

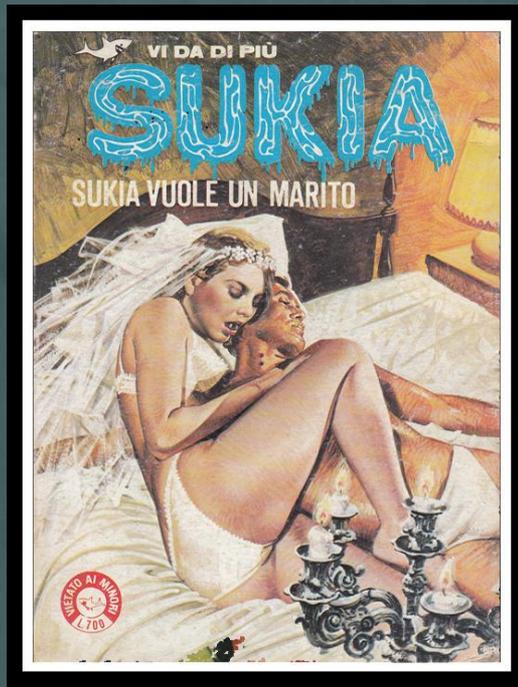
WALLESTEIN

il mostro

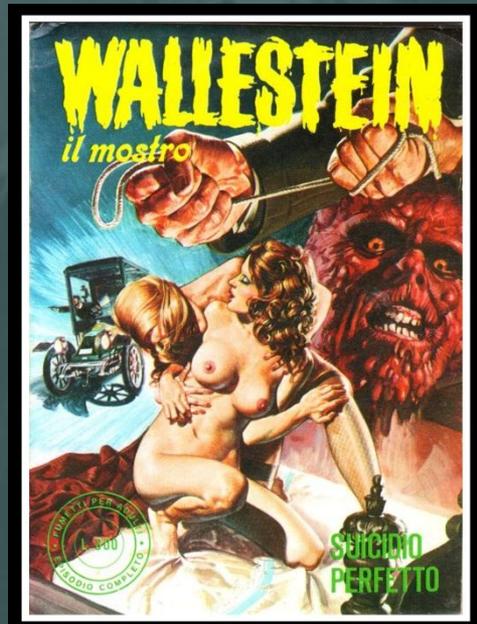
ADAM TWYCROSS, BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

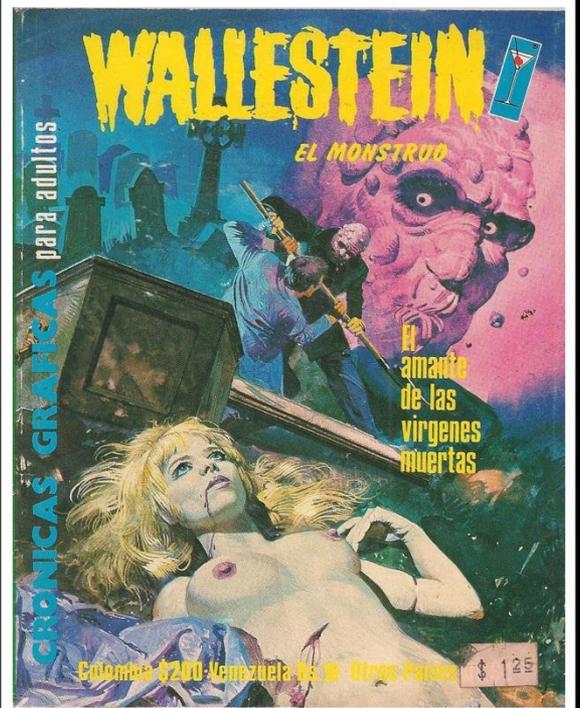
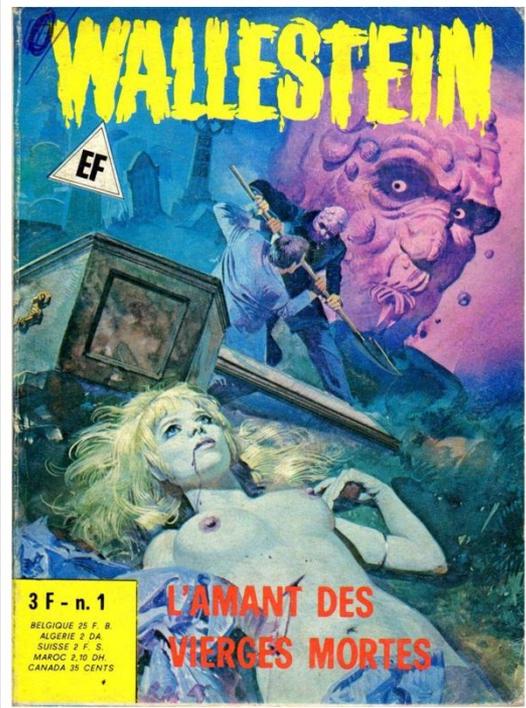
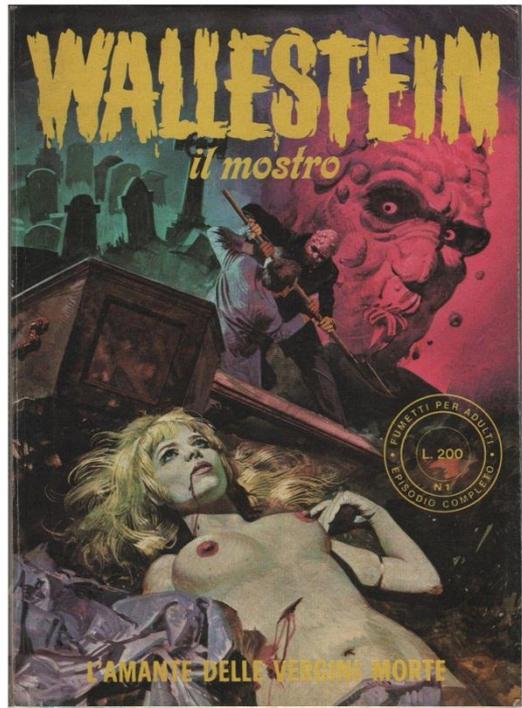
Wallestein is an Italian sex and horror comic, published between 1972 and 1982.

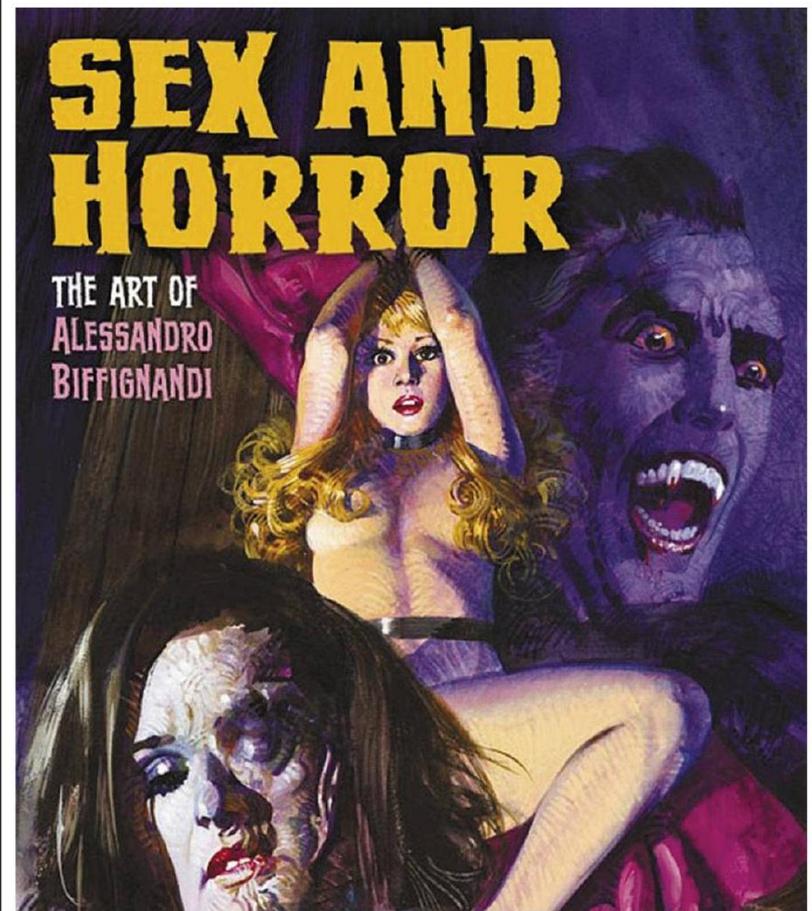
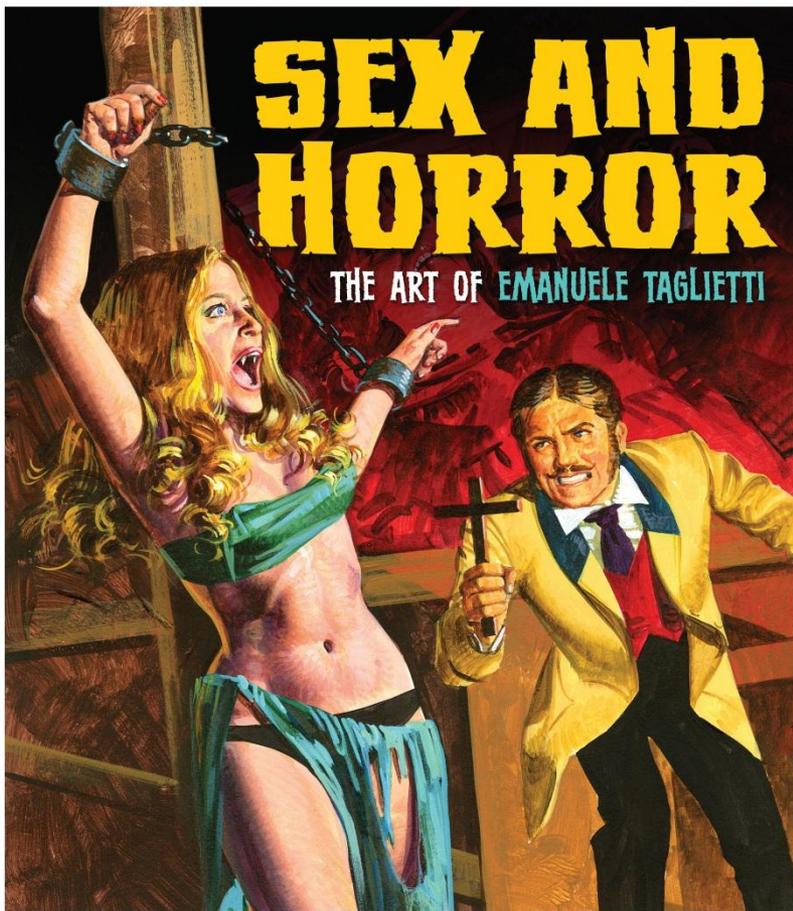
One of a number of adult pocket digests from publisher Edifumetto which offered a heady mix of gothic horror, fantasy, sex and violence.



Wallestein concerns the exploits of Jimmy Wallestein, an apparently dashing playboy who, in reality, is a hideously deformed and brutally violent monster. Parallels can be drawn with both Batman and Swamp Thing.



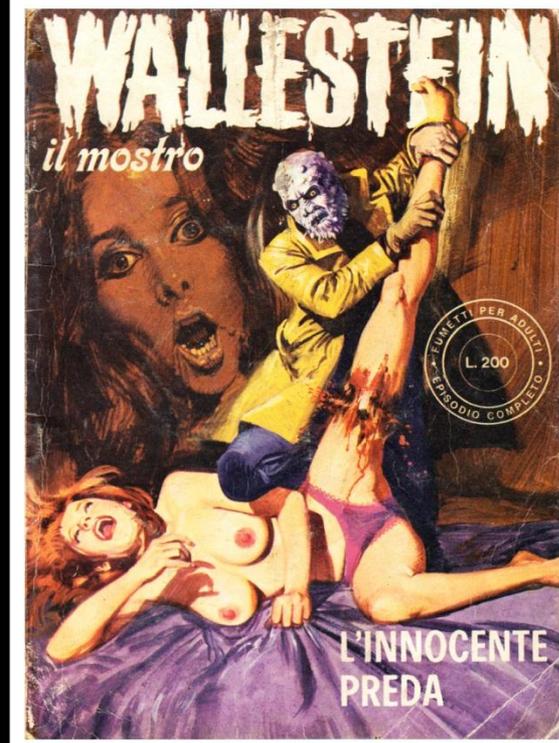
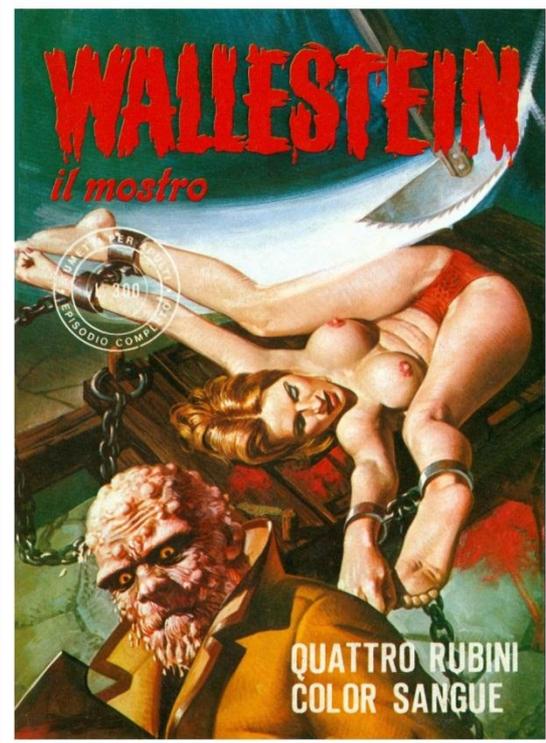


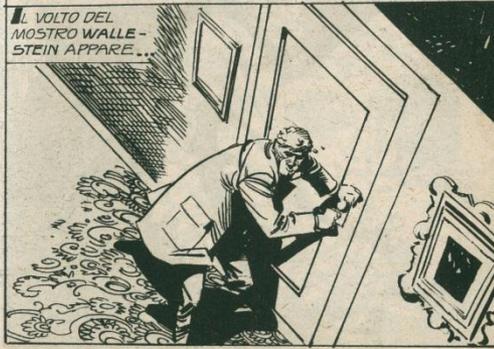


Writing in the Sex and Horror series, Mark Alfrey memorably describes Wallestein the Monster as “a gore-fest that is so horrendously violent it borders on parody.”

Wallestein is one of the many pocket digest comics produced by Edifumetto in the 1970s and 1980s.

Typically covers are vibrant, well executed and quite adult.





In common with many comics in this format, the interior art tends to be less impressive.

Interior art is black and white; two panels per page is typical, although splash pages also feature.

Each issue consists of a self-contained story of around 120 pages.

The Components of Wallestein

Wallestein himself is an extremely physical, extremely sexual beast- a fantasy of unrestrained human desire.

However, he also avenges and investigates crimes- so he's also a fantasy of a particularly brutal type of justice.

Villains are often emblematic of capitalist greed and corrupt politics- many other Italian media texts of this period reflect this cultural unease around the impact of capitalism (see for example the 'giallo' films of Mario Bava and Dario Argento)

Stories often involve a valuable 'macguffin' – but Wallestein never profits financially from his adventures.

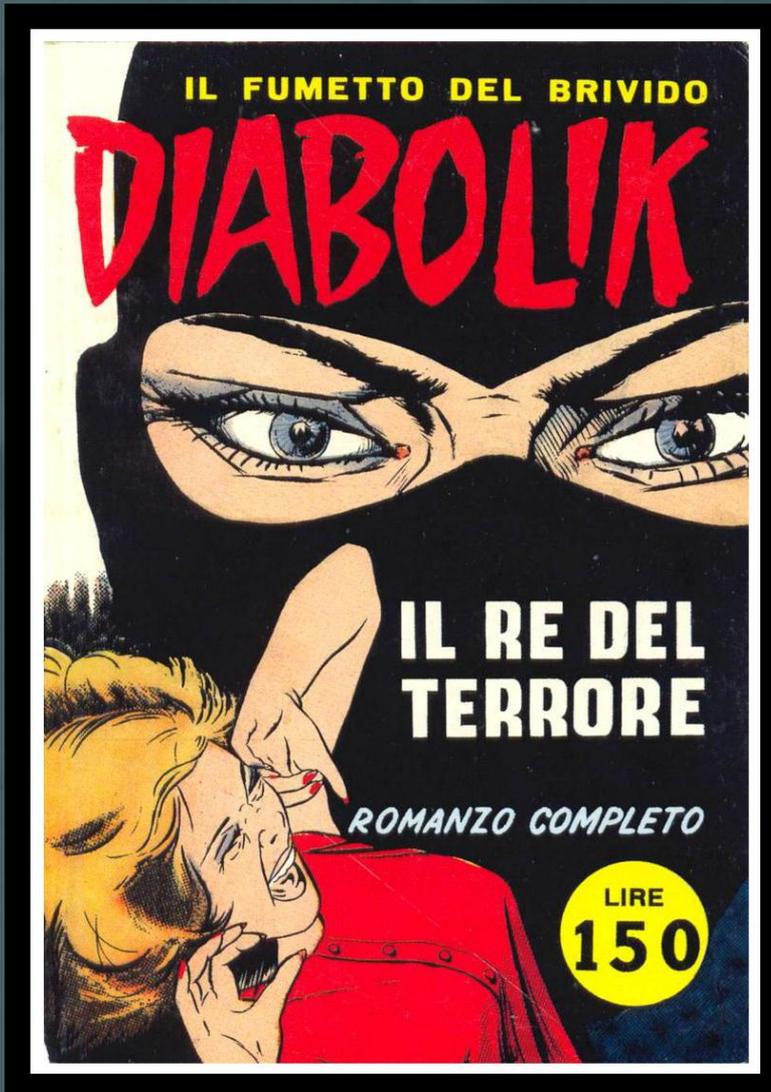


Only a few people know that Wallestein is actually a monster, amongst them his girlfriend Sara Orloff, and an old woman called Olympia Moore.



The police are represented in the stories by the bungling Inspector Fleming and Sergeant Blackman (echoes of Sherlock Holmes can be seen here)

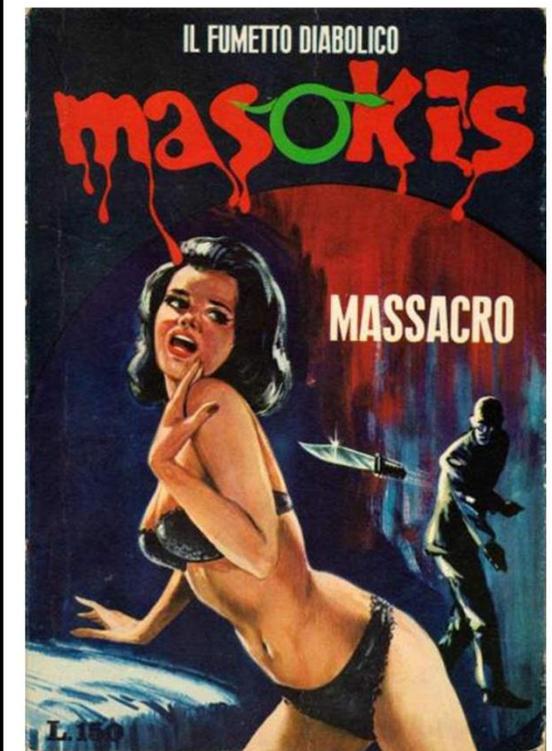
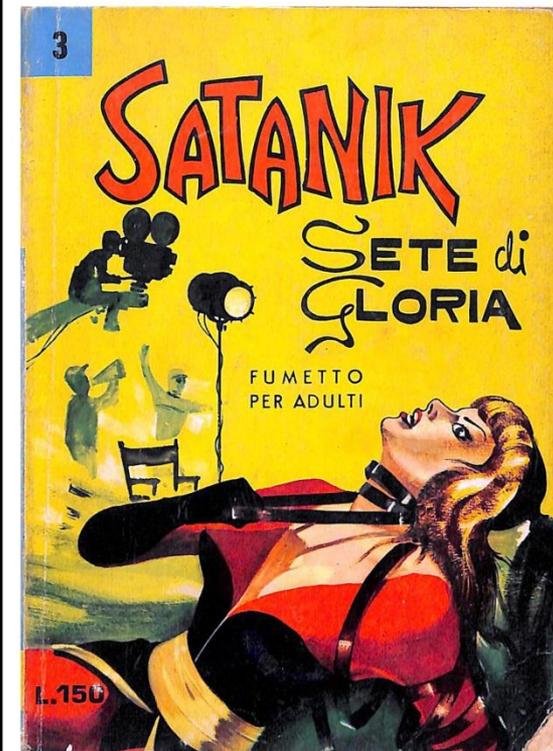
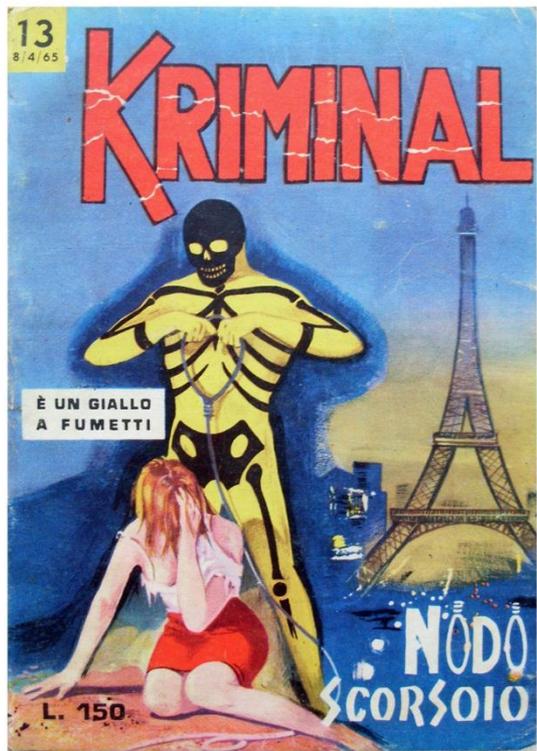




Wallestein's most obvious heritage is the Italian *fumetti neri* boom of the early 1960's.

Angela and Luciana Giussani's *Diabolik* (1962) laid down a number of genre conventions which were widely imitated and can be found in Wallestein:

- Adult audience.
- Format.
- Anti-hero as lead character.
- Police antagonist(s).
- Female partner/love interest.
- Capitalist greed/corruption.
- An anti-hero who can operate beyond usual societal constraints.
- Increased eroticism and violence.

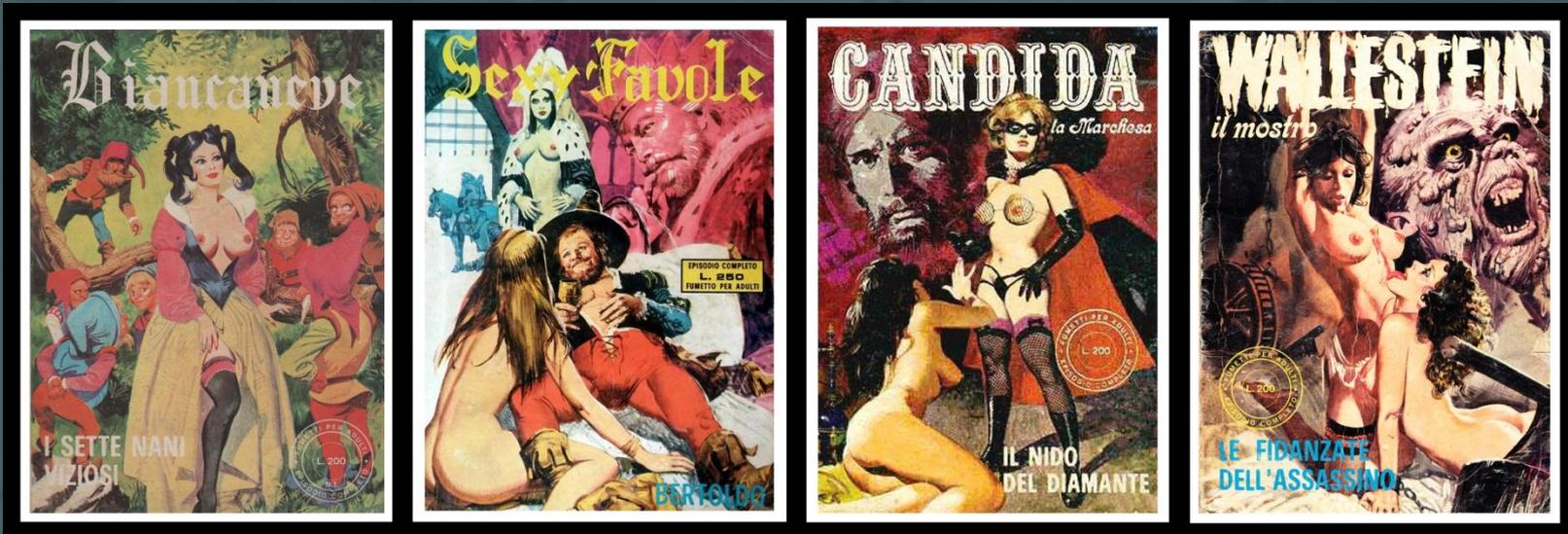


Increased sex and violence in Diabolik and its many imitators created a backlash in some sections of society and the media from 1965.

The result was a splintering of the market into *fumetti neri* and *fumetti vietati ai minori*.



Renzo Barbieri starts to produce fumetti neri and fumetti vietati from 1966, and in 1972 launches Biancaneve, Sexy Favole, Candida La Marchesa and Walestein Il Mostro under his new Edifumetto imprint.



The British Link

Wallestein and the rest of the Edifumetto titles are part of a much wider narrative that sees adult comics gain popularity across much of Europe during the 1960s and 1970s.

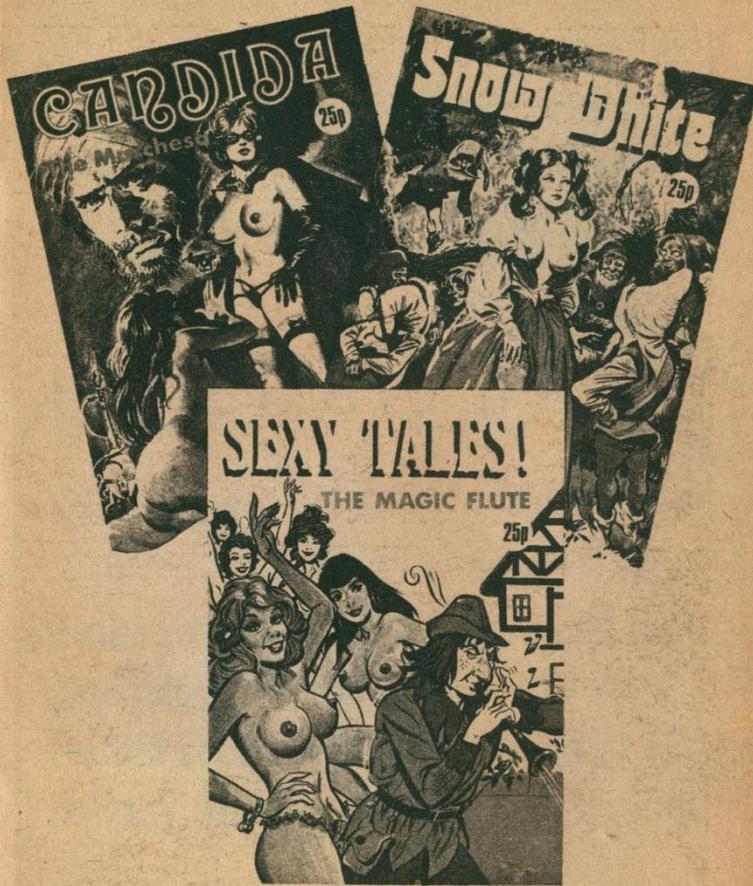


It is often claimed that British comics did not follow a similar trajectory, and that comics in Britain continued to be dominated by juvenile publications (at least in the mainstream)



A UK re-issue of a Wallestein comic that originally appeared in Italy in 1973.

- Who would have published this type of comic?
- How could it have been distributed?
- Mainstream or small press?

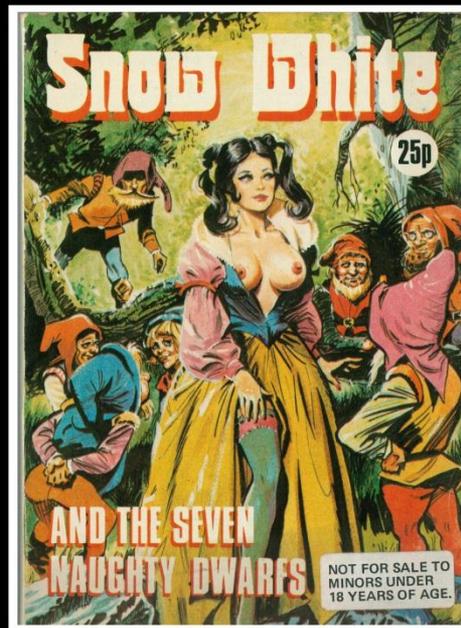
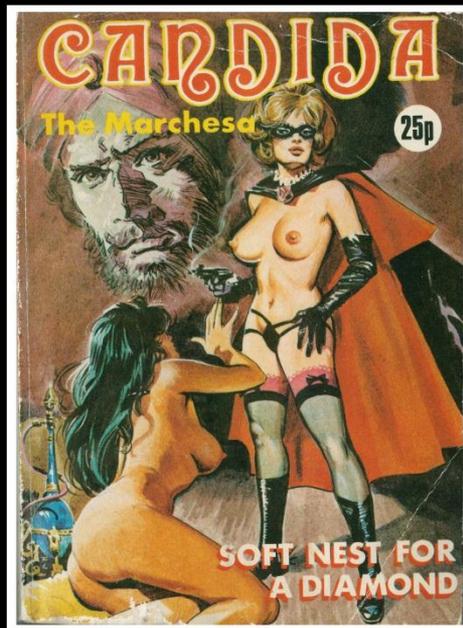
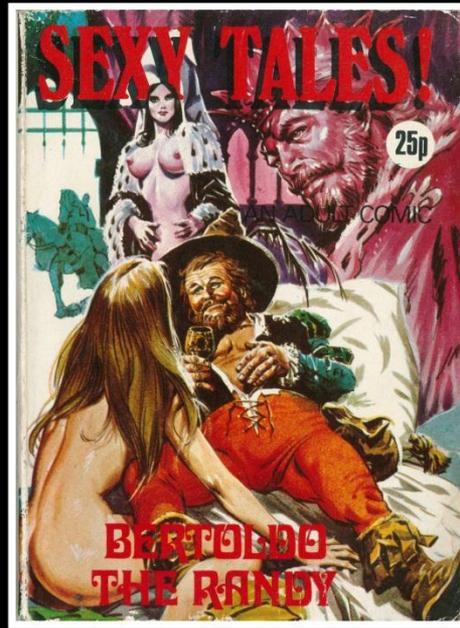
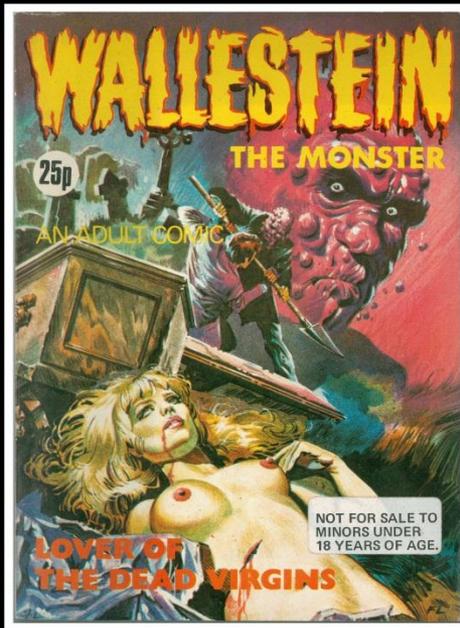


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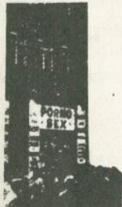


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COPENHAGEN PORNFLASH 1974

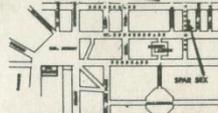


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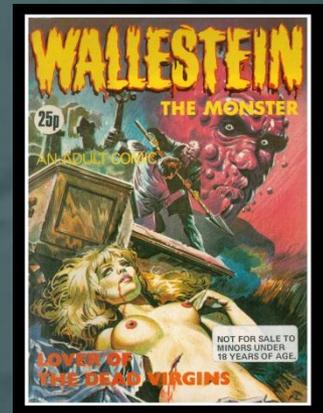
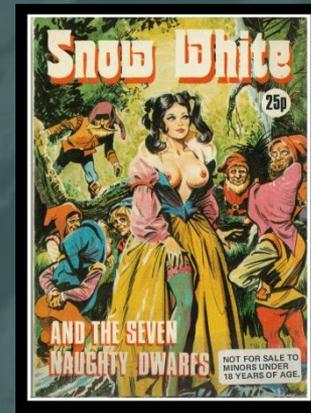
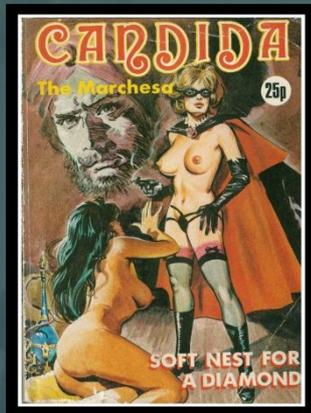
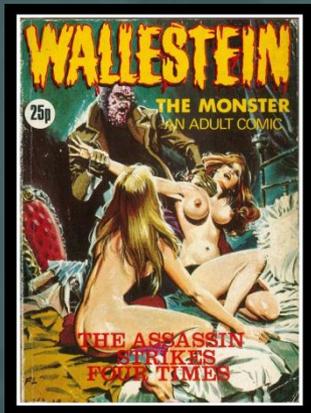
Top Sellers = Thorpe and Porter = Warner Brothers

Independent distribution networks allow for nationwide distribution whilst bypassing the 'cartel' systems of WH Smith, John Menzies, and the like.

“Because they had their own fleet of vans.... [Top Sellers] were able to get virtually anything distributed, through small indie newsagents across the country who they would supply direct.” Dez Skinn.

Enabled Warners to publish 'difficult' material whilst isolating their core brand.

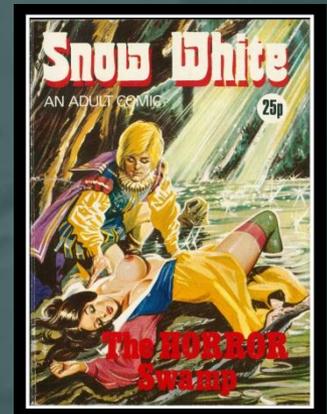
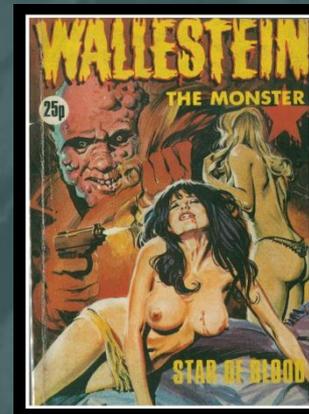
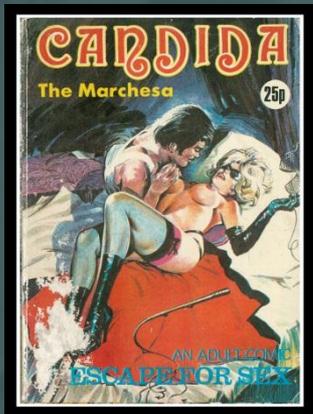
Independent distribution meant that they could publish anything they wanted- comics, books, magazines, and guarantee nationwide distribution.



Wallestein suggested that:

- The UK might have been producing other adult comics during this period.
- WH Smiths and John Menzies might not have been as powerful as I had imagined in acting as a 'brake' on the creation of adult comics in Britain.
- Links between British and European comics might be more extensive than I had anticipated.

And so it proved... Wallestein is emblematic of a deep and extensive interconnection between UK and European comics of this period... the very period in which adult comics were gaining prominence in Europe.



WALLESTEIN

il mostro

ADAM TWYCROSS, BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY