

FOREWORD

There exists a certain parallelism between the ufological activities of the author of this book and this writer. I began my work on UFOs in 1965, and a few years later I chose alleged landing reports as my first field of specialization. In 1971, I published a major paper with Dr. Jacques Vallée on 100 landings in Iberia (back then we called them “Type I” cases, in keeping with the cases classification devised by my mentor, Vallée); and in 1976, Dr. J. Allen Hynek’s Center for UFO Studies released my technical report on 200 cases in Spain and Portugal. My first book, in 1978, was entitled *OVNIS: el fenómeno aterrizaje* (“UFOs: The Phenomenon of Landings”). A follow-up catalogue and analysis of nearly 600 cases was edited in book form in 1987, under the title *Enciclopedia de los encuentros cercanos con ovnis* (“Encyclopedia of UFO Close Encounters”), co-authored with Juan A. Fernández Peris - with which book I came full-circle with regards to this subject.

Maurizio Verga, the noted Italian researcher and compiler of this outstanding *opus*, commenced work gathering reports of UFO landings in 1977; and this volume demonstrates his ample bibliographic research on this subject through the years. Maurizio was my “shadow.”

Subsequently, Maurizio’s second field of research was an outstanding data collection effort focused on photographic events, i.e. instances where one claimed to have made a photograph, film or video of a so-called UFO manifestation, as occurred in his native Italy. His PHOTOCAT, a database presently consultable on-line, is a prototype.

As for myself, after more than ten years involved in what it is generally referred to as the process of declassification of secret UFO reports in the custody of the Spanish Air Force, I switched agendas to the production of an international catalogue of UFO sightings in which images were captured. Project FOTOCAT was thus born. In this instance, it was “shadowing” Maurizio.

Hence, both of us have been following one another’s progress, as far as concerns UFOs, and the mutual influence has enriched each of us. Moreover, on the personal side of the equation, Maurizio is one of the nicest human beings whom I have ever known.

And from my perspective, the job that Maurizio Verga now has on display in this new book is of superb, first-rate quality. This is a technical report relevant to all known UFO landing accounts reported by eyewitnesses in Italy in the first part of the last century. The reader will find case abstracts and plenty of illustrations to document the reports, plus some appendices featuring reprints of actual press clippings dealing with UFOs; reproductions of covers of magazines of the era devoted to the phenomena; and comics and sci-fi publications of the period - including a review of UFO-related movies which comprehensively presents the cultural flavor in which the UFO accounts developed.

EDIZIONI UPIAR, the publisher, is to be highly commended for this excellent volume - which I anticipate will continue, along with others, to complement the entire scenario of this type of phenomenology as reported in this European nation: material which is absolutely essential for a sensible, candid, and “down-to-earth” analysis of these occurrences from a global perspective.

With the passing of time, many ufologists - like myself, with some 40 years research experience under my belt in this field - are realizing that the UFO mystery might solely be a social construct, as opposed to an actual, physical phenomenon. At the least, in its main body of evidence, it appears to behave more as a myth unfolding with the passage of the years as a socio-cultural phenomenon, as opposed to anything else. There are, however - few and far between, as Charles Bowen aptly stated it - some incidental phenomena visually sighted, optically detected, and device-recorded in the atmosphere for which the above-mentioned definition may be insufficient. It is the work of pioneers such as Maurizio Verga that will undoubtedly assist the scholars of the next generation in determining the definitive, true nature of UFO reports.

Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos
Valencia, Spain, February 2006

Notes:

° Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos's 1965-2005 bibliography may be found at <http://www.anomalia.org/bibliog1.pdf> .

° The blog URL for FOTOCAT is: <http://fotocat.blogspot.com>