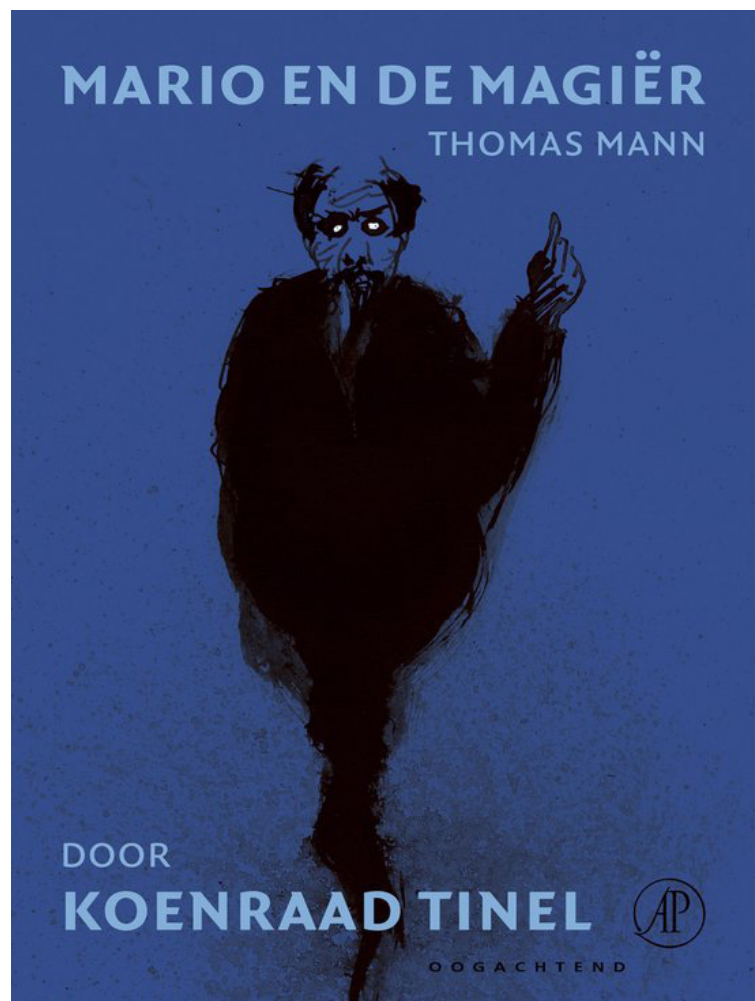




Visit www.flandersliterature.be for information about translation grants.

“Some pages are like palimpsests, with sketches that have been passed on through the ages, from cave to graphic novel. Tinel lets doom crystallise into fossils.”

De Standaard

“Fine-tuned text and raw pencil strokes.”

De Volkskrant



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Mario and the Magician

Koenraad Tinel

A young family travels to Torre di Venere, hoping to spend a pleasant, calm and carefree time in this popular holiday destination by the Tyrrhenian Sea. But while the summer slowly slips into autumn and the other tourists start to disappear, what they find is narrowmindedness, petty arguments, and an overall tense atmosphere. When the stifling heat makes way for a sultry sirocco, Cavaliere Cipolla appears; a demonic, hunched hypnotist who enthuses and manipulates his audience with a whip. It is in the humble waiter Mario that this dark magician eventually finds his fate...

With his novella *Mario and the Magician* (1930), German author Thomas Mann (1875-1955) expressed a suffocating feeling of unease after a holiday in Italy. A foreboding of the disastrous, all-destructive war that the rise of fascism would lead to. 150 years after Mann was born, Koenraad Tinel (1934) feels the modern-day echoes of Mann's story resounding, and adapts it, in collaboration with translator Els Snick, into an impactful graphic novel.

Koenraad Tinel is sculptor and illustrator. He started drawing and playing piano at a very young age. In 1944 his parents flee to Germany, taking little Koenraad with them. An odyssey through the wreckage of Europe that is forever ingrained in his mind. Although he is a talented pianist, the young Koenraad wants to become a visual artist. Hij studies sculpting at the La Cambre school of arts in Brussels. Beside sculpting and drawing, Tinel often collaborates with befriended musicians and theatre makers. He's lived and worked in an old castle-farm in Leysbroek since 1996.

SAMPLE TRANSLATION

10

At about fifteen kilometres from the popular beach town Portoclemente, with its overflowing promenade, countless hotels, shops, wide sandy beach crowded with tents, little flags waving atop sand-castles, and sunburned bodies, lies Torre di Venere.

13

Torre di Venere was once an idyllic refuge for those who went in search of unspoilt nature.

But, as it tends to go in these places, humanity threw itself heedlessly onto the silence and, in doing so, drove her away.

14

Thus Torre, although still the more humble and tranquil place compared to Portoclemente, became a fashionable destination for Italians and foreigners alike.

15

Here too, you'll now find a Grand Hotel and numerous pensions.

17

In July and August, it is no different here than it is in Portoclemente: it will be teeming with yelling, jeering, and howling bathers.

19

The air is filled with the hoarse voices of worried mothers, calling the resounding names of their children.

20

And in equally raspy, bold voices, the vendors advertise their oysters, beverages, flowers, corals, and ice-cream cones.

22

When we arrived, the season was still in full blast and the cafes on the promenade were all packed full of people. As was the Esquisito, where we were served by Mario - the same Mario who will come up again later.

Torre di Venere ligt zo'n vijftien kilometer van Portoclemente, dat met zijn drukke promenade vol hotels en winkels, zijn brede zandstrand bezaaid met tentjes, bevestigde kastelen en bruinverbrande mensen, een van de populairste badplaatsen is aan de Tyrreense Zee.







Torre di Venere was ooit een **idyllisch toevluchtsoord** voor de enkeling die houdt van ongerepte natuur.

Maar zoals dat met zulke plekjes pleegt te gaan, heeft de mensheid zich ook daar in een lachwekkende hartstocht gestort op de stilte en haar daarmee verdreven.



Zo is Torre, hoewel nog steeds ingetogener en
bescheidener dan Portoclemente, bij Italianen
en buitenlanders in zwang geraakt.



Ook hier staan nu
een **Grand Hôtel** en
talrijke pensions.





In juli en augustus is het er niet anders dan in Portoclemente: het **krioelt** er van de schreeuwende, scheldende en joelende badgasten.





De lucht is vervuld van de schorre stemmen
van ongeruste moeders die de klinkende namen
van hun kinderen roepen.



En met een al even hese, vrijmoedige stem prijzen
verkopers hun oesters, drankjes, bloemen, koralen
en ijshoorntjes aan.





Toen wij er arriveerden, draaide het seizoen nog op volle toeren en de cafés op de promenade zaten afgeladen vol, zo ook de Esquisito, **waar Mario ons bediende** – dezelfde Mario over wie ik het later nog zal hebben.

