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THE FIRST RESOURCE FOR MATHEMATICS

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Mathematical puzzle tales from Mount Olympus. (English) Zbl 1518.00003

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The author has published several puzzle compilations before and he has been vice-president of the *International Mathematical Tournament of the Towns* which are a Russian alternative for the *International Mathematical Olympiads*. During these *Tournaments* problems have to be solved that require in general more ingenuity than skills obtained through drill. For this book, Liu selected 40 of the problems from the past *Tournaments* (1981–2021) which are listed in an appendix. In the main part of the book these problems are reformulated in the context of stories inspired by Greek mythology.

The main character is Eubie (prince Eubuleus of Eleusis) telling about the problems he had to solve as a young assistant of Silenius the Satyr, and later during his many adventures. This is not a textbook about Greek mythology, which is freely interpreted here, but there are recognizable stories like the Labours of Heracles, Pandora's box, etc. The stories are told in the form of dialogues, reminding us of Plato's Dialogues. Each of the 40 chapters ends with a problem and a description of the solution.

The idea is that, by reading this book, students of the classics, usually with a less mathematical mindset, would become interested in some mathematics as well. However, do not mistake this as a training in proper mathematics in the sense of mathematical textbooks. The intention is rather to encourage the recreational yet creative ingenuity, required to solve these puzzles.

The problems are hard in general even if the originals involve problems for junior participants. Also the answers (not the solution) to the originals are given in the appendix. Sometimes, when they differ somewhat from the solutions for the ones given in the mythological context, this leaves some aspects to be solved for the reader.

Reviewer: Adhemar Bultheel (Leuven)

MSC:

00A08 Recreational mathematics

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