



CHAPTER ONE

**The first years. Primary school - High school – University
1875-1897**



Angelos Evangelidis Tanagras – My Memoirs

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PREFACE

Angelos Evangelidis Tanagras¹ became widely known in Greece and abroad, as the founder and president of the “Hellenic Society of Psychical Research”, or, of the “Psychophysiology Society”, which was active from 1923 continuously for 35 years, while Tanagras kept active as a parapsychologist for about 40 years. He founded the society together with two distinguished Greeks, the medical doctor and novelist Pavlos Nirvanas and the archeologist and painter Alexander Philadelphus, in view to research, register and interpret psychical phenomena. He published his findings in the “Psychikai Ereunai” magazine of the Hellenic society that he was publishing from 1925 till 1942. There were also public lectures given at the Society’s center, on 67 Aristotelous street in Athens, as well as at the Gendarmes and Police Academies and at the lecture hall of the Athens University on Massalias street in Athens. In these lectures Tanagras would explain psychical phenomena and present experiments with the help of the, specially trained by him, mediums of the Society.



Two pages of Tanagras’ manuscript, #275 & 276, belonging to the paragraph titled: “The founding of the Hellenic Society of Psychical Research”.

He collaborated in long-distance telepathy experiments with other parapsychology centers in Europe and the USA until about 1951. As the years passed by, especially after the Nazi occupation of Greece, the intense activity of the Hellenic Society was gradually diminished. Tanagras was now in old age and those of his close

collaborators still alive, were occupied with their own private professions to make a living, unable to continue his work.

Tanagras possessed a rich literary talent that he presented in articles and prose published in newspapers and magazines and also as essays on parapsychology. He had also edited translations of ancient Greek authors. A large number of his prose and novels published by newspapers and magazines have not been archived. He began writing the memoirs of his long life in 1957, when he was already 82 years and continued until about 1964. He wanted, as he frequently mentions in his memoirs, to have them published. With that aim in mind, he sent his manuscripts in around 1965 to the Parapsychology Foundation² (PF) in New York. He had already sent to the PF his book «Le Destin et la Chance» in 1959³, to be translated in English and be published. On May 20th of 1965 the PF presented this new edition by the title «Psychophysical Elements in Parapsychology Traditions», honoring his 90th birthday celebration. This book was published by the PF two years later.

The manuscripts of the autobiography of Tanagras remained stored in the library of the Parapsychology Foundation for over 40 years, till the day when my efforts to acquire copies of them reached a happy ending. Tanagras used hard cover notebooks of large size to write his memoirs that were hard-wearing enough to be preserved in good condition until today. Yet, the long years have affected some scattered pages he had annexed to the main body of his memoirs, containing some of his final thoughts.

Tanagras writes his memoirs always in old Greek (katharevousa), with appropriate punctuation and accents on his words, using fine ink pen, so that his writing is generally quite legible. At times, however, his advanced age and his delicate state of health would take over affecting his writing, which becomes shaky and illegible. He would even forget at times to add words to his sentences and dates that he cannot remember, lending ambiguity in the text.

In the top margin of the notebook where he kept his memories, he added the titles of the topics treated on those pages, written in thick red pencil. He also numbers his pages on the top margin, but sometimes he would confuse the numbering sequence. I kept, in the more than 500 pages of his biography book, the exact same titles of paragraphs he used, dividing the book into four main chapters, related to the main periods of Tanagras' life.

The first chapter refers to the years of his education, from the primary school to the medical school of the University of Athens. The second chapter refers to the season where he serves as medical doctor of the Navy, his adventures during his many journeys on sea and when he was serving on land. The third chapter refers to the period when he resigns from the Navy to establish and direct the Hellenic Society of Psychical Research. In the fourth chapter, the epilogue, I brought the last scattered of his manuscript pages, where he presents in an advanced age his thoughts and his philosophy in life. In this last chapter, in the very few times where he forgot to add his own paragraph titles, I took the liberty to add my own, according to my estimation.

I started working on Tanagras as part of my research in extrasensory perception phenomena, (ESP), that I had already began researching since year 1990. I was inspired to include the personality and work of Angelos Tanagras in my ESP research, by the Athens Lawyer, Mr. Eustathios Sermier.

My work on Tanagras became known to the international community of researchers of psychical phenomena through my lectures, in England and Germany⁴ in years 2001- 2002. The material that I presented at that time originated in part from the Greek national library archives, but also from the archives of German libraries.



It was through this publicity that I became aware from a collaborator of the Parapsychology Foundation, that the manuscripts of the Tanagras memoirs were stored in the PF library. My long period of efforts to obtain copies of these memoirs lasted about five years, in the form of numerous “requests” either directly to the PF director or via its collaborator.

Finally, the PF posted to me a small section of these photocopies, at the beginning of year 2007. I was able to photocopy myself the rest of Tanagras’ autobiography manuscripts, after visiting the PF library in Greenport, Long Island, NY, where the PF library had then moved to, being first nominated as the PF “Library Fellow”⁵.

It is worth mentioning the contribution of the youngest of Tanagras “sensitives”, Mrs Eleni Kikidou, to the whole project of acquiring those copies. She

was the only member of Tanagras' team of sensitives still alive at the time, with who I was in contact in relation to my research. Mrs Eleni Kikidou, who was particularly interested in obtaining her teacher's autobiography, had offered to the PF in year 2006, as a noble gesture, the gift of a special edition of a honorary collection of Greek coins of different values, including a silver one, all presented on velvet inside a hard case.

Having obtained the copies of Tanagras' manuscripts and having informed the director of the Parapsychology Foundation library that I intend to publish them as a book, I started initially to publish parts of it. First, in a talk at the conference of the British Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in 2008, and later in a talk at the Norwegian Society of Psychical Research also in 2008⁶, while I published an article about Tanagras and his telekinetic medium Cleio in the magazine of the British Society for Psychical Research⁷ in 2009. In this latter publication I made reference, as it is customary, to the existence of Tanagras' manuscripts in the library of the PF and also that I already possessed copies of them, so that the international community of the SPR magazine subscribers were appropriately informed.

Tanagras' intention regarding the publication of his autobiography was clear and specific, as he describes on a note: *«To not make reference to it (i.e. his autobiography), if not done in an appreciable and valued way. Otherwise, to let it sleep in peace where it is being stored»*, signing his request with the date 14th July 1964⁸.

Realizing his wish for a respectful and well-documented publication of his autobiography was for me not limited to a simple digitizing of his manuscripts. It was a goal sustained by many years of research, in order to make the necessary references to either the historical events of his narrative, or to the personalities that he presents, aiming to the inclusiveness of the book. My aim was to confirm the information he presented in his often illegible manuscript, as complete as possible and to chronologically place those chronicles, by verifying names and events. To make the reading of his autobiography smoother, I converted the original writing style of Tanagras, common in the early part of last century into the currently spoken Greek language.

The contribution of the lawyer, Mr. Sermier, in the creation of this work has been valuable, in checking for the proper flow of text, or even to add information to

the presented events. For any errors possibly remaining in the text, the responsibility is entirely mine.

To collect the references appearing in the book as endnotes, I consulted publications, in books and articles related to Tanagras in the field of parapsychology kept in library archives, both in Greece and abroad. My searches also included the Internet. In my bibliographic research, I was greatly benefited by the continuous support of the coordinator of the departments “Psychological Counselling and Social and Cultural Research”, of the “Institute of Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health”, IGPP, (Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene) in Freiburg, Germany, the psychologist Mr. Eberhard Bauer.

By reading Tanagras’ autobiography, one discovers his great literary talent and the depth of his knowledge. The reader will manage to conquer a view of his multifaceted character, while enriching at the same time their background knowledge on people, places and events, at which Tanagras happened to throw his glance.

I do not agree with the “scientific” descriptions Tanagras attributed to psychical phenomena, and I do not endorse some of his philosophical views on historical events and human behavior. However, I found the journey of his long life excitingly multifaceted. Realizing Tanagras’ dream “to publish his memoirs sometime” and accidentally obeying his prediction “that it will not happen within his 20th century”, I offer here this book to you, dear readers, so that you can also enjoy it, too.

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Athens, December 2016

Notes and Comments

¹ The Silhouette of Tanagras portrayed on the first page of this book was part of the material in Tanagras autobiography.

² The website of PF is at: <http://www.parapsychology.org/>

³ This book is accompanied by a letter from Tanagras in French: «*A la fondatrice du Parapschology foundation M^e Eileen Garrett marque d’ estime pour son oeuvre digne d’ imitation. Admiral A. Tanagras. 1959*».

⁴ In relation to the collaboration of Tanagras with Oesterreich, I gave lectures in England and Germany, as for instance in 2001 at the Department of Psychology of the University of Tübingen and in 2002 at the 26th international conference of the British Society of Psychical Research in Manchester.

(Tätigkeitsbericht Biennial Report 2002/2003, Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene e.V., Freiburg i. Br. : http://www.igpp.de/allg/Berichte/report_2003_1.pdf)

⁵ <http://www.pflyceum.org/186.html>

⁶ Referring to the psychokinetic medium of Tanagras by the pseudonym “Cleio”.

⁷ Fotini Pallikari, *Angelos Tanagras; The 1935 Oslo International Parapsychology Congress and the Telekinesis Of Cleio*, JSPP abstracts, 2009. (<https://www.spr.ac.uk/publication/jspp-abstracts-2009>).

⁸ A part of Tanagras’ note written on a brittle page, decolored by the years and titled: “The life of a passerby”.