

Cartoon strips – why not in Latin

Ylermi Luttinen
MD, Latin enthusiast

I had picked up a habit of reading the cartoons ‘TinTin’ and ‘Asterix’ from time to time in different languages to practise my skills. The language in these cartoons has appeared to be good, understandable everyday language. The German writer, Karl-Heinz Graf von Rothenburg or RUBRICASTELLANUS, has translated almost all of the Asterix cartoons into Latin.

I was aware of the fact that two Latin translations of the TinTin albums had been published earlier by Caelestis Eichenseer. When visiting Brussels in 2005, I found a TinTin store which sold TinTin albums in various languages. After I had asked for a Latin translation, the storekeeper went into the back room and came back with two books in his hands. He claimed that they were the last copies in Latin. That was how I got the albums ‘The Secret of the Black Island’ and ‘The PHARAO’s Cigars’ into my possession.

The writer of all of the TinTin cartoons in French is a man called Hergé. I, for my part, decided to translate two more albums into Latin. I also decided to translate them straight from French without taking a look at the Finnish translation. That way the translation would most likely remain close to the original text.

So, my task was to translate the albums from French into Latin. I had previously translated them from Finnish into Latin. The process turned out to be quite challenging for an amateur like me. Luckily Dr. Erkki Palmén joined me in the project. Without his extensive and excellent help the process would not have been successful. ‘The Blue Lotus’ (*De loto caerulea*) is finished now and so is another album ‘The Crab with the Golden Claws’ (*Cancer forficibus aureis*). The third album ‘The Broken Ear’ (*Auris fracta*) is almost finished.

All this translation work has required many hours of Latin studies. Throughout these years I have practised my skills by translating various texts from Latin into Finnish, such as ‘The Little Prince’ (*Regulus*). This booklet also includes a vocabulary section with explanations. I have also had the honor of helping Dr. Erkki Palmén in his translations of two short stories by Guy de Maupassant from French into Latin. Both of them have been published in the Latin periodical ‘Melissa’ in Brussels and one more story will be published soon.

The Latin versions of the TinTin albums are awaiting to be published. My hope is that the Titinus albums will create joy and be of use to all Latin lovers – even outside the borders of our country. The text of the comic strips is mainly modern everyday language. The illustration supports the texts by clarifying them. Thus the reader will become more assured of being able to understand the text correctly.