



Ummo: The Planet of the Anonymous Correspondents 27 Years of Close Encounters of the Postal Kind

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In 1958 Donald Franson wrote a short SF story *The Time for Delusion* (1) about a debunker who, in order to make a fool of every cultist once and for all, decide to publish (under a pen name) his own hoax, a book describing several phone talks with a Venusian. Among all the nonsense he planted many hidden clues, proving its fallacies. The book became an unexpected best-seller, and when he disclosed his authorship to blow-up the affair, pointing out to the buried evidence and self-revealing inconsistencies, nobody believed him !. They all knew he had been ordered to recant.

Surely Bertrand Meheust was not thinking about this kind of influence when he wrote his book *Science fiction et soucoupes volantes*, but I maintain that this form of counterattack is more frequent in Ufology than usually admitted. A classical example had already been exposed in *Magonia* (2) concerning the book *Flying Saucer from Mars* by Cedric Allingham aka Patrick Moore. But there are many more.

Ocasionalmente, one of them reaches a long-standing fame. The so called "UMMO affair", the most important contribution of Spain to UFO folklore, has been around for more than 25 years, and it is still quite controversial. In spite of the scores of Ummologists that painstakingly comb the "sacred texts" in search of the definitive proof of their extraterrestrial origins, there is no doubt among the serious Spanish ufologists that UMMO is a HOAX. But that only answers half of the problem. The second half is almost as appealing.

Good hoaxes die hard. Any serious investigator can avoid their direct effects and point to their evident falsehood (not always soon enough to avoid some embarrassing) but it is more difficult to avoid secondary effects. I will quote our admired Peter Rogerson: "It may be comforting, flattering even, to imagine that the hoaxers who fooled you needed the huge resources of a government or international agency to pull the wool over your perceptive eyes".

Or even tertiary ones.... a few sentences later, Peter Rogerson himself wrote: "UMMO had, one suspects, a more serious purpose. It was samizdat literature saying things which could not be said openly in Francoist Spain" (3). More about the explanations at the end.

To appreciate "in toto" this amazing story of the unilateral contacts of a purported expeditionary group of aliens with some Spaniards under the Franco dictatorship, during the sixties, I must begin by putting it inside the appropriate context.

First, some pertinent antecedents?. The contactee era began in 1952 when a self-appointed 'Professor', George Adamski, claimed contact with the alien beings aboard a flying saucer. Gradually this subphenomena extended all over the world: Coniston (England) February 15th, 1954; Oeydalen (Norge) August 20th, 1954; Natal (South Africa) December 27th, 1954; Madrid (Spain) November 17th, 1954; etc., etc.

In the Madrid case, a male nurse, Alberto Sanmar-

tin, allegedly received from an ufonaut that did not identify himself, a "Space Stone" covered with strange signs. Precisely during the precedent weeks, another self-appointed 'Professor' (a civil servant working in the Telegraph Office, with a peculiar liking for criptography and graphology) Fernando Sesma, had been writing in a local newspaper a long series about UFOs, including Adamski.

Thanks to this publicity Sesma formed his own group "Sociedad de Amigos de los Visitantes del Espacio" (Friends of Space Visitors Society). During the following years they will discuss at length about the "Space Stone" and its meaning. It was in 1961 when Sesma saw his first UFO and began to receive anonymous letters. They were absolutely symbolic, full of short incoherent sentences. Then, in 1962, arrived the first letters whose author identify himself as an alien, Saliano, from the planet Auco, orbiting Alfa Centauri.

Meanwhile, more UFO folklore was being created everywhere. In April 24, 1964 took place in USA the famous Socorro case, the first one where the UFO showed a symbol on its fuselage. According to Jacques Vallee (4) it was the Arabic sign for Venus !. Also in 1964 the French writer Robert Charroux received several letters (through an unnamed correspondent MNY) allegedly from beings of Proxima Centauri that called themselves Baavi. They described their civilization, their grammar, their metric system and even included several concepts of Astronomy, Physics and Chemistry (5).

On April 23, 1965 died the world's most controversial contactee, George Adamski. The day after, in Scoriton, Arthur Bryant met a huge flying saucer and its three occupants, one of them identified himself as "Yamski". After a second sighting on the night of June 6, 1965 there were found around several pieces of machinery, including a small glass phial, with a message rolled into the broken end (6).

Also in 1965, Frank Herbert wrote a SF book that will generate some kind of a cult: *Dune* . Could it be a coincidence that it included the word UMMA, under the following meaning: " one of the brotherhood of prophets (a term of scorn in the Imperium, meaning any 'wild' person given to fanatical prediction)"?

All the pieces of the script are now available. Now, let us have a look at the actors. Unfortunately, the most important ones have decided to remain anonymous: the mysterious "gentlemen from Ummo", the copyists (apparently, two of them) charged with the duplication and delivery of the amazing documents, many of the

alleged recipients (including everybody outside Spain, and any possible scientist), and even both photographers of the San Jose Valderas case. It seems that several of the precedent roles (if not all) had been played by the same person or persons.

Among the extras, first mention must fall on the original members of the Friends of Space Visitors Society, each one with his own peculiarities: 'Professor' Sesma, the carismatic leader; Mr. Villagrasa, a civilian construction engineer who was to receive the most technical papers; Mr. Garrido, a police officer who became a convert when his son's health (in desperate need of a cardiac operation) was improved enough to allow for it, thanks to the Ummites and their "microscopic UFOs"; Miss Araujo, a young lady employed in the American Embassy (providing the unavoidable CIA-connection, so useful), etc. Around them more and more spectators and jokers, as the events developed.

And so, the story began.

During 1965 Sesma obtained great popularity all over Spain with his disclosures about the utopian Auco society, a real Eden in the heavens. His weekly gatherings in the basement of a pub called "La Ballena Alegre" (The Joyful Whale) became a fashionable meeting point for all the most peculiar characters in Madrid. The temptation was unsurmountable.

On January 1966, 'Professor' Sesma received several phone calls, followed by an emissary that showed him surprising tridimensional cards (very similar to Japanese ones, then unknown in Spain, as Sesma himself admitted several years later) to convince him of their extraterrestrial origin, carrying them away afterwards. These were followed by tens of pages describing their home planet, their civilization, etc. etc. Each and everyone of them was read aloud by Sesma to his acolytes, along with the messages from Saliano and other personal experiences, as raw material for the continuous brainstorming of the group. But the Ummo papers did not look like just another piece of moonshine. Their principal attraction, a very skilled work, was their non proselytizing, non mesianic aspects plus their strongly rational philosophy. Besides, their authors insisted on not to be believed and to keep all the situation under secret.

Nevertheless, at the same time that they proclaimed "Do not believe us", a masterful psychological strike came from the skies. On February 6th, 1966 at 20.00 p.m., a UFO flew over an astonished witness who was driving home, Mr. Jordán Peña, and landed for a few

seconds in the outskirts of Madrid, leaving some physical traces, whose photographs became front page in several newspapers. To establish an inescapable link between both sets of events, the UFO displayed upon its belly the same emblem used to "authenticate" the Ummo documents: it very much resembled the alchemical symbol for Uranus. Besides, the Ummites themselves confirmed the sighting, apparently a few hours before made public.

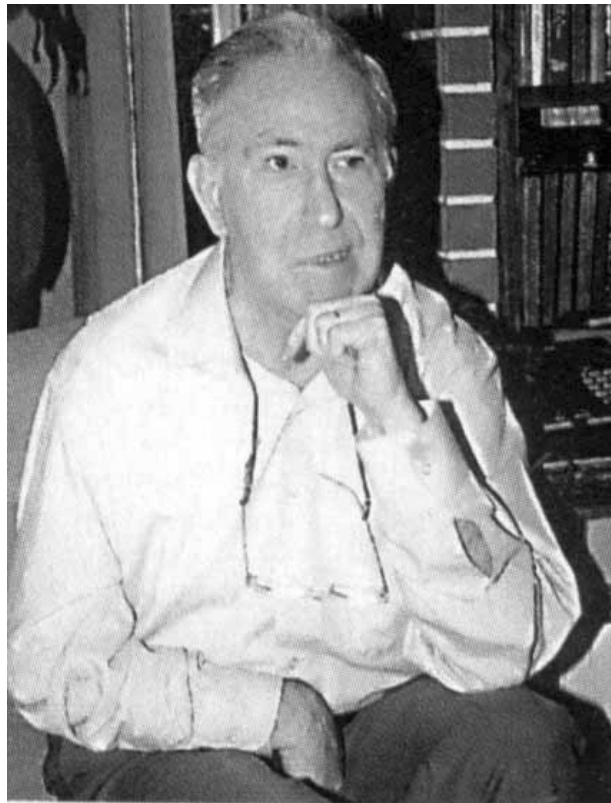
With the passage of time, Mr. Jordán Peña, has reached the uncomfortable status of being the only ¿credible? and identified witness in a close encounter with a Ummo spaceship (there were some journalist's comments about additional ones, but none have been found since then). No wonder then, the curiosity that his life and adventures has created among the investigators.

Thanks to the persistent efforts of many ufologists it has been possible to bring into light several pieces (¿coincidences?) that surely bear relevance in all the affair:

Around 1955 Mr. Peña was living in Alicante (a town at only 100 miles from Albacete, where in 1954 took place a macabre incident that caused a great stir in the area, and later the Ummites will credit to themselves) and studying many esoteric and spiritualist groups. He read at length about Cultural Anthropology, Philosophy, and History of Religions, among many other subjects. He learned several languages and subscribed to Nature and other international scientific magazines, back in 1965 at least. His investigations introduced him to the frauds of mediums and prompted him to initiate into conjuring and sleight of hand. He describes himself as an agnostic (rejecting his Catholic upbringing) and a sceptic (despite being a declared opponent to all the Paranormal, he did believe in Telepathy up to the 70's) but he was one of the founders of the Spanish Parapsychology Society, where he has been Vice-chairman for many years. Mr. Peña obtained a degree as Telecommunications technician, but prefer to introduce himself as a psychologist. In fact, at the time of the sighting, he was working at the Personnel Department in one of the

biggest Spanish building societies (Agroman).

This short summary offers you just a very limited glance over such an amazing personality. Let me add a final touch. Mr. Peña himself denies the extraterrestrial origin of the craft he saw !. He maintains that it was some kind of experimental aircraft developed by the Americans and deployed in Spain thanks to the collaboration of Franco's regime. And the 'Ummo affair' would be a psico-sociological experiment masterminded by the CIA. In any case, unexpectedly, he joined Sesma's group, (at first, without revealing that he was the witness of Aluche), and quite soon reached its leadership.



José Luis Jordán Peña

The flow of documents was continuous. After the first bunch about the daily life in Ummo, there followed all kind of digressions about

Philosophy, Sociology and Religion (in Ummo and Earth), even featuring the most appealing coincidence for a Catholic reader: the life and teachings of UMMOWOA, a religious founder, whose body dissappeared from the table where he had just been vivisected, as ordered by an ancient bloodthirsty Empress. In spite of all these proofs, Sesma gradually became dissatisfied with the Ummites, they were too much rational (they do not even know about the so called Liberal Arts) for his liking. It was a mutual refusal, because on the other side, the Ummites became obsessed with the minutiae: they said to be monitoring every meeting, and asked for silence among the audience and a raised voice during readings to allow for a perfect recording. They always complained to Sesma for mixing their messages with those of Saliano and others, up to the point that several times they cut the supply as a punishment.

In what can be seen as a final attempt to convince Sesma, the typist himself wrote to him, confirming everything. All the emotional overtones lacking in the arid paragraphs dictated by the Ummites, can now freely flow. Despite his anonimity (hopefully only a temporal measure), at least there was a human being who actually met and worked with them. So, we got the first description

of these alien beings: completely humanoid, tall and fair, with blonde hair. Angelic, but also with a sinister side: as they communicate through telepathy (of course !) their vocal chords become atrophied, so in Earth they must use an artificial larynx, that gives them a very peculiar voice without inflexions. The copyst was oppressed by the whole extraordinary adventure in which he found himself caught up, and his letter released a mixture of fear and ingenuity that appealed to our most basic emotions. To leave no stone unturned, he also included a final surrealistic touch: the Ummites were Accounting experts !.

With the arrival of the summer holidays of 1966, the contact is interrupted during several months, except for the occasional letter to keep the ashes burning. Maybe the Ummites needed time to evaluate their activities and plan and prepare further developments. At the beginning of 1967 they stroke again, with renewed strength, in an encircling movement:

On one side, there appeared another anonymous correspondent purporting to be a certain professor, the holder of a chair in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Madrid. His only letter described how he received (on loan) a little piece of apparatus that convinced him of their extraterrestrial origin, as he saw in a tridimensional screen a histological specimen, greatly enlarged, in colour, and alive. He recorded (and kept) a colour film of all the operation. He ended his letter proposing to all the recipients a gathering, to coordinate their actions and, should it be considered necessary, inform the Spanish authorities... The plot thickens !

On the other hand, there really was a qualitative leap ahead. Deserting Sesma, the Ummites turned to some of his followers (Villagrasa, Araujo, Garrido, etc.) with a real barrage of pseudo-technical papers, trying to knock them out into definite faith.

First, the exclusive report about his arrival to our planet (written with their characteristic irrelevant minuteness): "At 04 hours 17 minutes 03 seconds GMT on the terrestrial day of March 28, 1950, an OAWOLEA UEWA OEM (lenticular-shaped spaceship) established contact for the first time in History with the lithosphere of EARTH (...) at a place some 8000 metres distant from the town of La Javie, Department des Basses Alpes, (France)". This long story (49 pages) is a masterful piece of work. The reader is absolutely touched when the expeditionary group made their first transcendental discovery: "some fragments of white-yellowed, flexible and brittle sheets... full of characters... and stained with feces" whom they attributed ritual meanings.

It is really too much that the first document preserved for the galactic posterity turned out to be some pages of the French newspaper "Le Figaro" used as toilet paper by a peasant. After several initial blunders, the Ummites adapted so well to the human culture that in the following months they committed "nineteen acts of transgression against private property"... naturally, to be returned "as soon as they were able to obtain money without robbery". To keep closely to their role as scientists, transgression means to anaesthetize the inhabitants of a house, and besides taking an assorted group of objects, "to undress the humans and take samples of hair, nasal and vulvar mucus, etc."

Second, a very peculiar group of documents about Spiritism and Parapsychology, describing, among others things, a supposed Ummite expedition to India in order to investigate, with their advanced technology, the 'miracles' of the fakirs. Naturally, they discovered the hoaxes and disclosed to their readers the tricks employed. In short, a strong sceptical commentary on the Paranormal, from people who assure to be born-telepaths !.

And finally, the long-delayed answers to anybody's questions: 1) How they make the journey here?, and 2) Why they are so similar to us?. These papers form the real core of the myth, what sets up the difference with any other contactee tale. Unfortunately, in spite of all the favourable publicity around them, from Antonio Ribera in 1979 to Jean-Pierre Petit in 1992, they are just pseudoscientific jargon at its best. I will give you a very rough and incomplete summary, just to let you know the flavour of them.

1) To explain their easy crossing of the huge interstellar distances, the Ummites employed a multistaged strategy:

a) There are an infinity of paired Universes (matter and antimatter) that interplay between them, creating certain space-warps which, when the isodynamic circumstances are right, became a kind of "short-cut" (for instance, a voyage to the stellar system UYI ABEE, located at 9165 light-years from Ummo, only took 40078427,56 thousandths of UIW (86,06 terrestrial days)) . Unfortunately these disturbances are unpredictable except within a very short time, a useful way out of any inconvenient appointment

b) Usually, these short-cuts are not enough, so they need additional help: luckily, each Cosmos has "at least, ten dimensions", fully-interchangeable, and with the suitable property that in each new tri-dimensional

space, the speed of light should adopt any value between zero and infinity

c) Now, there only remains the “simple” problem of performing such a dimensional change. At a time (the sixties) when the earth physicists were confused with the endless discovery of subatomic particles, the Ummites introduced (in 68 pages and a few formulas) the IBOZOO UU, defined as an elemental (and immaterial) entity composed of orthogonal axes. According to the manner in which these axes are orientated, we see the production of matter, energy, space, and even time.

Now everything is clear. You take a spaceship and its crew (just some zillions of IBOZOO UUs), reverse each and every one of their axes with absolutely accuracy, go into the suitable dimensional frame, and once in the desired destination (through non-disclosed means of propulsion), you undo the reversing without missing a single atom, with the bonus of recovering all the energy wasted before. Voilà !.

The real problem, so well hidden by the Ummites behind such an exhibition of pseudoscientific pyrotechnics, and never answered, is that, if they themselves admitted the impossibility of accelerations “above 24500 GAL”, even an interplanetary shortened distance needs too much time to go through.

2) To explain their incredible resemblance with us, the Ummites appeal to their pompous “Biogenetic bases of the living beings that inhabit the Cosmos” (29 pages). In a shared trait with their human counterparts, they began by denying random Evolution with childish and trite arguments, to be replaced by a previous information about ALL possible living beings in the Cosmos, coded into 86 pairs of Krypton atoms (they have a real fixation with the noble gases) “in mysterious resonance” and located in every germinal cell of the Universe (as they confirmed in terrestrial samples) that will express itself according to the environment. More precisely, “each change of an electron in a suborbital layer codifies one of the possible animals”. Confronted with an exponential branching, they pulled out of their hat a useful teleological convergence that will bring them together into the Man (ummite or terrestrial), explaining our mutual likeness. Not satisfied, they maintain that the range opens again afterwards, to come together in some future and final Superman.

If all this is already quite difficult to swallow, what can we say about the working procedures. They are absurd and lacking any logic, even wrapped with an accuracy

and terminology pretently scientific. The long range mutations are connected with a cosmic cycle of 877,533 years, imposed by the electromagnetic emissions from the galaxies in the 21'106 cm. frequency, recorded into the cell's water and assembled through several generations, due to their short span of life !.

On the other hand, the short range mutations acted through a chemical way. For instance, those wonderful camouflage adaptations will simply develop “as the luminous stimulus from the surrounding colouration fall into the nervous system of the animal, they will originate a series of biochemical alterations in the most external layers of the oxygen atoms that form the intracytoplasmatic water molecules, their electrons will vibrate and then disappear after emitting gravitational waves affecting the corresponding krypton atom, which will react as required”. No comments.

These detailed revelations seemed to point at some immediate confrontation. The dramatic tension was mounting. As well as the real one surrounding the Middle East. Then, another ‘coup de théâtre’. The “gentlemen from UMMO” learned all about the proposed meeting and prohibited it. Therefore, the professor never revealed himself, and over the following months the believers were very busy trying to ascertain his identity, without real success.

What God takes off, God returns. On the last day of May, 1967, about forty people present at the usual gathering of ‘Professor’ Sesma were read the announcement of the forthcoming arrival of three UMMO spaceships next day ! (one in Bolivia, one in Brazil, and the third, in none other place than Madrid). Unfortunately, even though they organized several reconnaissance parties, none was able to meet the spaceship as it allegedly performed evolutions in the sky over the Madrid suburban estate of San Jose Valderas and landed briefly nearby, at 20.20 hours of the day in question. But they will not be disappointed, one amateur photographer had immortalized the sighting with his camera, had contacted the same journalist that covered the Aluche case, and had graciously departed with some of his negatives for free, keeping his anonymity. The photos hit the front page and did not leave the slightest doubt.

Surely, this incident was intended to be the final point of the affair. Another summer was approaching, no better time to enjoy well deserved holidays. Few days later there exploded the Six Days's War between Israel and the Arabs, which provided a timely alibi for their departure

and the cessation of the correspondence. Discharging ballast, the followers received a sale package, with papers about Law, Astronomy, etc. plus a personal letter from the anonymous typist, confirming their flight without date of return (and so did he, talking about leaving his old address and travelling abroad, to dampen any future search). R.I.P.

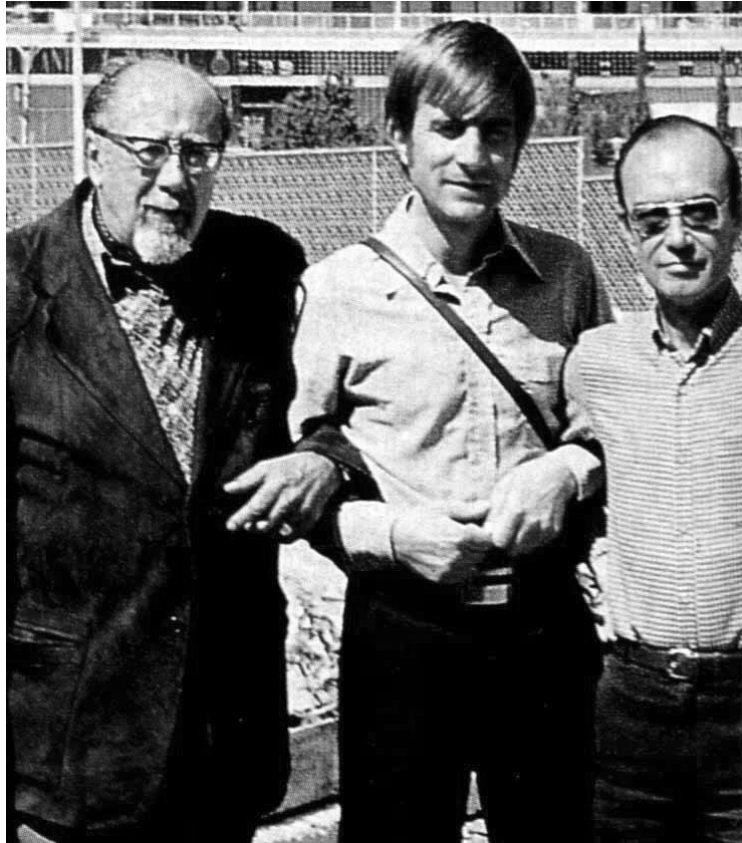
As in any second rate SF plot, the Ummites did not count on the human element. Up to then all the UMMO affair had limited itself to a small group of believers that did not show a high level of scepticism. But now, armed with those definitive proofs, it was decided to engage professional help. They decided to contact an ufologist: Marius Lleget. The situation suddenly opened to a whole new level of interest and challenge. It called for reinforcements and a very careful and close handling.

Out of thin air materialized "Antonio Pardo", a second anonymous photographer of the San Jose Valderas UFO. In a beautiful stroke of synchronicity, he wrote Mr. Lleget before the Madrid's group, enclosing new negatives, a detailed report of his own "in situ" investigation, and to cap it all: an extraterrestrial artifact !. It was a semi-destroyed capsule that contained a piece of green plastic engraved with the Ummo symbol.

Mr. Lleget rightly refused to get involved, and passed this greek present to his friend Antonio Ribera, the most prestigious Spanish ufologist of the time. Fortunately, he was some kind of "arm-chair ufologist", a SF writer and translator who obtained his fame rehashing foreign UFO books but seems to have never been involved in a personal direct investigation. In this case, the field-work was left to his valued friend Rafael Farriols, who over the years, will become the leading specialist in Ummo, up to the point of founding some companies with Ummo trade-names and securing all the documents received since then. As they lived in Barcelona, their man in Madrid was.... ¿anybody

guess?... Mr. Peña. Thanks to his praiseworthy efforts were located several witnesses. Most of them could only give circumstantial evidence after severe prompting, but those who allegedly witnessed the UFO always insisted to remain unnamed. It must be something contagious.

With the Ummites safely far away, the work of keeping alive the myth was an easy and not-demanding one for the typist. Only a letter from time to time, delivered to members of the Madrid group, full of trails to be followed all over Madrid by their eager recipients. Mr. Peña also received a couple of letters, but of a different nature. They are the only ones (allegedly written by members of an equivalent French group) that acknowledged the distribution of Ummo documents outside Spain. As usual, it had been impossible to confirm them, despite the fact that they provided a postal address and a reward for any other capsule they obtained.



From left to right: Antonio Ribera, the contactee José Luis Grifol and Rafael Farriols

In due time, Mr. Ribera and Mr. Farriols published a book with their conclusions, whose title tells it all: A perfect case. Inside they included an analysis of the device: the capsule itself was made of nickel of a very high purity and the plastic material was polyvinyl fluoride. At the time of the events, this material was made exclusively by du Pont de Nemours in the USA, under the brand name of TEDLAR. They pointed to "some NASA and military applications", but its main use was in the building industry. They also invented another acronym (VED) (Extraterrestrial Manned Vehicle) and the typist obliged. In what will be his last apparition in scene (excluding a much posterior letter in 1973) he enclosed a long report (60 pages and many drawings) about the UMMO VEDs that nevertheless managed to tell us nothing useful and testable about them. It is surprising that people who claim to use gravitational waves for everything, including cooking, had to resort to spinning their small spaceships in order to obtain an artificial gravity !

It was Summer 1968. The UFOs had already become acceptable in the Spanish media. Films like '2001' and 'Planet of the Apes' attracted crowds. Weekly on TV appeared "The Invaders". Everywhere in Spain it was taking place the first and biggest UFO flap of our history. So it surprised nobody when the typist added that THEY had returned. But the holidays passed without any notice from them.

Finally, in September the Ummites sent a letter of introduction to the new friend, Antonio Ribera, from Paris. The show continues. But as fate would have it, on September 17th, 1968 an indiscretion of Father Enrique Lopez Guerrero, disclosed the affair to the public making headlines all over the world with sentences like "thousands of years ago, Jesucrist incarnated as a slave in the planet Ummo, suffering prosecution and death". Shocked, the contact was suddenly interrupted. It was not never to be the same again.

It restarted in 1969 but only with very short papers (4 or 5 pages each), exclusively addressed to Mr. Ribera and quite superficial, nothing with the depth that they used to show. They also wrote to another contactee of the time, Sinod (who maintained telepathic contact with an extraterrestrial named Atienza, from the planet Uln, descendant of a Spanish conqueror abducted in Argentina in 1650) in order to arrange a meeting. Small Universe, indeed !. Maybe they did not arouse the reactions they wanted because the contacts became less and less frequent and soon stopped.

In January 1970 Mr. Jordán Peña deserted Sesma and created his own group, ERIDANI. The Ummites followed him, in what can be seen as a return to the origins, and involved themselves strongly in the activities of this group, but he, the president, never received their written attentions. Their correspondence became paranoid, advising about the maleficent intervention of secret services like the CIA, tapped calls, infiltrates, etc. etc. On the other hand, they also offered guidance for proselytizing new members and useful tips to gain the control of the group. All this culminated in November 1973 with a real thriller, as they predicted a shortly nuclear war because of the situation in the Middle East, announced their definitive departure, and in a final stroke of sentimentalism offered their own nuclear refuge for the salvation of their flock. Our old acquaintance, the typist, was the trustee of the code to the refuge's coordinates. Unfortunately we will never know them, specially now that the Cold War is finished.

And this is the situation that remains up to date. An age-decimated group of believers meeting periodically,

usually under the benevolent leadership of Mr. Peña and Mr. Farriols. At first (in 1971 and 1973) there were quite a happening: limited Simposiums only for the connoisseurs (but, even so infiltrated by the Ummites, as they revealed afterwards) to discuss and analyze the sacred texts. But after Ribera revealed to the world in 1974 (first in the FSR and later with 3 complete books) the contents and peculiarities of the ummite papers, the UMMO affair has become a myth-in-the-making. The Ummo symbol is described in Denmark, USA, Poland and last, but not least, in Voronezh. It is an established alien trademark. Anybody can borrow their cloak, from dangerous child-abusers (Edelweiss sect in Spain) to Fundamentalism Christians looking for additional help defending the Turin Shroud.

Now that you have a bare summary of this complex situation, I should defend my thesis. I maintain that all began as some kind of joke that later got out of hand. The best evidence is the fact that *all* the quantitative data included in the very first document was (more or less subtly) *wrong*. Considering its galactic importance and the typical punctiliousness displayed by the Ummites, this is quite shocking, but true. They began by giving as the correct distance between Earth and Ummo 3,68502 light-years, identifying their star as Wolf 424. This distance was precisely which was calculated by its human discoverer in 1938 but, as it was already known in 1966, the correct distance was about 14,6 light-years.

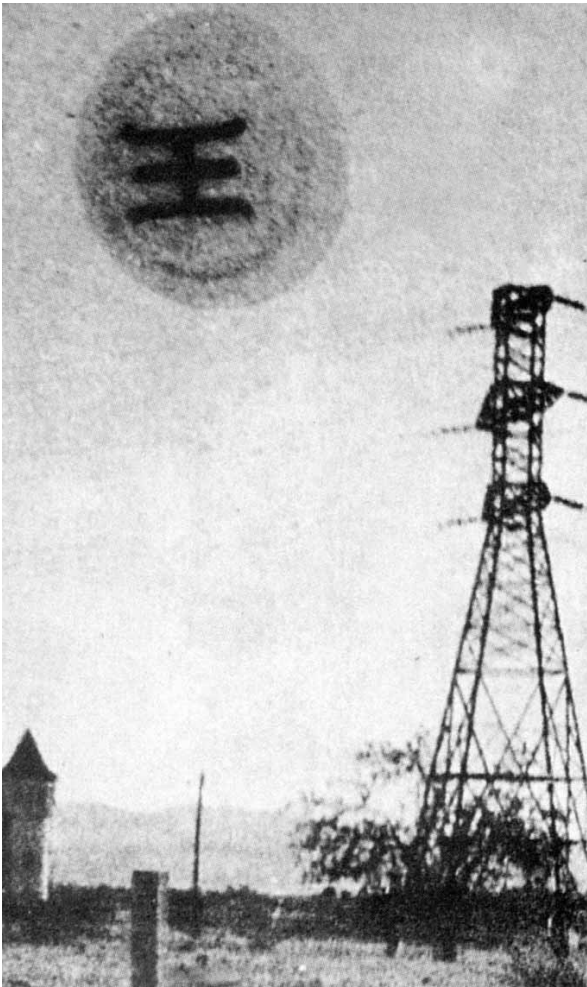
Afterwards they gave both radius of their planet (equatorial and polar), the second being longer than the first. Next, they estimated Ummo's mass in $5,4 \times 10^{21}$ tons, and its gravity acceleration in $11,88 \text{ km/sg}^2$. These measures are mutually incompatible.

The first inconsistency spotted was about the mass. The Ummites pleaded guilty of too much familiarity and explained that they should have used DUUOs instead of terrestrial tons ($1\text{DUUO} = 1,7333 \text{ Kg}$). The problem with distances offered a perfect excuse to attribute the smaller one to those wonderful isodynamic shortcuts. This procedure of claims, errors and counterclaims continued through all the correspondence.

When they wrote about their planetary system they referred to a second planet. Apparently nobody noticed that the meaning of "binary system" (Wolf 424 being one) is quite different !. As their sun (IUMA) has a spectral type M, with a low superficial temperature, coherency imposes that UMMO must circle very near it, but then its sydereal period (orbit's length) did not square. This time they appealed to their ancestors' "false conceptions", but even so it still miss

Kepler's Third Law by a ten per cent !

You must understand that it is not easy to point out errors against people who displayed a disgusting superiority, bordering on the most hypocrite paternalism. This submission was reinforced by planting careful traps. For instance, when they insisted that the visual apparent magnitude of IUMA was lower than its absolute magnitude. Or when they wrote: "weigh two masses in a steelyard, one kg. of straw and one kg. of iron,...you will see how the pointer leans to the iron". Or when they explained how to prepare krypton compounds, apparently unknown in Earth. Many sceptics laughed then, but the Ummites laughed last !



One of the photographs of the "Ummo ship" allegedly seen in San José de Valderas.

In short, so many (false or true) errors and inconsistencies cannot be casual or due to lack of knowledge. They must have been deliberately included.

Let me finally present the UMMO affair, summed up in its appropriate dimensions:

Duration: a little more of a year (from February 1966 to July 1967), plus another outburst at the beginning

of 1969. From then onwards, never more than occasional contacts. Space: limited to Spain, despite the headings of some documents suggesting translations to languages as non-existent as "slav-czech".

Volume: Around 1000 known pages corresponding to 150 different shipments, even though they themselves said to have prepared "more than 6700 reports"!

Contents: A third of the known material (330 pages) is just pure gossip, 269 pages referred to various philosophical considerations, around 178 pages gave some raw data (usually impossible to verify) and only 144 pages contained valuable information, already commented.

Quality: The papers never offered nothing really novel. For example, the cosmological theories could be derived from the works of Eddington and other material easily obtained in scientific journals of the time (like *Nature* and *Science&Vie*). Without a doubt the author was familiar with foreign material (the Ummites made references to the works of Halton Arp (sic), and also extracted from books by Martin Gardner *The Ambidextrous Universe* and Asimov (*The Noble Gases*). But with the hindsight of the 27 years passed, the contents look very naïve, and the real mystery is why so many people had believed in them for so long.

Special mention deserved those so called "ummologists". Nowadays any religion or sect cannot rely only in Faith, it needs some middlemen who will analyze his 'sacred texts' (the Bible, the Urantia book, etc.) and provide the followers with final proofs of their veracity, from the authority not of God but of its secular counterpart, Science. So pseudosciences like "scientific creationism" or "TM science" are born. It is also true that you can always find an expert to support your pet belief. In short, the UMMO papers had been a peculiar kind of Roscharch test, each one had found what he was looking for: Father Guerrero elaborated from them his own "Cristocentric thesis of the Universe" (in a 618-pages book); Jean-Pierre Petit (a French physicist long interested in Ummo), after studying hard for several months the Theory of Relativity, assures that "nothing demands that the speed of light should remain constant" (7). Many people had been trapped in this vicious circle. They come across some hint, develop their own ideas around it, and in a final feedback, credit them to the Ummites, reinforcing their admiration towards "their high scientific level".

Even the sceptics (and there were a lot of them since the very beginning) had been mystified. In a ironic letter that clearly betrays their terrestrial origin, the Ummites

themselves summarized many of the conspiracy theories that proliferated. From the Opus Dei to the Rosacrucians passing through the CIA, the KGB and the Punch !. I have already said that Mr. Peña prefers a CIA-connection. In France it has just appeared *L'affaire Ummo: les extraterrestres qui venaient du frois*, by Renaud Marhic, insisting in a KGB-connection.

In Spain, Carles Berché champions a “shared-paranoia” (8). Make your choice.

Mine is a radical use of the Occam’s razor. The Ummo affair is just an unipersonal endeavour. The author surely enrolled some accomplices to forge traces and photos, and he also got the unexpected help of many others freelance hoaxers, but neither more people nor a secret agenda are needed. Hoaxing is fun, and funnier if you mix with your victims and enjoy their doubts, their emotions, their naïvete, and even become their master, pulling the threads of your puppets at will. Besides there is always the thrill of being uncovered. I will not even deceive myself by appealing to higher rational motivations like a sociological study or similar, as I suspect that the author himself did. But who was he?.

Such a good mystery story cannot end without naming the culprit. As it can never be proved, even with a confession now lacking, I can only offer my firm belief (shared with many other ufologists) that UMMO’s creator was Mr. Jordan Peña. We do not have any smoking gun but the circumstantial evidences are overpowering although controversial. To me, it does not matter, he had offered us a marvelous opportunity to follow the making of a myth.

NOTES

(1) Compiled in *Flying Saucers*, 1982, Isaac Asimov, Martin H. Greenberg & Charles G.

Waugh Eds.

(2) *MAGONIA* 23, “Flying Saucers from Moore’s?”, Christopher Allan & Steuart Campbell.

(3) *MAGONIA* 43, “Book Reviews: Jacques Vallee’s Revelations.” Peter Rogerson.

(4) Jacques Vallee, *The Invisible Colleague*, p.112 (British paperback edition).

(5) Robert Charroux, *Le livre des secrets trahis*, 1964.

(6) Eileen Buckle, *The Scoriton Mystery*, 1967.

(7) Jean-Pierre Petit, *Enquete sur des extra-terrestres*, 1991.

(8) *CUADERNOS DE UFOLOGIA*, nº 3, 1988, Carles Berché Cruz, “Ummo, 20 años de paranoia compartida”.

Update

Ummo: The Never-Ending Story

Luis R. González Manso. 1994

Under this heading has just appeared in Spain a special double-issue of “Cuadernos de Ufología” (1) devoting 115 pages to the conscientious demolition of the Ummo hoax. Any reader of my previous article (2) will surely appreciate the new data.

First at all, you must know that the author of Ummo affair has already confessed. Mr. Jordán Peña, the main suspect, finally acknowledged his authorship through a very peculiar public confession in September 1993. More about it later.

Despite this revelation (or even, because of it) an exhaustive examination of the Ummo hoax and its worldwide influence was indeed lacking. Now the collective work of several ufologists from Spain, Argentina and Russia, offers an excellent beginning.

The main article (42 pages) “Ummoquake: the threads of an affair” by J.J. Montejo and Carles Berché, is a masterpiece in detective work, the volume of pieces of evidence uncovered and fitted is overwhelming. Their main triumphs are:

a) To locate and obtain the confession of one Mr. Peña’s early collaborator, who acted as an “independent” witness in the Aluche case, that launched the affair.

b) To provide a detailed personal, social and ufological background about the affair that helps the reader to understand the development of the myth, exploring several revealing anecdotes.

c) To properly delimit the real dimensions of the material: “during its most prolific stage the Ummo correspondence did not even reach 500 pages in a year and a half, an average of less than a page daily”.

d) In spite of the fact that it was Mr. Peña himself who first “located” and interviewed almost all the peripheral witnesses of San Jose Valderas UFO, the authors maintain a more complex explanation for this famous photographic case: besides faking the pictures, Peña and company would had also staged a false UFO with a balloon (something similar was done a few months before in Italy) to provide for some “bona fide” witnesses.

e) Using modern computerized picture-analysis, Carles Berché found another hanging thread in one of the Valderas photos (not the same discovered in 1977 by the GSW). On the other hand, according to the Ummo grapevine (as collected in UMMOCAT, a fascinating catalogue with more than 3.300 entries -and counting-, developed by Ignacio Darnaude Rojas-Marcos), Antonio Ribera has funded another computerized analysis that did not find any threads. Who lies?

f) The authors paid a long-awaited tribute to Oscar Rey Brea, the first Spanish ufologist who criticized the Ummo photographs (3). Already in 1970, corresponding with Antonio Ribera, he pointed to several of the flagrant mistakes that others have brandished later.

g) Also included is a detailed exposition of the terrestrial precedents for several of the apparently original and controversial ummite ideas, including science-fiction and fantasy (among them a beautiful story by Jorge Luis Borges "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" written in 1940).

h) A final chapter is devoted to the confession of Jordán Peña and the curious circumstances surrounding it.

On April 2nd, 1993 the ummites wrote from Cuba suggesting Mr. Rafael Farriols (the main archivist of the Ummo followers) to question Mr. Peña about the affair. In response, few days later, Peña sent a long and abstruse letter confessing his authorship but without any explanation. At the same time, he prepared for the Spanish skeptical magazine "La Alternativa Racional" (The Rational Alternative) a shortened version of his letter (4). He described the affair as a sociometric experiment to verify his pet theory "The Anubis syndrome", a strange case of paranoia afflicting 80% of humankind (himself included) into believing the Paranormal; and without any more evidence, spent the bulk of the article attacking all the ufologists who had accused him along the years.

All this was apparently forced by the unexpected revelations of two women who were supposedly brainwashed years ago by Jordán Peña (acting as a gnostic guru). He even faked a poltergeist to keep them frightened!. These accusations forced his resignation as Vice-president of the Spanish Society of Parapsychology.

As I predicted in my article, nobody believed him.

Sceptics because he gave no data about this purported sociometric experiment; and believers because... "you are following orders of higher rank". Ignacio Darnaude (5) summarize the believers' objections: "You has not explained (...) how a person at the backstage enjoyed the implausible capacity to invent for two long decades, the cumbersome (...) Ummo epistolary, an almost superhuman feat demanding, piled onto a single person, the brain of Einstein, the vast encyclopedic culture of Asimov, Aldous Huxley and Jacques Bergier put together (...) plus the histrionic talent of Sarah Bernard and even the cynicism of Machiavelli".

Several more articles offered many valuable material for the sociologist.

"Buawaigaai Ayuyisaa 'Argentina' do ia Kaawaea Ummooemmi ia Oyagaa" (Ummite language for "Perception by the social network in Argentina about the arrival of Ummo men to Earth") by Alejandro C. Agostinelli offers a fascinating insight into the influences of the Ummo affair in Argentina (included feedback to Spain, as when Adalberto Ujvari, a blonde and tall argentinian ummologist, visited Albacete and became an ummite). Besides, it put Jacques Vallee's works (he devoted a chapter of his book Revelations to the Ummo connection in Argentina) in its proper value: none.

Boris Chourinov ironically demolished Renaud Marhic's theory about the KGB connection, explaining the Ummo sign described in Voronezh as contamination, when an ufologist showed the Valderas photo to one of the children (who was not even a witness).

I myself dissected the very first Ummo document, foundation stone for all the subsequent developments, and found it crumbling into nothing. Never such an important document (nothing less than the first piece of an interstellar communication!) was so full of errors.

The last paper, by Ignacio Darnaude Rojas-Marcos offers a detailed bibliography and a final anecdote, an alleged Ummo phone call received in November 9th, 1992 by the author. His account and commentaries opened us an involuntary window into the mind processes of a Ummo believer, revealing how nothing will change. It becomes the most appropriate ending to the monograph. As somebody said: "Those who believe without reason, cannot be convinced by reasoning".

UMMO is dead! Long live to UMMO!

NOTES

(1) CUADERNOS DE UFOLOGÍA, nº 16-17. 1994

• *Terremoto en Ummo: los hilos del montaje*. José Juan Montejo & Carles Berché. Pags: 26-65.

• *No perdamos el hilo... de San José de Valderas*. Carles Berché. Pags: 65-69.

• *Memorias de un ummologo que nunca lo fue*. José A. Cezón. Pags: 70-78.

• *Ummo: el derrumbe de un mito*. Luis R. González. Pags: 79-92.

• *Buawaigaai Ayuyisaa "Argentina" do ia Kaawaea Ummooemmi ia Oyagaa*. Alejandro C. Agostinelli. Pags: 93-115.

• *Ummo: ¿un castillo rojo en España?*. Renaud Marhic. Pags: 116-123.

• *Francia: hay ummo en tus ojos*. Alejandro C. Agostinelli. Pags: 124-125.

• *Los humoristas se afanan frente al asunto Ummo*. Boris Chourinov. Pags: 126-132.

• *Intercambio telefónico con un pretendido ummita*. Ignacio Darnaude Rojas-Marcos. Pags: 133-135.

• *Ummo. Bibliografía esencial*. Ignacio Darnaude Rojas-Marcos. Pags: 136-138.

(2) Luis R. González. *UMMO: The planet of the anonymous correspondents*. MAGONIA nº 47. Pags: 9-14.

(3) Óscar Rey Brea. *Algo sobre las fotografías del supuesto OVNI de San José de Valderas*. STENDEK nº 9. Agosto 1972. Pags: 5-11.

(4) José Luis Jordán Peña. *UMMO: otro mito que hace CRASH*. LA ALTERNATIVA RACIONAL. Verano 1993. Pags:7-9.

(5) CUADERNOS DE UFOLOGÍA nº 16-17, p. 57.