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## **FREDERIK PETRUS KOUMANS, 1905-1977, A BIOGRAPHY AND A TENTATIVE LIST OF HIS BIOLOGICAL PAPERS**

by

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With one plate

On Wednesday 27 April 1977, my predecessor as a curator of fishes at the Leiden Museum, Dr. F. P. Koumans, after a short illness, rather unexpectedly passed away at the age of 72. Considering his rôle as a staff member of the Museum and the importance of his contributions to science, the publication of a short biographical note and a list of his publications seems an obligation towards his former colleagues, if not a duty for me as his former pupil.

Frederik Petrus Koumans was born on 21 January 1905 in the Hague, where he attended elementary and high school. After his high school examination in 1922, he studied biology at the nearby University of Leiden, where he obtained his masters degree in 1927, and his doctorate in 1931.

There is no information available about his being interested in natural history at an early age, though his choice of biology as a study seems to point that way. He became a member of natural history societies (Nederlandsche Dierkundige Vereeniging, Nederlandsche Natuurhistorische Vereeniging) only in 1924, and his first interests, rather than in fishes, seem to have been in Cetacea, on which group he gave a lecture to the The Hague branch of the Nederlandsche Natuurhistorische Vereeniging on 16 February 1924 (*Natura*, 308: 68-70). It is interesting that his later friend, Mr. J. Knock, with whom he was to make a round the world trip in 1938, shared this early interest in cetaceans (*Natura*, 304: 14-15). Also molluscs had Koumans' attention, as is shown by his first gift of a few specimens to the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie already in December 1923 and his later activities in the Nederlandsche Malacologische Vereeniging, but this interest evidently decreased

around 1945, when he disposed of his private collection (17500 specimens) on behalf of the Leiden Museum.

Although he already presented two eggcapsules of rays to the Museum in January 1924, he started to deal seriously with fishes only around 1928, after previously having occupied himself for shorter periods with insects, during research in the Meiendel dunes near The Hague (*Natura*, 334: 151), and with isopods, on which he published a paper just after becoming attached to the Leiden Museum (1928).

Dr. Koumans' actual career as an ichthyologist started in March 1928, when the director of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Professor Dr. E. D. van Oort, had him temporarily appointed as curator of the rich fish department to succeed Dr. C. M. L. Popta, an appointment extended for a year on 1 April 1928, and made permanent on 1 April 1929.

From then until 1 November 1947 — when he was honorably discharged at his own request — Dr. Koumans mainly worked on fishes and especially studied gobies, publishing the results in 24 papers (16 devoted wholly to gobies). It is remarkable, and perhaps illustrative of his character, that one of his first scientific papers, his thesis "A preliminary revision of the gobioid fishes with united ventral fins" (1931), concerns a comprehensive account on one of the most difficult groups in this discipline, which few ichthyologists would dare to tackle, and certainly not without extensive preliminary research (and publications) on intricate details. Other major publications, these after accumulating much more experience with this subject, are his "Gobioid fishes of India" (1941) and volume X, "Gobioidea", in Weber & De Beaufort's "Fishes of the Indo-Australian Archipelago" (1953). Another important publication, "Results of a reexamination of types and specimens of gobioid fishes, with notes on the fishfauna of the surroundings of Batavia" (1940), the outcome of his round-the-world trip in 1938, also should be mentioned here. According to his own words (Koumans, 1941: 500), "The examination of 294 types of described species [= about 260 nominal species, -MB] showed that 165 names were synonyms of those of already described species. 62 species had to be removed to another genus as the authors did not pay attention to the limits of the older genera, e.g. those of Bleeker. Several authors published upon specimens of the same species under different names".

During his curatorial activities, Dr. Koumans visited several countries in western Europe (e.g., France, 1928, 1934; England, 1930, 1935, 1936; Switzerland, 1937; Denmark, 1945), either to collect specimens there or to examine material in musea and other institutions. His major trip abroad was an eight month voyage around the world, from 21 February to 21 October

1938, made in the company of Mr. J. Knock. Besides assembling considerable collections at several places (mainly fishes and molluscs), many institutions were visited, lectures given and especially gobies studied; the scientific results have already been indicated in the previous paragraph. Of this trip the following itinerary (with the persons met) may be given:

- 21 February: departure Leiden, Netherlands.
- 22 February: arrival London (British Museum, J. R. Norman).
- 23 February: departure Southampton per "Berengaria".
  - 1 March: arrival New York (American Museum of Natural History, J. T. Nichols, E. W. Gudger).
  - 3 March: departure New York and arrival Washington (U.S. National Museum, H. M. Smith, L. P. Schulz, E. D. Reid; Bureau of Fisheries, S. F. Hildebrand, I. Ginsburg).
- 17 March: departure Washington and arrival Philadelphia (Academy of Natural Sciences, H. W. Fowler).
- 21 March: departure Philadelphia and arrival Boston/Cambridge, Mass. (Museum of Comparative Zoology, W. C. Schroeder, H. B. Bigelow).
- 23 March: departure Boston and arrival Buffalo, New York.
- 24 March: departure Buffalo and arrival Toronto, Canada.
- 25 March: departure Toronto and arrival London, Ontario (Univ. of Western Ontario, Helen T. Battle).
- 28 March: departure London, Ontario and arrival Ann Arbor, Michigan (Museum of Zoology, C. L. Hubbs, H. van der Schalie).
  - 1 April: departure Ann Arbor and arrival Chicago, Illinois (Field Museum, A. C. Weed).
  - 4 April: departure Chicago.
- 11 April: arrival (via San Francisco) Palo Alto, Cal. (Stanford University, G. S. Myers, A. W. C. T. Herre), Pacific Grove (Hopkins Marine Station, R. L. Bolin).
- 22 April: departure Palo Alto and arrival San Francisco.
- 23 April: departure San Francisco per "Matsonia", Matson Line.
- 28 April: arrival Honolulu (Bernice P. Bishop Museum, E. H. Bryan).
  - 2 May: departure Honolulu per "Monterey", Matson Line.
  - ? May: visit Auckland, New Zealand (Auckland Museum, G. P. Archey).
- 16 May: arrival Sydney (Australian Museum, G. P. Whitley; University of Sydney, W. J. Dakin).
- 26 May: departure Sydney.
- 27 May: arrival Melbourne (National Museum, D. J. Mahony, G. Mack).
- 29 May: departure Melbourne.
- 30 May: arrival Adelaide (South Australian Museum, H. M. Hale, B. C. Cotton).
  - 2 June: departure Adelaide.
  - 5 June: arrival Brisbane (Queensland Museum, H. A. Longman, T. C. Marshall).
  - 8 June: departure Brisbane per Burn Philp Line.
- 24 June: arrival Surabaya.
- 25 June: departure Surabaya and arrival Batavia (now Djakarta) (Laboratorium voor het Onderzoek der Zee, J. D. F. Hardenberg, J. Westenberg; Inland Fisheries Service, A. L. Buschkiel). June-July: visits to Buitenzorg (now Bogor) ('s Lands Plantentuin, K. W. Dammerman) and Tjikadjang (Inland Fisheries Laboratory, C. P. J. de Haas).
- 25 July: departure Batavia.
- 31 July: arrival Surabaya.
  - 1 August: departure Surabaya per Java China Japan Line.

- 10 August: arrival Manila (Bureau of Science, H. A. Roxas, D. Valladolid).  
31 August: departure Manila.  
4 September: arrival Singapore (Raffles Museum, M. W. T. Tweedie).  
?8 September: departure Singapore.  
?15 September: arrival Calcutta (Indian Museum, S. L. Hora).  
?20 September: departure Calcutta, via Madras (Madras Museum, F. H. Gravely) to Colombo.  
?24 September: arrival Colombo (Colombo Museum, where P. E. P. Deraniyagala absent).  
28 September: departure Colombo per "Indrapocra", Rotterdamsche Lloyd.  
11 October: arrival Marseille.  
21 October: arrival Leiden.

These data were taken from a handwritten list by Koumans and his published report of 1940. The specimens collected included about 2000 fishes and 14000 molluscs, besides some specimens of other groups. The extensive report on this voyage, now missing, apparently never was published.

During this period Dr. Koumans was also active in various societies, both scientific and more popular. After having been a member of the The Hague branch of the Nederlandsche Natuurhistorische Vereeniging since 1924, as assistant secretary from 1925-1929, he became a member of the Leiden branch after moving to that town around 1928, acting there as secretary from 1930-1935. A few popular articles were published in the Society's periodical, *Natura*, and lectures were given, covering various subjects ranging from Cetacea and observations made along the Dutch beach to damage by the green frog to pisciculture, and even including botany. Several secretarial reports on meetings and excursions also should be mentioned here.

Dr. Koumans was one of the founders of the Nederlandsche Malacologische Vereeniging, becoming its first secretary from 1934 till 1942. In 1935 he also was appointed editor of the society's periodical *Bacteria* (1st issue 1936), a position he held till 1944, while moreover acting as the Society's librarian. He published some malacological contributions of a more popular kind, including several book reviews, and secretarial communications. He was a member of the Nederlandsche Dierkundige Vereeniging since 1924, but besides his giving a few lectures on fishes (28 October 1934, 21 November 1937, 20 April 1940), nothing is known about his activities in this society until his appointment as a treasurer in 1948, when his main interest already had moved away from natural history. At his own request, he was discharged in February 1949.

Furthermore, Dr. Koumans was an active member or collaborator of aquarium- and sport fisheries societies, publishing a few accounts in their papers and delivering lectures on popular subjects, thereby conceding to his social and educative inclinations.

Actually, these inclinations made him feel more and more dissatisfied with his working circumstances at the Leiden Museum, which he named a cloister, allowing only limited social contacts with the outer (non-scientific) world. As he vainly tried to compensate this lack by his aforementioned activities in diverse societies, and although an appointment as lecturer in fishery biology at the University of Leiden (April 1947) at least gave him an opportunity to satisfy his educational desires, he requested and received discharge of his position at the Leiden Museum before the end of 1947, when he had the opportunity to become the head-curator of the municipal hospitals of The Hague (effective 1 November 1947) with the task to combine and organize the medical libraries of various local institutions. After passing two examinations for trade librarian (1948), he most successfully accomplished this task, making the library one of the best in its field in Europe, both in contents and in organization, with an exemplary documentation system for medical literature. Besides this tremendous task and his subsequent activities as a librarian, he still found time to publish on various medical subjects and acted as a secretary for the Sectie voor Speciale Bibliotheken. It is clear that all this left him hardly any time to spend on ichthyology, though occasionally he accepted requests for the identification of gobies. Dr. Koumans retired in 1970, when he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Municipality of The Hague. Relieved from his tasks, he found time to edit the fish volumes of the Dutch version of Grzimek's Tierleben (1971, 1972).

In 1972, Dr. Koumans moved to Ede, in the centre of the Netherlands, where only a short span was granted him to peacefully look back on a well spent life. On 27 April, after a short illness, Dr. Kouman died, mourned by his wife and three children. Although since 1947 our contacts were rather restricted, I remember him as a most adequate tutor, perhaps not easy to get close to, but for all those succeeding in penetrating his defenses a reliable, helpful and compassionate friend and colleague, highly esteemed both in ichthyological and medical circles.

#### Chronological list of publications on natural history

##### a. Scientific papers on fishes

- 1-1929. Note on the genus *Microsicidium* Bleeker. — *Zool. Meded.*, 12: 1-3.
- 2-1930. Note on a collection of fishes from the Moluccas collected by Dr. F. Kopstein. — *Zool. Meded.*, 13: 1-6.
- 3-1931. A preliminary revision of the genera of the gobioid fishes with united ventral fins. Thesis, Lisse: (i-iv), 1-174.
- 4-1932. Notes on gobioid fishes (1-5). 1. Note on the genus *Stigmatogobius* Bleeker; 2. Description of *Callogobius liolepis* (Blkr. museum name) Koumans; 3. Note

- on *Quisquilius profundus* M. Weber; 4. Note on the name *Herreichthys*; 5. Note on the distribution of *Apocryptichthys cantoris* (Day). — *Zool. Meded.*, 15: 1-16.
- 5-1933. On a new genus and species of Apogonidac. — *Zool. Meded.*, 16: 78, pl. 1 (fig. 2).
- 6-1935. Notes on gobioid fishes. 6. On the synonymy of some species from the Indo-Australian archipelago. — *Zool. Meded.*, 18: 121-150, 5 figs.
- 7-1936. Notes on gobioid fishes. 7. On the Indo-Australian species of *Oxyeleotris* Bleeker. — *Zool. Meded.*, 19: 128-134.
- 8-1936. A case of increase of the number of scales during growth in fishes. — *Temminckia*, 1: 267-276, 3 figs., 2 tables.
- 9-1937. Notes on gobioid fishes. 8. Further notes on the synonymy of species of Gobiodea. — *Zool. Meded.*, 19: 177-179.
- 10-1937. Notes on gobioid fishes. 9. Notes on the synonymy (continuation of note 8). — *Zool. Meded.*, 20: 11-23.
- 11-1937. Notes on gobioid fishes. 10. On a collection of the Museum of Basle, with description of a new species of *Apocryptodon*. — *Zool. Meded.*, 20: 24-26.
- 12-1937. On a collection of fishes from Siam. — *Zool. Meded.*, 20: 61-64, 2 figs.
- 13-1940. On a collection of gobioid fishes from the Andamans. — *Rec. Ind. Mus.*, 42: 15-18.
- 14-1940. Results of a reexamination of types and specimens of gobioid fishes, with notes on the fishfauna of the surroundings of Batavia. — *Zool. Meded.*, 22: 121-210, 1 table.
- 15-1940. On a collection of fishes from East Java. — *Zool. Meded.*, 22: 257-264.
- 16-1940. On a new species of *Puntius* from Borneo. — *Temminckia*, 5: 189-190.
- 17-1941. Some results of my scientific trip in 1938. — *Arch. Néerl. Zool.*, 5: 500.
- 18-1941. Gobioid fishes of India. — *Mem. Ind. Mus.*, 13: 205-329.
- 19-1944. Fam. Gobiidae. In: H. Blegvad & B. Løppenthin, *Fishes of the Iranian Gulf. Danish scientific investigations in Iran, Copenhagen*, 3: 1-247, 135 figs., 12 pls. (162-174, figs. 93-102, pl. 10 fig. 3).
- 20-1947. A small collection of fishes from Malaya (Zoological notes from Port Dickson, 2). — *Zool. Meded.*, 27: 309-311.
- 21-1949. On some fossil fish remains from Java. — *Zool. Meded.*, 30: 77-82, 2 pls.
- 22-1949. The fishes (Zoological results of the Dutch New Guinea Expedition, 1939, 2). — *Nova Guinea, n.s.*, 5: 284-288, 4 tables.
- 23-1953. Gobiodea. In: M. Weber & L. F. de Beaufort, *The fishes of the Indo-Australian archipelago, Leiden*, 10: (i)-xiii, 1-423, 95 figs.
- 24-1953. The Pisces and Leptocardii of the Snellius Expedition (Biological results of the Snellius Expedition, 16). — *Temminckia*, 9: 177-275, 2 figs.

#### b. Popular publications on fishes and related subjects

- 1-1933. [Comments to] *Haplochilus* of *Aplocheilus*? — *Het Aquarium*, 3: 242.
- 2-1933. [Footnote on synonymy of *Chela johorensis* and *Ch. oxygastroides*]. — *Het Aquarium*, 4: 11.
- 3-1933. Een practische ruitenkrabber voor aquariums. — *Natura*, 419: 180.
- 4-1933. Iets over het determineren van visschen. — *Het Aquarium*, 4: 72-74.
- 5-1933. [Footnote to the name *Ophiocephaloidei*]. — *Het Aquarium*, 4: 75.
- 6-1933. [Remarks on] De muilbroedende Betta. — *Het Aquarium*, 4: 100.
- 7-1933. Nog iets over geslachtsveranderingen bij *Xiphophorus helleri*. — *Het Aquarium*, 4: 100.
- 8-1934. Over visnamen. — *Het Aquarium*, 5: 8.
- 9-1935. Over enige slijkspringers van de Noord-kust van Java. — *Het Aquarium*, 5: 226.

- 10-1936. *Gobius xanthozona*. — *Het Aquarium*, 6: 120.  
 11-1936. Nog eens over *Gobius xanthosona*. — *Het Aquarium*, 6: 144.  
 12-1936. Eenige opmerkingen [about killing and preservation of fishes]. — *Het Aquarium*, 7: 42-43.  
 13-1936. Over *Betta Picta* (C. & V.) en *Betta fusca* Regan. — *Het Aquarium*, 7: 68, 2 figs.  
 14-1937. Het "vischje van 4 meter". — *De Telegraaf* [newspaper], 16 oct.: 4.  
 15-1939. Eenige opmerkingen [on mudskippers and white-cloud-mountain minnow]. — *Het Aquarium*, 9: 304-305.  
 16-1942. *Barbus partipentazona* en *sumatranus*. — *Het Aquarium*, 12: 195-196.  
 17-1942. [Comments to] Besmettelijke schubbenruigheid. — *Het Aquarium*, 13 (2): 19.  
 18-1944. Tonijn aangespoeld te Wierum (Fr.). — *De Levende Natuur*, 49: 12.  
 19-1946. [Comments to] Encyclopaedie voor den Aquariumhouder. — Annex to *Het Aquarium*, 17, unpagged, 2 pp.  
 20-1946. *Brachygobius nunus*. — *Het Aquarium*, 17 (6): 77-78, 1 fig.  
 21-1947. De "Rivierprik" is niet verdwenen! — *Leidsch Dagblad* [newspaper], 24 June: 3.  
 22-1947. Het onderzoek van de vissen van Suriname. — *De W.-Ind. Gids*, 30: 55-58.  
 23-1947/1948. — Orde *Gobiomorphi*. In: J. J. Hoedeman et al., *Encyclopaedie voor de aquariumhouder*, Amsterdam, 28 pp. (X.70-X.70.37.25), 1 fig., 7 col. figs.  
 24-1948. [Comments to] Het geslacht *Acanthophthalmus*. — *Het Aquarium*, 18: 182.  
 25-1971. Opmerkingen bij de Nederlandse naamgeving. In: B. Grzimek et al., *Het leven der dieren*, Utrecht & Antwerpen, 4: 632. 1972. Same text, same work, 5: 588-589.

### c. Malacological papers

- 1-1934. Onze zoetwatermollusken. — *Het Aquarium*, 5: 86-89, 11 figs.  
 2-1934. Het kweken van mollusken. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 1: 2-4.  
 3-1935. Opmerkingen over het determineren van mollusken. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 2: 9-10.  
 4-1935. P. Ehrmann, Weichtiere in Tierwelt Mitteleuropas. [Book review]. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 3: 18.  
 5-1935. H. v. d. Maaden, Hoe heet die schelp? [Book review]. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 3: 18.  
 6-1935. Gemengd nieuws [death of Philippe Dautzenberg, Paris]. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 3: 19.  
 7-1935. Iets over de nomenclatuur van onze mollusken. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 4: 23-25.  
 8-1935. J. G. Th. van Nes, Schelpen op ons strand. [Book review]. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 4: 25-26.  
 9-1935. Gemengd nieuws [death of Dr. Johannes Thiele]. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 4: 26.  
 10-1936. (with J. Th. Henrard). Korte levensbeschrijving van Dr. J. Baster, naar wie dit tijdschrift is genoemd. — *Basteria*, 1: 6-12.  
 11-1936. (with J. Th. Henrard). *Turbo stagnalis* Baster, een nomenclatuurschets. — *Basteria*, 1: 13-16.  
 12-1936. (with J. Th. Henrard). On the occurrence of the *Helicigona lapicida* (L.) in the Netherlands. — *Basteria*, 1: 52-54.  
 13-1936. Hoe bergen wij onze mollusken op? — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 5: 28-32.  
 14-1936. Dr. F. C. van Heurn, Over fossiele schelpen van het Nederlandsche strand en hare verwantschap met fossielen uit de tertiaire lagen van België en Engeland. [Book review]. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 7: 40.

- 15-1936. Tera van Benthem Jutting en Dr. H. Engel, Fauna van Nederland afl. VIII, Mollusca Gastropoda Opisthobranchia, Amphineura et Scaphopoda. [Book review]. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 7: 41.  
 16-1936. W. E. Ankel, Prosobranchia. Die Tierwelt der Nord- und Ostzee Lief. XXIX. [Book review]. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 7: 41.  
 17-1939. Vermeldenswaardige vondsten. — *Corr.blad Ned. Malacol. Ver.*, 14: 93.  
 18-1942. Nog eens tropische slakken. — *Het Aquarium*, 13 (6): 65.

#### c. Miscellaneous publications on natural history

- 1-1924. Walvisschen [in report of meeting by W. L. Varossicau]. — *Natura*, 308: 68-70.  
 2-1924. [Additional remarks on whale dentition]. — *Natura*, 309: 86.  
 3-1924. [Correction to report of lecture on "Walvisschen"]. — *Natura*, 309: 91.  
 4-1925. Een mooie vondst [Tursiops tursio]. — *De levende Natuur*, 29: 282-284, 2 figs.  
 5-1927. Fauna van Nederland. — *Natura*, 351: 224.  
 6-1928. Neue oder merkwürdige Isopoden für die Niederländische Fauna. — *Zool. Meded.*, 11: 199-205.  
 7-1932. Worteloos kroos bij Den Haag. — *Natura*, 406: 149.  
 8-1933. De "schadelijkheid" van den Groenen Kikvorsch voor de visscherij. — *Natura*, 413: 32-36.  
 9-1933. Het Nederlandsch Historisch Natuurwetenschappelijk Museum te Leiden. — *Natura*, 419: 178-180.  
 10-1933. In Memoriam Professor Dr. E. D. v. Oort. — *Natura*, 421: 226-227.

#### d. Articles in encyclopaediae

- 1-1947/1957. Oosthoek's Encyclopedie.  
 2-1966/1975. Grote Winkler Prins.

#### e. Secretarial reports on meetings and excursions of the Nederlandsche Natuurhistorische Vereeniging

##### Branch The Hague

1925. *Natura*, 318: 41  
       320: 82-83  
       322: 118-119  
       323: 135-136  
       326: 185-186  
 1926. *Natura*, 330: 58-60  
       331: 80-81  
       335: 160-161  
       339: 226-227 (excursion environs The Hague and Reeuwijkse Plassen).  
 1927. *Natura*, 342: 76-77  
       343: 95  
       347: 152  
       348: 176 (excursion Naardermeer).  
       350: 207 (excursion Staelduin, near 's-Gravenzande).  
 1928. *Natura*, 352: 9  
       356: 129  
       360: 194 (excursion Staelduin).  
       361: 207 (geological excursion Utrecht).  
 1929. *Natura*, 364: 12  
       365: 26-27



## Branch Leiden

1930. *Natura*, 381: 108-109 (excursion Noordwijkerhout and Langevelderslag).  
384: 160 (excursion Meer-en-Bos, Loosduinen).  
385: 173-174 (excursion beach between Hoek van Holland and Kijkduin).  
386: 190 (excursion Groenendaal near Heemstede).  
387: 202 (excursion Huys te Warmont, Warmond).
1931. *Natura*, (392): 135.
1932. *Natura*, 406: 155 (excursion Noordwijk and Noordwijkerhout).  
408: 200 (excursion environs Nijmegen).

## Taxa named after Dr. Koumans

- Obtortiofagus koumansi* Whitley, 1933 (= *Acentrogobius koumansi* (Whitley)).  
*Acentrogobius koumansi* Norman, 1935 (= *Acentrogobius normanni* Koumans).  
*Vaimosa koumansi* Mukerji, 1935 (= *Stigmatogobius roemeri* (M. Weber)).  
*Gnatholepis koumansi* Herre, 1937 (= *Acentrogobius herrei* Koumans).  
*Koumansetta* Whitley, 1940.  
*Oplopomus koumansi* Boeseman, 1947 (= ?? *Gnatholepis otakii* (Jordan & Snyder)).



F. P. Koumans (1905-1977)