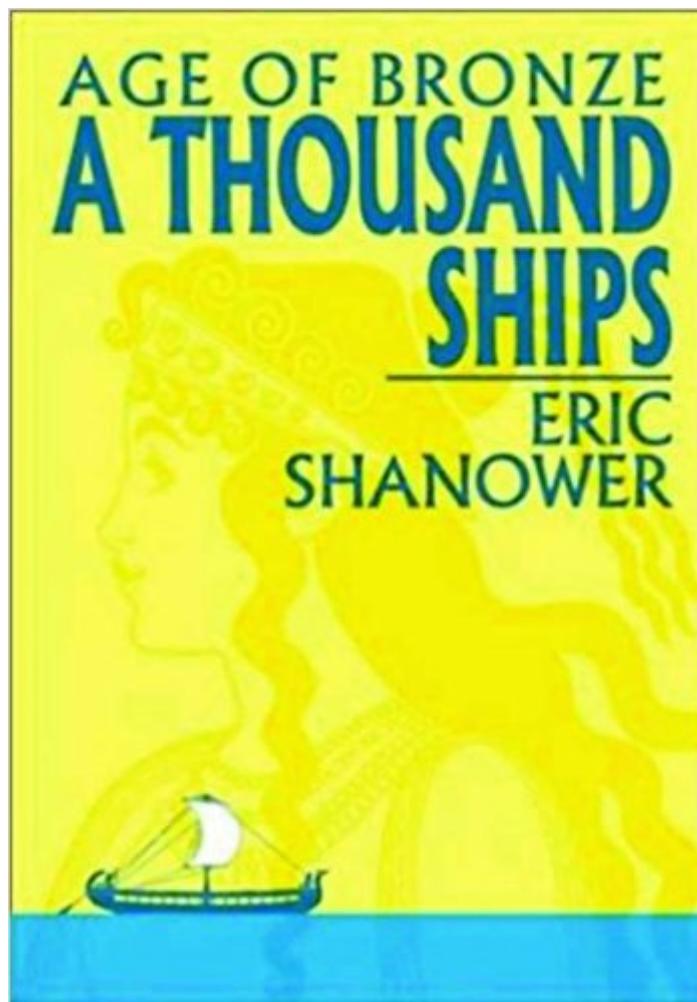


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# Age Of Bronze, Vol. 1: A Thousand Ships



## **Synopsis**

Daring heroes, breathtaking women, betrayals, love and death--the most spectacular war story ever told: The Trojan War. When a lustful Trojan prince abducts the beautiful Queen Helen of Sparta, Helen's husband vows to recover her no matter the cost. So begins the Trojan War. From far and wide the ancient kings of Greece bring their ships to join the massive force to pledge their allegiance to High King Agamemnon. Featuring the greatest of the Greek heroes: Achilles, Odysseus, and Herakles, along with a cast of thousands. AGE OF BRONZE: A THOUSAND SHIPS reveals hidden secrets of the characters' pasts, serving up joy and sorrow, leading up to the brink of war, and foreshadowing the terror to come. Age of Bronze will be included in a major international exhibition travelling to three German museums in 2002. The exhibit is centered on the current excavations at Troy and features Age of Bronze in an exhibit devoted to modern interpretations of Troy. Age of Bronze has been nominated for numerous Eisner (The comic industry's Oscar) Awards. Rack it in your mythology and historical fiction sections for even more sales success.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Shanower won 2001's Will Eisner Comics Industry Award for Best Writer/Artist for this extraordinary project: the first part of a seven-volume graphic novel about the Trojan War. He has researched every imaginable source about the war, from ancient legends to medieval romances to contemporary scholarship, and synthesized them into a fantastically rich narrative. He's also delved deep into the architectural history of Mycenaean Greece, so that the dress and settings in the book

look like Bronze Age artifacts, rather than the Classical Greek styles normally associated with the story. The book begins with the story of Paris, the milk-white bull and the kidnapping of Helen, and goes up to the start of the war Shanower still has a ways to travel before touching the material of the Iliad. He treats the material as historical fiction rather than mythology, as a tale of people, not of gods, though the supernatural aspects of the story are worked in through dreams and visions.

Shanower subtly alters his visual style for every flashback sequence: when Priam relates the story of Herakles, the images are cartoonish and the characters larger than life. His dialogue is formal but not florid, and the narrative flow is clear and simple. But the story also has many amazing scenes for an artist the erotic entanglement of Achilles and Deidamia, the feigned madness of Odysseus, the launching of the thousand ships to rescue Helen and lay waste to Troy and Shanower makes the most of them, with a fine-lined style in black and white drawings evoking woodcuts and classical paintings. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Great series. Great condition. Good buy. Support the author so he finishes the series!

Spectacular! This is the 1st volume in the series. It starts with Paris coming home to Troy and his abduction of Helen, and then Agamemnon who calls on the Achaean kings, bound by their oaths, to get her back. A lot about Achilles too. It ends with them setting off from Aulis to begin the epic war. This is a must for Trojan War enthusiasts. From homer to Shakespeare, you have a single story of Troy and Shanover also draws on archeology to present the Achaean and Trojan cultures as they really were. Parents might want to preview it for the kids as there is some nudity. Highly recommended!

I bought the first three in this series for my 6th grader who is dyslexic. She finds graphic novels a great format. She received these in her care package at camp and they were a big hit in the unit. Mostly girls receive gossip magazines and these novels were much more popular and a much better content. These tie into the 6th grade history social studies standard with Ancient Greece. By the end of 6th grade most kids have been introduced to Greek mythology and are ready for this series, which is adult in nature but this age group is now seeking more adult content in their reading and viewing material. I would much rather this than Teen Vogue or Seventeen magazine. All I can say is a group of 11 girls who just finished 6th grade loved these. Now I just need to find something to send next year to camp.

Eric Shanower does a fabulous job of bringing the Mycenaean world and the story of the Trojan War to life. Shanower has a different perspective on many of the characters than I might choose, but still I find his protagonists credible and compelling. With a combination of strong characterization and historically accurate settings and costumes, this is simply one of the best reimaginings of the myth I've encountered. Highly recommended for fans of graphic novels and aficionados of the ancient world alike -- as well as for those who just love a gripping story!

### Impressive work

I came across this book first in a review in Archaeology Magazine. The reviewer gave it high marks for knowledge of what Homer's Greece and Troy (probably) looked like. So it is a great source of visual knowledge. Pity they did not hire Shanower to do some scene sketches of the movie "Troy."

I am familiar with Eric Shanower's work in colour on other comics. I've finally started reading Age of Bronze, as I had previously avoided it (didn't like the b&w pictures). I had always thought that the Iliad was a too-lengthy poem story and really, there was nothing more to it than Helen of Troy, the Trojan Horse, Achilles etc. Having finished this first volume, I can't say that it blew me away, BUT, as a stand-alone comic, it is excellent! It is obvious that this was a labour of love for Shanower and probably is his masterpiece work. The script is excellent, interwoven with interesting personalities and given some context in this rambling story. The drawings are very precise, with terrific perspectives and a thoughtful depiction of how the Greeks/Trojans would have looked like, given the wealth of recent archaeological evidence. In summary, this is an excellent comic (would have looked better in colour), and totally outclasses all other indie comics and most major mainstream comics as well.

"A Thousand Ships" is the first volume in a projected seven part series titled "Age of Bronze," in which Eric Shanower intends to tell the entire story of the Trojan War. Volume 1 collects the first nine issues of the comic book saga, beginning with Paris herding cattle on the slopes of Mount Ida and ending with the thousand ships of the Achaean fleet supposedly sailing off to Troy to fetch back the face that launched them, namely Helen. The first part of the volume tells of how Paris learned that he was really Alexander, Prince of Troy, and after he abducts Helen the second half tells of how the Achaean host was assembled, including wily Odysseus and the young Achilles. As a person who still collects comic books and teaches Classical Greek & Roman Mythology I can appreciate the

problems that Shanower has to deal with in telling this timeless tale. In the past I have taught a giant unit on the Trojan War in which students had to read the stories about the Judgment of Paris and the Abduction of Helen from Edith Hamilton's "Mythology," the Euripides play "Iphigenia at Aulis," Homer's "Iliad," the Fall of Troy from Virgil's "Aeneid" and then continued with the story of Agamemnon in the "Orestia" by Aeschylus. Greek mythology is, as Shanower notes, hopelessly convoluted and contradictory, which means making all the stories fit together impossible. Shanower solves this Gordian knot by establishing ages for his characters with an eye towards how old they will be at the end of the Trojan War. Yes, this still presents problems (Helen, with her eight-year old daughter, seems much older than Paris, Achilles seems too young to be outraged in the next volume by the scheme by which Agamemnon dupes Iphigenia into coming to Aulis, and Neoptolemus will be 10 when he comes to Troy to take part in the slaughter at the end), but in each and every instance I understand exactly what contradiction Shanower is trying to resolve in the wealth of classical mythology from which he draws his tale. I find Paris to be too much the hot-headed brat, but since Shanower has decided that Helen submits to the abduction because she believes it to be her fate rather than out of love the characterization does not work against the story at this point (Paris is always the most problematic character in the story, in the same way that dealing with Judas forces authors to make hard choices in telling the story of Jesus). The most significant difference in Shanower's version is that the supernatural elements are downplayed in order to emphasize the human element. There are dreams and visions, "But no gods in the flesh" (Shanower proves he has fully done his research when he points out that Dares of Phrygia had Paris dream the judgment in his "History of the Destruction of Troy"). What matters here is not so much the abduction of Helen, but the fact that Troy controls the Hellespont and commerce by ships between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Still, prophecies and portents prove themselves accurate time and time again. I also want to note Shanower's accuracy in showing the city and throne room of Mycenae, which I visited this spring. Helen's dress and idols bespeak the Minoan civilization more than the Mycenaean to my eye, but that is not too much of a stretch. The artwork is certainly competent enough and since it works in service to the story there is nothing to complain about on that score (although I thought the decision to do the recap of the sack of Troy by Herakles in a more cartoonish style counterproductive). What I especially appreciate is the way that Shanower provides lots of details in the vast majority of his panels. Consequently, I would not be especially interested in seeing this volume in color because the artwork is clearly more effective in black & white. I look forward to the next volumes in the series, especially when Shanower has to deal with the monumental gap that exists between the arrival of the Achaeans on the shores of Troy

(the story that the first man ashore would die is fairly well known) and the refusal of Agamemnon to give up Chryseis to her father that begins Homer's "Iliad." I will be interested to see if Shanower glosses over that nine-year period or meets the challenge of finding some sense of drama and characterization to what happened during the period. All things considered, this is a fine beginning which should impress those who know the original stories as well as those who were seduced by the recent television mini-series abomination "Helen of Troy."

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