



Valensole, France, 1.7.1965 (Case 6). Artist's impression superimposed on photograph of alleged landing site.

high - the size of a smallish car. It was standing on six legs connected to a central pivot, and had a door and a transparent dome: M. Masse likened it to a monstrous spider. At first he thought it might be a helicopter, since they frequently landed on these fields: but he quickly realized this was no such thing. Then he saw two creatures bending down as though examining his plants: since his crop had recently been damaged by unknown vandals, he moved forward angrily.

He was about seven metres from them when one of the figures turned and pointed a pencil-like object at him, taken from a holder at its side: Masse found himself halted in his tracks, unable to move. The two figures stood watching him, but did not seem hostile; they seemed to be discussing him. They were about one metre tall, dressed in close-fitting grey-green clothing, with no headgear. Their heads were about three times the size of a human head, in proportion to their bodies: they had large ears, high cheeks, lidless eyes, no chins, and round holes for mouths.

their tone IMMACULATE PLANET, XENOPHON STAR

OUR NAME

ALPHA (α) CENTAURI STAR, 4.1 light years

The two beings returned to their machine; the door closed, the legs whirled and retracted, and the machine left the ground silently. When it was between fifteen and twenty metres away, it suddenly vanished. About fifteen minutes later feeling returned to Masse and he was able to move again: he worked until between 7.30 or 8 am, then went back to the village, where he told his adventure at a cafe. Being known and respected in the neighbourhood, his story was taken seriously and thoroughly investigated both by the police and by private UFO investigative groups: though some contradictions were noted, no reason was found to doubt his story, and some confirmation was obtained from other witnesses which seemed to support his claim. Physical traces were found on the site, which persisted and affected future crops until the field was ploughed over. Masse also suffered from psychological effects - he slept inordinately and experienced dreams of a psychic character.⁵⁶

In selecting these examples, I have deliberately chosen relatively simple and unsensational cases, occurring to ordinary people in the casual course of their daily lives. None of these people was particularly interested in UFOs; they were not deliberately looking for them nor, so far as is known, were they subject to any other kind of delusion or preconception. In all six cases, the sighting came as a total surprise, to which the witness had to adjust while in the course of doing something quite trivial - going to bed, returning home, doing the daily work. In each case the witness responded with emotions ranging from mild puzzlement to complete bafflement; in each case subsequent investigation, while it has failed to discover the true explanation, has also failed to show that the witness in any way misreported the incident. In short, these things seem to have taken place as described, for all anyone can show to the contrary.

Of course, some of them are capable of some kind of explanation. For several of them, a helicopter might seem to offer an answer - behaving unusually for some