

# ON THE THEME OF "A NOTE ON WILLIAM OF OCCAM" BY AIMÉ MICHEL

By René Fouéré

I HAVE read with the utmost interest the learned and brilliant text in which Aimé Michel attacks William of Occam, and also myself in a friendly way.

Though perfectly capable of doing so, this is neither the time nor the place to present a reasonable defence of William of Occam. So I will merely defend myself against the criticism of my valued friend Aimé Michel.

If I admit the principle of his criticism, its wording seems unpleasant to me and I am not the only one thinking so.

Not only was this criticism published in a review to which I am not a regular contributor, but I can only make reserves concerning the behaviour which consists—even for fun—of quoting another's thought in such a manner that the reader is unable fully to understand its meaning and scope.

Pierre Louys used this process in dealing with the Scriptures with so much talent that the intents of the Biblical text have been totally distorted. By cutting off only one passage from the part of my article in which I was referring to William of Occam, Michel runs the risk of bringing readers of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW to the opinion that I am perhaps a lieutenant of Lt.-Col. Quintanilla or, even worse, an associate of Dr. Menzel!

As I have said, I could present in the future a reasonable defence of William of Occam's principle of "parsimony". My adhesion to this principle is neither general nor unconditional but, rather, occasional and tactical. It is my opinion that the famous Franciscan monk's utterance—if expounded with wisdom (but wisdom is not merely prudence, as Bulwer Lytton stated)—contains a valuable methodological truth.

As for the footnote added by the editor, I wonder if Waveney Girvan—with whom I was on very good terms—would not have been surprised to hear of the use made of his words against me.

Concerning Michel's criticism, I think—in order to put things right again—it will be sufficient to quote in full my brief reflection, the text of which appeared, as Michel himself has indicated, in *Phénomènes Spatiaux* No. 7, p. 24. It reads as follows:

"Secondly, although having no reason *a priori* to deny that physics, far

in advance of ours, might perform this 'space-time manipulation' of which Aimé Michel speaks, we believe that, for reasons of methodology, it should be considered only as a last resort. William of Occam wisely held that hypotheses should not be multiplied unnecessarily. We will say, for our part, that the most complex, the most uncertain, should be resorted to only after having exhausted all the simplest and most verifiable ones.

"We do not know whether a science superior to ours could effectively manipulate relativistic space-time. So far as we know, such a manipulation is not provable, in the present state of our knowledge. On the other hand, numerous observers agree in affirming that flying saucers are capable of fantastic accelerations 'that would tear the skin off the bones of terrestrial pilots' and, at the time that the speed reversal during the incident witnessed by Nash and Fortenberry, acceleration was estimated at 1,000 g, that is to say a thousand times the acceleration of earth's gravity! Thus, we personally feel it is incumbent upon us, logically, to attempt to explain the apparently sudden disappearance of flying saucers by first bringing up these lightning accelerations.

"From a distance of 20 metres, the image on the retina of an object the size of that described by Maurice Masse had already shrunk and the object had already attained a certain speed. Therefore, one might suppose that, had a prodigiously abrupt and radial acceleration been applied to the object during the persistence duration of its initial image, its apparent size could have been, in a split second, so reduced as to render it practically undiscernible against the residue of that image. So that the observer would register nothing between this previous image and the imperceptible pin-point left immediately thereafter."

I leave it to the readers of *Flying Saucer Review* to decide what to think about it.

(Translated from the French by Lina Cristi and Elaine Ackerman.)

[I cannot think that Waveney Girvan would have objected to my use of his words in the footnote to the Aimé Michel article, for he had employed them in very much the same sense as M. Michel did in his reply to René Fouéré's criticism of his 1965 Valensole article. I certainly did not use them against M. Fouéré, but merely to demonstrate how Waveney felt on roughly the same issue —EDITOR.]

## NEW BOOK

### WERE THERE "SPACEMEN" IN THE ANCIENT EAST?

That indefatigable searcher of the past, my friend W. Raymond Drake has beguiled readers of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW on many occasions with his crops of stories garnered from history, stories open to interpretation as evidence of UFO activity down the centuries. He has fascinated us with his "discoveries" of incidents like the memorable occasion when two "flying shields" put an army to flight in Charlemagne's times. And having made a pretty clean sweep of relatively recent historical times, such as Norman, Saxon, Roman eras, he has, in our pages, speculated bravely on "spaceship" and "extraterrestrial" influences in history, folk-lore and "folk memories" of Ancient Britain.

In *Spacemen in the Ancient East* (Neville Spearman, 112 Whitfield St.,

London W.C.1.,—240 pages, with an extensive bibliography, and well-indexed—30s.) Raymond has done it again.

He has gathered in, with an enormous sweep, copious records from writings and records of civilisations of reputedly greater antiquity than ours. India, Tibet, China, Japan, Egypt and ancient Babylon have yielded many tit-bits for the Drake collection. However, I fear that the farther he goes back into the past, the wilder become his claims and the more unlikely the comparisons he draws.

Nevertheless some of his quotations give us cause to ponder. Here is one of many examples quoted by the author from translations of ancient texts which seem to indicate that warring hordes of antiquity were

possessed of weapons and vehicles even more potent than those at our present-day command:

"Beholding that mountain like a mass of antimony with countless weapons falling from it, Drona's son was not at all moved. The latter invoked into existence the Vajra weapon. That Prince of mountains, struck with that weapon, was quickly destroyed. Then this Rakshasa becoming a mass of blue clouds in the firmament, decked with rainbow, began

to furiously shower upon Drona's son in that battle a downpour of stones and rocks. Then that foremost of all persons acquainted with weapons, viz. Ashwatthaman, aiming the Vayarya weapon destroyed that blue cloud which had risen on the firmament." (*Drona Parva* p.497).

"This somewhat garbled account," says Mr. Drake, "suggests a bombing attack by spaceships, one of which was destroyed by a ground-to-air missile."

You may or may not agree with the

author; you may think the description above is the fantasy of an ancient poet rather than a true historical record, but if so, then what put such ideas into the mind of a poet thousands of years ago? Is this part of the proof that Earth was once ruled by beings from other planets—as thinks Mr. Drake? Frankly I doubt it, although items such as this do seem to indicate the existence of ancient civilisations waging an unusual kind of war.

CHARLES BOWEN

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