

not seem to me exact. It was a clearer, more vivid, richer color and with shifting tints like the luster of a pearl. It was not at all like the moon on a clear transparent night, for one saw and felt it like a living star. Nor was it spherical like the moon, nor did it have the same quality of lighter and less light. It looked like a burnished wheel cut out of mother-of-pearl. Nor could it be confused with the sun seen through a fog -- there was no fog... This disc spun dizzily round. It was not the twinkling of a star: it whirled round upon itself with mad rapidity... The sun, preserving the celerity of its rotation, detached itself from the firmament and advanced, blood-red, towards the earth, threatening to crush us with the weight of its vast and fiery mass. These moments made a terrifying impression."⁽⁴⁾ The relationship of the old phenomenology to religion are discussed by Thomas.⁽⁵⁾

An example of earlier celestial displays of interest is illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2. These are broadsheets from Nuremberg (1561) and Basel (1566), respectively. The psychologist, C. G. Jung, provides an analysis of the contents of the woodcuts in his interesting book.⁽⁶⁾ Reference 7 has a very interesting reproduction of a fourteenth century fresco in a Yugoslavian church.

The modern period of the phenomenon began with a widely publicized sighting made by Kenneth Arnold in Washington state in 1947. A study by Bloecher of north american reports over the four week period bracketing the Arnold sighting lists 853 events, including 38 sightings made before Arnold's heavily publicized sighting.⁽⁸⁾

Because the early reports seemed to suggest airborne craft of unusual appearance and kinematics, the problem came to rest with the newly organized U.S. Air Force. Initial fears were that the country was being overflown by advanced foreign aircraft, possibly on intelligence missions. The latter was suggested by the large number of sightings from the White Sands, New Mexico area and from the vicinity of the Hanford, Washington atomic plant.

Serious inquiry proceeded for a few years without any positive results. A number of supposedly knowledgeable people spoke out pointing out the sporadic nature of the sightings, and that since the reported