

The Great "Cross" above the Vatican

Alberto Perego

Translation and annotation by Gordon Creighton.

NOW that we have plenty of opportunity to see the ridiculous conclusions reached by the Condon Commission, I suggest that an opportune moment has come for us to consider what happened in the skies over Rome on Saturday and Sunday, November 6-7, 1954. For the occurrences of those days constitute a mass sighting of the very greatest importance, and yet one which is still totally unknown to many serious and eminent students of our subject, largely perhaps because my own Report on the matter at the time and my three books¹ were published in Italian (all now out of print) and have never been translated into English. And no reports of the phenomena of November 6 and 7 ever appeared in the Italian press.

Until August 1954, whenever I heard of stories of "Flying Saucers" I thought that these machines were secret aircraft developed by the Great Powers, and shared the common opinion of astronomers that any hypothesis as to the possibility of interplanetary aviation was quite absurd.

During August and September 1954 the Italian newspapers carried numerous reports of the massive UFO "visitation" over France, including accounts of many landings. Then, on September 17, a cigar-shaped object appeared and remained stationary for a few minutes over Rome, being seen by thousands of witnesses, and by October the "wave" had spilled over from France into Italy. For the one month of October 1954, the Italian press carried reports of no less than 200

sightings, and some 19 landings, all over or on Italian territory. And on November 11 the United Press said there had been 400 separate Italian UFO reports in the past 80 days.

In Rome itself thousands of eyewitnesses excitedly discussed what they had seen, or besieged the newspapers with their stories. By now, however, the newspapers were beginning to be bored with the whole subject, and finally many eyewitnesses began to think it better not to talk any more of what they had seen.

But the most startling developments were yet to come.

At 1.00 p.m. on October 30, as I was driving in my car past the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, I noticed a crowd of about a hundred people gazing up at the sky. I stopped, and looked up myself, and saw two small white dots moving in a southerly direction. Later I saw them vanish in opposite directions, and then they (or two others) reappeared and began moving northwards. My clear impression was that these objects were some kind of "aircraft," and flying at a height of about 2,000 metres. The phenomenon impressed me deeply, particularly the total absence of any noise from their engines. Was this, then, the "new kind of aircraft?" And, if so, whose were they, and why over Rome? The affair was duly reported in the Rome papers of the following day, October 31.

I come now to the far more spectacular happenings of November 6 and 7, which never received the least mention in the press.

A PIONEER ITALIAN UFO RESEARCHER

I have been hoping for some years that we might be able one day to devote some space to making known the remarkable role played by the Italian diplomat Dr. Alberto Perego in collecting and publishing so much material about these very important and very numerous Italian sightings and landings of the early 1950s. He has been one of the real pioneers, and it is interesting to note that in more recent years he has been at the Italian Consulate at Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil, and consequently in the best possible position for studying the extraordinary UFO happenings in South America.

Dr. Perego is today the Director of his Italian Centre for Electromagnetic Aviation (CISAER) at Viale Pasteur 46 in Rome.

I recently asked Signor Roberto Pinotti, Secretary of C.U.N., the new centralised Italian organisation for the study of the UFO problem (Centro Unico Nazionale Per Lo Studio Dei Fenomeni Ritenuti Di Natura Extraterrestre, 40100 Bologna, Casella Postale 796) whether he would kindly comment for me on Signor Perego's pioneer role and on the authenticity of the occurrence of the remarkable phenomenon of the "Cross" and the great UFO concentrations over Rome on November 6-7, 1954. He has replied assuring me that the matter is *entirely authentic*.

He adds that he differs from Dr. Perego only in not sharing some of the particular interpretations of UFO events at which the latter has arrived. For example, as his three books show clearly, Dr. Perego is inclined to see great significance in the occurrence of UFO phenomena on certain dates, and he is at pains to link it all with political and military happenings on our planet. He is inclined also to harbour far more idealistic views of the UFO occupants than are many of the rest of us and to be much more ready to accept "contactee" stories. Like many people, he does not seem to be willing to face squarely the solid evidence that exists that many of these beings, whatever they may be, and wherever they may be from, are certainly no friends of our species. He is inclined to believe that the appearances and demonstrations by UFOs are designed to influence the politics of terrestrial governments, and indeed some of our national leaders and politicians may be "contactees."—GORDON CREIGHTON.

At about 10.45 a.m. on November 6, I was in the Tuscolano district of Rome, when I again saw some of these "white dots." Many people around me had noticed them too. I went up on to the flat roof of a factory in order to get a better view of the sky and I stayed up there, with many other people, until 1.00 p.m., enthralled by what I do not hesitate to call the most stirring spectacle that I have ever seen in my life. I quote below from my notes made at the time:

November 6, 1954: Today, between 11.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m., the sky of Rome has been crossed by several dozens of flying machines travelling at a height of around 7,000 or 8,000 metres. They were moving at variable speeds, which at times seemed to be as high as 1,200 or 1,400 km. per hour.

The machines appeared like "white spots," sometimes with a short white trail. At first I calculated that there were about fifty of them, but later I realised that there

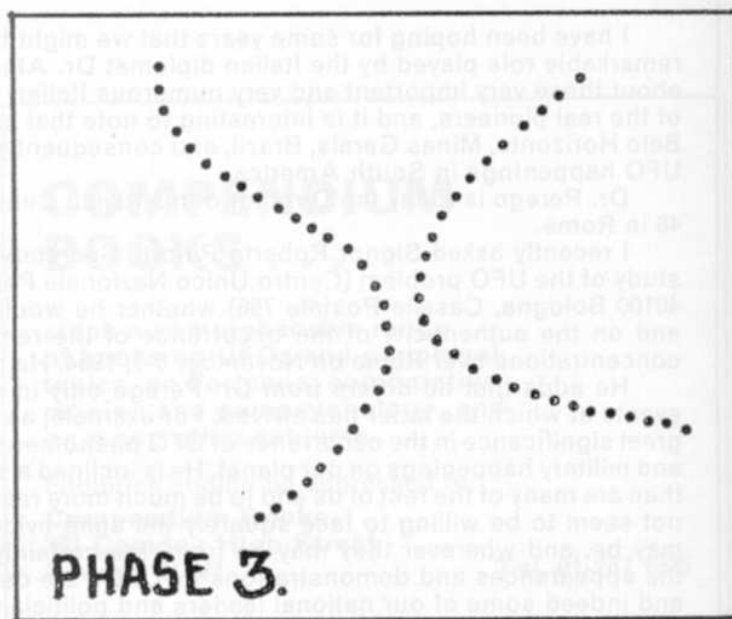
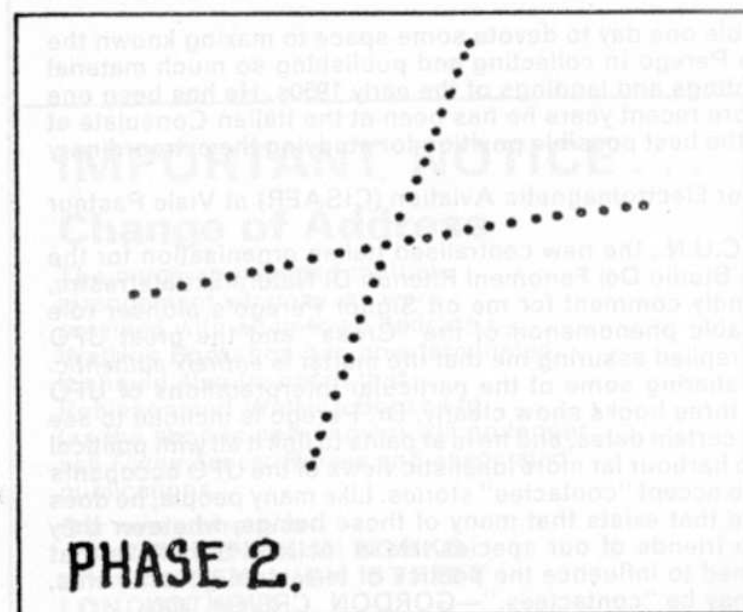
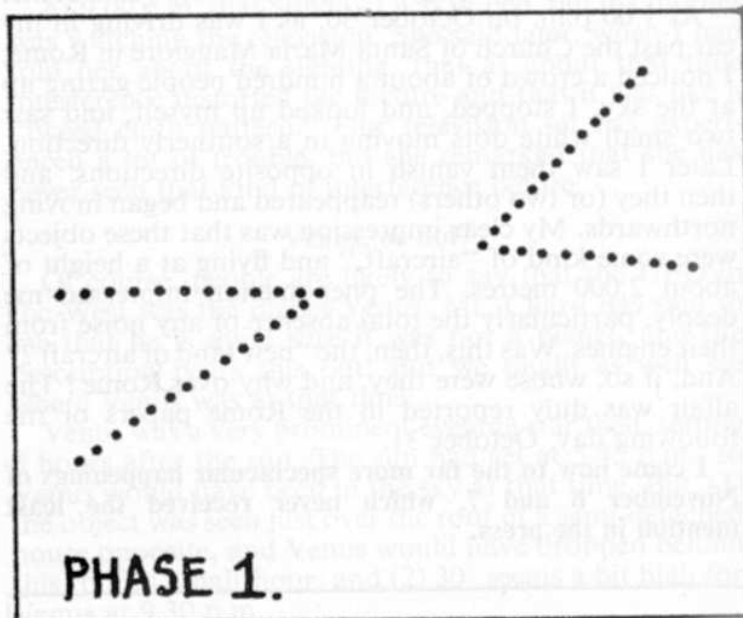
were at least one hundred. Sometimes they were isolated, sometimes in pairs, or in threes or fours or sevens or twelves. Frequently they were in diamond or "lozenge" formations of four, or in "V" formations of seven. At other times they travelled in "Indian file" or performed sweeping curves, or advanced on a wide front forming an obtuse-angled "V."

At noon, a large formation of twenty machines, the largest formation I had yet seen, appeared from the East, flying towards Ostia, and almost immediately after that I saw a similar flight of twenty more coming from the opposite direction, i.e. *from Ostia*. The two "V"-shaped squadrons converged rapidly until the vertices of the two "V"s met, thus forming a perfect "St. Andrew's Cross" of forty machines, with ten to each bar. The convergence occurred at an estimated altitude of 7,000 or 8,000 metres over the Trastevere-Monte Mario district of Rome, and consequently **right over the Vatican City itself.**

Next, the whole "Cross" performed a three-quarter turn on its axis, becoming more of an "X." The "Cross formation" was retained for a total time of about one minute, and then broke away into two serpentine curves which moved off in opposite directions. (See sketches, as originally given in my book *Svelato Il Mistero Dei Dischi Volanti*, 1957). The whole operation had lasted about three minutes.

Again, as I watched, I saw what appeared like a large bluish shadow forming in the sky ten minutes later and realised that it was a fresh concentration building up as, in formations and squadrons of four and seven and twelve they began to reappear. This time I was able to make a better count, and could see that they totalled at least one hundred. This time the concentration was in another part of the sky, and not directly above the Vatican.

I was overwhelmed by feelings of delighted surprise mingled with some anguish, and conscious of having been present at something new, something of supreme grandeur. These great squadrons of craft clearly possessed a new and revolutionary type of strength, which



The three phases of the formations seen over the Vatican, based on the author's sketches

might well be far beyond anything that our conventional anti-aircraft guns or Air Forces could do against them. But . . . to whom did they belong?

At this point I noticed, descending from the sky, a strange shining filamentous material—the material which has subsequently become known as “Angel Hair.” I was able to seize a handful of it. It looked like the fine twigs and filaments of a Christmas tree, but thinner, and very long. It was not like the filaments used in the last War by the U.S. bombers to disturb the enemy radar. It was not tinfoil, but rather a “glassy” sort of substance, which evaporated completely in a few hours.

November 7, 1954: Today, a Sunday, feeling surprised that the newspapers carried not a word about what I had seen the day previous, I went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and spoke to an old friend, Ambassador Magistrati, now Director of the Political Affairs Department of the Ministry. It seemed that the Foreign Ministry knew nothing of the matter. They had received no reports from anybody. I tried to telephone to various other high officials, but as it was Sunday, the Government offices were all deserted.

At 11.30 a.m., I went back to the Tuscolano district of Rome again and up onto the same flat roof as yesterday, and to my astonishment I found that the mysterious machines were again over the city! They remained in the sky for two-and-a-half hours, and I remained on the roof all this time, watching them.

This time, the machines totalled no more than fifty, and the formations were smaller. The largest I noticed was of twelve machines. Usually they were in diamond or “lozenge” formations of four, or in “V” formations of seven. They appeared to be carrying out some kind of systematic reconnaissance, and “assembled” no less than five times over different sections of Rome, with intervals of about 10 minutes between. The first concentration was over the Nomentano-Flaminio district. Then came groupings over the Centre of Rome (Termini Station); over the Church of San Giovanni; the Tuscolano district (where I was); and finally the Tiburtino district.

The squadrons would always arrive from different directions, and always in regular formations. Meanwhile, beneath them, a bluish sort of cloud was gradually forming, which would finally conceal them from view. Then they would be seen emerging again from the flanks of this bluish cloud, always in “Indian file.” They would fly away over the country around Rome, and return in formation ten minutes later for the next “concentration.” Here I would emphasise again that *the machines always entered the “zone of concentration” in formation, and always departed from the concentration in “Indian file.”*

Today I again saw the shining filaments falling from the sky.

The “concentrations” yesterday (November 6) were over the western parts of Rome (Monte Mario, Trastevere, Ostiense), so the “reconnaissance” of these two days must have systematically covered the whole city.

November 8, 1954: Once again, the Rome papers carry no comment about these happenings, and no reports. But the newspaper *Il Messagero* has a report from

England that the R.A.F. radar has detected squadrons of mysterious objects passing over England on November 6.² “At the British War Office, they are concerned,” concluded this report in *Il Messagero*. Another news item in the same issue of *Il Messagero* reported however that “On November 4, a ‘flying saucer’ has landed at Nuoro, in Sardinia, Italy, and then departed with a faint hissing sound.”

I called today upon General Pezzi of the Italian Air Force, Chief of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Defence. He received me very courteously, but he said he knew nothing whatever about the events I described. I read my notes to him, and asked him to report the matter to the Minister of Defence.

November 10, 1954: I was received today by the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He knew nothing about the matter, and was surprised that the Military Authorities have made no report to them about it. I asked him to convey a copy of my *Report on the Observations* to the Minister.

November 11, 1954: I was received today by General de Vincenti, Commander of the Italian Air Defence. He informed me that Radar is normally working only over certain fixed zones, at certain fixed periods, and up to a radius of 6,000-7,000 metres.

Everything now becomes clear. The objects seen by me on November 6 and 7 cannot have been captured by the Radar, which was not in operation on those days. (It might also be added that, had the targets been higher than 7,000 metres, they would in any case not have been picked up.)

November 12, 1954: At about 11.30 a.m. today I noticed that the machines were again over Rome. I telephoned to General De Vincenti of the Air Defence Headquarters, and he informed me that he had issued orders for observations to be made.

There are reports in the newspapers that “flying saucers” have been seen on November 9, 10, 11, and 12 respectively, over Chile, Peru, Brazil, Malaya, and Jugoslavia. *So why, I wonder, this strange silence about the flying machines over Rome?*

As my subsequent enquiries showed, large numbers of citizens of Rome had seen the craft on November 6 and 7. Throughout almost the whole of the preceding month of October, the papers had been full of the press reports of saucers from France and elsewhere. By now the subject was “old hat,” and the papers claimed that they were no longer interested in the everlasting discussions of “flying saucers.” Moreover, November 7 being a Sunday, the newspaper offices were closed on that day, and, since the authorities issued no information on the matter, it is easy to conclude that the newspapers never received any knowledge of the vast scale of the demonstrations over Rome on these two days.

My own first assumptions were that the saucers seen in such numbers above our Capital were either American or Russian new secret machines, but it was not long before I began to see that such a view was too untenable and could not be taken seriously.

A few days later, I paid a visit to the Astronomical Observatory at Monte Mario, where Professor Cimino

admitted to me that, during the last few days ". . . something strange had been seen in the skies over Rome."

Then I visited the Vatican Observatory at Castel Gandolfo, near Rome. There the Director of the Specola Vaticana, Father Zilwes, informed me that at about 11.00 a.m. on November 12 a Brazilian priest who was on duty in the Observatory had seen some strange objects pass twice over the Observatory, very low at terrific speed, and with no sound. This piece of information satisfied me. The mystery craft had not only been seen above the Vatican City; they had also been spotted by somebody at the Vatican's own observatory.

Father Zilwes denied that there could be any possibility of "interplanetary aviation" or "extraterrestrial visitors." He said he did accept it as possible that what had been seen was some new type of aircraft, possibly "teleguided" and owned by one of the Great Powers such as U.S.A. or U.S.S.R. He said he felt sure that one hundred such machines could easily be "teleguided" by a similar number of pilots sitting in one room in a Base. This conversation left me with the conviction that the objects I had seen must be terrestrial craft, and most probably were Russian teleguided machines. Whenever I heard of encounters with the UFO entities, for a long time I was satisfied to dismiss them as Tartars, Mongols, Chinese, Tibetans, and so on—all pilots of secret Communist machines.

When, two years later, I came finally to adopt the extraterrestrial hypothesis, I wrote to Father Zilwes, from whom, on November 20, 1956, I received the following reply:

"We have found very interesting material in your Report, which is possibly the most complete that has yet been made on the problem of the so-called f . . . s . . . But why did so many scientists, whom I met at the Astronautical Congress in Rome, give no consideration at all to this problem?"

My reply to Father Zilwes was very simple:

"Because all the Governments keep this matter secret . . . And because all "scientists" receive Government salaries. So they prefer to keep silent . . ."

NOTES by G. Creighton

¹ Alberto Perego: *Svelato Il Mistero Dei Dischi Volanti*; Roma 1957.

Sono Extraterrestri! Edizioni Alper, Roma, 1958.

L'Aviazione Di Altri Pianeti Opera Tra Noi; Roma, 1963. All published by Dr. Perego's CISAE (Centro Italiano Studi Aviazione Elettromagnetica, Via Ruggero Fauro 43, ROMA, Italy).

² The British press for November 6, 7 and 8, 1954, had reports of mystery squadrons of objects passing over Britain from East to West at great heights and only observed by radar, during the week November 1-7. Commenting on this, the Editor of *Fate Magazine* (British edition) for February 1955, said:

"Flying Saucers, which first converged over the American continent, are now concentrating on Britain. Now, here in London itself, there is more than oral testimony to go on. *Fate* can reveal this month that there is a flurry among Security "high-ups" over the latest saucer tracings being flashed on British radar screens. A wide group of screens have reported, and are reporting, strange tracks

in the sky, moving East to West over the British Isles, flying two miles up, often at incredible speeds.

"First attempts to discount them as unidentified aircraft, stray balloons, carrier pigeons, meteorites, etc., have been abandoned.

"Flying saucer sightings follow an intelligent pattern, yet no aircraft known to man could fly or change direction at such amazing velocity. Why these objects should now show such interest in Britain is a question to which the Air Ministry is furiously seeking an answer.

"Let it dwell on the warning in *Fate* last month by Lord Dowding, its old war-time Defence Chief:

"The most important thing I have to say is to give a warning against attempts to open fire on these objects . . . We should be guilty of criminal folly if we were to hinder a contact which might well bring untold blessings to humanity."

Several of the British press-reports at the time (the *Sunday Dispatch* was one of the papers concerned) said that the formations of mystery objects, as observed on the radar screens, rapidly changed position several times as they passed over London. According to these accounts, the objects were at first flying in the shape of a large "U" with the opening towards the front, but changed then to what was described in some reports as an "N" and in others as a "Z." (An "N" on its side resembles a "Z.") There were inevitably people at the time who took this to be a clear admonition that the "Visitors" were telling Britain that she should adhere closely to the counsels of the United Nations (U.N.).

SPECIAL
ISSUES

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ARE
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However, only a few of No. 2, "BEYOND CONDON" remain. No. 3, "UFO PERCIPIENTS" and No. 4, "UFOs IN TWO WORLDS," are still in good supply.

No. 2, 60p; No. 3, 40p; No. 4, 60p

The Los Angeles Basin Sightings

1: From April 1 to April 4, 1973

Ann Druffel

For 13 years Mrs. Druffel was a member of the Los Angeles NICAP sub-committee. She now devotes much of her spare time (from being a housewife) to investigation for MUFON, NICAP and DATA-NET, and as project co-ordinator for her SKYNET group.

FOR a period of eight days beginning April 1, 1973, the Los Angeles Basin area experienced an unprecedented number of sightings. If one considers colours and general appearance of the objects, there may well be an inter-relationship between them, the nature of which is not presently known.

With the exception of the Shackman sightings (which follow in Part 2) they were all referred by the Griffith Observatory in Hollywood to SKYNET #3 Druffel. Since sighting forms have not been returned yet by most of the witnesses, we have not permission to use many of the names.

Plate-like, oscillating UFO

This minor "flap" began at 6.00 a.m. on April 1, when Mr. W— happened to glance out of his twelfth-storey apartment window in a fashionable section of Hollywood. His front window commands a beautiful view of the city of Los Angeles to the east, south and west. He was startled by a glowing, round yellowish-white sphere which flew "directly over his head and disappeared toward International Airport to the south-south-west. It was brightly luminous and he had the impression it was "flat like a plate," though he could not be sure. The edges were clear cut against the still-darkened sky, even though the sky was slightly overcast.

The object travelled at tremendous speed, and it travelled from his location out of sight in about two seconds, but he was left with a vivid impression because of its high degree of strangeness. The experience he described as "eerie." There was no sound. He was most puzzled by its motion which put him in mind of "an object in water." Although the object travelled in a straight directional path, it oscillated back and forth "like a cork bobbling on an ocean."

He called an Air Base in San Bernardino, and then the Air Force Office in Los Angeles, where he spoke to a Miss Osako, who could give him no information. He is employed in "finance and banking" and requested anonymity because of his position. He stated he wished to report the object because he felt it should be known to some responsible source.

Sky formations: first report

Two days later, multiple witnesses viewed a most unusual sight in the Los Angeles skies, a sight which left all, without exception, uneasy and puzzled. The first to report this occurrence were Mrs. M. W— and her teenage son. At 7.10 p.m. on April 3 they viewed a

series of white lights flying from west to east. Most of them were in pairs, the progression between each pair being regular and with the same spacing between each pair. They were all the size of "smaller stars," faster than high-flying jets, and flew very "smoothly." There were about ten in all, seemingly very high with the appearance of satellites, but much faster than, for instance, the *Echo* satellites. First they saw a group of three, then a pair, then one flying northward by itself, then two more pairs.

They were first seen in the west about 75° high and disappeared from view in the lights of a train track about 35° high in the east. The W. family live in Glendale, about nine miles north of Los Angeles Civic Center. Both commented on the strangeness of the objects, unlike anything they had ever seen.

Second report

The next report was from Mr. and Mrs. B—, who live in Lake View Terrace, about twelve miles northwest of Glendale. It is a small isolated community with a clear, dark sky. The B—s say, with their five children, five pairs of white lights flying from the west-north-west to south-east. Duration of sighting was "from a few minutes after 7.00 p.m. to 7.15 p.m." They had been impressed that each pair seemed "the same height, speed, and flying on the same plane." As each pair disappeared into the distance, another would come up from the north-westerly horizon and follow the pair ahead. They also saw two single lights which resembled the pairs in size, speed, and trajectory. During the passage of the pairs, a single, bright and seemingly lower light crossed the sky from south to north, and passed "almost directly overhead," as did the smaller objects.

Each object gave a "glow," and the appearance of a "round light," though not really showing a disc. They all seemed the size of bright stars, except the south-north object, which was even brighter. Only Mr. B— could determine that some of the lights were blinking. Their passage was fast, though there was time to "stare at them as they crossed the sky." Each group took about 30 seconds to complete its passage.

They were viewed from about 25° above the West-North-West horizon and disappeared into the distance at about 25° above the south-easterly horizon.

Mr. B— is a pilot, working in military aircraft, and for this reason requests anonymity for the family. He is convinced the lights were not from airplanes. He stated they "were much too fast" and gave the example that a