



# Identification of the mummy that inspired Hergé's character Rascar Capac

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## ABSTRACT

This article puts an end to speculation about the source of inspiration of the Belgian cartoonist Hergé in the creation of his iconic character of Rascar Capac, the mummy of an Inca king in the comic “The Adventures of Tintin”. We review the hypotheses proposed in this respect by reviewing Hergé’s use of sources for the creation of his imagery, before comparing the iconography of the image of Rascar Capac with the images proposed as source of inspiration. The conclusion is that the character of Rascar Capac is inspired by a drawing in the French encyclopaedia *Larousse*, which represents a mummy from the Chachapoyas area in northern Peru. This mummy is on display at the *Musée de l’Homme* in Paris, so the idea that a mummy on display at the Cinquantenaire Museum in Brussels was the source of inspiration is ruled out.

**KEYWORDS:** Hergé; Rascar Capac; art history; mummy; Chachapoyas.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

The Belgian cartoonist, Georges Remi (1907-1983), known under his pseudonym Hergé, was the creator of his own artistic style known as *ligne claire* (French: clear line), which later became the most famous and recognisable style of the ninth art (Mikkonen, 2017: 113). The *ligne claire* was adopted by many other artists (Duncan et al., 2009: 297), even influencing the pop art of Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol (Grove, 2010: 123). Although Hergé created several comic strips, he achieved worldwide fame with his series “The Adventures of Tintin”. According to the Moulinsart company that manages Hergé’s copyrights, as of 2019, 270 million copies had been sold between the 24 albums of this comic book series, which to date has been translated into 110 languages (Moulinsart, 2022 a), in addition to which all comics have been repeatedly adapted for the big and small screen (Moulinsart, 2022 b), most recently by the famous director Steven Spielberg (Spielberg, 2011).

In the Peruvian context, the albums “The Seven Crystal Balls” (Hergé, 2004 [1948]) and “The Temple of the Sun” (Hergé, 2005 [1949]) are of particular importance, since a large part of their plots are set in Peru and include extensive imagery from various pre-Columbian cultures, including Tiahuanaco, Mochica and Inca. Hergé, who never visited Peru, used a number of sources for the two ‘Peruvian’ albums (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 64, 66 and 80), to create greater realism. The comic strip “The Seven Crystal Balls” is about an archaeological expedition to the Peruvian Andes, where a group of scientists discover the tomb of the Inca king Rascar Capac and bring his mummy to Europe. Shortly after arrival in Europe, the seven members of the expedition fall into lethargy as a result of a supposed curse, inscribed on the tomb of Rascar Capac, while the mummy mysteriously disappears. The story is then continued in the album “The Temple of the Sun” and was first published as a serial in the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* in 1943 and 1944, before appearing as a colour album in 1948. The story comprising the two albums has been adapted for film and television, as well as in the form of a musical.

### 1.2. Problem and objective

Until recently, it seemed uncontested that the character of the Inca mummy of Rascar Capac was inspired by a mummy exhibited in the Cinquanteaire Museum in Brussels<sup>1</sup>; this was claimed both by the museum itself (Royal Museums of Art and

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1 This museum is part of the Royal Museums of Art and History and was recently renamed *Musée Art et Histoire* (Museum of Art and History). However, in this article the former name Cinquanteaire Museum (*Musée du Cinquanteaire* in French) is still used due to the simple fact that this name is much more recognisable and is therefore still almost exclusively used by the media and websites.



History, 2022) and by the Hergé Foundation (Moulinsart, 2022 c), as well as by several scientific articles dealing with anthropological aspects of the mummy (Appelboom and Struyen, 1999; Chapman et al., 2020). The mummy, from northern Chile, dates from the Late Intermediate Period and belongs to the Arica culture (Royal Museums of Art and History, 2022).

But in 2020, a first controversy about Hergé's true source of inspiration broke out and was widely covered in the international media: The Pairi Daiza Zoo in Bruges (Belgium) claimed that a mummy from the Nazca culture, more than 2000 years old, which had been part of their exhibitions since 2008, could have been Hergé's true source of inspiration. This idea was based on the fact that this Nazca mummy had been exhibited in Brussels in 1979, as part of the 50th anniversary of "The Adventures of Tintin", in the exhibition "The Imaginary Museum of Tintin". This statement was not well received by the Cinquantenaire Museum in Brussels, guardian of the "real" Rascar Capac. Its curator, Serge Lemaître, pointed out that the Nazca mummy of Pairi Daiza had never been on public display until almost 20 years after the first public appearance of the Rascar Capac character, so that due to the obvious anachronism the issue seemed settled for good. However, Philippe Goddin, a "tintinologist" (a specialist in Hergé's work), intervened in the controversy by putting forward a third possibility: According to him, the first images of Rascar Capac were essentially based on the drawing of a mummy in the Larousse encyclopaedia, which in turn represented a mummy brought from Peru to France by the Austrian-French explorer Charles Wiener and currently in the *Musée du quai Branly* in Paris. (Anonymous, 2020).

Therefore, the aim of the present article is to resolve the dispute between the above-mentioned hypotheses and to establish the source of Hergé's inspiration for Rascar Capac.

## 2. Methodology

The investigation and review of the hypotheses detailed above is conducted in two parts. The first part reviews the feasibility of the hypotheses and the second part reviews their likelihood or veracity.

### 2.1. A review of Hergé's sources

The first step concentrates on assessing the possibility that the mummies in question may have inspired Hergé by examining the cartoonist's use of the same sources in his work in general and, if possible, also in the albums "The Seven Crystal Balls" and "The Temple of the Sun" specifically. This review does not consider the Nazca mummy exhibited in the Pairi Daiza Zoo for the reasons given above (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 72 describes the anachronism of this proposal in more detail). Thus, the use of imagery

based on the one hand, on works exhibited in the Cinquanteanaire Museum and, on the other hand, on images from the *Larousse* encyclopaedia is analysed here.

## 2.2. *Iconographic comparison*

The second step consists of an iconographic comparison of the image of Rascar Capac with photographs of the Arica mummy in the Cinquanteanaire Museum, on the one hand, and the drawing of the mummy in the *Larousse*, on the other hand, establishing similarities and differences in order to identify additional hints for or against the two hypotheses.

For this purpose, we use the images of Rascar Capac from the first version of the cartoon, published in the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*. In that edition, the figure of Rascar Capac appears in 7 panels; in the first three, the mummy is sitting in a showcase (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 69, 71 and 77), while in the other four he is seen entering through a window or throwing a crystal ball (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 79). For comparative purposes, we limit our analysis to the first three, because the other panels show Rascar Capac no longer as a mummy but as a living character, without any factual basis. In the showcase, however, the mummy always appears in the same position, and is even seen from the same perspective each time, so it is not necessary to use more than one panel in the comparisons.

The mummy in the Cinquanteanaire Museum appears in a recent documentary where it can be seen from all angles (Cordier, 2019), and its image has also spread on the internet due to its fame among fans of Tintin's adventures.

The image in the *Larousse* encyclopaedia appears under the entry *Pérou* (French: Peru), in the sixth of eight volumes of that work (Augé, 1904: 797). It is certain that Goddin was referring to this one, both because it is the only mummy in the entire encyclopaedia with a resemblance to Rascar Capac, and due to the fact that Goddin himself reproduces this drawing in his interpretative work on the album (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 68).

## 3. Results

### 3.1. *Use of imagery from the Cinquanteanaire Museum and the Larousse encyclopaedia in Hergé's works*

The idea that a mummy from the Cinquanteanaire Museum would have inspired Hergé in the creation of his Rascar Capac figure is based on the author's frequent visits to the museum (Anonymous, 2020) and the repeated use of museum imagery in his work (Baudson, 1980). The most prominent example of this is found in the sixth Tintin adventure, "The Broken Ear" (Hergé, 2007 [1937]), whose plot centres on the theft of



an idol from the same museum and its recovery. The idol in question is a faithful copy of a statue from the Chimu culture, on display in the museum (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 5). Thanks to this and many other examples, it is confirmed that objects from the Cinquantenaire Museum have been part of Hergé's imaginary, although in the album in question, "The Seven Crystal Balls", no other image of the museum has been identified apart from the mummy (Hergé and Goddin, 2014). In terms of chronology, it is recorded that the mummy in question has been on display at the Cinquantenaire Museum since November 1926 (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 72).

The case of the Larousse encyclopaedia is even clearer, as even in the "Seven Crystal Balls" album itself, a number of images from this source have been identified, for example objects from Zapotec art (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 50), as well as the representation of an Asian butterfly (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 58) and fossil remains (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 56).

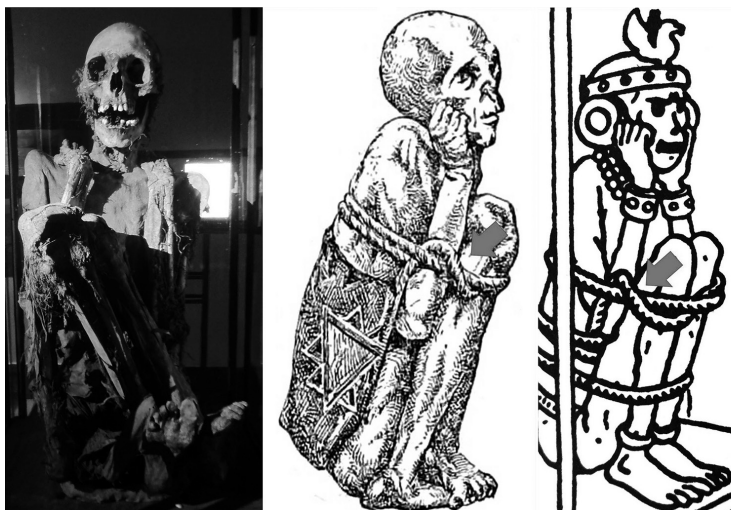
The latter, which appear under the entry paléontologie in the encyclopaedia (Augé, 1904: 623), are of particular interest. They show that Hergé consulted precisely the sixth volume (out of a total of eight), i.e., the one where the mummy in question appears under the entry Pérou (Augé, 1904: 797), recorded, by the way, quite close to the paléontologie entry, considering that the encyclopaedia has a total volume of about 8000 pages. This fact becomes even more interesting when one takes into account that the fossil drawings inspired by the encyclopaedia were published on 5, 6, 11 and 12 March 1944 (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 57 and 61), while the first appearance of the mummy of Rascar Capac drawn in his showcase appeared very shortly afterwards on 28 March 1944 (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 69). Both the physical proximity and the temporal sequence are important hints, although of course they cannot be classified as definitive evidence.

In summary, we note that Hergé drew on both sources before and at the time of creating the figure of Rascar Capac, so that depending on the chronology of events, both could have been his source of inspiration. However, we note that when he created the album in question, Hergé had been using the *Larousse* more frequently, and had even consulted the sixth volume of the encyclopaedia, the one with the image of the mummy, shortly before the first appearance of Rascar Capac.

### 3.2. Iconographic comparison

It seems that no systematic iconographic comparison has ever been undertaken between the figure of Rascar Capac and the mummy of the Cinquantenaire Museum on the one hand and the *Larousse* mummy on the other; at least, no such work has ever been published. However, as for Rascar Capac and the museum mummy, Lemaître mentions two similarities: the lack of hair, as noted in the first version of the Rascar Capac drawing, and the bending of the knees (Anonymous, 2020). Neither of these

aspects is distinctive, as the vast majority of mummies from the Andean area have bent knees and many of them are hairless (Aufderheide, 2003: 92-158). Therefore, these features alone do not constitute evidence that the mummy in the Cinquanteinaire Museum was indeed the source of Hergé’s inspiration. Therefore, it is necessary to elaborate further on this comparison (see table 1 and the illustrations in figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Left: Photo of the Cinquanteinaire Museum mummy (Creative Commons by Q. Keyzers under CC BY-SA 3.0); Centre: Illustration from the Larousse (Augé, 1904: 797); Right: Initial version of Rascar Capac (fragment from Hergé & Goddin, 2014: 69, ©Hergé/ Moulinsart - 2022). The red arrows were added by the author.

Table 1. Iconographic similarities and differences (similarities are marked in medium grey, differences in dark grey, and the case where there are similarities and differences at the same time, in light grey).

Aspect compared	Mummy of the Cinquanteinaire Museum	Mummy of the Larousse (Augé 1904)	Rascar Capac (Hergé 1944)
Mouth	Open	Nearly closed	Nearly closed
Hair	Absent	Absent	Absent
Position of hands	Opened, placed on the shoulders	Closed, next to the cheeks	Closed, next to the cheeks
Position of arms	Fully bent and close to the body	Fully bent and close to the body	Fully bent and close to the body
Position of feet	In the air, upwards	On the ground, left foot on top of right foot	On the ground, parallel
Position of the legs	Separated from the chest, leaning to the right	Almost close to the chest, parallel to it	Almost close to the chest, parallel to it
Ischium bone	Not visible, as it is mounted on a support	Strongly pronounced	Strongly pronounced
Ropes tying the mummy	Absent	Present (see comment below)	Present



What is striking is the very few iconographic similarities between the figure of Rascar Capac and the mummy in the Cinquantenaire Museum: from the position of the hands, legs, and feet to the ischium bone - strikingly prominent in Rascar Capac, but not observable in the Brussels mummy - and finally the lack of ropes in the Brussels mummy, there is not much iconographic similarity. This lack of resemblance has already been noted by pre-Hispanic mummy specialist Dr. Anna-Maria Begerock (2017: 77).

However, the question remains: Is it possible that Hergé simply modified the appearance of the mummy to suit his artistic taste? To answer this question, it is sufficient to review two of the differences between the museum mummy and the figure of Rascar Capac that could hardly have been products of his imagination, since these features, absent in the Chilean mummy, are characteristic of mummies from other parts of the Andes, such as those from the Chachapoyas area<sup>2</sup>, which “were tied with rope” and had “an extreme and forced flexed position” (Guillén, 2003: 297-298). It is because of this (and the resulting position of the hands) that Begerock wonders whether Hergé will have studied a Chachapoya mummy at some point, either in the museum itself or from another source (2017: 77), and indeed it would be an inconceivable coincidence that Hergé would be inspired by the mummy in the Cinquantenaire Museum and then modify it in such a way that it more closely resembles other mummies - which according to this scenario the author would not have seen - in such particular aspects.

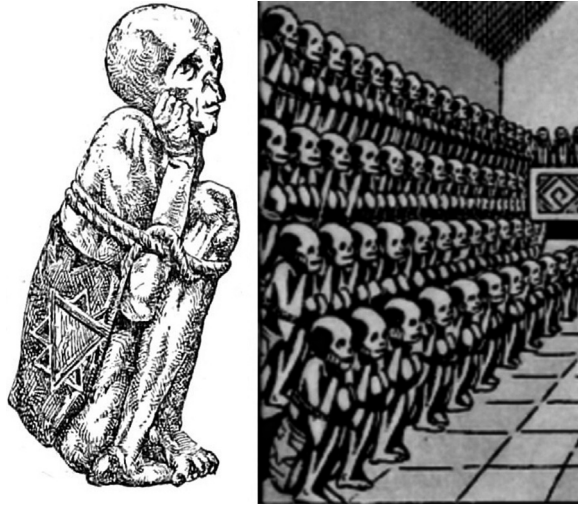
On the other hand, the iconographic similarity between Rascar Capac and the *Larousse* mummy is almost total, except for the position of the feet. It is even possible to find one more similarity: the perspective of the observer towards both mummies is practically identical. But the most striking of all the similarities found is undoubtedly the loop of the rope that ties the mummy below the knee (highlighted in figure 1 with red arrows). This detail can hardly be attributed to coincidence, so, together with the other similarities, there is no doubt that this was Hergé's source of inspiration.

However, quite apart from that, there is one more hint: the use of the same image by a friend of Hergé's, Edgar P. Jacobs.

Hergé hired the Belgian cartoonist Jacobs (1904 - 1987), known mainly thanks to the “Blake and Mortimer” cartoons, in January 1944, which is shortly before he created and drew Rascar Capac. Jacobs' task consisted, among other things, of colouring and improving the comics already published in newspapers, as well as contributing to the comic strip “The Seven Crystal Balls”. Shortly before accepting this commission, Jacobs finished his own comic strip “The U Ray”, the quality of which Hergé liked so much that he decided to hire him (Peeters, 2012: 152).

It is just in this comic that Jacobs uses the image of the *Larousse* mummy in several panels. Although he depicts it in a somewhat more stylised way, the bag hanging on the *Larousse* mummy with its corresponding embroidery is noticeable, as well as the aforementioned overlapping of the feet (see figure 2).

2 Following the proposal of Guengerich and Church (2017), it is no longer advisable to speak of a “Chachapoya culture” due to the cultural diversity of the area in question, but of a “Chachapoyas area”.



**Figure 2.** *Left: Illustration of the mummy in the Larousse (Augé, 1904: 797); Right: Mummies in Edgar P. Jacobs’ “The U Ray” (1991 [1943]: 20, fragment).*

It is obvious that it cannot be pure coincidence that Jacobs and Hergé drew from the same source at the same time, while they were working together. Hergé’s source of inspiration for the creation of the initial version of Rascar Capac is thus already proven, but the question remains as to whether this also applies to the colour version of the character, which has appeared in the various reprints since 1948.



**Figure 3.** *Left: Illustration of the mummy in the Larousse (Augé, 1904: 797); Centre: Rascar Capac in his initial black and white version (fragment from Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 69, ©Hergé/Moulinsart - 2022); Right: Rascar Capac in his final colour vesion (fragment from Hergé, 2004 [1948]: 28, ©Hergé/Moulinsart - 2022).*





Figure 3 illustrates that the differences between the two versions are minimal. Leaving aside the modification of his clothing, mainly the headdress, which could have had several additional sources of inspiration (Hergé and Goddin, 2014: 78) which are not the object of the present research, the versions differ in only two aspects: the modification of the chin, which is more bony in the final version -a mere approximation to the real shape of a human skull that does not require a specific source-, and the addition of hair. As for the second point, while it is possible that Hergé may have seen a mummy with hair and decided to add this detail to increase the terrifying appearance of the figure, it is impossible to verify this, let alone identify a possible source of inspiration. Therefore, the *Larousse* illustration is thus established as the main source of inspiration and the only identifiable one.

### 3.3. Identification of the mummy depicted in the *Larousse*

Finally, there remains the task of identifying the mummy depicted in the *Larousse*. The encyclopaedia itself gives no clue as it labels the drawing as: “mummy”.

In the introductory section, we have already seen that Goddin identifies the mummy in the *Larousse* as a Peruvian mummy that would have been taken by the Austrian French explorer Charles Wiener and which today would be in the *Musée du quai Branly* in Paris (Anonymous, 2020). We will see below that the mummy in question does indeed come from Peru and is exhibited in Paris, but that it was not Charles Wiener, but the French botanist Pierre Vidal-Senèze who brought it to France. The mummy is now part of the collections of the *Musée de l'Homme* (French: Museum of Mankind), listed under the inventory number MNHN-HA-30187 (Musée de l'Homme, 2022).



**Figure 4.** Comparison of the illustration and photographs of the mummy; Left: Illustration of the mummy in the *Larousse* (Augé, 1904: 797); Centre: Profile photograph of the mummy in the *Musée de l'Homme* (Dérobert and Reichlen, 1947: Plate 15); Right: Frontal photograph of the mummy in the *Musée de l'Homme* (Hamy, 1897: Plate XXXIII).

The identification of the mummy depicted in the *Larousse* is relatively easy because of the bag hanging on it, which is the same as the one with which it was found in 1877 (Vidal-Senèze and Noetzli, 1877: 640-641). With this very same bag on the mummy is shown by the then director of the *Musée de l'Homme*, Ernest-Théodore Hamy in 1897 (see figure 4, right), who also indicates its provenance: the archaeological site of Piedra Grande del Utcubamba (near Chachapoyas, in the present-day department of Amazonas, Peru). From there, Hamy indicates, it was brought to Paris in 1877 by the aforementioned Vidal-Senèze (Hamy, 1897: 65-66). Another collaborator of the Museum, the Americanist Henry Reichlen, also mentions the mummy and indicates the same provenance (Dérobert and Reichlen, 1947: 43-44), as well as including a photograph (see figure 4, centre). The photo demonstrates perfectly that this is the very same mummy that appears in the *Larousse*, since among the many coincidences between the mummy in question and the *Larousse* drawing, there are several coincidences that surpass by far the level of coincidence:

First, that the bag of geometric designs is hung on the same side (the right) and at the same height.

Secondly, the ropes that fix the position of the limbs are not only in the same position (below the knees) but are also of the same thickness and have the same type of loop at the level of the right forearm, a detail that we have already examined in Hergé's drawing.

Thirdly, the left foot is resting on the right foot.

Fourthly, the right shoulder is very close to the face, which is due both to the slight inclination of the head to the right, and to the fact that the arms are tight to the body.

Fifthly, the position of the right hand and its fingers match precisely (the left hand is not visible in the *Larousse*, due to the perspective chosen by the illustrator).

But there are also differences: the drawing does not show the damaged parts of the mummy, and the mummy's mouth is closed. Both differences are probably due to aesthetic considerations on the part of the *Larousse* illustrator but, in view of the coincidences identified, they are irrelevant to the identification of the mummy. However, both aspects are relevant to pinpoint Hergé's source of inspiration, as they prove that Hergé based himself on the *Larousse* drawing of the mummy and not on the mummy itself or a photo of it, as the character of Rascar Capac shares precisely these two aspects with the *Larousse* drawing, which do not appear in the original mummy.

The mummy from the *Musée de l'Homme* has been the subject of several studies: it has been examined from an anthropological point of view (Thomas et al., 2021), and the location of the archaeological site "Piedra Grande del Utcubamba" has been investigated, as well as the archaeological context and the circumstances of the discovery of the mummy (Ziemendorff, 2019). As far as is known so far, it is the remains of a warrior from one of the ethnic groups of the Chachapoyas area. It was removed from an anthropomorphic sarcophagus by Vidal-Senèze in 1877 and sold in Paris the



following year; since 1878 it has been part of the Trocadero Ethnographic Museum, now the *Musée de l'Homme* (Ziemendorff, 2019).

### 3.4. Charles Wiener and Hergé

Apart from the mummy of Rascar Capac, Hergé also drew other Peruvian mummies, in the same album “The Temple of the Sun”, more precisely on its cover, and in several panels (Hergé, 2005 [1949]: 45-46). Since these mummies appear only for illustrative purposes, without representing characters in their own right, their source of inspiration is less disputed. A simple iconographic contrast (see figure 5) confirms the hypothesis that Hergé elaborates an almost exact copy of the drawing of a false head from a bundle in which a mummy of the Chancay culture<sup>3</sup> brought by Charles Wiener was wrapped (Löhndorf, 2009: 220)<sup>4</sup>. Begerock (2017: 77) speculates that Hergé was rather inspired by drawings by the German archaeologists Reiß and Stübel (1880-1887). These, in fact, show a series of false Chancay heads; however, none of them bears as much resemblance to Hergé's depiction as Wiener's drawing (see the direct comparison in figure 5 with the false head drawn by Reiß and Stübel that bears the highest degree of resemblance to the one on the cover of the album “The Temple of the Sun”).



**Figure 5.** Left: false head of a mummy bundle from the Chancay culture, drawn by Charles Wiener who took it to Paris (1880: 649); Centre: fairly exact copy of Wiener's drawing by Hergé (2005 [1949]: Cover); Right: false head of a mummy bundle excavated in Ancón by Reiß and Stübel (1880-1887: Plate 12).

3 The original object is in Paris but is not currently on display (Musée du quai Branly, 2022, Inventory number: 71.1878.2.768).

4 Charles Wiener's excellently illustrated *Pérou et Bolivie* (French: Peru and Bolivia) of 1880 was indeed a first-rate iconographic source for Hergé; in the case of his albums “The Seven Crystal Balls” and “The Temple of the Sun” even the most important. In this sense, Löhndorf (2009: 220) indicates more than a dozen iconographic coincidences between Wiener's work and that of Hergé.

It is possible that the fact that the other mummies in Hergé's work are based on an illustration by Charles Wiener has led to the aforementioned erroneous linking of the *Larousse* mummy with Wiener.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

The present research has confirmed the hypothesis that Hergé was inspired by the illustration of a Chachapoya mummy in the *Larousse* encyclopaedia. The iconographic comparison of the mummy illustrated in the *Larousse* with the image of Rascar Capac has shown that both coincide almost completely, even in some aspects that cannot be mere coincidences, among them especially the loop of the rope that binds the mummy. From this and the other indications given above, it can be concluded that it was this - and only this - mummy that inspired Hergé. The mummy illustrated in the *Larousse*, in turn, represents a mummy from the Chachapoyas area, which in 1877 was extracted by the Frenchman Pierre Vidal-Senèze and is today exhibited in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. At the same time, the theory that the mummy exhibited in the Cinquantaire Museum was the source of Hergé's inspiration for the creation of Rascar Capac is refuted.

The result of the present research, the fact that it was the drawing of a mummy from the Chachapoyas area that inspired Hergé's character Rascar Capac, is of importance from different points of view.

Firstly, as we have seen in the introductory part of this article, the source of inspiration for the figure of Rascar Capac is a hotly debated issue, since for the different institutions involved it is of importance to possess the "mummy of Rascar Capac", for example for the purpose of promoting their respective exhibitions. Moreover, the aforementioned documentary on the mummy that would have inspired Hergé, translated into several languages, and events such as the travelling exhibition "In Peru with Tintin", with the mummy of the Cinquantaire Museum as one of its icons (Prescott, 2007), are testimony to the widespread interest of the millions of fans of "The Adventures of Tintin" in this very subject. The present research has confirmed the hypothesis that Hergé was inspired by the illustration of a Chachapoya mummy in the *Larousse* encyclopaedia. The iconographic comparison of the mummy illustrated in the *Larousse* with the image of Rascar Capac has shown that both coincide almost completely, even in some aspects that cannot be mere coincidences, among them especially the loop of the rope that binds the mummy. From this and the other indications given above, it can be concluded that it was this - and only this - mummy that inspired Hergé. The mummy illustrated in the *Larousse*, in turn, represents a mummy from the Chachapoyas area, which in 1877 was extracted by the Frenchman Pierre Vidal-Senèze and is today exhibited in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. At the same time, the theory that the mummy exhibited in the Cinquantaire Museum was the source of Hergé's inspiration for the creation of Rascar Capac is refuted.

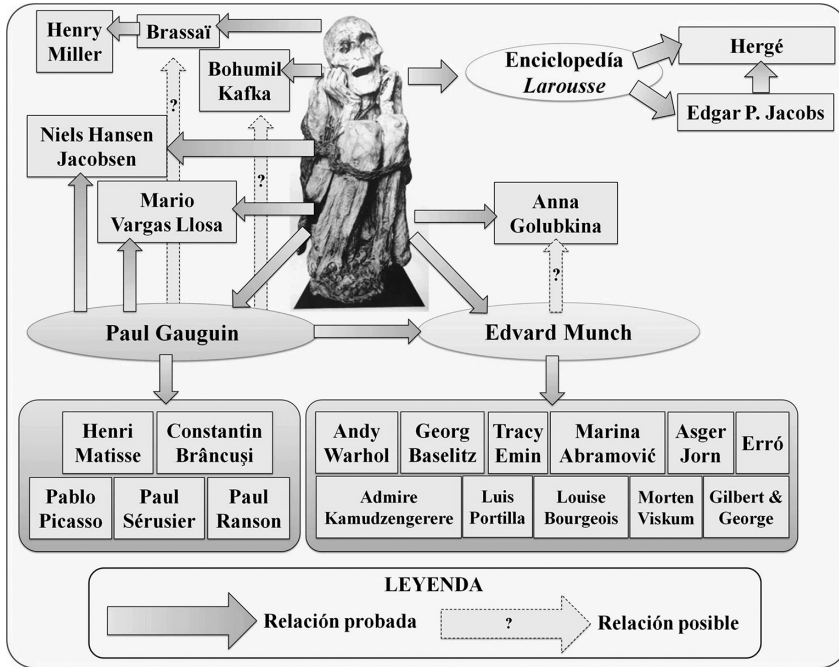


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At this point, the question arises: Is it really necessary to use an original mummy (regardless of whether it is the "correct" one) to illustrate Hergé's work in exhibitions and promotions? Within the framework of the present article, we cannot enter the current debate on whether South American or Egyptian mummies have a place in Europe, the context in which they should be displayed in museums, and whether they should actually be repatriated (a comprehensive summary can be found in Ordoñez Alvarez, 2019: 24-49). It seems that Hergé himself already had his own opinion on the matter 80 years ago, when in the opening scene of "The Seven Crystal Balls" he puts the question in the mouth of an anonymous gentleman: "What would you say if the Egyptians or the Peruvians came over here and started digging up our kings? What would we say then, eh...?", provoking Tintin's affirmation: "It's true..." (Hergé, 2004 [1948]: 1, own translation).

The artistic aspect of the result of our research seems even more important. The fact that Hergé - and, as we have seen, Edgar P. Jacobs - have used just this mummy as a source of inspiration is of great interest for the history of modern art, because the Belgian cartoonists are not the only artists who were in some way struck by this same mummy from the Chachapoyas area. Long before them, it also inspired the French painter Paul Gauguin (Andersen, 1967), who based some twenty artworks on its image (Ziemendorff, 2014), as well as the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch, probably prompted in some way by Gauguin, created his famous work "The Scream" under the impression of the mummy (Rosenblum, 1978: 7-9; Ziemendorff, 2015). Many other artists were inspired by it in a more indirect way, i.e., either through Gauguin's works - among them Pablo Picasso, Henry Matisse and Mario Vargas Llosa - or through the influence of "The Scream" on the art world - among them Andy Warhol and Georg Baselitz (Ziemendorff, 2016). The case of Hergé, however, differs from this large "conglomerate", where the vast majority of cases are based on the artistic plan of Paul Gauguin, being more similar to the case of the Hungarian photographer Brassa and the American novelist Henry Miller (see figure 6 below), in the sense that the mummy influenced their work in a way that was completely independent of other artists.



**Figure 6.** Direct or indirect artistic interpretations of the mummy from the Chachapoyas area including the Larousse, Hergé and Edgar P. Jacobs (Illustration from Ziemendorff, 2016: 161, updated by the author, adding the Larousse, Hergé and Edgar P. Jacobs; Photo of the mummy: Hamy, 1897: Plate XXXIII).

The fact that the *Musée de l'Homme* mummy has influenced so many artists, many of them among the foremost in modern art, seems striking in itself. But the case of Hergé and Jacobs described in this article is entirely independent of the others in Figure 6, and this necessarily opens up a question: What is it that makes this mummy from the Chachapoyas area so distinctive and allows it to appear again and again in works of art? Perhaps it conveys fear, anguish, and terror better than any other image - but it remains an unanswered question.

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