

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAVIC

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PAINSTAKING research was the basis of an interesting study, *The Birthplaces of Prominent People in relation to Bavic*, by J-C. Dufour, which appeared in FSR Vol. 20, No. 1 (published July 1974). Dufour's devotion and dedication paid off, for he was able to show that a surprisingly high percentage of famous and gifted people had been born on, or very near to, the BAVIC line. A similar analysis of birthplaces relating to a randomly-chosen line drawn in a different direction across the map of France showed no comparable "peaking" effect, whereas the percentages of births of important people recorded at increasing distances from the second, random line, were remarkably similar to those recorded at identical distances from BAVIC.

A few readers have criticised us for bothering with such a study, one or two of them having been quite sharp with us for wasting valuable space. They are entitled to their opinions, but I would never agree that the space was wasted. My only concern is that when deciding to put M. Dufour's findings on record, I fell into the trap of *assuming* that everyone interested enough in UFO research to read *Flying Saucer Review* would know about BAVIC, and why it is important. My mistake was to fail to support M. Dufour's article with an explanatory piece about the line, particularly for the benefit of readers new to the subject. I will endeavour herein to remedy that omission.

The great wave

In a three-monthly period from approximately mid-August to mid-November 1954, there was, in North-Western Europe, an immense incidence of UFO observations, with reports of everything from aerial 'flyovers' — some of a most bizarre nature — and great 'cloud cigars' spawning smaller disc-shaped objects, to landings and creatures, and often unpleasant contacts. This great wave seemed to be concentrated largely on France, but, as one would expect, there were a good number of reports from neighbouring countries like Britain, Belgium, Italy and Portugal.

"Bavic" and orthoteny

Prominent among those who collected and puzzled over these thousands of reports was Aimé Michel, who won fame with his excellent book on the 1952 wave, *Lueurs sur les Soucoupes Volantes* (trans: "Glimmers of light on flying saucers") which was published in English under the title *The Truth about Flying Saucers*. While Michel was seeking to find a pattern when plotting on his maps the locations of the observations that made up the glut of 1954 reports, his friend Jean Cocteau suggested an examination of the plots on a day-by-day basis, to

ascertain whether or not some UFOs could have moved along lines which were, perhaps, of geomagnetic significance. One of the first days with really widespread reporting by a large number of witnesses, was September 24, 1954. When that day's locations were marked on a map, it was immediately obvious that six of them were seen to form a straight line extending from Bayonne to Vichy (hence the abbreviation *Bavic*) and beyond. The six points involved were located at Bayonne, Lencouacq, Tulle, Ussel, Gelles and Vichy. It was found later that the sites of other, less well-authenticated observations, were also located on the line.

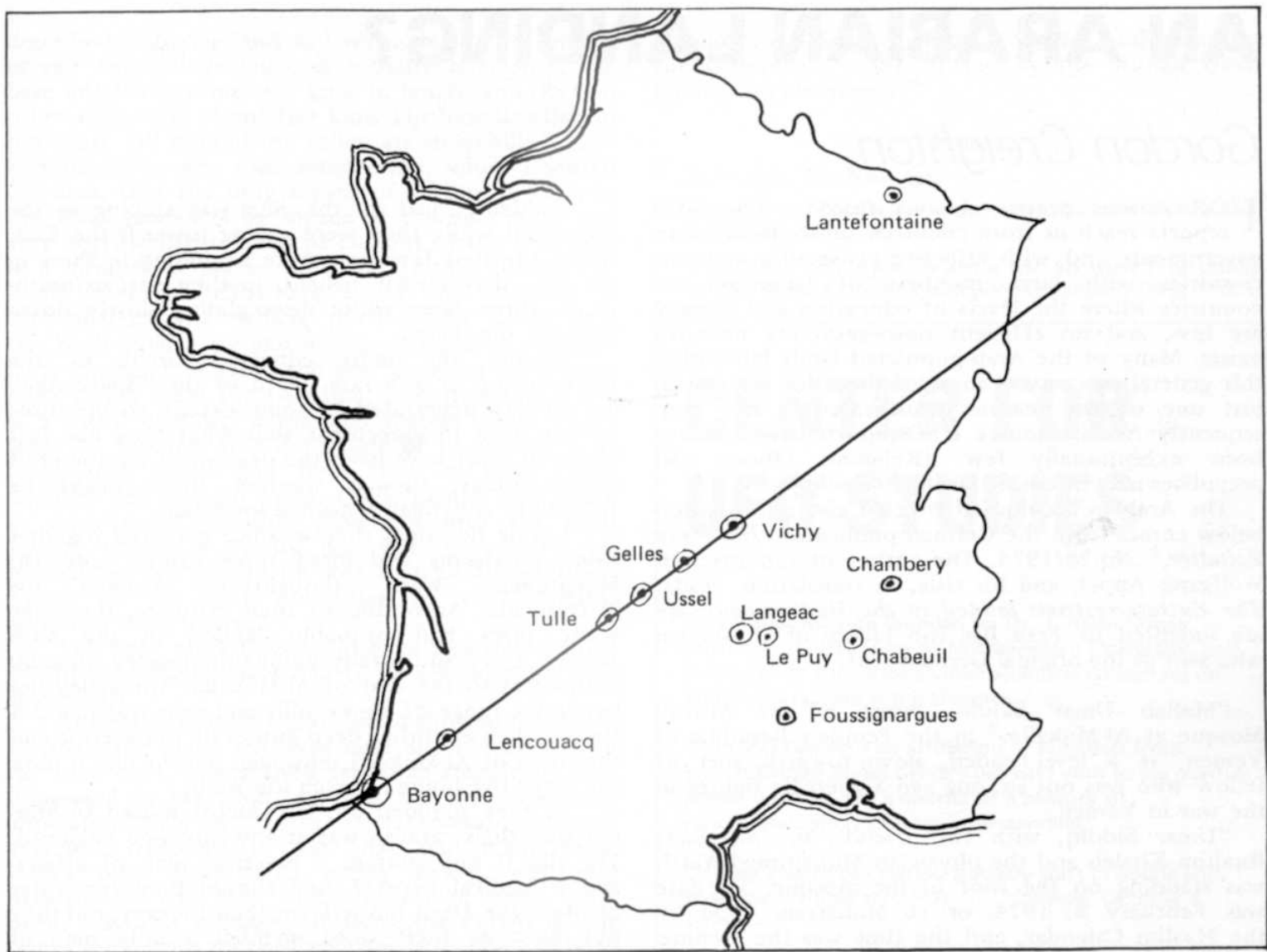
Michel also discovered multi-point alignments on other days during the wave, and prompted by the success of his technique, which he called *orthoteny*,

he proceeded to plot networks of alignments, three point and upwards, from report locations for all the main days of the wave. This, the first scientific discovery of "ufology," was published, with the accounts of the cases involved, in his famous book *Flying Saucers and the Straight Line Mystery* (Criterion Books, New York), and soon afterwards in France under the title *Mysterieux Objets Celestes* (Editions B. Arthaud, 1958, and Editions Planete, Paris, 1966). Subsequent debate (cf. J. & J. Vallee: *Challenge to Science: the UFO enigma*) has shown that three- and four-point alignments occur among random dispersals of points on a map with similar frequency to those plotted by Michel. In spite of this, the staggering significance of the major multi-point lines remains, and there has always been a very special "feeling" among many researchers about BAVIC' the first orthotenic line to be discovered.

Since the publication of Michel's second UFO book, other significant observations have been made right on the BAVIC line: one that springs readily to mind is the bizarre affair at the little hamlet of Vauriat (see FSR Vol. 9, No. 3 and No. 4 — May/June and July/August 1963). Jacques Vallée has also speculated on the possibility of increased incidence of UFO observations along global projections of the major orthotenic lines (FSR Vol. 9, No. 6, November/December 1963), but even more remarkable discoveries relating to the line were to follow some years later.

UFOs in pre-history

In a delightful study entitled *Palaeolithic UFO-shapes* (see FSR Vol. 15, No. 6, November/December 1969), Aime Michel took stock of the wonderful Magdalenian Cave paintings of the middle and upper Paleolithic eras. He posed questions about certain symbols and painted shapes, some disc-like, some ovalloid, some domed, which appear in some of the



The Bayonne-Vichy orthotonic line ("BAVIC"): sighting locations of September 24, 1954

caves in France and Northern Spain, and which had long caused Savants to scratch their heads. Some of the paintings actually have shapes depicted in light and movement across the roof of the cave — as across the open night sky — or "taking-off" vividly from the ground. In a few isolated instances human-like figures were associated with the shapes, but for the most part the rule seems to be "animals only." And, pointed out Michel, these Magdalenians were such magnificent artists, the equal of any of the Renaissance, that they were quite capable of depicting what they *saw*, and that the strange UFO-shapes that they drew are to be found only in caves situated along, or very close to, BAVIC.

The Saint and the Line

More was to follow. In a short study of the life, adventures and work of the great religious figure Saint Vincent de Paul (see *An Enigmatic Figure of the XVIIth Century* in *FSR* Vol. 18, No. 2, March/April 1972) Aimé Michel revealed that he had been greatly moved when, quite by chance while writing

the article, he discovered that this peasant's son had been born in the hamlet of Pouy, which is exactly on BAVIC.

Thinking aloud in a later article, Michel wondered whether other famous and talented people could have been born on the line: where for example was the birthplace of that exquisite musical genius, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, in relation to the line? Well, Salzburg is not on the line but, not to be outdone, Michel wondered if his parents could possibly have "laid down his keel" on BAVIC. Intriguing thoughts, and ones that prompted M. Dufour to launch himself into his study which led to a further disclosure about the line which seems more than pure coincidence.

BAVIC has been closely and importantly associated with UFOs, and we have seen that UFOs are frequently observed in association with other paranormal phenomena, so it is possible that anything further of an unusual nature that is observed or discovered relating to BAVIC may not be without significance in this subject.