

НОВОСТИ УФОЛОГИИ

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Interview with Vicente Juan Ballester Olmos



Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos, born in Valencia (Spain), December 27, 1948. Emeritus Manager, Insurance, Labor Cost and Pensions, Ford Motor Company (1976-2005).

He is the author of 8 books and over 400 published reports and articles. His research bibliography can be found at:

<http://www.ikaros.org.es/bibliog1.pdf>

Presently, Mr. Ballester Olmos is working in the development of FOTOCAT, a worldwide catalogue of UFO photographs, films and videos, with 11,000+ entries. See his blog:

<http://fotocat.blogspot.com/>

1. How you first became interested in the UFO phenomenon?

In 1964, at the age of fourteen, I was reading “Our Neighbour Worlds”, an astronomy book by V.A. Firsoff and my attention was caught by a couple of lines in the page 147 of the Spanish edition mentioning that “several times strange objects have been detected in the space, which have not been satisfactorily recognized”. It excited my imagination and I decided to study the subject myself, in spite of my tender age. In 1968 I founded in my home town (Valencia) the first ever UFO society financed by a University college. In 1973 it was dissolved to shift to a research free of bureaucracy and my personal work on ufology has maintained an intense pace since then, developing contacts with all major UFO organizations and students internationally.

In spite of not having a formal education beyond a bachelor’s degree, I became a self-taught student of many sciences and the scientific method. It was followed by an intense professional life of 30 years in the finance community within a multinational company.

2. What mistakes mostly do, inexperienced researchers when they approach the study of the UFO phenomenon in a non-professional manner?

In my view, mistakes depend on the mental framework of the “investigator”, of his bias, his preconceptions, this is, his prior beliefs. After having studied the UFO phenomenon on a regular basis for 47+ years, I can state that we do not have a unique solution to the UFO enigma.

We can affirm that most events have conventional explanations, others cannot be properly analyzed because of lack of enough data, and finally we have the “residue” of unexplained, some 10% of all reports. UFO phenomena are quite diverse and patterns are not clear. Additionally, both UFOs and IFOs have similar statistical structures.

The problem with the approach to the study of UFOs, I insist, is in the preconceived ideas because you tend to adjust your “investigation” to your beliefs. But, as we still do not know what UFOs are, how can you jump to conclusions? Originally, UFOs (then called “flying saucers”) were thought to be interplanetary ships. Since 1947, no clear-cut, crystal evidence exists to support this. In fact, many classic cases have been solved. Governments are closing their UFO programs and release their archives to the citizens, because they found no proofs of menace or extraterrestrial origin.

On the other hand, indications point to a myth-in-the-making type of development in the UFO motifs and stories.

Having said that, the UFO phenomena require scientific investigation and it must be done by professionals, not by amateurs.

3. Tell us a little about the State program for the study of UFOs in Spain?

The Spanish Ministry of Defense had UFO files from 1962 to 1995; these were fully declassified between 1991 and 1999. I played a key role in this process by requesting first the release of archives and then by acting as a (free) consultant to the military Intelligence section which administered the declassification process.

Spain’s government do not invest resources in UFO investigation, as, like other countries, it was found out that UFOs do not represent any threat to national security.



Left to right - Col. A Bastida, V.J. Ballester Olmos and Lt. Col. E. Rocamora

4. Do you know any cases of radar tracking of UFOs and their simultaneous visual observation?

Out of 122 declassified UFO events by the Spanish Ministry of Defense, we find 29 cases associated to radar, as follows:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Unexplained</u>	<u>Explained</u>
Radar tracks	9 cases	4 cases	5 cases
Radar-visual	20 cases	7 cases	13 cases

Most of the radar detections are due to false or conventional echoes (18). For radar cases without visual support (radar tracks) the existence of many unsolved events (4 out of 9, 44%) is due to records with lack of data (book annotations with scarce, poor information to be analyzed). Regarding radar-visuals, most of the uncorrelated targets were explained, but 7 out of 20 (35%) are unexplained, therefore potential “best” examples of UFOs, worth of study.

5. Which cases were most numerous on the number of observers?

Here applies one of the rules or laws of Jenny Randles; when there are sightings with a massive number of witnesses, the probability is extremely high that these have a man-made or astronomical explanations, like research stratospheric balloons, artificial space-clouds, rocket reentries, meteor fireballs, missile launches, etc.

6. What you know, interesting cases UFO landing on the ground, with the scientific study of the landing?

I have devoted many years to collect and investigate UFO landing reports, in fact, three of my books are devoted to this specialty. In 1987 I published (jointly with J.A. Fernández Peris) the “Encyclopedia of the Close Encounters with UFOs”, where I provided detailed summaries for 230 landing reports in Spain and neighbor Portugal, plus a catalogue of 355 cases that were solved in the process.

The last phrase of this book read: “Do the UFO events hold specific attributes, in comparison with resolved events?” The investigation highlighted the entropy of the phenomenon, and the absence of singularities of UFO cases in regard to IFO cases.

There are many cases which present abnormal features: close encounters with alleged flying crafts, reports of humanoids, associated traces, etc. Let me describe one such case I have investigated first-hand.

At 11:30 am of July 25, 1979, a wealthy 54-year-old farmer of Turís, in Valencia, was driving to his fields when some 700 m before arriving, he saw a reflection he thought to be a car. About 3 minutes later, when he was about 50 m away, he saw what he first thought was a car parked in the middle of the trail. It was only when he was about 4 m from the object, which blocked his way, that he noticed that it was not an automobile. It had a “*half-egg*” shape, lacked wheels, and was resting on the ground on two “*feet*.” It was white in color, had a flat base, and dimensions of 2.5 m tall and wide. “*It was something metallic and very bright*”, the witness stated.

Amazed and still sitting inside his vehicle, he saw two identical beings come from a carob tree 11 m to his left. They were some 90 cm in height and they entered the object by the left side very quickly. They were seen just for 2 seconds. Suddenly, the object rose at great speed and disappeared in a few seconds. No sound was heard.

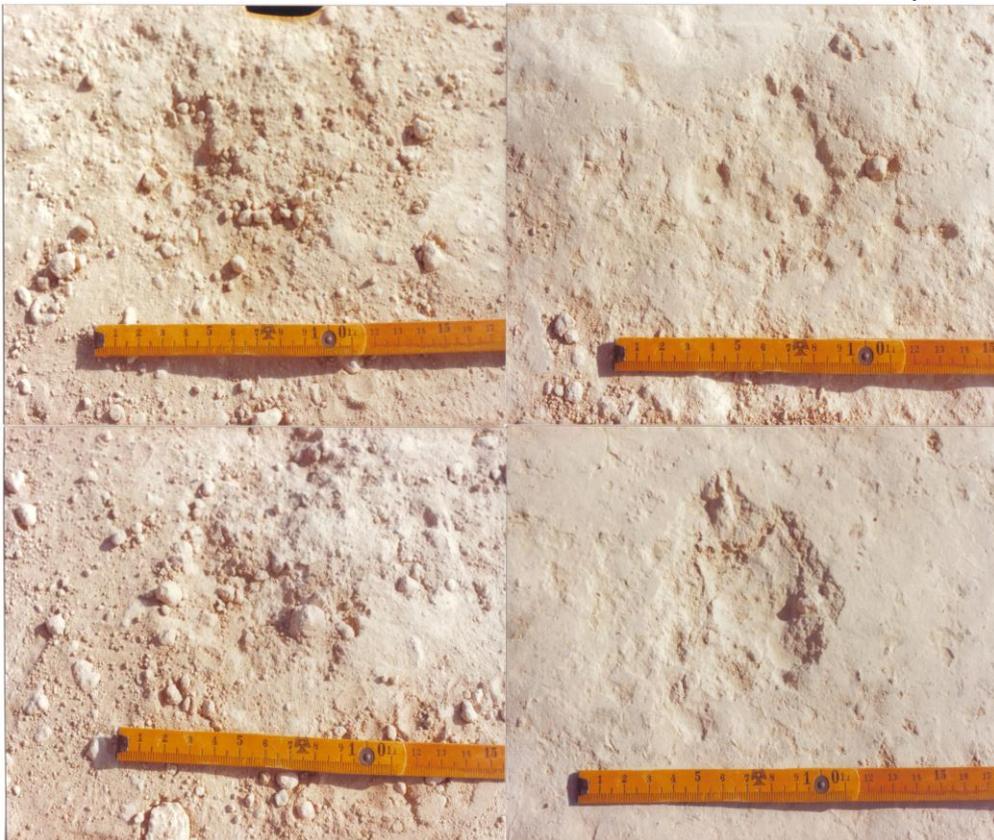


Turis, 1979 – Drawing of landing scene

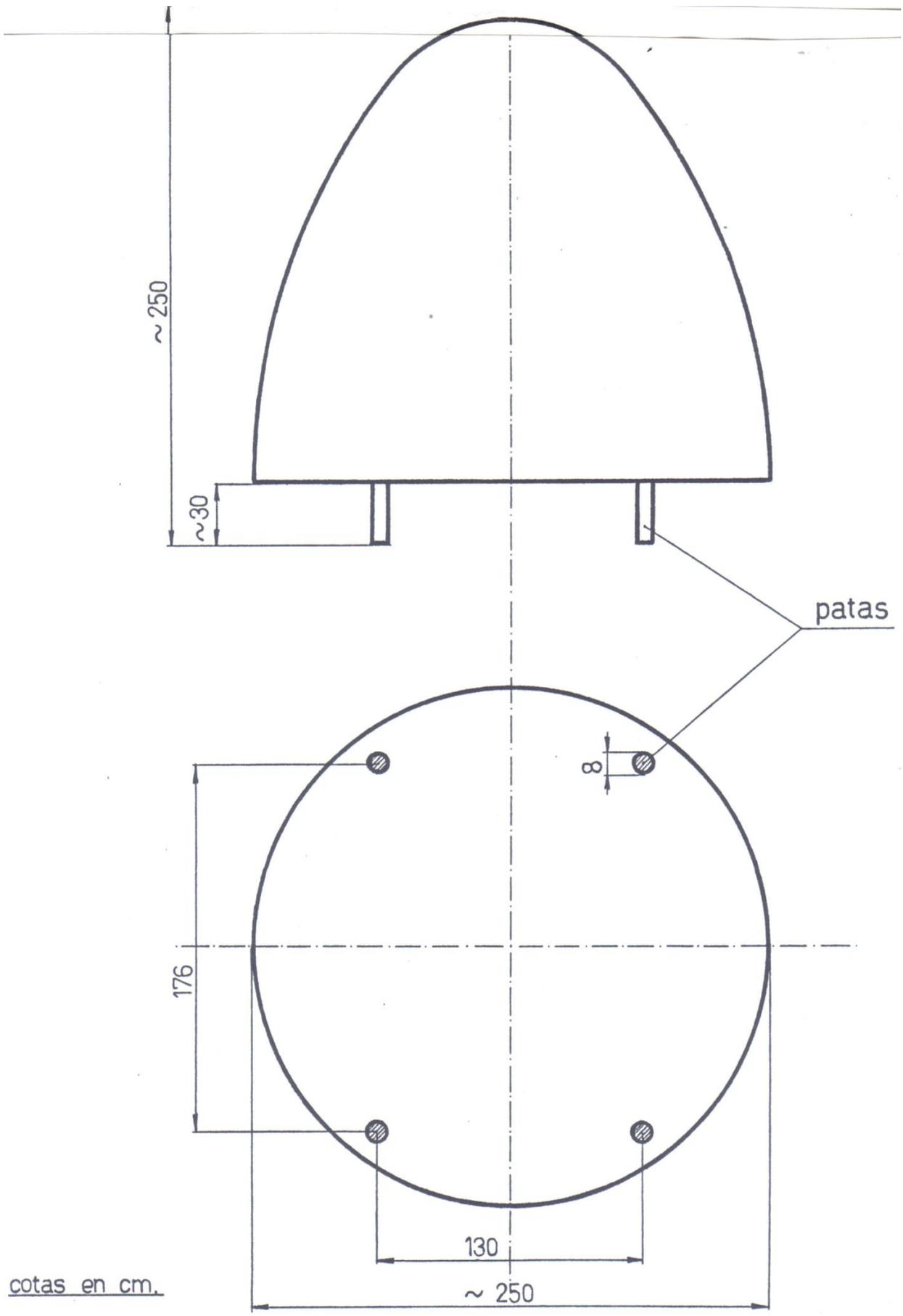
In the following days a complete on-the-spot investigation was done. I also visited the place and talked to the witness. During the investigation, 4 tracks in a 2 by 1 m rectangle were found in the landing place. Each one was a circle formed of eight spherical holes, which surrounded a central round hole. Using a manual device, a weight of 4 tons was roughly estimated.



Turis- 1979, witness, V.J. Ballester Olmos and Dr. M. Guasp



Turis – traces found



Turis - scheme of UFO landed

30 years later I revisited the area and the witness to find the same claim with the same energy from a person of 84 years of age. Was it a dream, a hallucination, something unreal? He denied it. He is convinced of what happened in front of his eyes. And he is convincing.



Turis-2008, witness and V.J. Ballester Olmos

Critique is not easy. It was said that the clothing of the beings resemble two characters of Stars Wars, but the movie culture of our man is extremely poor. This case is unique. This is precisely the problem with close encounters: it seems that each event is singular and different, as if it was the product of a personal mental construction. And this is a paradigm because it represents the hard core of the high-strangeness UFO phenomenon: whether the testimony of an alleged out-of-the-ordinary experience follows from a true physical reality or from an invention.

7. Tell us about your collaboration with Jacques Vallee, Aimé Michel and Allen Hynek?

They were my mentors, yes. In the early 1970s Dr. Jacques Vallée and I wrote two major papers on the study of landing reports in Spain and Portugal, published in the best journals of the epoch in several languages. Dr. Vallée wrote the forewords to some of my books as well. My correspondence with him started in 1969 to our days. I admire Vallée in his more “classic” scientific facets. Aimé Michel was a deep intellectual and an extraordinary thinker with whom I had many years of learning and fruitful exchange of letters. Dr. J. Allen Hynek was a reference scientist in the UFO business and a source of advice. I met them in France, Spain and England.



V.J. Ballester Olmos and (clockwise) Aime Michel, Dr Jacques Vallee, Dr. Richard Haines, and Dr. J. Allen Hynek

8. Which are now in the most important structure for the study of UFOs in Spain?

In Spain there are a few groups of amateurs interested in UFOs. Most of them are oriented to publish web sites or online journals, not doing actual research. Some use these publications to release their internal demons to attack their "enemies" (they act as provincials full of complexes). But most of ufologists are related to media (radio, TV or press), being in practice commercial propagandists, trying to make a living at the expense of the UFO mystery. There is also a gang of skeptics which successfully criticize what media-oriented writers or TV presenters publicize.

There are also a number of students who do a good job in the analysis of UFO events, and others acting as scientific consultants to some of us.

Formal UFO organizations which were large and very active in the 1960s-1990s currently are under minimum as far as activity is concerned or have vanished.

9. What are the main goals and objectives of FOTOCAT Project?

Since year 2000 I started a new project, FOTOCAT. The objective is to collect all known information produced about every single UFO report in the world where pictures, footage or digital media have been obtained. For this, a huge archive has been created. This working program also encourages the analysis of events. FOTOCAT attempts to become a reliable database for current and future students of UFO phenomena. It is a public service in the sense that it is meant to be provided to the research community in full and free when finished.

The actual catalogue is a computer-based databank, an Excel spreadsheet register containing 25 standard data columns., including date, time, description, location, national and regional codes, mode of image, codes for CE or ball lightning events, name of photographer, data for media professionals, full duration, and special features of the photograph. Finally, references and bibliography.

Currently, FOTOCAT has over 11,000 entries. In addition to the spreadsheet, there is a physical archive. It comprises some 200 chronological folders containing case information, including photographic prints, as well as 3,500 slides and a hard-drive file with some 50,000 digital images.

Generally, the catalogue ends on December 31, 2005. There is a double reason for that. I realized that the number of recent pictures was escalating as a function of the popularity of digital cameras, and a large proportion of incoming photographs were instances of digital artifacts (“orbs”, “rods”) and unseen bug or bird trails.

The actual catalogue is not yet available as it is unfinished. FOTOCAT Project, however, provides yearly or regional listings to researchers on demand. FOTOCAT is not an end in itself; it represents data storage for data exploitation and analysis. Theme, year, wave, or country reports are being produced and released online, in addition to minor review reports posted in the blog updates. To date, the project has already published 5 major papers in the FOTOCAT Report series dealing with the 1954 wave, the year 1965 in Argentina, sphere UFOs seen from airplanes, and cases in Norway and France. At this stage, there are several other papers in preparation.



Left to right- V.J. Ballester Olmos, Ole Jonny Braenne and Clas Svahn, London, September 2012

10. Your wishes for UFO researchers from the countries of the disappeared - the Soviet Union.

I have many colleagues and friends in Russia and Ukraine, mainly, that I do value a lot. I can keep good relationships with researchers with different viewpoints, the important issue is mutual respect. In particular, I find outstanding your own efforts in gathering documentation and requesting UFO files from the Academy of Sciences. I just wish that scientific method and an unbiased perspective are applied to the study of UFO phenomena.

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Questions by Igor Kalytyuk.