented—such as with André Houot’s or Éric Le Brun’s innovative representations of the Paleolithic age (**Figs. 818–821**)—as well as how the archaeological process is communicated. Swogger’s call for a closer association between comics art and the discipline of archaeology is in line with a larger movement in archaeological theory to examine the role of visual representations in archaeological practice. As Stephanie Moser and Clive Gamble noted in their 1997 article on “The Iconic Vocabulary for Representing Human Antiquity”:

Archaeology does not yet take its visual language very seriously. Unlike geology, which discovered the importance of its visual language some years ago . . . , it is only now being realized in archaeology just how many of our arguments about the past are presented as images. These range from the convention of the scientific specimen, such as a technical drawing of a flint implement, to the visual jargon of a Harris matrix or a section drawing, to full-blown reconstructions of life as-it-was in the past.

Similarly, John Kantner begins his editorial introduction to a special issue, “Cartoons in Archaeology,” of a 2005 volume of the Society for American Archaeology’s *The SAA archaeological record*:

How many times have we heard “archaeology is a visual discipline”? Our textbooks are full of imagery, site reports include innumerable photographs, PowerPoint presentations are used routinely in classrooms (and now our professional meeting) . . . To help bring the past to life, we create three-dimensional models and illustrate artistic reconstructions of past material culture, and we routinely represent our discipline in television documentaries. The vast majority of archaeologists clearly embrace the use of visual media to represent what we do and to evoke ideas of what the past was like.

In a 2014 e-panel discussion by six archaeologists who use the comics medium, John Swogger gives an example from his own work of the dual role comics can play in the dissemination of archaeological research: in a page from his publication on the archaeological material found in the peat bogs by the lake Llyn Cerrig Bach on the Welsh island of Anglesey (**Fig. 831**), Swogger reconstructs in comic form both the ancient context of the votive offerings deposited in the lake from about 300 B.C.E. to 100 C.E. as well as the new remote sensing techniques archaeologists are currently using to

investigate the site. Another example of this dual role comics can play in the dissemination of archaeological research is *Les Esclaves oubliés de Tromelin*, the comic that the artist Sylvain Savola created after joining an archaeological mission to the tiny Indian Ocean island of Tromelin, where, in 1760, a group of black slaves from Madagascar were marooned after the ship that was carrying them was shipwrecked and the crew abandoned them to fend for themselves in the desolate land for fifteen years before they were rescued; Savola's rendition (**Fig. 832**) depicts both what the archaeologists discovered of the remains of the structures the slaves built and the artifacts they left behind as well as an imaginative reconstruction of what their lives might have been like as they struggled to survive.



**Fig. 831.** John Swogger, Page from *Llyn Cerrig Bach* (CADW – Welsh Government Historic Environment Service), 2014. From Swogger, Feb., 2014.



**Fig. 832.** Sylvain Savoia, *Les Esclaves oubliés de Tromelin*, 2015, plates 72 and 82. From Douar and Martinez, 2018, pp. 24–25.

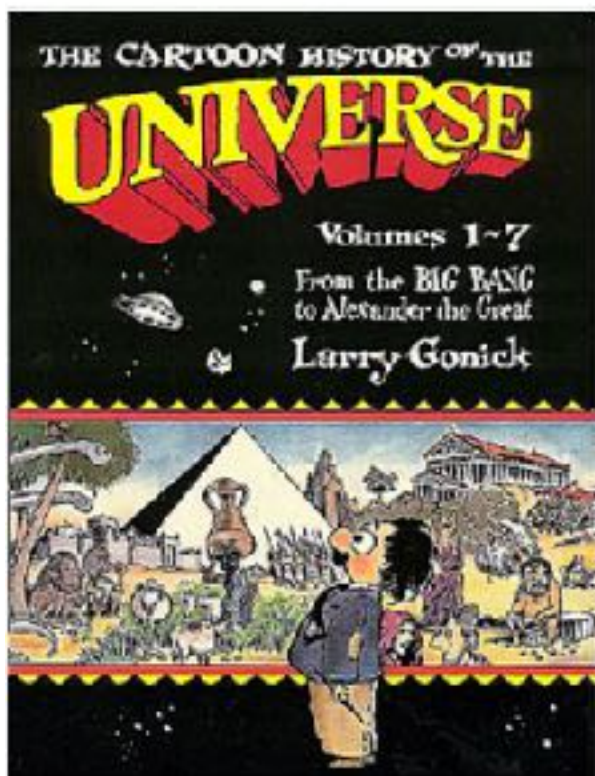
Another significant use of the comics medium in archaeology is the South African archaeologist Johannes Loubser’s 2003 *Archaeology. The Comic*. For this introduction to the discipline of archaeology, Loubser incorporates cartoon imagery that supplements, rather than merely illustrates, the text. Imagine, for instance, how much information would be lost in his passage on site-formation processes (**Fig. 833**) if the images of people modifying the landscape over time and the accompanying stratigraphic cross-sections were omitted!

[I wish that Loubser’s comic was around when I was first studying archaeology, or when I was teaching introductory archaeology courses!]



**Fig. 833.** Johannes H. N. Loubser, *Archaeology. The Comic*, 2003, p. 47.

In speaking of comics and the representation of antiquity, one would be remiss not to mention Larry Gonick's wonderfully entertaining *The Cartoon History of the Universe* (Fig. 834). Originally put out in fascicles in the 1980's by the San Francisco-based underground comix publisher Rip Off Press, Gonick's comics were later republished by Doubleday in the 1990's. Gonick's quirky, but well researched, overview of world history is presented in humorously satirical cartoons, such as with the example Gonick has posted on his website of the "attitude problem" of early Christians in the Roman Empire who condemned Romans to eternal damnation for believing in false gods while at the same time espousing love for their neighbors.



**Fig. 834.** Larry Gonick, cover to *The Cartoon History of the Universe I*, and page from *The Cartoon History of the Universe II*.



As Paul Bahn quipped in his 1992 article “Bores, Bluffers and Wankas: Some Thoughts on Archaeology and Humour,” which appeared in a special “Digging for Laughs” issue of the *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*: “As anyone who frequents them knows, archaeologists are a pretty boring crowd on the whole. . . . To the public, the image of the archaeologist—rightly or wrongly, but mostly rightly—is that of an eccentric, humorless bore.” While we will come back to the question of how the public perceives archaeologists in the first section of the “Digging the Past” essay below, we can just note here that, judging from comics used in the dissemination of archaeological research, the image of the humorless archaeologist might seem justified.

But such an impression is most decidedly wrong.

As John Kantner noted in 2005:

It is therefore not surprising that archaeology is also well represented in cartoons. From comical representations of the practice of archaeology to more realistic (if not always real) stories of the past, cartoons have played an important role in our discipline. How many archaeologists have never seen the Calvin and Hobbes

strip where Calvin exclaims, “Archaeologists have the most mind-numbing job on the planet”? [ Cf. **Fig. 867** below] Who among us has not placed Far Side strips on our office doors, or created impromptu cartoons in our field notebooks?

And if, as we will see below, the discipline of archaeology has engendered many a cartoon cliché, archaeologists themselves have played an active role in creating humorous cartoons about themselves.

The propensity of archaeologists to make fun of themselves in cartoons can especially be seen in *Shovel Bums*, an archaeological “zine” created by the archaeologist Trent de Boer in 1997, the first eight issues of which were republished by AltaMira Press in 2004. [The title refers to the self-deprecating name American cultural resource management (CRM) archaeologists have adopted for themselves to reflect the difficulties they have in eking out a career as contract archaeologists.] As de Boer remarked in the 2005 SAA special publication “Cartoons in Archaeology”:

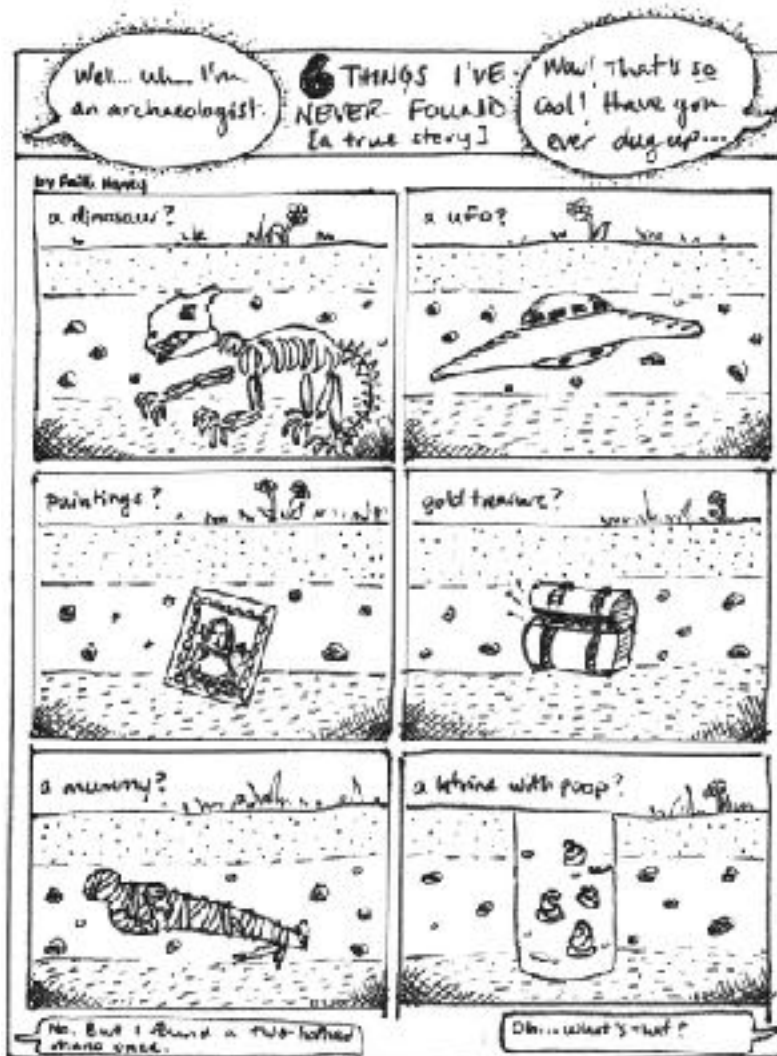
From the beginning, humor has played a major role in *Shovel Bum* [. . .]. Having a sense of humor in the field is a valuable coping mechanism, as anyone who has spent time in inclement weather trying to fill out paperwork understands. A good sense of humor can get you through the particularly unrewarding CRM projects, such as shovel testing suburban front yards—the kinds of projects that make you question your initial decision to become an archaeologist. Every shovel bum worth his or her salt has dozens of good, usually hilarious, field stories, and *Shovel Bum* has long served as a clearinghouse.

On the other hand, *Shovel Bum* is also about acknowledging the joys of being an archaeologist [. . .]. The old phrase “a bad day in the field is better than a good day in the office” is the mantra of many a shovel bum. It is not uncommon for archaeologists to put up with month after month of dreary office work for that one perfect field day each season. The most memorable field experiences eventually find their way into my comix.



Fig. 835. Troy Lovata, "How to Use the Tool," 2000. Reprinted in de Boer, 2004, p. 113.





**Fig. 836.** Faith Haney, “Six Things I’ve Never Found [A True Story],” *Shovel Bum* #13, 2012, p. 9.

Two *Shovel Bum* comic strips illustrate how archaeologists can make fun of dig life. Troy Lovata’s “How to Use the Tool” (**Fig. 835**) humorously depicts a game virtually every archaeologist has played at some point in their digging career—seeing how far one can extend a metal tape measure before it bends. [My personal record is 1.78 meters, using a Stanley Tylon™ 5m. metal tape.] [Troy Lovata famously wrote his Ph.D. on the domestication of dogs in Pre-Columbian America as a comic strip, complete with a talking dog narrator; Lovata humorously recounts this experience in his 2005 SAA article, also presented as a comic strip; cf. **Fig. 848.**] Faith Haney’s “Six Things I’ve Never Found [A True Story]” *Shovel Bum* comic strip (**Fig. 836**) also makes fun of something nearly every archaeologist has experienced—the inane questions one is asked about the most exciting thing you have ever dug up.

It is not surprising that archaeologists, who are used to sketching vignettes of their excavations in their field notebooks, sometimes make cartoons of dig life. But it

seems that professional illustrators employed on excavations have a special affinity to the comics arts. John Swogger is a notable example of this trend; another is Glynnis Fawkes, who in 2001 published *Cartoons of Cyprus*, a collection of cartoons inspired by her experiences when working on excavations in the East Mediterranean. Fawkes uses a feminist perspective to humorously record both the joys of archaeology (Fig. 837) and the trials of dig life, such as having to get up early in the morning or having to deal with summer romances among fellow diggers (Fig. 838), as well as the cultural clash American women experience when working in countries where machismo reigns (Fig. 839).



Fig. 837. Anne Glynnis Fawkes, *Cartoons of Cyprus*, 2001, p. 26.



Fig. 838. Anne Glynnis Fawkes, *Cartoons of Cyprus*, 2001, pp. 28 and 33.



DONT TEASE THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS!

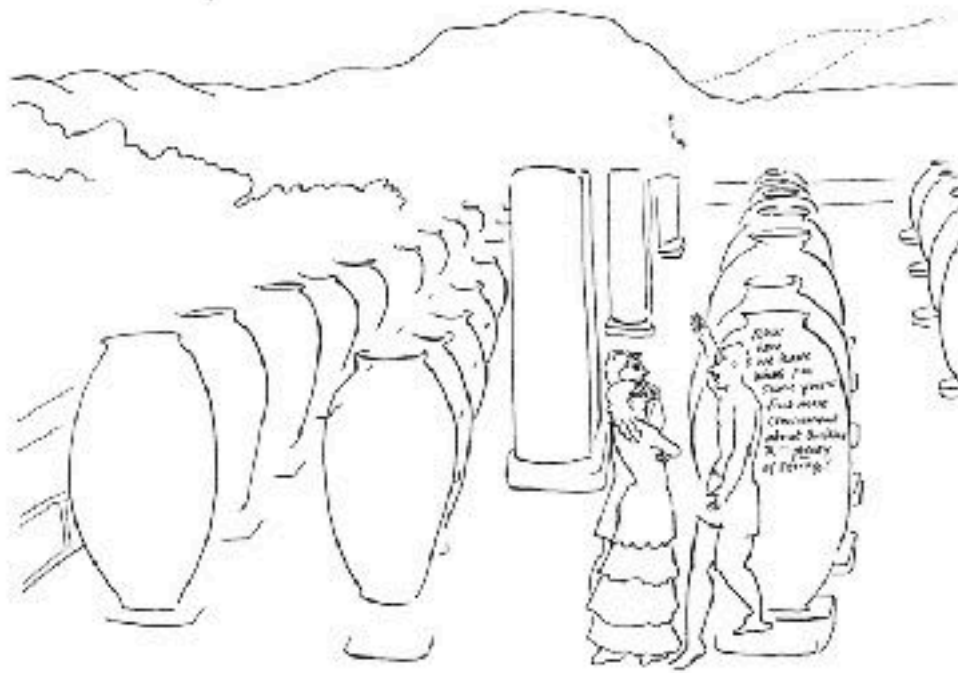
Fig. 839. Anne Glynnis Fawkes, *Cartoons of Cyprus*, 2001, p. 27.



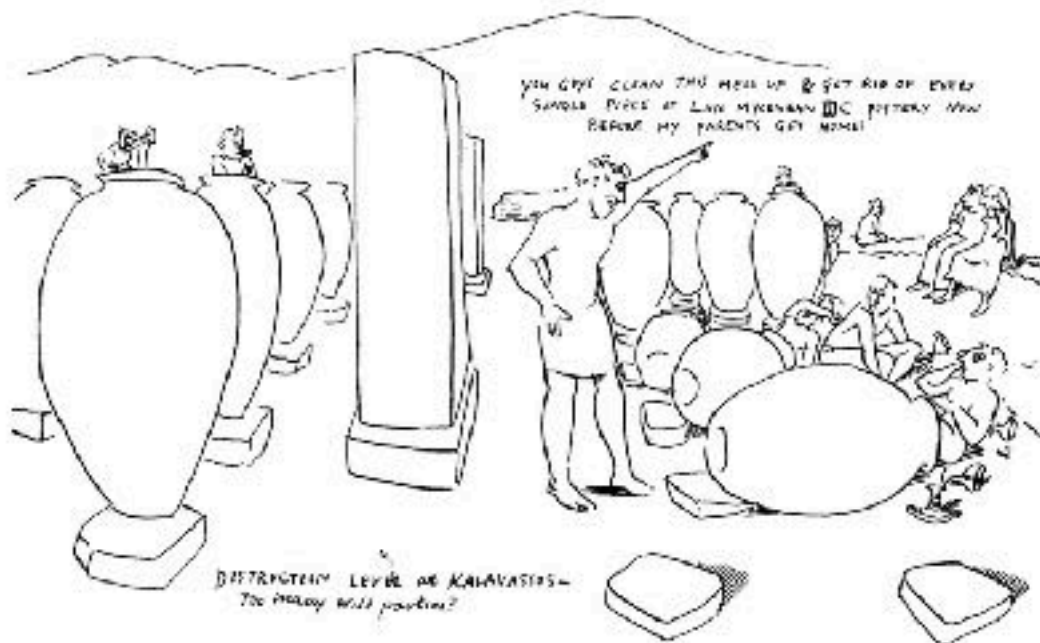
Nice work on the Ashlar,  
and my 6-year old could  
draw better ships!

CRITICISM OF MODERN ART & PHOENICIAN  
KITCHEN

Fig. 840. Anne Glynnis Fawkes, *Cartoons of Cyprus*, 2001, pp. 43.



*The hard sell for prime real estate - Kalavassos*



**Fig. 841.** Anne Glynnis Fawkes, *Cartoons of Cyprus*, 2001, pp. 34–35.

In addition to cartooning dig life in general, Fawkes also makes “in-jokes” that require viewers to have a sophisticated “culturally bound background knowledge” of Cypriot archaeology. Only those well versed in the field would get, for instance, Fawkes’ “humorous uchronía” “my-child-of-six-could-do-that” cartoon about the ship graffiti carved on the Late Bronze Age ashlar blocks of Temple 1 at Kition (**Fig. 840**) or smile at

her suggestion that the Pithos Hall of the palatial Building X at Kalavassos-*Ayios Dhimitrios* had been used by real estate agents as a selling point or that its ca. 1200 BCE destruction was the result of youths who partied when their parents were away and then removed all traces of their Late Mycenaean IIC pottery (**Fig. 841**). [Full disclosure: I was the trench supervisor who excavated much of the Pithos Hall under the direction of Allison South at Kalavassos-*Ayios Dhimitrios* in the early 1980's; these Fawkes' cartoons thus particularly strike my funny bone!]

### **“Humorous Uchronía” of Prehistory**

As we pointed out in the “Preface” to these essays, we are using the phrase “humorous uchronía” to refer to the creation of a humorous incongruity through the projection of contemporary cultural elements onto the past; we do so to differentiate this type of humorous temporal anomaly from the general term “uchronía,” which has come to denote only the literary genre of “alternate history,” such as Harry Harrison’s 1984 science-fiction novel *West of Eden*, with its alternate universe of dinosaurs and hominids (**Fig. 781**). We have seen in the Part II essays about art-themed cartoons and comic strips that the “humorous uchronía” temporal anomaly is occasionally used to create funny incongruities, such as with the cartoons that transform works of art into “selfies” (e.g. **Figs. 10, 36, 450–458 and 490**); other examples include the anomalous inclusion of contemporary cultural elements in the art of Michelangelo (**Figs. 7–11**), Picasso (**Figs. 20, 570–571**), Dalí (**Fig. 21**), Botticelli (**Fig. 472**), da Vinci (**Fig. 473–480**), Whistler (**Figs. 504–506**), and van Gogh (**Figs. 546–547, 551, and 556**).

But, if “humorous uchronía” occasionally pops up in art-themed cartoons, it is the predominate form of incongruity humor used in cartoon gags about the past. While the vast majority of these “humorous uchronía” cartoons involve the projection of incongruous contemporary cultural elements into the past, there are other “inverse humorous uchronía” cartoons, such as with **Figs. 868–870** below, where the present is incongruously re-presented as the past, or with the future archaeology cartoons (**Figs. 883–898**), where the present is humorously misinterpreted in the future.

The way that incongruous contemporary cultural elements are projected onto the past can tell us a great deal about the cultural attitudes of both the cartoonists and comic strip artists who are making those projections as well as the viewers who are laughing at their jokes. One area where this is most readily apparent is with gender

relations, such as we have already seen with the sexualization of women in V.T. Hamlin's *Alley Oop* comic strips (Figs. 800–801) and Jon St. Ables' *Lucky Comics* (Fig. 802).



Fig. 842. Fredrick Opper, *Our Antediluvian Ancestors*, 1903, Fig. 40.



Fig. 843. Fredrick Opper, *Our Antediluvian Ancestors*, 1903, Fig. 48.

Perhaps the clearest rationale for incorporating “humorous uchronía” into cartoons about the prehistoric past was articulated by Frederick Burr Opper, the cartoonist who first introduced “cavemen” to the American funny pages; as Opper writes in the introduction to his 1903 collection of cartoons, *Our Antediluvian Ancestors*:

In that dim time which we call Prehistoric, the ordinary man, clothed sometimes with a bear-skin, and sometimes only with a little brief authority, as he walked about or sat in front of his cave, probably thought of a number of things. And it seems to me that his thoughts must have been very similar to those of the average man of to-day. He, doubtless, considered whether his wife was taking proper care of the dwelling and the children, whether his meals were well cooked, whether he could get the better of some neighbour in a stone-hatchet trade, and whether he could get even with some other neighbour against whom he had a grudge. In fact, the ordinary man’s mind, I am convinced, worked then as it works now, and was occupied with the same interests, desires and emotions.

I have tried to embody, therefore, in these pictures of the sayings and doings of “Our Antediluvian Ancestors” this belief of mine, that although everything else in the world changes constantly, Human Nature has not changed, is not changing, and will never change.

Today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we cringe at Offer’s patriarchal “a-woman’s-place-is-in-the-cave” attitude and his “my-mother-could-cook-better” joke (**Fig. 842**). Similarly, few people today would smile at his sexist, bourgeois cartoon about a caveman having to wash the dishes because the cook left (**Fig. 843**).



**Fig. 844.** Dave Coverly, *Speed Bump*, 7 March, 2007.

That is not to say, however, that bourgeois “humorous uchronía” cartoon projections onto prehistory are a thing of the past. For instance, a recent Dave Coverly *Speed Bump* cartoon, which uses the cliché of a brochure-holding patron standing in front of a museum display (**Fig. 844**), makes a joke about the assumption that employing a nanny to look after one’s kids might be part of Opper’s unchanging “Human Nature.”



**Fig. 845.** Two stills from *The Flintstones*.

The epitome of anachronistic, “humorous uchronía” cartoon Stone Age humor is *The Flintstones*, the Hanna-Barbara animated cartoon series which aired from 1960 to 1966 and which has continued to thrive in American popular culture with movie spin-offs, trademarked merchandise, and even two theme parks! Loosely based on the television sitcom *The Honeymooners*, the “uchronía” humor in *The Flintstones* comes from transporting a typical 1960’s suburban American world into a Paleolithic past (**Fig. 845**), such as with two couples sitting on a stone couch watching television [note the “painting” (resembling post-Paleolithic Spanish Levantine rock art) above the couch—a cliché we have seen in **Figs. 725–726**] or a husband lighting his wife’s cigarette with a Zippo lighter [one of the sponsors of the television show was Winston Cigarettes]. The Flintstone household reflects 1960’s American cultural norms that seem archaically quaint, if not outright offensive, to us now: the husband, Fred Flintstone, goes off to work everyday [Fred works at the Slate Rock and Gravel Company operating a bronto-crane—very much like how brontosaurus were used to operate elevators in Winsor McCay’s comics about the Land of the Antediluvians] while the svelte, coiffured wife Wilma stays at home where she takes care of the baby and pet dionosaur—when she is not out shopping and spending too much money (**Fig. 846**).





**Fig. 846.** Fred Flintstone at work, and Fred, Wilma, and Pebbles Flintstone with their pet, Dino.



The corpus of our Part III archaeology-themed cartoons and comic strips are presented in three essays: “Digging the Past”—an exploration of cartoons making fun of archaeologists and of the archaeological process; “The Nutty Stone Age”—a survey of cartoons about cavemen and cave painting; and “Comical Cultures”—an examination of cartoons that make fun of ancient cultural monuments, from Stonehenge to Aztec pyramids. In addition to exploring what the “humorous uchronía” in these cartoon gags have to say about American cultural attitudes, we will also examine what the “representations” of the past reveal about American popular culture’s generally mistaken views of antiquity.



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