

# OF GODS, GENII, HEROES AND ENTITIES

*Aimé Michel*

Translation: Gordon Creighton

IN 1948 or 1949, when I was still quite a young man, I found myself dining one evening in the home of the pianist Walter Rummel, along with Rosamonde Gérard (the wife of Edmond Rostand, author of *Cyrano*), her son Maurice Rostand, and an unknown gentleman who chanced to be my immediate neighbour at the table. During the random conversation this gentleman revealed a prodigious knowledge of ancient Greek literature, which he seemed to know in its entirety, by heart, in Greek. My favourite philosopher in those days was Sextus Empiricus, whom nobody reads and nobody knows: but he knew Sextus Empiricus better than I did, and keenly urged me to translate him, for at that date no good translation of him in French existed.

But my neighbour struck me even more by the depth and originality of the ideas he voiced on everything. As I listened to him, I had the impression of hearing a man who had come from a wiser world and who regarded the present as a period that had lost its way in illusory ideas on man, on Nature, on mind and thought, on death, on the material universe, and on the meaning of our destiny.

After dinner, I asked Rummel who was this man whose name I had not caught when being introduced to him. "What!" cried Rummel, "Didn't you recognise Mario Meunier!"

And, indeed how could I not have recognised the greatest Hellenist of our time? Ever since then, greatly impressed by that evening, I have never failed to buy it whenever I have chanced to come across one of Meunier's books—virtually impossible to get now because, like all works of learning, they are hardly ever republished.

Some time later, we began to hear talk about the flying saucers, and I never translated Sextus Empiricus.

Then, some three or four years ago, I found in a second-hand bookshop, Mario Meunier's translation of the *Golden Verses* of Pythagoras, followed by Hierocles' *Commentary*.<sup>1</sup>

Reading this *Commentary* was for me one of the greatest surprises of my life: it revealed to me in fact a cosmogony within which the UFOs, far from appearing irrational or improbable as is now the case, would have been recognised as the most natural thing in the world and the least surprising. Reading Hierocles one could even ask oneself whether that cosmogony was not perhaps the distant echo of an age in which mankind had *known* what UFOs are, and had recognised in UFOs a normal, indeed even an essential part of the world in which they lived.

## I. Hierocles

This is how Meunier introduces our author to us (p. 10): "One of the most remarkable minds of that erudite school of philosophy and one who, along with Proclus, Damascius, Olympiodoros, and Simplicius, constituted the final glory of the city of Athens and of the Genius of the Pagan Era. In fact, although he lived and taught in Alexandria during the Vth century of our era, Hierocles is already permeated with the spirit which a century later, was to animate the last great philosophical school of Antiquity, the School of Athens, that final effort of a way of thought now relegated and corralled back, by the triumph of Christianity, into the venerable precincts of Athens where it had had its beginnings. It was in the year A.D. 529 that the Emperor Justinian made a decree and issued instructions that nobody should teach philosophy any more in the city of Athens. In 532, three years after the closure of the School, the same Emperor, having banished the leading philosophers, who took refuge in Persia, confiscated the very considerable possessions of the society of the Platonists."

Other details about Hierocles are given by a number of writers of Antiquity (Damascius, Suidas). I will return to this later.

## II. The Pythagorean tradition

As we know, Pythagoras had lived long before, in the VIth century B.C. We know too that many mathematical

## THE OREGON PHOTOGRAPHS

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impression of "something" in that area, but his recollection would be fuzzy and unclear just as the viewer of the aforementioned "different frame" movie may remember one or two especially distinct, or provocative, frames of the film.

The photograph indicates that this process of appearing and disappearing is non-instantaneous. The edges of the object are relatively faint and the dark bottom is most intensely black in the centre. Light from the background passes through the centre for a shorter period of time than through the edges. What about this

business of appearing and disappearing? Isn't this something new? Not at all. Several respected authorities on the subject have written of simultaneous visual and radar sightings of UFOs that have simply vanished from space.

The UFO mystery appears to be the nearest window to a new era in science, and photography is in a pivotal position because not only is the camera a great tool for investigation, but also for creating interest. The mind of man has always seen to it that the most ambitious fantasies of the previous century have been topped by the events of the next. We've already done more than the most wild 19th Century writers could imagine and soon "2001" may seem archaic as we look through that glass.

and scientific discoveries are attributed to him, discoveries so numerous and so brilliant indeed that Heraclides of Pontus, as Diogenes Laertius testifies,<sup>2</sup> believed that Pythagoras could only have been able to accumulate such knowledge over the course of many previous incarnations; a view which was shared by Empedocles, by Pherecydes of Syros, and by numerous writers of Antiquity.<sup>3</sup> The thesis of Professor E. R. Dodds of Oxford agrees more with our own view: he shows in fact, and in very convincing fashion, that Pythagoras, like Epimenides before him, had been in contact with Greeks from the Pontic Chersonese, in other words the Crimea, who were familiar with the beliefs and practices of the Scythians and other peoples of Central and Northern Asia, *i.e. with Shamanism*.<sup>4</sup> Shamanism is very similar to the modern spiritualistic doctrines (Spiritism, Theosophy, etc.). It teaches the existence of a world that is superior to the world of man, a world inhabited by *genii*, by *gods*, by *heroes*, and by *demons*, the latter being dead people who have merited survival in their "astral body." The Shaman is a medium who, in trance, is able to contact this superior world and to draw knowledge from it.

Dodds emphasises also the strange resemblance between Pythagoras and the Thracian Shaman Zalmoxis to whom Herodotus refers<sup>5</sup>: they both teach very similar doctrines, both founded a monastic order, and both promise their disciples that they will attain to immortality if they obey their rules carefully, that is to say, that they will become *demons* (Δαίμονες). (It is of course necessary to understand this word *demon* in the sense that it had in Antiquity, which is nearer to what Christians call *guardian angel*: cf. the Δαίμων of Socrates.) Another strange fact is that this teaching resembles totally the teaching of Gurdjieff, who claimed that he had received his own initiation in precisely that same region of Asia where Dodds sees Pythagoreanism as having had its origins.

Be that as it may, during all the following centuries the teaching of Pythagoras was piously transmitted, and meditated on, and commented on, by his disciples, and it is Pythagoreanism in its most elaborated form that, exactly one thousand years after the times of Pythagoras himself, Hierocles gives us in his precious *Commentary*. The references in Hierocles' text to Plato and to authors of every epoch of Hellenism prove that this doctrine was always known, and that it truly is the doctrine of its founder. Mario Meunier's numerous footnotes show furthermore that many of the comments by Hierocles are purely and simply quotations from writers of all periods: Meunier had only to see the text to find these writers with his own fantastic memory. Iamblichus,<sup>6</sup> Aristotle,<sup>7</sup> and other writers describe Pythagoras as an authentic Shaman, capable of prophesying, of bilocation, and Aristotle even reports a tradition according to which Pythagoras was an incarnation of the famous Apollo Hyperboreus, which is good confirmation of the North-Asian origins of Pythagoreanism, for in fact *hyperboreus* means *Arctic* or *northern*. (See Dodds, *loc. cit.*)

### III. The doctrine of Hierocles

In school we all were taught that the Ancients were polytheists: they believed, so we are told, in a great

crowd of anthropomorphic gods, belonging to one or other sex, addicted to all the passions and prone to all the weaknesses of man himself, but immortal. The image of the religion of Antiquity that has been spread through our educational system, at any rate in France, is the image by which Bossuet defined the Egyptian religion: "*Everything was a god, except God himself.*"

Those of us who have read Plato know however how sublime is the monotheism of Socrates. Does this merely mean that the greatest of philosophers was an exception? Not at all: already Xenophanes of Colophon, a contemporary of Pythagoras, had said, in his book *On Nature*:

*"One God there is, greatest of gods and men  
Unlike in form to mortals and in men."*<sup>8</sup>

And, even before Xenophanes, Homer himself, as quoted by Aristotle,<sup>9</sup> says:

*"No multitude of Lords: let one bear sway!"*

Well then, who are all these gods of Mythology? Hierocles will tell us. But, before we come to that, and in order to reply in advance to those who might probably raise the objection that Hierocles, living in the Vth century A.D., could have borrowed his ideas from Christianity, I will also quote Maximus of Tyre,<sup>10</sup> who lived two centuries before Jesus:

*"There is one God, King and Father of all, and also many gods who are God's children and share His sovereignty. This is what the Greek says, and so also says the barbarian."*

And now let us hear what Hierocles says. The *Golden Verses* (Χρυσᾶ ἑπτῆ), 71 in number, on which he comments, were the creed of the Pythagorean sect, which they knew by heart and which they recited daily. These verses, if not explained, are often enigmatic: this is designedly so, in order to preserve the esotericism of the sect. The clarified meaning was explained during initiation, and at the end of his *Commentary*, Hierocles states clearly that he has confined himself to reporting these explanations. Here is the first verse:

*In the first place honour the Immortal Gods, as they are established and ordained by the Law.*

Verse 2:

*Honour the Oath with all manner of Religion.*

Verse 3:

*In the next place honour the Heroes who are full of goodness and of light.*

Verse 4:

*Honour likewise the Terrestrial Demons by rendering them the worship lawfully due to them.*

These verses are admittedly very obscure: for if it is the immortal Gods who must be honoured *in the first place*, what is this Law which was ordained for them?

Hierocles' answer is: The Law controlling the world gave them a system of order at the same time when it

established their essence or nature, placing them in the celestial spheres "until all the circles of the heavens are filled."

Here Meunier quotes another Neoplatonist, a contemporary of Hierocles, who says: "*The first principle*" (i.e. the maker of the Law) "*is raised up above all thought: it is an unknowable abstrusity.*"<sup>11</sup> The beings whom the Greeks call the Gods are thus creatures superior to man, dwelling in the heavens, and sharing in, or sharing among themselves, the Divine Sovereignty over the world.

And, Hierocles continues, it is necessary "to know them and honour them according to the order in which the Orderer of the world has placed them, not exalting their divine dignity too much, and not diminishing it too much, but esteeming them as what they are, according to the rank that they have received. . . ."

The respect for this Order is what is called the "Oath."

Next after the immortal Gods come the "glorified Heroes" and the "Terrestrial Demons." It would take too long to quote textually Hierocles' explanation regarding these entities. Let us sum it up in the words of Meunier (p. 53): "The glorified Heroes are spiritual substances rather like the Christian "angels" (except on one point of capital importance), and the "Terrestrial Demons" are the souls of men separated from their bodies. But separated only from their material body for—and this is very important—the Gods and the Heroes and the Terrestrial Demons all have a body, though it is of a different nature from our body, and those are the bodies which inhabit Celestial Space according to their rank and order."

This order is mentioned again in Verses 45-48, which likewise are very mysterious for the uninitiated:

Verse 45:

*Practise thoroughly all these things; meditate on them well; thou oughtest to love them with all thy heart.*

Verse 46:

*It is they that will put thee in the way of Divine Virtue.*

Verse 47:

*I swear it by Him who has transmitted into our soul the Sacred Quaternion.*

Verse 48:

*The Source of Nature, whose course is eternal.*

The Pythagorean Quaternion is, to begin with, the sum of the first four whole numbers: 1 plus 2 plus 3 plus 4, which makes 10, which is the basis of the customary system of numbering that gives rise to all numbers. As the reader will know, for the Pythagoreans everything in Nature is nothing but numbers. The Quaternion is thus the source of the eternal arrangement of the world, the arrangement that assigns their rank and order to the four families of beings that inhabit the Universe, namely the Gods, the glorified Heroes, the Terrestrial Demons, and men.

As regards the "Precepts," and as regards the "Divine Virtue" to which they lead us, we discover as we read Hierocles how greatly we are deceived by our Christian reminiscences. For in fact this Divine Way is contact, "communication with the higher beings" (Meunier, pp. 331-332, note): the Pythagorean teaching

aimed at developing "the discipline of the mysterious faculties," at "intensifying clairvoyance," at putting the mind in touch "with the hidden forces," at making it "apt for communicating with the higher beings."

But where are these higher beings? Hierocles' answer is quite clear. The Terrestrial Demons inhabit near-Space, "beneath the Moon" he explains, but "above the zone which is allocated to mortals." The immortal Gods inhabit distant Space. The Heroes are less distant than that. The Gods never descend on to the Earth, but the Demons and the Heroes can do so. They can meet with men, can speak with them, either inwardly or in reality.

Meunier's footnotes show that this doctrine actually was the belief of the Ancients throughout the whole of the Classical Age and right up to the triumph of Christianity. It survived thereafter briefly in Persia, and then was wiped out there by Islam. Is it not strange that it seems to be a syncretism of all the fringe teachings which have been recovered, quite independently of each other over the course of the last century, and have all been more or less rejected by the modern mind: various forms of spiritualism, initiation sects, Ufology? If some original mind were to set out to make a synthesis of everything nonconformist that is in circulation now as our 20th century draws to a close, he would be re-inventing Pythagoreanism almost precisely.

I don't know what to think of this coincidence. To say that the doctrine of the *Golden Verses* is a synthesis of all the phantasms of the eternal unconscious would be a mistake, for what could have happened to this allegedly eternal unconscious between the end of Paganism and the middle of the XIXth century?

To present it as an episodic and recurrent triumph of the irrational would be even more absurd, if one recalls that Reason will for ever remain the gift of Greece to men, her incomparable discovery, and that Pythagoreanism was universally respected by the greatest minds of Antiquity, including the founders of Science (among whom, by the way, Pythagoras himself has a high place).

#### IV. The end of Hierocles

I see the triumph of the irrational far more in the misfortunes that overtook Hierocles towards the close of his life. He arrived in Byzantium and taught the venerable doctrine there, preaching tolerance, gentleness, mastery of the passions, temperance, and "measured respect for the higher beings." The Christian *magistrati* ordered him to be seized, tied to a post, and flogged. As his blood flowed forth, so Suidas tells us,<sup>12</sup> he filled his cupped hand with the blood and threw it in the face of the judge, repeating as he did so this line from Homer: "Take, Cyclops, drink, thou eater of human flesh." He was able to return however to Alexandria, where the teachings of Pythagoras died out soon afterwards. And with them there died the last of the only men in the world who would have regarded as completely natural the mystery which we study in this Review.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mario Meunier: *Pythagore. Les Vers d'Or*. (Paris, 1925.)

<sup>2</sup> Diogenes Laertius, VIII, 4.

- <sup>3</sup> Cf. chapter V of E. R. Dodds (Professor at Oxford): *The Greeks And The Irrational*. (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1959.)
- <sup>4</sup> Mircea Eliade: *Le Chamanisme et les Techniques Archaiques de l'Extase*. (Paris, Payot, 1968.)
- <sup>5</sup> Herodotus: IV, 95; IV, 93; 5, 4.
- <sup>6</sup> Iamblichus: *Life of Pythagoras*, 90-93, 140, 147.
- <sup>7</sup> Aristotle: Fragment 191R: Pythagoras A7.
- <sup>8</sup> Martin P. Nilsson: *Greek Piety*. (Translation from the Swedish, New York, 1969) p. 116. (Professor Nilsson is considered to be one of the top specialists on Greek religion.)
- <sup>9</sup> Aristotle: De Mundo, 397b9 and ff.
- <sup>10</sup> Maximus of Tyre: Φιλοσοφούμενα λόγοι, 7, 5.
- <sup>11</sup> Damascius: 'Απορίαι καὶ λύσεις περὶ τῶν πρώτων Ἀρχῶν (Problems And Solutions In Connexion With The First Principles), 52a, 124b.
- <sup>12</sup> In his *Life of Hierocles* (Ἱεροκλῆς, untranslated. Quoted by Meunier, p. 15.)

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Neoplatonist Hierocles of Alexandria flourished around AD 430. He was a pupil of Plutarch at Athens, and taught for some years in Alexandria. His *Commentary* enjoyed great popularity during the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The writers Photius and Stobaeus both mention several other works by him, notably one on the theme of Providence and Fate, but none of them seem to have survived.

The "Englishing" of Aimé Michel's article has presented something of a problem. As soon as I had realised its potential importance "for our subject," I felt that many FSR readers might well wish to carry this line of research further and read the whole of Hierocles for themselves. I looked therefore to see whether there was any English version of this noble work in print at present. If there were, I thought that, for the sake of unity and continuity, it might be better for me to quote certain of the key passages directly from it and not from Meunier's version—excellent as it is—since not all of our readers read French.

I found indeed that there is an English version of the *Golden Verses* and the *Commentary*, and that it is in print. It was made by an Englishman named N. Rowe (in 1707!) and reprinted by the Theosophical Society of Adyar and Wheaton, Illinois, in 1906 and again as recently as 1971. Its full title reads: *Commentary of Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras*, done into English by N. Rowe, from the French of André Dacier. (It seems that the splendid French intellect was as well to the fore on Greek studies in 1707 as it has been since, and one can be sure that today the French are much less eager than the rest of us to abandon the teaching of so noble a tongue.)

To give N. Rowe his due, I should add that he was not just a translator from the French. He was a Greek scholar too, for his version of the *Golden Verses* was made direct from the Greek, and he then combined it with his translation of Dacier's French version of the *Commentary*. Dacier's work had appeared in Paris in 1706. Just to make matters a little more complicated, it seems that Dacier had made his translation not straight from the Greek but from J. Courtier's Latin version of it (published in Paris in 1583!), at the same time checking and correcting it against a number of Greek MSS.

Since this full English version by N. Rowe is in print, I decided to use his renderings of Golden Verses Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, and not to make my own translation of them from Meunier. Thus any FSR reader who wishes to read the whole of Hierocles in English will, one hopes, not find himself confused.

The three quotations from, respectively, Xenophanes of Colophon, Homer, and Maximus of Tyre about the *One Supreme God, King and Father of All* are given in English

already by Aimé Michel, and come presumably from the works of either Professor E. R. Dodds or Professor Martin P. Nilsson (see Footnotes).

There are naturally discrepancies between Rowe's English rendering of the *Golden Verses* from 1707 and Meunier's much more recent French version, but I see no serious disagreement on anything of substance. However, certain of the terms which form the subject of this article are different, so I give them here for comparison:

<i>Meunier</i>	<i>Rowe</i>
Les Dieux immortels (The immortal Gods)	The Immortal Gods
Le Serment (The Oath)	The Oath
Les Héros glorifiés (The glorified Heroes)	The Heroes who are full of goodness and light
Les Génies terrestres (The terrestrial Genii)	The Terrestrial Demons

G.C.

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**Dr. J. Allen Hynek to visit  
Australasia . . .**

(see note on page iv of cover)

# UFO ENTERS AND INSPECTS A ROOM

*Albert Adell and Pere Redón*

Translated from the Spanish by Gordon Creighton.

**D**URING the night of June 21-22, 1972, Javier Bosque, a twenty-year-old Spanish student of the Escuelas P.P. Escolapios Theological College at Logroño, in North-Eastern Spain, had an extraordinary experience.

We interviewed this young man and interrogated him at very great length, indeed somewhat brutally and harshly in our desire to get at the truth, for which we beg his forgiveness. We found him an extremely pleasant and thoroughly normal and intelligent person, well worthy of credence.

He had been tape-recording some guitar exercises (see Fig. 1, plan of his room). He had left the tape-recorder standing on a chair beside his bed.

After supper he went to bed and turned on his transistor-radio. To the background of soft music he started reading a book (*Don Quixote*). Beside the bed, at G on the sketch, he had placed a fairly tall standing ashtray with a wide base, and on top of this ashtray he had put a lamp and tilted it to shine on the opposite wall, near the window, so that, reflected back from the wall, it would give a gentle and regular illumination to the whole room.

Soon the night was far advanced. He read on. The radio station had closed down by now, but as he had had the transistor-radio on very low, he did not trouble to switch it off.

It was 2.00 a.m., when he suddenly perceived that the room seemed to have grown brighter. This he took to mean that the power-supply had been stepped up, as is more or less normal at certain hours of the night. He put his book down on the bedside-table (H) and, in doing so, was obliged to turn slightly to his left, and this movement put him more directly in line with the living-room window, which was slightly ajar. To his great astonishment he now perceived that an intensely powerful light was coming through between the two leaves of the window, as well as through the interstices between the edges of the window and the window-frame.

His astonishment turned to fear however when he noticed that the two leaves of the window were opening slowly to give passage to a luminous object which came straight towards the centre of the entrance to his bedroom-alcove.

The device seemed to be menacing by the very nature of its weirdness. It moved slowly and utterly silently, emitting no hum or sparks or anything of the sort, maintaining a height of about two metres from the floor. On arriving at the entrance to his alcove, it stopped. The light from it was intensely vivid. Javier's eyes hurt from it, and, terrified, he did the instinctive thing and covered most of his face under the bedclothes and hung on to them tightly, while trying to sink as deeply as possible into the bed. Then the object performed a sudden downward movement and stopped again, this

So far as I know, little attention has been paid yet to the several recorded cases in which objects, perhaps of the "Foo-Fighter" type or in some respects akin to them, have allegedly penetrated into houses and "looked around." I have a good Brazilian case of a few years back, still awaiting translation. In the meantime, here is the first part of a follow-up investigation of a report of a case in Spain which was accorded brief mention in the "World Round-up" feature in *Flying Saucer Review* for November-December 1972.

The article comes, with the kind permission of editors and authors, from the September 1972 number of our excellent Spanish contemporary STENDEK,\* journal of C.E.I., *the Centre de Estudios Interplanetarios* of Barcelona, and the authors, both Catalans, are members of the Centre's governing council. In their opinion this case is one of the best and one of the most thoroughly researched of all Spanish UFO cases, and we congratulate these painstaking investigators on their interesting results.

In view of the great pressure for space in FSR, I have dropped the whole of the introductory section, in which Albert Adell and Pere† Redón describe their meticulous study of the percipient, Javier Bosque, and give their reasons for finding him an entirely trustworthy witness. I have however omitted nothing from the account of the arrival and behaviour of the object, nor from the taped interrogation of Javier Bosque, nor from the concluding section headed *Sensation or Obsession*.

GORDON CREIGHTON.

† For those who may not be familiar with the forms of names as used in Catalunya, I would add that *Pere* = Peter (French Pierre; Spanish Pedro), just as *Joan* = Jean/Juan (and so not a girl's name), *Francesc* = François/Francisco; *Miquel* = Michel/Miguel; *Josep* = Joseph/José, and *Lluís* = Louis/Luis.—G.C.

time at a height of some 40 cms. from the floor. He states that at no time did the size of the object change in any way, nor was there any variation in its brightness.

Dazed and petrified he lay there, peeping out through half-closed eyes at the object and wondering whether it was going to attack him. The idea crossed his mind that it might be a trick played on him by a friend: a teleguided device of some sort, but no sooner was this thought born than it died. No. This object was something too unreal for that. And yet its movements indicated an utterly precise control. Any plaything invented by man would perhaps have flown or floated around, but in some way or other it would be bound to betray some technological imperfections. But this thing was

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