

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΤΑΝΑΓΡΑΣ: ΤΟ ΧΑΜΕΝΟ ΗΜΕΡΟΛΟΓΙΟ. Η Ζωή και το Έργο του Πατέρα της Ελληνικής Παραψυχολογίας μέσα από τα χειρόγραφα του [ANGELOS TANAGRAS: THE LOST DIARY. THE LIFE AND WORKS OF THE “FATHER” OF GREEK PARAPSYCHOLOGY BASED ON HIS HANDWRITTEN DOCUMENTS]. Research and comments by Nikolaos Koumartzis. In Greek (with endorsements and introduction in English). Athens, Greece: Daidaleos, 2017. Pp. 650. ISBN 978-618-5298-02-9

This 650-page volume is a major publication - not only for Greek readers, but for all those interested in the history of parapsychology. Nikolaos Koumartzis draws on the memoirs of Angelos Tanagras, safely preserved by the Parapsychology Foundation for decades, and over 200 photographs collected from different sources, to bring back to life the works and times of the person who was indisputably the father of Greek parapsychology.

I admit that, despite my Greek origins, I did not know much about Tanagras myself, at least not until I met Nikolaos. I should have. He was the founder of the Greek Society for Psychical Research (GSPR), author of the theory of psychoboly (the forerunner of psychokinesis), a tireless psychical investigator, and a figure of international renown at his time, having initiated some of the earliest long-distance telepathy experiments (between Athens, New York, Paris, Vienna, and other European capitals). I also discovered that he was a person of great culture and influence, one of the most celebrated authors of his time, an Admiral in the Greek Navy, and friend to many members of Greek royalty and to the most important scientists of his era.

The book is divided into three sections. In the first one (pp. 77-319), Tanagras describes his works before discovering his passion for psychical research. Thanks to his literary talent, he masterfully highlights great moments of his era, which is in itself interesting to the great majority of interested Greek people (and, to some extent, to the rest of us). For example, in stark contrast to what today's tourists experience visiting the capital of Greece, Tanagras meticulously describes “old Athens,” a city with a population of just 350,000 and hundreds of beautiful small villas and palaces. Similarly, he presents the burning of Smyrna (today's Izmir) in 1922 at the end of the Greco-Turkish War (p. 295), and the unknown and shocking details behind the death of Alexander, King of Greece, which impacted international affairs between the two World Wars.

The second section (pp. 321-573) is dedicated to Tanagras's work in our field: the founding of the Greek SPR (p. 343); the publication of *Psychical Research*, the society's monthly journal (p.359); and the 3rd, 4th and 5th international conventions of psychical research (pp. 435, 447, and 465 respectively). Among many others items, he discusses his study of the Anastenarides, the Greek firewalkers (p. 480), his theory of psychoboly (p. 502), and the possibility of developing latent psychical abilities (p. 557). Also of great interest is his defense of the idea that psychical research can be considered to be the “Religion of Science” (p. 562). The last section (pp. 575-579) serves as the epilogue to Tanagras's memoirs, with his observations and conclusions about his life work and research.

Angelos Tanagras: The Lost Diary is a premium publication, both in terms of design and paper-print quality. This makes sense because Nikolaos Koumartzis, besides being the Parapsychological Association's Art Director, also runs his own publishing house in Greece. The book is endorsed by several past presidents of the PA as well as mainstream Greek scientists, including the President of the Hellenic Physicists Society.

Nikolaos Koumartzis describes how this 7-year long project was completed and how he and his research team managed to transcribe 600 pages of Tanagras's quite difficult handwriting, using modern techniques (p. 34). The editor drew upon a wide variety of sources (e.g., 17 years' worth of issues of the Greek SPR journal, the Tanagras-Warcollier letters at the Institut Métapsychique archives), to thoroughly comment the original text (almost 1,000 footnotes) and help readers situate the social and political context of Tanagras's era, as well as that of parapsychology and related mainstream fields. For example in the introduction (p. 61) Koumartzis presents a little-known conflict in the field, in which Tanagras accused J. B. Rhine of presenting his own PK research as original without crediting Tanagras's earlier work.

This book fills a gap in terms of scholarly works concerning parapsychology in Greece. The flipside of such a thoroughly investigated volume is that its length might be discouraging for a general public. The editor may wish to consider a smaller, more accessible version of *The Lost Diary*, to increase the general public's exposure to Tanagras and his work as a psychical researcher.

Finally, a rather nice touch: the book came out just in time for the 60th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association in Athens in July, 2017. The last international meeting in Athens, the 4th Conference of Psychical Research in Greece, took place in 1930, 87 years earlier. Its organizer was Angelos Tanagras, of course; and this year's PA convention was organized by his memoirs' editor, Nikolaos Koumartzis.

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