

The Marian Apparitions at El-Zeitoun, Egypt, 1968-1971: Miracles and UAPs from a perspective combining parapsychology and sociology ¹

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Introduction

On 2 April 1968 around 8:30 pm, a group of Muslim workers at a local public transit garage in a northern suburb of Cairo, known as El-Zeitoun, noticed a woman on the top of St. Mary Coptic Church across the street. She appeared to be dressed in white, and they thought she was a nun (Brune, 2004: 7), but also that she was about to commit suicide, and shouted at her not to jump. Nothing happened. Then, a few moments later a number of women who were walking in the street also noted the woman on top of the Church, and one of them loudly exclaimed in Arabic that it was “Our Lady” (i.e. the Virgin Mary). At this time, one person ran to contact the emergency services while another one went to get the priest in charge of St. Mary Church, Father Youssef Ibrahim. There was now a small crowd gathering in the street, enough to block traffic. But before the emergency services or the priest were able to see the “lady,” it disappeared. All this commotion lasted only a few minutes (Zaki, 1977: 4-5), but according to other accounts there was a second apparition around 3:00 am the same night (Brune, 2004, 7). What unfolded in the weeks and months to come became known as the El-Zeitoun Marian apparitions, eventually witnessed by thousands of people and leading to a formal recognition by the Coptic Church authorities of a true apparition.

Marian apparitions, or more accurately anomalistic events interpreted as Marian apparitions, are neither a new nor a marginal phenomenon. From the fourth century to the present, there have been over 21,000 recorded Marian apparitions, and more than 200 of those occurred in the 20th century (Horsfall, 2000: 375-376). Some of them can be qualified without doubt as “social events”, given the number of witnesses, and the amount of press coverage they receive. In particular, one can note the events in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917; Garabandal, Spain, in 1961; Medjugorje, Former Yugoslavia, 1981; and Lubbock, USA (Texas), in 1988. If one is willing to accept that something anomalous might have occurred in Egypt in 1968-1970, and yet does not want to embrace uncritically a religious explanation, how could one approach this strange story?

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This chapter proposes an avenue to look into this case by proposing an analysis that is at the intersection of parapsychology and sociology, built on the Model of Pragmatic Information (MPI), which I have already proposed elsewhere, while looking into events that were understood as UFO experiences (Ouellet, 2011a; 2011b; 2015). This paper, furthermore, also seeks to illustrate that when it comes to the study of the so-called “paranormal” or “supernatural,” it requires a path that is truly scientific in spirit, and yet one that may lay uneasily between believers’ expectations, skeptics’ reductionism, and many methodologies from the natural sciences that are fundamentally inadequate to study human affairs.

The first part of this chapter looks into the nature of the reporting itself, in order to offer a critical look and assessment at the information gathered to study this case. It is followed by a presentation of the data, although most of it being of a qualitative nature. The MPI is then presented and briefly explained, and used to provide a possible explanation for the events that occurred in El-Zeitoun. Some concluding remarks are then offered in the context of studying the “paranormal.”

The reporting aspects

The events that occurred in El-Zeitoun, Egypt, are over 50 years old. This makes it by definition a historical case. Although many witnesses should still be alive today, they could be quite hard to find (and it would certainly be costly to try to find them). Furthermore, as shown by the field investigation conducted by Michel Nil in 1978, only 10 years after the events, many witnesses could not remember some key details such as the dates that the anomaly occurred. Hence, conducting a field investigation, at this point in time, would be of dubious value, and so focussing on existing material remains the most sensible option.

The overall recorded data is, surprisingly, also difficult to find. Although there are many internet sites that discuss the events, they are taking their information pretty much from the same source; an internet site maintained by a group of believers linked to the Coptic Orthodox Church at www.zeitun-eg.org. Like in the case of UFO websites, many unsubstantiated claims are uncritically carried from one website to the next. The case in point is the alleged visit to St. Mary’s Church in El-Zeitoun by the then Egyptian president Nasser.² According to Michel Nil (1979, pp. 113-114), there are also only a few publications in Arabic about the El-Zeitoun events, and most of them are relatively short brochures. The situation of publications in other languages is not much better (DeVincenzo, 1988, p. 4).

² Many websites state it as a fact, but I could find only one source on this point, and it is an undated interview with an unnamed witness by Father François Brune (2004, p. 21) about two undated visits by Nasser to El-Zeitoun. He apparently signed the Church’s Visitors book, but this book is now missing. Given the rather imprecise nature of this information, it is almost impossible to corroborate it.

In such context, texts written in English and French on the topic constitute the main source of data for this study. After reviewing this literature, it appears that there are only few substantive original sources that document the events, sometimes many years after the fact. Among the noteworthy ones are: (a) the English version of the report from the Coptic Church investigation (Gregorius, 1969); (b) Jerome Palmer's 1969 book *Our Lady returns to Egypt*; (c) Pearl Zaki's (1977) *Our Lord's Mother Visits Egypt in 1968 & 1969*; (d) Michel Nil's book (1979); Francis Johnston's (1980) *When Millions Saw Mary*; and (f) Brune's book (2004). It is to be noted that these texts were produced by believers, and that their intent was less about providing a detailed documentation of the events, and more about "proving" that the phenomenon was indeed a manifestation of the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, it is also important to note that the notion of "proof" for these believers has a somewhat different meaning than in the scientific context, as it based only on establishing correlations between the reported events and religious accepted doctrinal notions and concepts.

Although these authors documented several objective aspects like the particular elements reported by witnesses during the events, the miraculous cures, statements from the authorities, and newspaper clippings, the focus is very much on the witnesses' inner experience of seeing the Virgin Mary. To use a different language, they focussed on the experiencers' subjective appreciation of their own experience. This focus should not surprise anyone, as any religious belief is fundamentally based on profoundly personal mystical experiences. Lastly, let's underline that these publications also cover with great care the process of official acknowledgement by the Coptic religious authorities.

Another important issue to keep in mind is that the events occurred in the context of Orthodox Christianity, not Roman Catholicism, and most researchers of Marian studies are either priests in the Catholic Church or at least grew-up in a Catholic environment. If one acknowledges that the Virgin was indeed paying substantive attention to the Orthodox Church, then the Roman Catholic claim of being the "only true religion" can be indirectly challenged. Furthermore, these apparitions were not "typical", in that they were no communication between the entity and one or a few young people (usually teenage girls). In fact, there was no obvious message communicated in El-Zeitoun. These factors are likely to make the events "less interesting" for those who are working within the "normal" frames of reference found in Marian studies, something that Michel Nil (1979, pp. 152-154) also noted. Clearly, what makes an anomaly worthy of interest is very much dependent on social and cultural factors rather than the intrinsic "objective" qualities of the phenomenon.³

³ Any student of UFO events cannot escape to see strong epistemic parallels between religious investigations and UFO investigations: investigations are usually conducted by UFO buffs, trying to prove that what was observed was indeed an extra-terrestrial entity by establishing correlations with "typical" alien descriptions, the experiencers' subjective description of events, which is usually taken for granted (as long as it fits the alien "typical" description), and they seek any forms of acknowledgement from the authorities that something odd occurred.

The events of Zeitoun

The quantitative view

One thing that quickly becomes obvious when researching this case is that there is no complete list of apparitions. The Coptic Church investigation identified 27 apparitions during the period of 2 April 1968 to 4 May 1968, with a number of nights having more than one apparition occurring (Bayless, 1981, p. 8). Other sources noted that there was a decline in the number of apparitions throughout 1968 to one or two per week (Johnston, 1980, p. 10). The frequency went down to once a month by early 1970, according to Johnston (1980, p. 25). However, based on Zaki's research, between 21 August 1969 and 11 June 1971 there were 17 apparitions (Bayless, 1981, p. 21). According to Johnston, the last apparition occurred on 29 May 1971 (1980, p. 25).

In light of this rather incomplete data set, only an order of magnitude can be offered here. By combining the information provided by the different sources, it is estimated that around 90 to 95 apparitions would have occurred if counted as follows:

2 April - 4 May 1968: 27
5 May - Mid-1969: 45-50 (?)
Mid-1969-mid 1971: 17
Approximate total: 90-95 apparitions⁴

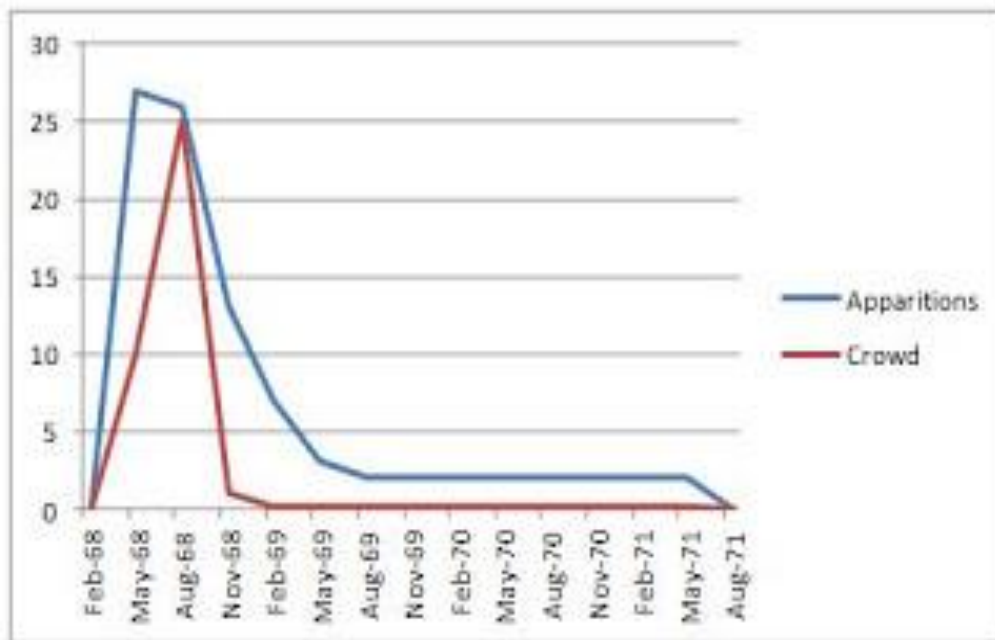
Another issue about this count is what is actually meant by "apparition". The phenomenon was not consistent in its visible characteristics. It ranged from the "full-blown" apparition to only a subset of it. For instance, Johnston states that the phenomenon was:

generally preceded by mysterious lights, flashing and scintillating silently over the church like a canopy of shooting stars. One witness described them as a 'shower of diamonds made of light'. [...] Minutes later, formations of luminous doves would appear and fly around the floodlit church. Eyewitnesses described them as 'strange bird-like creatures made of light' which flew with astonishing swiftness without moving their wings. They always maintained a definite formation and disappeared suddenly like melted snowflakes. Shortly after, a blinding explosion of light would engulf the church roof. As it dwindled, it shaped itself into the brilliant form of Our Lady. Invariably, she would be seen in a long white robe and veil of bluish-white light. (1980, p. 4)

⁴ A list of the referenced apparition reports is provided in Appendix A.

Zaki met a nun who counted 17 “apparitions” for the period between mid-1969 to mid-1971, while she also counted luminous birds on 24 nights, and lights, stars and other luminous phenomena on 85 nights for that same period (Bayless, 1981, p. 21). This illustrates quite well that the count is very much dependent on how the various witnesses defined the notion of “apparition.” Hence, the above count of 90-95 apparitions should be taken as an illustration of magnitude more than as a reliable count.

It is also interesting to note, even if one should not be surprised by it, that the number of witnesses followed the general pattern of the apparitions. There were only a few witnesses the first day, as it was a completely unexpected event. It eventually grew to a very large gathering. Nil interviewed a witness stating that there were about 100 people on the night of 13 April 1968 (1979, p. 44). Nelson estimated that there was between 1,000 and 1,500 people on 15 April 1968 (1973, 5). After that, the phenomenon was discussed for the first time in the mainstream press, in a 23 April estimate properly the size of a crowd, especially at night, and the higher figure might have been over-estimated. However, this provides a good illustration that not only the phenomenon was a very public event, but also the interest in the phenomenon can be correlated directly with its intensity, and its coverage in the mainstream press. Graphically, with the limited information available, the apparitions and crowd pattern for the entire 3-year period would have the following shape approximately:



From a quantitative view of the Zeitoun events, there are two additional observations that can be made with a fair degree of certainty. First, the events seemed to have been very intense at the beginning (during April and May 1968), but started to decline sometime after the official investigation ended and the phenomenon was declared authentic by the Coptic Church on 5 May 1968. Second, the phenomenon was resilient enough to last for 3 years, with a declining cycle of occurrences and intensity.

The qualitative view

The existing written material provides a relatively rich corpus describing the events. Although this corpus was essentially created by believers, it is significant enough to offer important points of reference for anyone interested in analyzing the events, even from a non-religious perspective. There are six main qualitative aspects that can be identified about the El-Zeitoun events: (a) the so-called light “birds”, (b) the smell of incense, (c) the clouds, (d) phosphorescent-like luminosity, (e) the scintillating lights or “stars”, and (f) the main luminescent object (i.e. the apparition itself).

The light “birds”

Many witnesses reported that there were luminous objects that traveled through the sky of El-Zeitoun (Palmer, 1969; Nil, 1979; Zaki, 1977), which were at first construed as “birds” but were clearly not birds. Their actual nature remains unknown to this day. They were described as follows:

Another phenomenon witnessed by the spectators is the appearance of bird-like creatures before, during, and after the apparitions, and sometimes on nights when there is no apparition at all. These creatures in some ways resemble doves. They are larger than doves; they are larger even than pigeons. Whence they come or whither they go no one can determine. It is known, says the keeper of the Cairo zoo that pigeons do not fly at night. But these can hardly be any kind of natural bird.

First of all, they fly much too rapidly. They fly without ever moving their wings. (Only one spectator interviewed thought he saw one bird flap its wings.) They seem to glide before, into, and around the apparitions. They never come to rest on the roof or trees, and on some occasions have been seen to disintegrate in the sky like wisps of cloud.

Varying in number on different nights, they have appeared singly, in twos, threes, and larger groups. Always in some kind of formation, the creatures fly in triangle, sometimes in the formation of a cross. Once twelve of them flew, six abreast in two rows.

Not only are these birds spotless white; they themselves emit light. They are like electrically illuminated birds which can be seen both in the brilliant light of the apparition and in the darkness of the sky above the apparition. They disappear as mysteriously as they appear and without sound of any kind. (Palmer, 1969, pp. 12-13)

Another description is from Bishop Gregorius on the apparitions that took place between 27 April and 15 May 1968:

Before the apparitions took place some birds that look like pigeons--I don't know what they are--appear in different formations. Sometimes two appear on the dome just as if they had come out of it. However, the dome is closed; the windows do not open. They might be seen flying eastward, then wheeling about and flying to the west, and while one watches them, they suddenly disappear. [...]

They do not flap their wings; they glide. In a flash they appeared; and disappeared the same way. They did not fly away but above and around the center dome. They did not fly away but above and around the center dome. They stay quite near and are close to the church when they vanish. Whatever formation they take, they keep. Sometimes as many as seven of them fly in the formation of a cross. They appear and disappear in this formation. They fly very swiftly. They are not light on one side, but are completely lighted. One does not see feathers at all--just something lighted. They are radiating creatures, larger in size than a dove or a pigeon. Sometimes as one of them flies lower, it gets larger and larger. People realize these are not pigeons. (Palmer, 1969, pp. 24-26).

Lastly, let's mention that there is a famous photograph of these "birds" taken by Wagih Risk. However, the photograph was analyzed in detail by Vern Miller of the Brooks Institute of Photography of Santa Barbara, California in the 1990s, and it became clear that although it was a genuine picture of the phenomenon, the individual object's shape is likely to have been altered to look like "birds" (Kamell et al., 1996, p. 223)

In themselves, these objects seem unexplainable, but if one keeps in mind that in April and May 1968 there was significant seismologic activity in Egypt (Persinger and Derr, 1989), then a somewhat different picture emerges. Strange lights in formation have been noted from time to time in various parts of the world, like for instance in the Idu Peninsula (Japan) during the earthquakes of November 1930, and in 1957 during an earthquake in Leicestershire, England (Devereux, 1989, p. 22). Also, some early UFO sightings involving some sort of "flight formations" have had earthquake dimensions as well. The famous Lubbock sightings of 25 August 1951, in northern Texas, were

interpreted by some as being “birds” (Clark, 1988, pp. 342-350), while there was some significant seismic activity in the area in June of the same year (Northrop and Sanford, 1972). The famous Washington D.C. sightings of 19-20 July 1952, where UFOs in formation were observed on radar screen, occurred just one day before a major earthquake in California with a magnitude of 7.6 (Housner, 1953, p. 16). Another case is the one of a pilot who saw seven objects in formation while flying between New Zealand and Australia on 13 January 1965,⁵ which occurred at the same time as a wave of earthquakes in New Zealand (Gibowicz, 1974). More recently, UFO flight formations were reported in Chile on 12 and 25 September 2011;⁶ there was also a 5.9 earthquake near the coast of Chile on 14 September 2011, and another one of 5.6 magnitude on 28 September 2011.⁷

Lastly, we can compare the “flight formations” of El-Zeitoun to the description of the famous UFO sighting of Kenneth Arnold of 24 June 1947. As Devereux noted,

[...] a brilliant flash of light occurred, centered on an area where Arnold saw nine bright lights. These traveled in an undulating fashion between (in all) three peaks of the Cascade mountains, hugging the terrain, frequently giving off brilliant blue-white flashes, usually preceding a change of motion. As Arnold obtained a closer view of them, the lights showed themselves to be generally discoid in shape, though with variations which may have been due to shape-changing characteristics, or difficulty of definition at long distances on Arnold’s part. The light varied in intensity, and maintained a rough formation. [...] The location where the incident took place also speaks volumes. The Cascades Mountains are located directly on a tectonic plate margin. (1989, p. 54)

A number of preliminary remarks need to be made here before going further. Observations of “birds” were widely reported at El-Zeitoun, and bear many resemblances to some UFO events, but the “birds” were never construed by the witnesses in Egypt as anything but some form of divine manifestation. Clearly, there is some social and cultural construction involved in these types of reports. Furthermore, the skeptics have jumped rapidly to the conclusion that these luminous phenomena must have been solely the product of earth-generated social constructions participating in a wider social narrative built on the ideology of scientism.

⁵ See <http://www.ufocusnz.org.nz/content/1965---Pilots-Sight-%E2%80%98V-shaped%E2%80%99-UFO-Formation/83.aspx>

⁶ See <http://onlysecrecy.com/videos/latest-ufo-videos/ufo-sighted-over-santiago-chile-25th-sep-2011/4316/>

⁷ From a query on IRIS (Incorporated Research Institutions of Seismology) at <http://www.iris.edu/data/>.

The science of earth-generated luminous objects is still, to this day, in its infancy. Michael Persinger is well-known to have proposed what he called the “tectonic strain theory” to explain the presence of luminous objects in the sky, as discussed above. The tectonic strain theory allows for objects to be seen far away from the epicenter of a seismic event, and can happen a few days before or after such events. Yet, the tectonic strain theory cannot account for the concentrated nature of the El-Zeitoun events. To have “birds” flying in formation at the exact same place for months is beyond what geophysics can explain at this time. It is therefore, for all intent and purposes an act of faith to assume that all those events can be solely explained as earth-generated phenomena, which from a sociological perspective, is no different to any other acts of faith. In the end, this aspect of the El-Zeitoun events remains beyond demonstrable traditional scientific explanation. However, if one is willing to embrace a mixed ontological approach where the objective and subjective may potentially merge in novel ways, then one could hypothesize that geomagnetism may provide an important enabling physical condition for such complex phenomena to occur, but it is not sufficient in itself to fully explain them.

The clouds and smell of incense

The New York Times article of 5 May 1968, one of the few mainstream newspapers outside Egypt publishing about the events, noted that “on three other recent occasions the apparition was seen and each time was preceded by the appearance of shining white clouds shaped like doves.” This short comment is instructive, as it shows that the “light birds” were also understood as being clouds by some witnesses. But there was another phenomenon involving clouds where the entire sky above the church was covered with clouds, and it was also accompanied by a smell of incense.

Palmer reported that “one should, perhaps, include as 'lights' the mysterious clouds that are sometimes seen to hover high above the church even when the rest of the sky is cloudless. On one night, Bishop Gregorius stated, there poured from the sealed stained-glass windows of the high dome, such clouds of incense that it would take 'millions' of censers to produce a like quantity. The incense cloud settled over the throng standing around the church” (1969, p. 12). Bayless adds a few more details in noting that “he [Bishop Gregorius] describes the appearance of clouds of deep reddish incense which billowed in huge quantities. It rose to a height of 30 to 60 feet and was clearly visible above and around the church against a colorless sky” (1981, p. 10).

Zaki described that “sometimes clouds like a thick fog would roll in towards the church as if they were being channeled down the streets in all directions to completely cover the church. They seemed to absorb the incense and its fragrance and carry it to the crowd of people and spread it over them like a canopy... The sky above would turn to a deep reddish-purple...” (1977, p. 12). She also added that this it was a pleasant fragrance (Idem).

Michel Nil interviewed Father Boutros, the parish priest of Zeitoun, in 1978. He noted that there was at various occasions clouds accompanied with thunder and a smell of incense (1979, p. 72). Finally, in an interview in 1980, a witness (Mona Mikhael) told Bayless that “other times we used to see clouds of incense. First, you would see a type of white cloud and it would cover all the church, all the area surrounding the church from above. [...] I never smelled anything like it in all my life. It was a very, very beautiful odor. The cloud remained for 10 or 15 minutes and disappeared” (1981, pp. 27-28).

This very unusual phenomenon remains difficult to explain, but it is not unprecedented. For instance, during the 1906 earthquake of Valparaiso in Chile, “other spectators saw red-violet patches in the sky during the earthquake” (Devereux, 1989, p. 22), which can be linked to the “violet low-level oscillation of air molecules or the emission of ignited gases from fissures in the ground during earthquakes” (Devereux, 1989, p. 24). Such events seem also to have common characteristics with what has been termed “electrochemical glow discharge”. As Devereux mentioned in his research on earthlights and seismic activity, “through various electrochemical reactions the expulsion of considerable amounts of gas into the air (bubbling through groundwater or out of fissure in the ground) accompanied by pungent chlorine or sulphurous smells could be caused. Such smells have been noted by witnesses involved with earthquakes, ball lightning and UFOs” (Devereux, 1989, p. 51).

We have here another indication that seismic activity might have contributed to the overall events at El-Zeitoun. The production of large quantities of gas, and the red-violet color associated with such clouds point in that direction. Yet, the issue of a pleasant smell of incense instead of the foul odor of chlorine or sulfur remains problematic. It is particularly problematic in that incense is, by definition, a substance void of sulfur.

Some might argue that given the euphoric state of the witnesses, who were also believers, their capacity to judge smell was impaired, and they projected a more consistent religious meaning to the smell they experienced. This may be so, but there were many other people (non-believers) who would have reported something else. In fact, a smell of sulfur or chlorine might have caused a panic in the crowd. Others may invoke phantosmia (olfactory hallucination) and parosmia (distorted sense of smell), but these conditions are usually linked to head injury and respiratory infections. This explanation would require that Egypt was undergoing an epidemic of such health conditions, something that is quite improbable. Another possibility would be that all those who reported on the Zeitoun events have censured their reports about an unpleasant smell, because it would not point towards a divine event. Yet, as there are no data pointing in such direction, one has to look somewhere else.

It is clear that religious experiences are at times associated with “smell of holiness”. In the Roman Catholic world, one pays attention to “the sign of ‘sweet odor,’ a phenomenon in which the body or the tomb of a saint emits a sweet odor. In the Old Testament, a sweet-smelling odor was a metaphor used to indicate a person pleasing to God and holy in His eyes. Usually, the odor is unique and cannot be compared to any known perfume. Cardinal Lambertini posited that while a human body may not smell bad, it is highly unlikely, especially in the case of a dead body, for it to smell sweet. Therefore, any odor of sweetness would have to be induced by a supernatural power and be classified as miraculous” (Saunders, 2006). This is certainly a good description of what the believers in El-Zeitoun were thinking, even if it was not about the body of a saint. This explanation, however, is beyond rational proof. It seems that once again, there might be some physical enabling conditions contributing to a far more complex phenomenon, where the objective and the subjective are mixing in ways poorly understood.

Phosphorescent-like luminosity

Another common qualitative description was some sort of glowing aura or phosphorescent-like luminosity in the sky and around the church. Palmer reported that "the large dome atop the church is sometimes illuminated by the heavenly lights, and on one occasion, as described by Bishop Samuel, the light which poured out from beneath one of the smaller domes gradually covered the entire church in light" (1969, p. 12). Michel Nil, based on his 1978 interviews, was told by Ragai Louis that he saw the church illuminated from above as if it was from a fluorescent light (1979, p. 43), while Victor Fakhri described the same phenomenon as a phosphorous light on the church's wall and dome (p. 85). As well, witness Sami Goubran described a very strong light, as if it was “a million of watts,” emanating from the church and lightening up the entire neighbourhood (p. 76). Bayless was told by the witness Mona Mikhael that “another time...like the sky was open. A very, very wide kind of light. Not very radiant” (1981, p. 27).

Yet again, this type of phenomenon is associated with seismic activities. Devereux noted that “streamers and aurorae-like displays across the sky, balls of light, glows in the atmosphere, sparkles of light on hillsides, ‘slow’ lightning – can occur in association with, but by no means with all earthquakes. They appear before, during and after quake activity, and sometimes at distances of tens of miles from the epicentre of such seismicity” (1989, p. 19). The issue is now becoming a familiar one. Indeed, the witnesses' descriptions reinforce the notion that the events of El-Zeitoun were enabled by seismic activity, but such geophysical approach can hardly explain why such luminosity was centered on the church for such an extended period of time.

Scintillating lights, “stars”, and other precursors to the apparition

The main apparition was oftentimes preceded by sparkingly lights. As Palmer noted, "the light have been described by spectators as 'a circle of bright spotlights' on one occasion; as 'falling stars' on another occasion, and even as a 'shower of diamonds of light' swirling in the path of Our Lady's movements. A brilliant crown, all of lights, has been seen over the figure of Our Lady, giving her a majestic and glorious appearance" (1969, p. 12). Zaki witnesses a similar phenomenon, as she wrote that “on my fifth night at about 4:15 a.m. I saw four yellow flashes or flames covering the front of the church. Following this about 4.30 Virgin Mary appeared ‘full figure’” (1980, p. 7). She added in a different text, “again I saw a flash of yellowish-orange light shaped like a big flame and covering the whole front of the church and lasting about five seconds. It was repeated twice (four times in all)...” (Johnston, 1980, p. 21). Hilda Goubran told Michel Nil in 1978 that at the time of the apparitions there was stars and pigeons associated with the apparitions (p. 83). Anzy Morid told Bayless in a 1981 interview that he saw “sparkling lights” prior to the apparition in April 1968 (p. 29).

Once more, Devereux in his study of light phenomenon associated with seismic activity quotes a report from the 1872 edition of *Nature* that is reminiscent of Zaki’s observations: “[...] following the great earthquake shock of a Californian earthquake recent to 1872, two witnesses observed ‘sheets of flame on the rocky sides of the Inuyo Mountains’ about half a mile from the Eclipse Mines. ‘These flames, observed in several places,’ the report continues, ‘waved to and from, apparently clear of the ground, like vast torches. They continued for only a few minutes’” (1989, p. 21). Further, he quotes a report from a 1902 paper in *Nature* discussing “flickering flashes” associated with eruption of Mont Pelee (1989, p. 24).

There are other analogous phenomena associated with the pre-apparitional phase that could be highlighted. For instance, Therese Gadallah told Michel Nil that she saw a large red ball transforming itself into the Virgin made of white light (1979, p. 78), and Vivian Goubran made the same observation about a red ball (1979, p. 80). The *Nature* article of 1902 about Mont Pelee eruption also noted a large red ball in the sky (Devereux, 1989, p. 24). A number of witnesses also described the pre-apparition phase as being a shining column of light transforming itself into the Virgin (Bayless, 1981, p. 24; Kamell et al., 1996, pp. 77, 79). Similarly, rays and beams of light were also noticed with seismic activities (Devereux, 1989, p. 24).

The description by witnesses of the events surrounding pre-apparitional moments are quite diverse in nature, but they all have counterparts in descriptions of light-related phenomena associated with seismic and earth activities. These represent further indications that there is a likely valid correlation between earthquakes in Egypt noted by Persinger and the El-Zeitoun events. But this also raises additional questions about why such a vast array of earth-based phenomena, which tend to occur separately in one off events, are concentrated geographically and qualitatively around that church in Cairo's suburbs. Unfortunately, geology and physics do not have any sound answers to offer for such improbable combination of events.

The apparitions

The apparitions seemed to have all occurred near the Church, but not necessarily at the same exact spot. As previously noted, the first one was seen on the roof near the base of the dome. It was also seen in the courtyard between trees (Palmer, 1969, p. 13), while on other occasions it was seen in mid-air above the main dome (pp. 21-23). It is interesting to note that after a number of days of apparitions, the public utilities cut the power in the neighborhood, at first to deflect a hoax, and then to help having a better view, as well surrounding trees were cut on the third night so people could see better (Nil, 1979, p. 49).

The most common colors were blue and white, but some noted also green and pink (Nil, 1979, p. 62), and others saw a reddish light (Palmer, 1969, p. 32). These are important elements to define the nature of the apparition, as the traditional colors associated with the Marian worship is blue and white, but also red (although more common in older and Eastern iconography). Several witnesses underlined that apparition disappeared as if it turns off slowly the dimmer of a lamp (Palmer, 1969, pp. 21-23; Nil, 1979, p. 50), while in other situations it rose in the sky to disappear (Palmer, 1969, pp. 13-14; Nil, 1979, p. 54). In some occasions it was perceived as if the wind was blowing through it and that her "veil" was moving in the wind (Palmer, 1969, p. 15), while it appeared to be flat and only 2-dimensional in another occasion (pp. 13-14). At times, the apparition was motionless and described as statue like (Nil, 1979, pp. 43, 62), but it appeared that it was moving more often than not (Palmer, 1969, p. 13) but as if floating without using "its feet" (p. 15). It was "making gestures" with her "head", and her "hands" in particular (Nil, 1979, pp. 50, 68-70, 72).

The actual shape appeared to have also varied from something like squarish form which was construed as the Virgin sitting and holding the infant Jesus (Nil, 1979, pp. 43-44), while in most cases it seemed to be closer to either a vertical rectangle or a vertically elongated lozenge with a circle at the top, which sometimes is seen in full, and other times only in “half-figure” (pp. 41, 63). Many claimed to be able to distinguish a face, eyes, and mouth (Palmer, 1969, pp. 21-23; Nil, 1979, pp. 53-54, 57), and even resembling representations seen in religious icons (Nil, 1979, pp. 43-44. Yet, others noted that there was a light but they could not distinguish anything particular (Nil, 1979, p. 42; Zaki, 1977, p. 12; Nelson, 1973).

As one would expect, it is normal to have variations in descriptions provided by eye-witnesses, but in general they tend to be relatively consistent. This certainly adds some degree of confidence about the common and ongoing presence of the phenomenon. However, one important question remains as to whether the witnesses projected into their experience their own beliefs and interpreted the events as being an apparition of the Virgin Mary. This is a difficult question to assess properly, but there are some elements that could provide a few leads in this regard.

The crowd

As noted above, the crowd became at one point very large, certainly in the thousands of people. Witnesses’ accounts are quite interesting in their comments about other people present. There was a lot of emotional energy displayed during these events. Some noted that people were screaming at the apparition (Nil, 1979, pp. 41, 43, 50, 53), and in Kamell and al.’s survey the crowd was described as either excited or hysterical (45%), and in prayerful devotion (38%) (1996, p. 284).

To add to the very intense atmosphere, some witnesses saw “miracles” such as paralyzed people walking and other people cured on the spot (Nil, 1979, pp. 41, 43, 68-70). This is in line with the investigation conducted by medical doctors on behalf of the Coptic Church which found several unexplainable cases of people being cured of illnesses. About a dozen of them are described in some detail in Palmer (1969, pp. 44-50).

In such an atmosphere, which mixes religious devotion and amazement, the probabilities that many people projected their belief into what they saw seem quite high. Even more, some social and cultural factors have to be included in the analysis. El-Zeitoun is known in the Coptic tradition as a place where the Virgin rested during the escape to Egypt, and there is an old tree associated with this tradition in El-Zeitoun. Then, the apparitions were centered on a Church, dedicated to Saint Mary.

In the end, however, clearly something truly unusual was observed. Non-believers like Nelson, as already noted, did see an intense light, but could not translate what they saw into the “Virgin Mary”. Yet again, the original witnesses were Muslim workers, and they thought that a woman was about to commit suicide by jumping from the Church’s roof. It seems that whatever was seen then, it was ambiguous enough to provide substantive room for interpretation.

Photographic controversies

Could the few available “physical evidences” help us here? Like with most UFO and paranormal-related pictures, they actually tend to murk the water more than they can help, as they create controversies about what they are. The fault, unfortunately, is usually that of the believers, who do not care to provide the rest of the information necessary to assess the source of the photography, or other forms of physical evidence. A picture is not a fact; it is an artefact that has a complete social and technical context to determine its validity, which cannot be severed from the actual image; otherwise it becomes meaningless colors on a piece of paper. The story of El-Zeitoun is no different in this regard.

There is a famous picture where the “Virgin” is seen in great detail, but it is actually an enhanced picture with a drawing done over it by an Egyptian doctor who witnessed the event. This was not intended to be a hoax, but rather to provide a “better” representation of what he saw, and he never claim it to be otherwise. Unfortunately, and yet unsurprisingly, this brought some skeptics to declare the picture a fraud, while in fact the original is actually genuine. The same picture is reproduced in Palmer’s book, which was published in 1969, so it was taken either in 1968 or 1969, by Ali Ibrahim. Once, the drawing is removed from the original picture, one can observe that the picture is much more blurry, as noted in Kamell et al.’s photographic analysis (1996, p. 225).

In the end, it remains difficult to assess what people saw from the point of view of the “physical evidence”. The fact that some pictures were “improved” does not invalidate the physical dimension of the events, but does not provide any further knowledge either. On the other hand, it could be useful for comparison purposes. The pictures of the late 1960s at El-Zeitoun are strikingly similar to more recent ones from Warraq, near Cairo in December 2009.

The apparition in Warraq was much shorter in duration when compared to the ones in El-Zeitoun. It was covered by the Egyptian press, and there are many phonecam videos available on YouTube. The case is not without controversies either, but it was declared to be a genuine supernatural phenomenon by the Coptic Church. What is

interesting is that it provides some points of comparison to visualize what people in El-Zeitoun saw more than 50 years ago, as well as what kind of atmosphere was happening then. If one looks at the videos on YouTube, the images are blurry but one can easily construe what is being seen as an apparition of the Virgin, matching the many aspects of the descriptions provided about the events of 1968-1971. It was a lozenge-shape form, highly luminescent, moving slowly on top of a building. Also, the atmosphere was intense; people were shouting, some were singing, cars were honking, etc.

If the events of Warraq are indeed comparable to the ones of El-Zeitoun, then a few points can be raised, which further confirm some of the conclusion provided above. First, it appears to be an objective event, but it is also a visually ambiguous phenomenon. One can interpret it in many different ways and project many different understandings of the details into it. For instance, what appeared to be a flame-like motion within the apparition could have equally been construed as a “veil” floating in the wind. Words used by witnesses are very much socially and culturally situated. Second, it was a social event exhibiting high levels of emotional energy by people in the crowd. And lastly, the event has become meaningful in great part because religious authorities have legitimized a particular interpretation of these events as well.

Unfortunately, in light of all the information available on El-Zeitoun, it is not possible to determine the nature of the events. Geomagnetism has certainly played a role as an enabling force, but when one looks at the apparitions in greater detail, there are simply too many physical manifestations that must have lined up at the exact same spot for many months for geophysics to explain everything. In any case, there are no known geophysical events that have been recorded to show all these multiple geophysical manifestations, let alone for them to have occurred in one exact location, and for so long. Hence, if one is interested to go beyond the belief systems of the both the skeptics and the believers, then an alternate and reasoned explanation is required. Hopefully, it can shed some more light on this intriguing case.

The Model of Pragmatic Information (MPI)

The MPI has been originally used to study poltergeists, better-known as Recurrent Spontaneous Psychokinesis (RSPK) in parapsychology. Walter von Lucadou, a German physicist and parapsychologist based at the University of Freiburg, has been a pioneer in developing the MPI beyond the realm of theoretical physics in its application to empirical spontaneous cases. Von Lucadou’s approach is built on his extensive empirical work on

RSPK, and the work done by his research centre in Freiburg.⁸ Over time, he notes that RSPKs tend to unfold according to a predictable general pattern, and therefore it is possible to map how a RSPK event would start, peak and disappear. Such pattern can in turn be explained by the actions and interactions of the various social actors involved in the events, who by either increasing or decreasing the context of indeterminacy for non-local correlations, allow anomalous psi to occur and to be noted.

Most scientific parapsychologists consider that poltergeists are actually uncontrollable psychokinetic (PK) forces (or energy) produced by someone in a family, or a small and close-knit group, who has deep but unexpressed psychological challenges. Their unconscious mind uses psi effects as a way to express what they cannot express otherwise. It is in many ways a cry for help. It is oftentimes focalized around a teenager, but not always, and the reasons for such over-representation of teenagers are not well understood at this time. The extension of the MPI to large scale events (such as the El-Zeitoun apparitions) is based on the assumption that collective psychokinesis is the fundamental element behind the anomaly, which has been noted by parapsychologists in other types of events (Ouellet, 2011, 117-118).

According to the MPI, a RSPK event evolves in 4 phases: (1) Surprise, slow start when only a few notice something really strange and unusual; (2) Displacement, ramping up and peaking when many start to notice but also start to believe that the phenomenon is caused some sort of non-human entity or forces; (3) Decline, when skeptical observers arrive, as they do not believe in the non-human entity explanation and have a more rigorous look at paranormal events; and (4) Cover-up and Disappearance, when official authorities get involved and declare the phenomenon to be a hoax or - fraud.

In a typical RSPK event, the phenomenon seems centered around one particular individual, called the “focus person,” but in light of the MPI, other people are also critical in influencing the intensity and nature of the phenomenon. In the Surprise phase, there are usually a few people who also experience something completely unexpected with strong emotions beyond the “focus person” to include those in his/her immediate environment. (2) During the Displacement phase, other people (who are called the “naïve observers” in von Lucadou’s model (e.g. ghost hunters, house spirit “cleaners,” etc.)) join the first experiencers, but these new people tend to displace the meaning of what is

⁸ For more on the MPI, please refer to von Lucadou, W. “The Model of Pragmatic Information (MPI).” *European Journal of Parapsychology* 11 (1995): 58-75; von Lucadou, W. “The exo-endo-perspective of non-locality in psycho-physical systems.” Casys, *International Journal of Computing Anticipatory Systems*, 2 (1998): 169-185; von Lucadou, W., & Zahradnik, F. “Predictions of the Model of Pragmatic Information about RSPK. In *Proceedings of the 47th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association*, 99-112. Durham, NC: Parapsychological Association, 2004; von Lucadou, W., H. Römer and H. Walach. “Synchronistic phenomena as entanglement correlations in generalized quantum theory.” *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 14 (2007): 50-74.

occurring by firming up a particular explanation of the phenomenon around the notion that some powerful non-human entity is involved. (3) The Decline coincides with the later arrival of “skeptical observers”, usually made of professionals and well-educated individuals who enter the fray and directly challenge the supernatural explanation provided by the naïve observers. (4) Finally in the Cover-up, society through the “authorities,” and oftentimes the mass media, step in to quell any belief left that the events were caused by supernatural forces.

From the point of view of the MPI, the unconscious sincere belief of the various people involved is a critical component for psi effects to be enabled or disabled. The original experiencers tend to have only a partial and fragmented belief in some supernatural explanation, and hence the phenomenon is weak at first but grows in intensity as a belief in supernatural power is anchored among them. The naïve observers will have deep beliefs in supernatural explanations, but such beliefs oftentimes diverge somewhat from that of the original experiencers, and hence the type of anomalous event tends to change in nature. On the other hand, the skeptical observers usually go out of their way to prove that nothing abnormal occurred, and to shatter any beliefs in the supernatural, and so the phenomenon declines. As well, some hoaxing might start to appear as some of the original experiencers might want to continue receiving special attention from others, or extend the more exciting life they have suddenly acquired. These hoaxes then reinforce claims from the skeptical observers that nothing anomalous occurred, and invite the authorities to bring back “order” into the community and “close the file” permanently.

In a number of ways, the events that occurred in El-Zeitoun followed the patterns predicted by the MPI, although not completely, as one of the social actors did not behave according to the usual expectations found in typical RSPK events—due to vested interests. Namely, by having the Coptic Orthodox Church authorities proclaim early on that the events were genuinely supernatural, and thus over-ruling the skeptical observers, the phenomenon lasted much longer than typically expected

Phase 1: The very short ambiguous start

The events of El-Zeitoun started with the surprise of a few non-Christians (the public transit workers) and Christians (women walking in the street at the same moment). The transit workers were afraid that someone would commit suicide, and they were quite worried, enough to call the police and emergency services. On the other hand, some Christian women were completely excited and rejoiced to see what they construed as an apparition of the Virgin Mary. In spite of the diverging explanations by the original experiencers, there was no doubt in any of their minds, that there was indeed something on the Church’s roof. During the surprise phase, like in any typical RSPK event, the first

few experiencers already hypothesized a supernatural explanation for what they saw without being fully certain about it. Notably, the Church priests were not present to confirm what was seen at the time of the first apparition, leaving further room for indeterminacy in potential non-local correlations.

The gathering of people at the El-Zeitoun site took a few days to become a major public event. The word of mouth process brought an increasing number of people from the neighborhood, who were still not too sure what to think about the events, and oftentimes had hours to wait until something happened. As well, the first witnesses did not report all the other strange phenomena noted later, such as the “birds”, the smoke, the scent, etc. From that point of view, the description proposed by the MPI generally fits well, where first the phenomenon grows in intensity, before it diversifies itself in the later displacement phase.

One obvious difference in this case is that the focus person is difficult to find, and there may potentially be a focus group rather than a focus person. However, there are a few clues available. The MPI proposes that the use of psi effect (ESP and PK) is to convey a message (hence the notion of “Pragmatic Information”) about the psychological distress of the focus person. Such messages tend to be symbolic, built on lateral logic, comparable to night dreams produced by the unconscious part of the mind. We can take note that the very first people who saw the phenomenon were Muslim people, part of the Egyptian broader public service, who were all thinking that they observed someone “near the abyss”. There is an implicit possible symbolic message here; but more on that later.

Phase 2: Rise and peak through displacement

In the days that followed the first apparition, the crowd started to gather in greater numbers around the Church. In the MPI language, the naïve observers arrived en masse to the site. If there was any doubt about the Marian nature of the phenomenon, they were quickly set aside by the intense religious fervour and the growing intensity of the apparitions. New phenomena started to be seen such as the “birds”, miraculous healing, smoke, scent, and movements of the apparition beyond the roof. During the first few weeks, the interpretation was fully displaced and firmed-up towards a supernatural explanation. Even some of the original public transit workers took on the naïve observers’ beliefs after experiencing what they construed as miraculous healings.

According to the MPI, such “slippage”, from a symbolic message to the belief of having a non-human entity in action is actually a requirement for the phenomenon to continue and grow. As long as the message is not understood, as long as the emotional-symbolic system is not closely observed for what it is actually trying to communicate, the level of indeterminacy in the psi-related system remains high, and therefore a key condition for non-local (or non-causal) effect (psi) to occur is maintained.

Phase 3: No immediate decline...?

It is here that the El-Zeitoun case is particularly interesting from the point of view of the MPI, as it did not follow the usual pattern of a RSPK event: the phenomenon continued for a number of months before starting to experience serious decline. What happened? The decline phase, according to the MPI, is directly linked to the arrival of skeptical observers on the scene, shattering the beliefs that the naïve observers were holding. What happened at El-Zeitoun is something rarely seen in a typical RSPK event: the authorities stepping in quickly with a sympathetic approach to the phenomenon! Not only did they not try to quell the supernatural events and its explanation, but they actually did everything to institutionalize its supernatural meaning.

When the Coptic Church sent priests to investigate, they quickly agreed about the “genuine nature” of the Marian apparition. The alleged visitation of President Nasser, if true, would have just reinforced the social and emotional dynamics favorable to the Marian explanation created by the swift action of the Coptic Church. Furthermore, by creating a professional medical committee to investigate the miraculous healings, the Church essentially “enlisted” many people who would normally be considered “skeptical observers” to further reinforce the supernatural explanation. This had the effect of neutralizing, at least in Egypt, dissident voices from potential skeptical observers. This approach from the Coptic Church is perfectly understandable and very much to be expected from a religious institution that canonically accepts the notion of miraculous apparitions. By comparison, such sympathy for poltergeist entities does not exist in modern police and health authorities.

Phase 4: No cover-up just growing indifference

The disappearance of the phenomenon appears to be correlated with the shrinking size of the crowd, which of course had a feedback and self-reinforcing effect of creating a phenomenon less interesting to attend to (especially as people had typically to wait most of the night for maybe seeing something, which was noted by others as less and less frequent). In the case of El-Zeitoun, given that the authorities were fully on side with the supernatural explanation, the quelling effect of formally branding the phenomenon as a fraud or a hoax simply did not happen. Hence, from the MPI perspective it was rather growing indifference that slowly “killed” the phenomenon. In other words, the anomaly ceased to be socially relevant but without the “slandering” interventions of powerful social actors (i.e., the authorities).

Who were the focus persons?

As discussed elsewhere (Ouellet, 2011), people, symbolism, geography and dates can help us identify possible candidates for a focus person or group. As stated above, the first to see the anomaly were Muslim public workers and Christian women. From this point of view, the message, or pragmatic information, might have been directed towards the Muslim people who were closer to the government of the time (socialist, nationalist and not particularly religious), and to the Christian minority of Egypt. The symbolism of being “near the abyss” seems to be a serious warning that people were close to getting into very serious trouble. The location, Cairo, is the seat of Egyptian government, but it is also the largest city in the country, so geography is information more equivocal as to where the focus persons could be. But in any event, the phenomenon was able to get attention of many in Egypt.

However, the dates seem to be particularly relevant. The events in El-Zeitoun started on 2 April 1968. Was there something that happened in Egypt, at the same time, that might have caused a serious collective upset but that could not be fully expressed by normal means? This is of course wide-open to interpretation, but let’s note that later in April 1968 the Egyptian government released over one thousand jailed radical Islamists, members of the Muslim Brotherhood (Hiro, 1989, 69), including Ayman al-Zawahiri who later on became the no.2 and then no.1 leader of Al-Queda (Erickson, 2002). This was part of a secretly negotiated grand bargain of appeasement between Nasser and the Islamist movement in Egypt, in the context of Nasser’s star starting to decline seriously after the stunning defeat of Egypt in 1967 against Israel. As Gordon reported, “the June War and its aftermath took their toll on the President. Nearly a year later, in April 1968, he compared himself to “a man walking in a desert surrounded by shifting sands not knowing whether, if he moved, he would be swallowed up by the sands or would find the right path” (2006, 107). Although in 1968 it was something done for immediate political expediency, this decision had significant consequences for the future of Egypt. The Brotherhood eventually organized the assassination of Egyptian president Anwer El-Sadat in 1980; they sponsored many attacks against the Copts of Egypt over the years; and more recently, they stole away the original democratic spirit of the Arab Spring of 2010, ultimately leading to the Egyptian military orchestrating a coup d’état to remove the Islamists from power. In a number of ways, that 1968 decision brought Egypt “closer to the abyss,” and it seemed that Nasser himself felt that way too.

Could the knowledge, or precognition, about the consequences of releasing over 1,000 members of the Brotherhood in 1968 have created a strong collective feeling of throwing Egypt into an abyss? Certainly, the notion that these people were dangerous already existed in Egypt in the 1960s, as they tried to assassinate Nasser twice already. Could there have been some people in the Egyptian national security apparatus in 1968,

who were aware and extremely anxious of the government's plan to provide an amnesty to members of the Brotherhood, but unable to speak up? This seems probable. Could they have been the focus group? Impossible to tell for sure, but they should be considered as potential candidates.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that geophysical activities in Egypt in 1968 contributed to create the enabling conditions for the very unusual events of El-Zeitoun. Many of the phenomena described by the witnesses can be explained through various theories and models found in geology, even if some models remain incomplete, such as the tectonic strain theory. Yet, on its own, geological explanations of all the events, once they are taken together and looked at from a more granular perspective, cannot reasonably account for what happened at the same place for so long. To stick to a purely geological explanation, one would need to invoke a long list of geological coincidences never seen before, and to dismiss condescendingly all the witnesses as unreliable. This is an unreasonable perspective that is based on a belief that a purely naturalistic explanation somehow exists but cannot be proven. The religious explanation is no different from the geological one, as it is based on a theological corpus from which a belief in Marian apparitions can be supported but not proven. Either way, it is a matter of belief.

However, if these events are looked at from a point of view situated at the intersection of parapsychology and sociology, then the events of El-Zeitoun can receive a complex and multi-layered but rational explanation. If indeed psi effects were involved, it seems that they encompass a wide range of phenomena such as collective telepathy, precognition, and even psychokinesis riding on geophysical forces. The MPI offers a coherent way of looking at how the events unfolded, and can rationally account for the deviation from the typical RSPK patterns. This explanation is neither religious nor naturalistic, and yet does not require a belief system.

On the other hand, as it is the case for most paranormal events, a final explanation, or at least an explanation that would satisfy almost everyone, is likely to be never found. Whether political events of the day had any objective influence on what happened in El-Zeitoun is also impossible to prove for certain. However, if one is using epistemological postures found in the social sciences, this could be considered a legitimate hypothesis. Yet, the more important point here is that we clearly have other choices than just geology or religion.

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6-7 April 1968	Kamell et al., p. 56; Nil, p. 117
8-9 April 1968	Palmer, p. 15, Kamell et al., p. 60; Nil, p. 114
10 April 1968	Bayless, p. 7, Kamell et al. P. 66; Nil, p. 115
11 April 1968	Brune, p. 8; Nil, p. 115
12 April 1968	Nelson, p. 6; Nil, p. 115
13 April 1968	Johnston, p. 6; Nil, p. 44
19 April 1968	Bayless, p. 25
27 April 1968	Johnston, p. 7
29-30 April 1968	Palmer, p. 21; Johnston, p. 19; Bayless, p. 9; Nil, p. 115
4-5 May 1968	Johnston, p. 5; Bayless, p. 10; Kamell et al. P. 71
6-7 May 1968	Palmer, p. 32
9 May 1968	Palmer, p. 35
13 May 1968	Johnston, p. 29
15 May 1968	Johnston, p. 7
28 May 1968	Palmer, p. 50
30 May 1968	Johnston, p. 28
31 May 1968	Bayless, p. 24
1 June 1968	Palmer, p. 48; Johnston, p. 8; Bayless, p. 10
4 June 1968	Nil, p. 98
8-9 June 1968	Johnston, p. 5; Bayless, p. 9
13 August 1968	Zaki, p. 7
15 August 1968	Nil, p. 80
11 Sept 1968	Nil, p. 80
6 October 1968	Nil, p. 120
5 January 1969	Palmer, p. 32
4 April 1969	Egyptian Gazette
6 January 1970	Johnston, p. 25
14 February 1970	Johnston, p. 25
6 March 1970	Johnston, p. 25
12 Sept 1970	Johnston, p. 25
29 May 1971	Johnston, p. 25

Appendix A – List of reported apparitions with sources

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