

PROTEUS

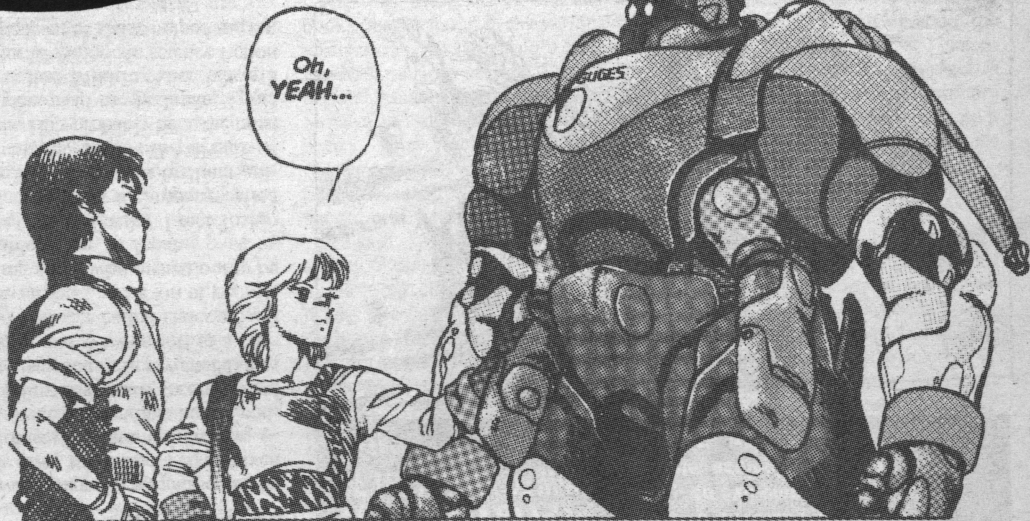
a Talk with Toren Smith by darwin m'pherson

In Greek mythology, Proteus was the elusive, shape-changing son of Poseidon. If you could manage to get your hands on him, he would do whatever you told him or tell you whatever you wanted to know.

Studio Proteus specializes in translating Japanese comics, or manga, into English for American publishers. After they receive reversed art for pages from Japan (a necessity because the Japanese read from right to left), the studio crew of Toren Smith, Dana Lewis, Tom Orzechowski, L. Lois Buhalis, Wayne Truman and Alan Gleason handle all production work, translation and rewriting, art corrections, lettering and more.

Their client list presently includes Eclipse, for whom they produce Appleseed, Cyber 7, Dominion, What's Michael? and Black Magic; and Dark Horse with Outlanders and short stories for Cheval Noir. Upcoming projects include The Venus Wars and Lost Continent.

Toren Smith, the man behind Studio Proteus, having to travel to Japan and England for business (and home to Canada for Christmas) was a little difficult to capture. But unlike Proteus, he was very forthcoming in answering questions, and I hear only his waistline changes shape.



AMAZING HEROES: *I've always been curious about this. Why don't you publish the comics yourself?*

TOREN SMITH: I'm not interested in doing all that garbage work, what I consider garbage work—talk to printers and make decisions on that basis, handle distribution and advertising and press releases and all that nonsense. The thought of doing that sends me into spasms of distaste. Mind you, I'm extremely glad there are people who like to do such things, and who do them well.

I'm not much of a businessman at all, it's not something I'm particularly interested in. I've had supervisory jobs and I've learned how to be a manager and that allows me to run

Studio Proteus, but that's not the be-all and end-all of it.

The reason I run Studio Proteus is to put my fate in my own hands. I started it because trusting other people to give me work or take care of me or whatever simply wasn't working out. I thought, "Well, if these things are my own, if I have the rights to them myself, if I make all of the arrangements myself, then no one's going to take them away from me. I know that for sure."

What I really want to do is just writing—that's all I really want to do. Unfortunately, to guarantee that I have the writing, I have to enter into a business situation. But I saw that there was a way to limit my involvement in