

TAIZÉ: A CASE RIGHT OUT OF THE ORDINARY

J. Tyrode

We take this extremely valuable and well investigated report, with the kind permission of the Editors, from the journal *Lumières dans la Nuit*, No. 122 of February, 1973. Translation from the French by Gordon Creighton.

THE EYEWITNESSES in this case fall into three groups:

1. Some 30 people or thereabouts, whose names, for the most part, are not known. Among them: Monsieur F. Tantot of Mâcon; Mlle. R. Faa de Masullas, of Sardinia; an anonymous man from Dijon. The rest of them are chance acquaintances of these three. The only one who might be found easily, should this be useful for our purposes, is an Italian student.
2. A group of four single witnesses, already named in 1.
3. Monsieur Tantot, on his way home, and a group of motorists, unknown, regarding whose identity no research has yet been conducted. We request them, should they so desire, to let us know who they are. Anonymity guaranteed.

The sites, and the weather on August 12, 1972

- i. A level area on the outskirts of the religious community of Taizé. (Geographical coordinates for Taizé: 46° 31'N; 4° 40'E, approximately.)
- ii. A spot on National Highway N.481, between Cluny and Mâcon, after one leaves Cluny. (Coordinates: 46° 26'N; 4° 39'E.) The BAVIC Line passes at 18 km. to the NNW of Taizé (see map showing details of the region). The weather was overcast, no stars being visible. Rain was falling during the termination of the Taizé sighting.

Taizé

The Taizé religious community, founded by Père Roger Schutz, a Protestant monk (and a Burgundian by origin) who studied Theology at Lausanne. Friar Roger is himself the director of the community at the present time. His life work is devoted to the cause of the Ecumenical Movement.

The sparse dwellings at Taizé, many of which, abandoned, have been bought up by Friar Roger, are scattered around on the crest of a hill (altitude about 250 metres) which dominates by some 50 metres or so the surrounding plain. The Friar has built a chapel there, to which people come from all over the world. In 1972, 35 nations took part in the celebrations organised there by him.

One meets there people from every walk of life, almost exclusively young people. These are housed in tents, like military bell tents, in Spartan conditions, sleeping on the ground in the wet weather and saying their prayers seated on the ground. These tents stand above the village, on the top of a hill, and there is a road leading up to them. On the whole of the terrain

on the other side of this road there are a cafeteria, and car-parks, and the young people have also fashioned a sort of rustic theatre there, cut out of the bare ground, where they are able to gather together for meetings. This theatre is right on the edge of the crest of the hill, and it was here that the sighting began.

This extraordinary affair lasted from 2.00 a.m. to 5.00 a.m. on August 12, 1972.

Two o'clock in the morning

A large group of young men and girls were up there, talking. Who were they? This can only be ascertained with very great difficulty. There were about thirty of them, but they are not anxious to give their identities. If it is absolutely indispensable, we could get the names of four of them, but the declarations already secured from three of them are sufficiently explicit and detailed for us to be able to draw up a circumstantial report on the facts of the case.

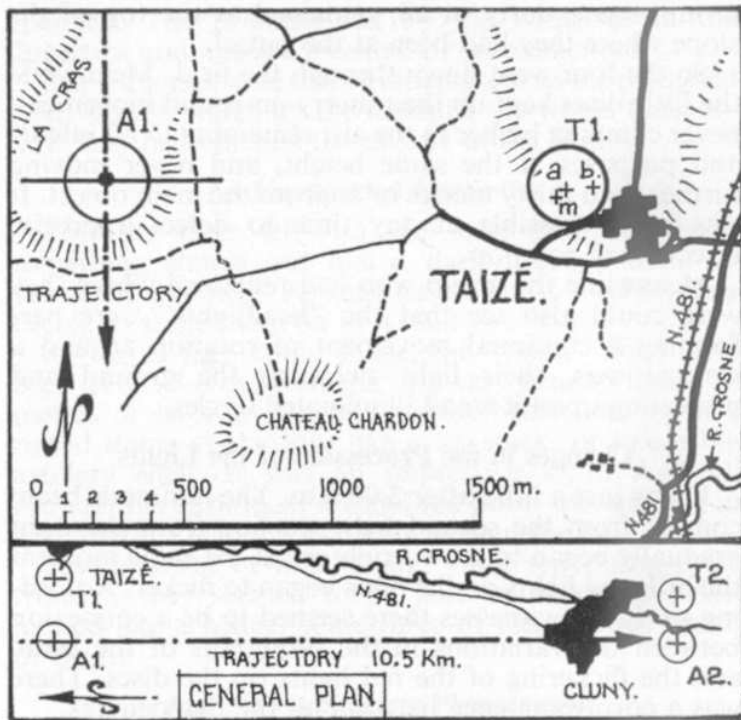
Among those present there were thus the young man from Dijon, Mlle. Renata Faa de Masullas, Monsieur F. Tantot, plus the young Italian student whose name I do not know at the present moment. None of those present believed in flying saucers, or at any rate none had ever taken any interest in such matters.

The Alarm is Given: Arrival of the Object

The group of youngsters were in the middle of their discussions. Suddenly Mlle. Renata Faa, facing towards the valley, saw "something" coming down out of the sky.

In order to give a better grasp of the scene, let us explain that, from the observation point where they were, they could see, towards the West, several rows of hills. Ahead of the 250-metre high slope on which they were gathered, they could see first of all another crest of the same height, then beyond that a second crest rising to 300 metres, and finally a third one beyond that, the top of which reaches 418 metres. These ridges are separated by shallow valleys, the downward slopes of which are gentle, while the rises on the other sides of the valleys are a bit steeper, putting one in mind of the steps of a stairway. Commencing just in front of the witnesses was a smooth descending area occupied by a vast ploughed field, bordered on the far limit by a hedge.

So Mlle. Renata was the first to see the approach of what she took to be some sort of star, and she shouted to her companions to look, but they did not look in the right direction and failed to see the motion of the "star," which had been too brief. Meanwhile,



Map of Taizé sighting and, below, plan Taizé/Cluny

Key: A1-A2, positions of object
 T1-T2, positions of witnesses
 a, position of 3 witnesses
 b, position of 30 witnesses
 c, position of dark mass

the "star" now seemed to have landed on the ground!
 And indeed everyone present could see that there was an object, stationary, apparently on the ground or very close to it, on the hill facing them, and visible at the same level as themselves.

But every one of them had noticed that the apparition of the object had been preceded by a sort of "whistling noise." Though in fact it was not quite a whistle, but rather it was like a sort of vibration which they felt in their ears without actually being able to identify any sound.

The object was thus on the ridge facing them, that is to say, approximately at the spot known as "Le Cras," so far as the darkness permitted them to see, for at any rate the high ground beyond Mont was visible behind the object, this feature imparting a certain degree of precision in their estimate of the object's position.

Size of the Object

It was big (see Fig. 1), and the configuration of the ground up at the site has enabled us to arrive at a good approximation as regards its dimensions. In fact it so happened that, running up that whole slope of the hill, there was a big field with a cereal crop, and owing to its lighter colouring this field could be seen very clearly in the darkness, being lit up by the light coming from the object. The object was bounded on the left by this field, while to the right of the object there was a tree very clearly visible on the ridge. "It's a coach," said one of the witnesses. "No. A coach is smaller than that," said another. The "thing" seemed to them to be very large, and their final estimate of its length was 30 metres. After our examination of the site by daylight,

we are of the opinion that the length was between 30 and 40 metres.

The Illumination of the Object: Lights Appear

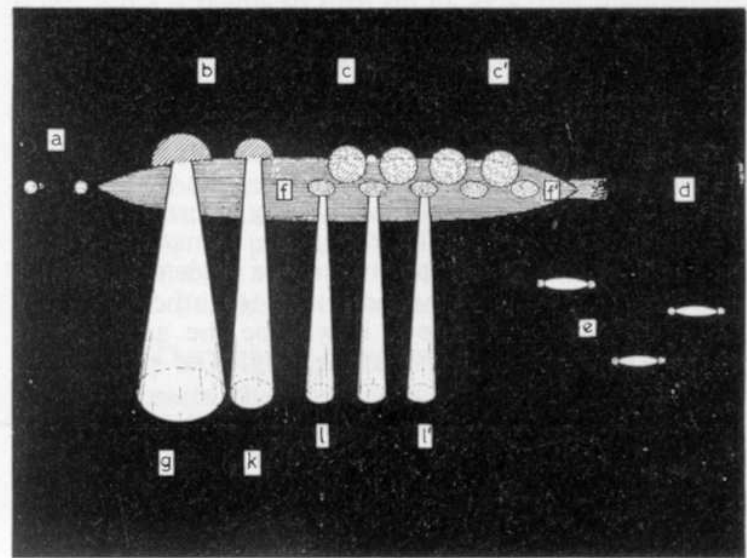
Mlle. Renata was thus, as we have said, the only one to have seen the arrival of the object. Turning round quickly, the other witnesses saw what one might term the lighting up of the object. First of all they observed lights, without distinguishing any order in the manner in which they were disposed. This lasted for a very brief time, for soon they could perceive an order to the lights and could make out a shape.

At the start of the sighting they perceived a series of seven lights, all yellow. Then, to their left, two small orange lights which seemed to be outside the object.

Very soon after that, five of the seven lights began to emit luminous beams which extended "progressively" towards the ground. These beams were white. There were only five of them. The two lights on the extreme right, as seen from the position of the viewers, projected no luminous beams.

Above the two beams on the extreme left they could see what looked like two demi-spheres (let us call them "cupolas"), also yellow, and all these beams of light diverged normally from each other as they shone downwards towards the ground.

But the witnesses made astonishing comments to me regarding one particular impression which had struck them as very curious: namely that these beams of light had given the bizarre impression of being as it were "pylons" rather than actual lights. This inevitably reminded me of what I myself had learnt in the Villiers-



Key: (a) two intermittent lights;
 (b) two yellow "cupolas," one bigger than the other;
 (c) four white "portholes" appeared at c then disappeared;
 (d) flames;
 (e) three white discs, each bearing two red lights, appeared;
 (f) four small yellow lights at f;
 (g) very large beam of light;
 (k) big beam of light;
 (l) to (l¹) three narrower and smaller beams of light

en-Morvan case, where the beam of light observed had behaved like a solid (see *Lumières Dans La Nuit* No. 96, December 1968). This impression is confirmed by the "progressive" extension of the luminous beams towards the ground. The light emitted by the object at Taizé had an appearance of rigidity and of coldness in its fixity.

Effects on the Observers

Almost at the very outset of the sighting, and for a duration of several minutes, M. Tantot felt a tingling in his fingers, like what is popularly called "pins and needles." The man from Dijon felt it too, and he also felt it in the knees. Mlle. Renata says that, so far as she was concerned, she was not affected and did not feel these tinglings.

The Sighting Continues: Appearance of the Discs

Soon after the object had landed, small red sparks made their appearance at the right end of the object, and then quickly were extinguished. As soon as they had been extinguished there appeared on the right side three small white discs which apparently had come out of the object along with the sparks. They seemed to consist of white light and yet to be quite material. At each of their extremities could be seen little red points of light. These small white discs started to perform various movements, turning around the principal object, and this continued throughout the whole of the observation, that is to say for more than 2½ hours. A description of the movements of these discs would be impossible, as they did not appear to obey precise laws.

Curiosity Wins: They Go and Look

After they had watched the main object for about an hour the eyewitnesses began to have the idea that they would like to go and take a closer look. Their impression was that the machine was nearer to them than actually was the case, and so four people went down into the ploughed field already referred to above (these were Monsieur Tantot, Mlle. Renata, the man from Dijon and the Italian student—a student of nuclear physics from what I have been able to gather).

In what follows below, it will be the accounts of these four people that I am giving. The rest of the

group, some thirty in all, remained at the top of the slope where they had been at the outset.

So the four went down through the field. Meanwhile the little discs kept up their merry-go-round movement, never climbing higher in the air, remaining to all intents and purposes at the same height, and never moving further than thirty metres or so from the main object. It was never possible at any time to detect a precise direction of rotation.

Meanwhile the group who had remained where they were could also see that the "headlights" were performing a continual movement of rotation around a vertical axis, their light sweeping the ground and projecting upon it small illuminated circles.

Changes in the Procession of the Lights

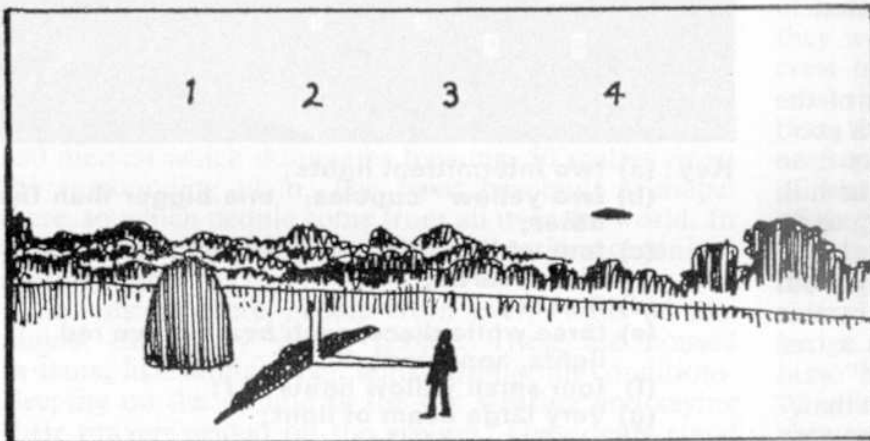
It was just a little after 3.00 a.m. The luminous beam coming from the second light starting from the right gradually began to grow brighter. At the same moment the little red lights on the discs began to flicker. According to the eyewitnesses there seemed to be a connexion between the variations in the brightness of the beam and the flickering of the red lights on the discs. There was a correspondence between all the manoeuvres.

New Phenomena Occur

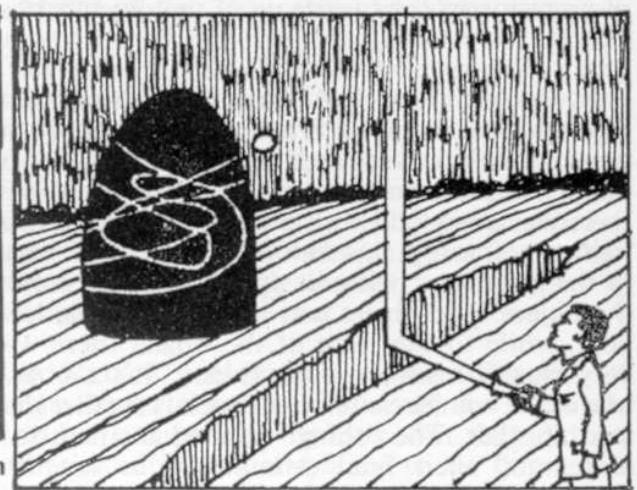
From that instant a series of complicated phenomena developed. It is impossible to describe them all in detail, and it has not been possible to establish the order of their sequence.

A multitude of red particles appear everywhere: in the air all around the witnesses, and on the ground in the ploughed field over which they are slowly advancing . . .

The luminous beam corresponding to the biggest light source (see Fig. 1) undergoes variations in brightness. One of the five small yellow lights changes to blue (the witnesses are unable to say exactly which one). Above and between the five yellow "portholes" there appear what look like circles of light of an unreal shade of white. These circles, or rounds of white, form as it were sorts of windows which have been gradually appearing, and are becoming more and more clearly defined. This goes on for twenty minutes. Then the rounds fade out and finally vanish. The light of the very large beam flashed several times and its brightness



1. Dark mass; 2. 'Hedge' deflects beam; 3. witness; 4. UFO in distance



changed. The pricking felt by the witnesses in the fingertips and knees continued or recommenced.

Our witnesses were still advancing across the ploughed field, slowly, watching the machine the whole time. By now they had reached the middle of the field.

An Unexpected Encounter

Towards their left, on the level ploughed field, something stands out like a dark mass, difficult to see in the darkness. As they have electric torches, they decide to shine them on to it. But . . .

So far as they could judge, the "thing" must have been about 5-6 metres high, and very near to them, 10 metres or so away. It was almost black, ending in a round dome at the top, like a haystack, or like a big artillery shell. It was an impressive sight. And all around this dark mass a small red point was moving in a haphazard fashion, like a fly around the bait.

Just in front of this "thing," and separating them from it, they seemed to be able to make out what looked like a hedge, some three or four metres ahead of them.

And Now a Strange Phenomenon

The beam of light from the electric torch, which they directed towards the "thing" horizontally, behaved as a good torch beam should, that is to say horizontally, as they desired, fanning out into a cone of light, and in the normal course of things should have reached the "thing." But lo and behold, when it had got to about 50 cms. from the "hedge" (let us however state straight away that there never was any hedge at that spot) the beam of the torch, which normally should have continued straight on its course, horizontally, turned up vertically, losing itself in the air, and never even touched the "hedge." And as it went up, it underwent a modification in the sense that, instead of continuing to fan out into a cone, it seemed to maintain the same width as it had at the point where it had been refracted.

After several fruitless attempts to shine the torch on to the "thing" the witnesses were by now discomfited and invaded by anxiety in the face of this unwonted phenomenon which exceeded their comprehension, and they hesitated to advance any further. Moreover they realised by now that the big object was much further away than they had imagined at first, so they remained where they were to observe events.

Four o'clock in the morning

The small discs now approach the main object. They flash, and their lights go out. Perhaps they have gone back into the object, which is what one might reasonably expect. Almost immediately after that the whole illumination disappears, and everything seems to have gone out. A minute goes by, and then the lights come on again.

Mechanically, Monsieur Tantot signalled towards the object with his torch. At once, as though in reply, the big light on the left end of the machine changes the direction of its beam and directs it towards the young people in the field and holds it on them. They are blinded and must shade their eyes with their hands in

order to lessen the effect of the burning rays. At the same time they feel intense heat. (This recalls the sighting at the Gabriel and Galand Dam where, after they had signalled with their headlights, the two witnesses were blinded. See *Lumières Dans La Nuit* No. 112 of June 1971. It recalls also the Franois case, in *Lumières Dans La Nuit* No. 99 of April 1969,* in which, after the witnesses had flashed their headlights, Mme. Froidevaux shouted: "They're charging down on us!")

Meanwhile the witnesses who had remained up on the top of the hill knew nothing of the drama which might have been going on down below (for, after all, the beams of light might well have had far more disturbing effects than they did). And they thought that the lights that they could see down there were all from the torches of the four who had gone off to investigate. Had it not been for this misunderstanding we might possibly have been able to secure more precise details regarding this phase of the sighting.

At Last the Big Object Moves

Down in the field our four witnesses stay where they are. The yellow beam of light from the object sweeps the ground beneath it. Near to it, a small red light has now appeared, and remains stationary, to the right of the yellow light. And now they see the object begin to move. It all looks as though it is having some sort of difficulties in moving. Then the machine executes a new manoeuvre. They can see it very clearly outlined now, at least they have a good idea of its shape. It is a mass of a sort of bluish tint, as though this mass were the envelope of the object seen earlier. It seems to have risen a little, and it still has this little red light on its right. Now it seems to turn on its axis, this manoeuvre being detectable by the movement of the little red light. In fact this little red light moves to the left, and then it returns on the right, and it looks to the observers as though it is the whole object itself that has turned and not merely the little red light.

Finally, the great machine shoots off suddenly towards the South, in the direction of Cluny, and seems to be following the profile of the terrain, that is to say, rising and falling with the profile. Such at least is the impression that the witnesses have.

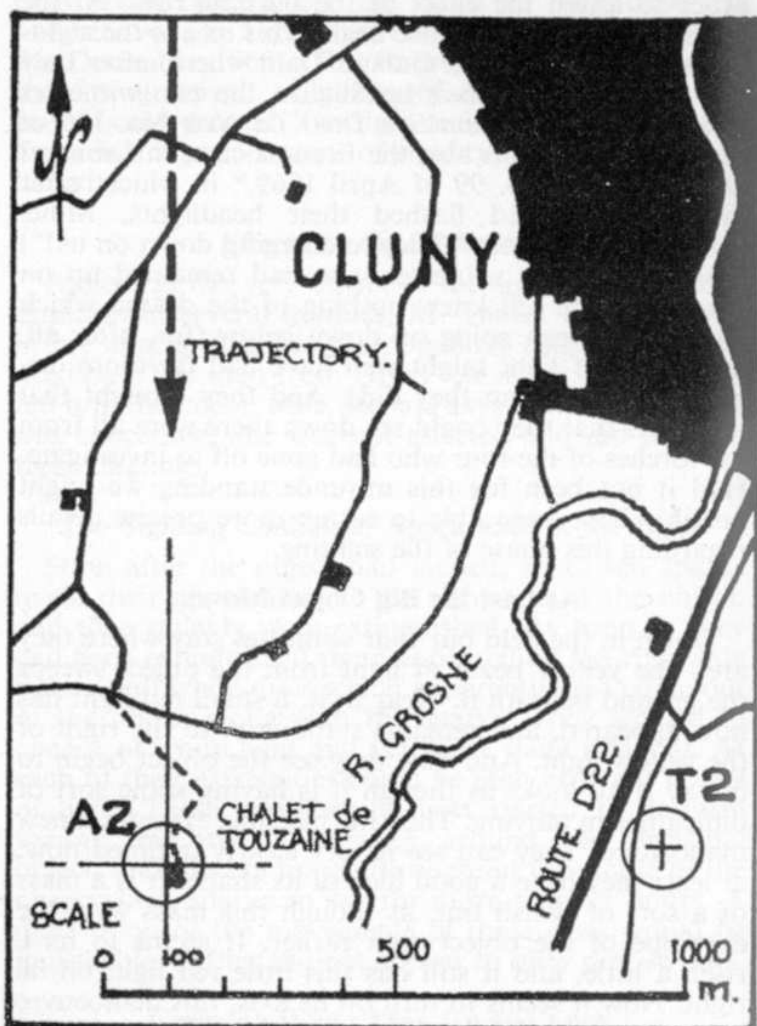
4.40 a.m.: The Sighting Has Lasted About 2 hrs. 40 mins.

As it departs, the machine is surrounded (or circumscribed . . .) by the bluish halo already mentioned. At the spot that it has just left, in the field on the hillside, there remains a faint halo, also bluish, which persists for a few moments. Then, after the machine has gone, it begins to rain.

The Speed of the Machine

The young people now begin to record the time for which the machine remains visible. From the various features of the terrain that could serve as reference points, they were able to make a rough estimate of its speed. They found that it did 9 kilometres in three seconds: in other words, a speed of 10,000 kms. per hour. This is an approximate figure which may after all be quite valid. The machine vanished from sight in the distance, but the witnesses had the impression that it did not go as far as the horizon.

* See also *FSR Case Histories*, Supplement 2.



The Object Seen Again

The Taizé sighting over, Monsieur Tantot got into his car to return to Mâcon. He took Highway N.481 to Cluny, passed through this latter place, and then, as he was driving up the hill beyond Cluny, a surprise was in store for him: there were a considerable number of stationary cars, their drivers apparently looking at something quite far off in the air and lower than the road. The occupants of two cars were near as M. Tantot drew up in his turn. Nor could there be any doubt in his mind: this was the same object that he had just seen at Taizé. The point in the sky, where it was, was right on the prolongation of the line of direction in which he had seen it disappearing a few minutes before.

The object was now low in the air, right above a small property surrounded by a ring of woodland. This property lies not far from the Cluny-Jalogny road, beside a narrow road which branches off here and leads to Touzaine. The property includes a small wood, mainly of fir and spruce, with a few poplars and aspens. In the lower part of the wood, near the Touzaine road, is a little clearing. Monsieur Tantot and the other witnesses were about 1 km. from the object, the sky was still overcast, and dawn not far off.

The object now presented the appearance of a great yellow light, projecting no beam, and accompanied by a small red light. The whole thing was surrounded by a

sort of bluish halo, such as had been seen at Taizé. In Monsieur Tantot's mind there could not be any doubt of its being the same object.

A few moments later, the other witness said it looked as though the object was now on the ground, obviously down in the clearing referred to above. They could see the trees lit up by it.

A few minutes later, the big yellow light began to give out an intermittent light, going out and coming on again. In any event its light showed great variations in brightness. When the lights of this large yellow one became normal again, a small red light began to flicker. It was not the same small red light seen in the previous sighting at Taizé, which had now disappeared.

Why Not Drive Up to It . . . in the Car

Monsieur Tantot drove towards the property. Meanwhile the object remained where it was. When he had reached a point not far from the wood, into which he did not dare to venture (it is more or less closed off by a surrounding wall, which has an opening in it, but no gate) he could see the bluish halo very clearly but could not see the machine itself.

Then, suddenly, there was no longer any halo and no longer any craft: it had vanished, he does not know how. And where it had been, on the ground, just as at Taizé, there was a bluish halo which remained for a few minutes, before vanishing in its turn.

He saw nothing further, so returned home to Mâcon.

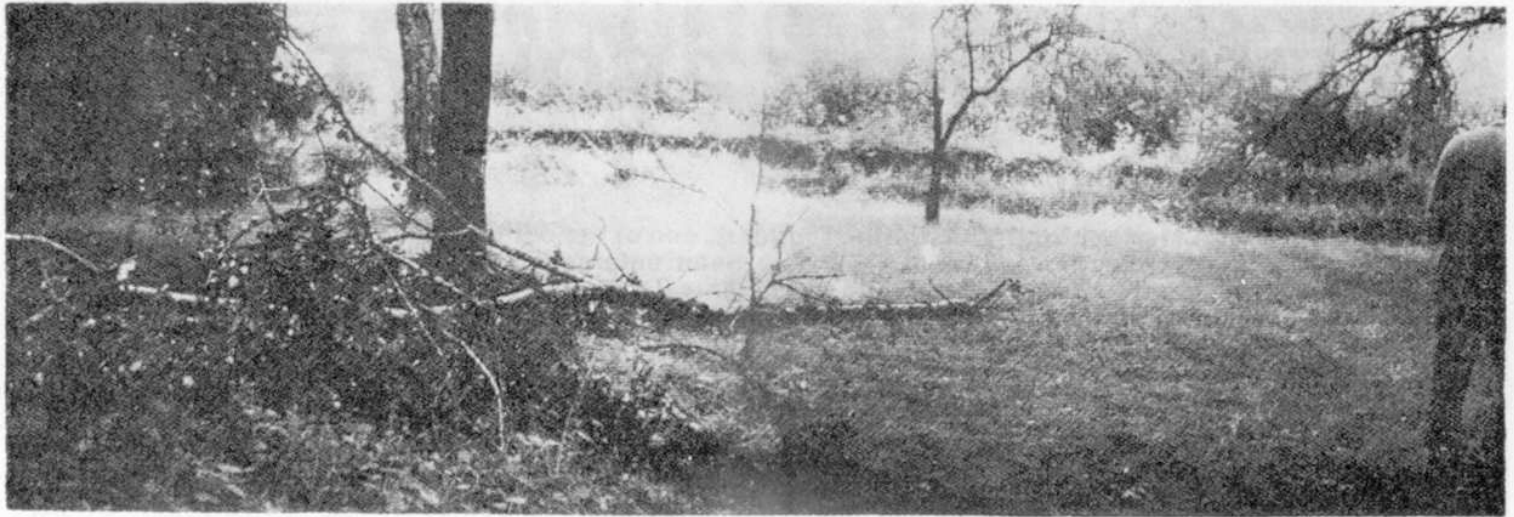
The Gendarmerie

Two days after this memorable experience, Monsieur Tantot decided to report his sighting to the Gendarmerie. He went to the Gendarmerie Brigade Headquarters in Cluny, and then to the Headquarters at Saint-Gengoux-le-National, where he was very well received. The Gendarmes took a tape-recording of his statement. Then he informed *Lumières Dans La Nuit*, in the person of Monsieur Robert Veillith.

Monsieur Tantot's Investigation

Accompanied by friends, M. Tantot went to the places where the machine was presumed to have landed. They found nothing at the spot where it was thought to have been at the first sighting. All that they saw was a burnt area in a field that had been mown, which area could have been the place where the object was. But the owner of the field affirmed that it was he himself who had burnt some hay there, hay that he had been unable to dry.

At the top end of the field they found marks that looked like wheel-tracks, probably of a tractor. Lower down, they found an area 30 metres long (the size of the object), and of elliptical shape, consisting of a zone of dessicated grass. Within this zone, there were marks where there had been fire, one larger than the other. It does indeed seem that it is the result of the heap of hay that the farmer burnt and that he then transferred to another spot a little further on in order to set light to a second heap of hay. We cannot say that these marks could have been made by the machine, and it is in fact highly probable that the story about the burnt hay is the correct explanation. (That is to say, of course, as regards the burnt piles of hay. But the zone of dessicated



Composite photograph of the glade, showing the broken aspen branch. Reproduced directly from *Lumières dans la Nuit*

grass, its shape, and the length of it, is a different matter, and remains a source of perplexity.)

An Interesting Discovery

Inside the wood the young folk were more fortunate with their investigation. Right in the middle of the clearing, which was very pronounced, they were surprised to see a large branch lying on the ground. This branch looked healthy, so they went over to look at it. It was from a good-sized aspen. A magnificent tree, about 20 metres high, it was perfectly healthy. Two-thirds of the way up the tree, they saw the place where the branch had broken off.

The appearance of this branch is rather strange. On the side of it that had been nearest to the trunk of the tree, it showed a break which, for about one-third of its diameter, looked as though made by a saw. And in that portion of it there was an orange-hued elliptical zone that contrasted greatly with the general colour of the break. After that, the rest of it looks as though the wood was not sawn but had been torn away, as though pulled violently from the tree. This "saw mark" is incomprehensible. It was not done with a saw . . . so with what and how?

The leaves of the aspen branch also present a strange appearance. They are of a greyish-brown colour, dotted with extremely numerous small bluish-white dots, as though applied with a fine spray. These leaves remain excessively supple for a very long time, and do not rustle. Close by, dry leaves are found which are not off this particular branch, and the appearance of which is totally different, looking nothing like these supple ones.

(The analysis of the leaves yielded no results. They were sent to a specialist and here is the answer received from him: "As regards the analysis of the leaves, the sample given was insufficient, and furthermore it was already too late for making biological analyses of any value. This raises once again the problem of sampling and the problem of the need for rapid reporting of information after a landing.")

And I made another interesting discovery at this place. I found, namely, that the aspen branch must have remained attached to the tree for a few moments before falling, and that it did not break "in one go."



The broken aspen branch. Arrow indicates the orange-coloured area

It looks as though, after beginning to break, it remained attached to the trunk a certain while, and then detached itself, having hung down for a few moments. Then it fell, the top first, hitting the ground not far from the tree, and only then became completely severed from the trunk, and dropping down on the ground. It was the middle part of the branch, thus, that was lying near the trunk.

The length of the branch is about 6 metres. Its average diameter is about 15 cms., and the average diameter of the orange part in the cut is about 5 cms.

I might add that all the other trees on the property are apparently in good health. The owner saw this broken branch lying there on the morning following the night on which the object was observed.

* * * * *

Note (by Editor of L.D.L.N.)

The photographs (some of the more interesting of which we published with this article) were all taken with infra-red sensitive film. Unfortunately, as Monsieur Tyrode tells us, the film was a bit old, which does not favour the securing of good results.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT TAIZÉ

F. Lagarde

Our contributor is, with M. Raymond Veillith (the founder), one of the editors of the journal *Lumières dans la Nuit*.^{*} The editorial team has been enlarged recently to include Messrs. M. Monnerie and R. Ollier, while the technical consultant (on UFO reports) is Aimé Michel. Translation by Gordon Creighton.

NO comment that we could make would seem incapable of providing any explanations or any additions regarding this sighting, extremely strange and inexplicable as we can only expect in the UFO Phenomenon. We abstain therefore from such comment, except only to say that the genuineness of this report is beyond doubt, and to note that the duration of the observation of the craft was particularly long, much too long for it to be a question of any sort of atmospheric phenomenon, and especially as it was followed by a second sighting a little later and in a different place.

Perhaps an expanded enquiry among the local populace might yield further details about this happening. It does genuinely present a poser for all those who—be they scientists or not—take an interest in the UFO Phenomenon.

But the surroundings too may be found to be of some interest.

We find that there is a series of faults, more or less parallel, running along the right bank of the valley of the river Grosne, and more or less S-N. These faults start in the area between Jalogny and Taizé, along the presumed route taken by the UFO.

The spiritual centre at Taizé is the world's only Protestant monastery. Its Friars number over 80. The Church of the Reconciliation at Taizé was rebuilt by young German volunteers as a token of reparation for the devastation suffered by France in the last War. I do not know whether it is possible to suggest any connection between this spiritual centre and the pheno-

menon seen, but this proximity of the Taizé Religious Community had to be mentioned.

In any case, this spot seems to have long been devoted to spiritual or religious purposes. There is a nicely placed group of seven dolmens near the high point known as Montcoue. Three of them are at the spot called "Les Chironails," to the north-west of Montcoue, and the one known as "La Motte-Chien" ("Dog-Mound") is on the southern face. The caves at La Diles are formed by a collapsed dolmen. Another dolmen, "La Pinasse," is in a neighbouring valley, and at Maranzais a raised stone construction, consisting of two tables and seven pillars, forms a great funerary chamber with two compartments. Finally, completing the picture, there are two ruined dolmens near the village of Noizé.

The Abbey of Cluny, nearby, is so well known that there is no need to speak of it. But near the Cross of Montmain (La Croix de Montmain) there is the stone known as "La Pierre de l'Ecorchure," which was no doubt the site of a religious cult in the days of the Celts and the Ligurians.

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