

## ‡7 Unpublished Letters

### A Mind-Size

**A1** *DIO* 4.1 ‡1 concluded with the promise that *DIO* 4.2 would detail *Journal for the History of Astronomy*'s brickwall rejection of the important paper, "Pan-Babylonianism Redivivus?", by classicist David Dicks, an internationally known scholar of ancient astronomy. (This paper, unchanged, was to become the lead paper of *DIO* 4.1.) We begin with the letter that accompanied Dicks' submission of the paper to the *JHA*:

To: Editor, *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 1994/1/5  
From: Prof. David R. Dicks [London University, ret.]

**A2** I submit the attached paper for publication in your journal. I have little expectation that you will accept it, as it is somewhat critical of many names in the establishment of the history of science; but I thought I had better go through the motions, anyway, to satisfy my conscience.

**A3** One thing I would request is that you do not send it across the Atlantic — there has been far too much unauthorised and unacknowledged pillaging of my work over there already. If you do not like it, let me know, and simply destroy it.

**A4** I look forward to hearing from you.

To: Dr. Dicks 1994/1/13  
From: Michael Hoskin

**A5** . . . My initial reaction on opening your letter on my return from abroad was one of pleasure at the prospect of a paper by yourself. Sadly, instead of the presentation of new research of the quality we have come to expect from you, it is more in the form of a succession of attacks on colleagues, many of them couched in language that is overtly offensive and quite unacceptable in a 'learned journal'. I am very sorry that you are not able to look back on your distinguished career with pleasure in a job well done — and to add further contributions to it. But if your complaints are justified (as may well be the case) then a more acceptable way of expressing them needs to be found. Sorry! . . .

**A6** DR comment: the it's-gotta-be-new-research gambit is such a threadworn Hoskin dodge that the Editor-for-Life no longer even bothers to check whether it applies. Dicks' paper in fact brings several novel evidences and observations to bear upon the key question of the primacy of Babylonian astronomy vs. Greek. As to whether the paper's language is scholarly, the reader is referred to the high opinion of no less than Curtis Wilson (Hoskin's most distinguished colleague on the board of the *General History of Astronomy*). Dicks' reply (§A7) is a gem. (How often we know these truths. But, how seldom they are said.) The key point is precisely what Dicks points out: why is the *JHA* so concerned with style (*DIO* 1.2 §B2) and with keeping certain political factions safe from criticism, that it willfully<sup>1</sup> ignores the sole issue that matters: does the research contribute to knowledge?

To: The Editor (M. A. Hoskin) 1994/1/14  
From: David Dicks

<sup>1</sup> Editor-for-Life at §A5: "as may well be the case".

**A7** Congratulations! Exactly as I had expected — a judicious blend of insincere flattery and unctuous high-mindedness! Of course it would not do to publish anything critical of the establishment on which you depend for referees; I quite understand — never mind any considerations of accurate scholarship or historical truth. . . .

To: *DIO* 1994/3/14

From: David Dicks

**A8** I presume you've seen the latest bunkum in *JHA* [25.1:39-55; 1994/2] — 'Neolithic Lunar Maps'! I ask you! Hoskin must be out of his tiny mind. It's quite extraordinary what passes for "new research of . . . quality" (to quote from his [§A5] letter to me) these days.

## B ISIS in Crisis: Lying Lower & Lower

**B1** When the Neugebauer-Muffia decided to hold a conference 1994/5/6-8 (at M.I.T.'s Dibner Institute), Muffiosi as usual agreed not to inform DR of the event. DR phoned *Isis* (History-of-science-Society [HsS]) Editor Margaret Rossiter on 1994/4/22 to apprise her of this situation and to ask why the *DIO*s so far sent to *Isis* as publishable matter had not even been acknowledged. She replied that she didn't understand them and that she had thrown all of them away. She suggested writing a letter-for-publication for *Isis*, which I sent (4/26) and which she of course did not publish. In this 1994/4/26 letter to HsS, DR also took the opportunity to ask a few questions about the scholarship & behavior of the Muffia, and to suggest a debate (at the M.I.T. conference) of the issues in contention between us:

To: History of science Society (*Isis*) NOT CONFIDENTIAL 1994/4/26  
From: *DIO*, Box 19935, Baltimore, MD 21211-0935(phone: 410-889-1414)

**B2** As acknowledged in your Society's 1991/7 *Newsletter* (p.35), many of you have been regularly receiving the Dennis Rawlins (DR) journals, *DIO* & *The Journal for Hysterical Astronomy*. You should know, therefore, that these DR journals have pointed out at least two discreditable incidents involving: [a] *Isis*, and [b] the snobsters known to *DIO* readers as the "Muffia", that amusingly inept and lordly cult of scholars that is the legacy of the late O.Neugebauer (BrownU & Princeton [Institute for Advanced Study]). (As we'll see below, it looks like *DIO* reportage of a 3<sup>rd</sup> such episode is in the offing.) [Note added 1994/10: HsS can't say it wasn't warned.]

**B3** Not greatly to anyone's surprise, *Isis*-persons have done nothing whatever about these matters. Except, of course, to try suppressing *DIO*! (See under R.Kargon, below [§B9 & §B19].)

**B4** And the Muffia's reaction to *DIO*'s revelations of, e.g., its repeated highschool-math blunders and its Nobel-level discoveries of the "Winter Equinox" (S.Pathak 1994/2/27 query: is this a new rock band?) and the Autumn Solstice (see sources cited in "Black Affidavit" [*DIO* 1.3 ¶10], copy enclosed) has been its standard courageous strategy: run away and hide. (See *DIO* 2.3 ¶8 §C.) Well, why *shouldn't* the Muffia keep hiding? Muffiosi have learned, from decades of experience, that no amount of its mismatch or misbehavior will draw the slightest public censure from the History of science Society. To a cult that places so little value on such trifles as mere scholarly integrity (a cult that is indeed dedicated to unremitting exaltation of C.Ptolemy, the most thoroughly exposed pre-Muffia plagiarist in the history of astronomy), the HsS's guaranteed inaction is a handsomely engraved invitation for that cult to keep right on behaving exactly as it pleases. The two above-cited incidents:

1. The MacArthur-Fellowship paper of Noel C. Swerdlow (*J.Hist.Astr.* 1989) published 2 equations nicely explaining certain rigged Ptolemy "observations" of Venus. Curiously, these equations had earlier been discovered by DR and sent to *Isis* (for publication) in 1983. *Isis*' repellent reception of the equations (despite publication-approval by *Isis*' own eminent referees) is described at *DIO* 1.2 §I13 (pp.134-5). (See also *Isis* suppression cited at *DIO* 1.1 ¶6 fn 4.)

2. In the *J.Hist.Astron.*'s 1989/5 *lead* paper, the Muffia's Alexander Jones [argues] the impossibility of fitting eccentric (Greek-trig) orbits to 3 famous Hipparchan solar-position trios (data found at *Almajest* 4.11 and 5.3&5). And the *lead* paper of *Isis*' 1991/9 issue (1<sup>st</sup> UChicago number) is [a follow-up orbital paper], founded upon the earlier *JHA* analysis. Though [its] math was vetted by an imposing flock of Muffiosi (most of whom will be at the upcoming Dibner meeting: all 4 scholars cited at *JHA* 22 p.122), the papers are a credibility-mass-suicide so broad that [it must be shared by the whole senior Muffia-*JHA* combine]. Facts:

[a] Even before [the] papers appeared, DR had already published 1 of these allegedly-Impossible orbits (*DIO* 1.1 ¶6, 1991/1/14; elements reprinted at *DIO* 1.2 §G10). The other 2 Impossible orbits were published at *DIO* 1.3 §K9 & §M4 (& fn 162). (See also *DIO* 2.3 ¶8 fn 18, transmitted to Muffiosi via Johns Hopkins U: written receipt 1992/10/30.) That the three DR solutions indeed fit Hipparchos' solar data, can be verified by highschool math.

[b] The [Muffia] "proof" of impossibility for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hipparchan trio is based upon [two elementary] math errors (*DIO* 1.2 §G9). Note: [its] equation ( $67^d/2/3 = 67^o/2/3$  of mean solar motion) requires a 360<sup>d</sup> year. Muffia-cult slanders, *still-unretracted and still-Hist.sci-uncriticized* (partial compilation at *DIO* 1.1 ¶1 §C7), include applying the label "Velikovskian" to Ptolemy-skeptics Rob't Newton (the late eminent Johns Hopkins U physicist) and DR; thus, I will note that the only previous scholar who promoted a 360<sup>d</sup> year was Dr. I. Velikovskiy. (See Dr. V's *Worlds in Collision* Pt.1 Chap.5 & Pt.2 Chap.8: pp.124, 330f.) Since checking [Muffia] mis-math has evidently been too much for the numerous *Isis* people who have received *DIO* 1.2, the truth of all of *DIO*'s charges of [poor math] in this prominent Muffia-*JHA-Isis* [mess] has instead been confirmed in detail by Cantab mathematician Prof. Hugh Thurston, Univ of British Columbia: Math Dep't phone# 604-822-2666, home phone# 604-531-8716.

**B5** Jones<sup>2</sup> was seen in possession of *DIO* 1.1 (containing one of the Impossible solutions) at the Graz ancient astronomy conference in 1991/9. *DIO* 1.2-3 (& 2.1) was mailed directly to Jones on 1993/12/31. His [Muffia-advice-dictated] reply? No reply. (Similar to *DIO* 1.1 ¶3 fn 7.)

**B6** In the 1991/5 *JHA*, its Editor-for-Life, Michael Hoskin (whose amusing scholarship is examined at *DIO* 1.2 fn 60), published all of this false Muffia math (and [the] discovery of the Winter Equinox [!], *JHA* 1991/5 p.119) after the usual intensive *JHA* refereeing. The Editor-for-Life has refused<sup>3</sup> even to receive *DIO* 1.2-3 (& 2.1), which corrected *JHA*'s [orbital] mess: *Hoskin simply sent back here, unopened, the envelope containing these*

<sup>2</sup> Jones is now acknowledging privately at least some of these errors. But he has publicly withdrawn nothing. And, if he ever does, he will likely avoid citing *DIO*, where these mistakes & the 3 allegedly Impossible orbits were 1st published. [Note added 2005: Happily, DR's prediction proved far too pessimistic. See *DIO* 6 ¶3 §A2.]

<sup>3</sup> Problem: ever since DR pointed out the errors undercutting an entire 1982 *JHA* paper (belatedly retracted in the 1984/6 *JHA*), the *JHA*'s esteemed Editor-for-Life has (1983/3/21: see *DIO* 1.2 §B) refused correspondence with DR, thus *coincidentally permitting the JHA to evade its obligation to acknowledge its errors*. (See enclosed catalog of muffs: [*DIO* 4.1 ¶4 §A]. No less than 17 of them have graced the *JHA*.)

*DIO issues*. [See *DIO 4.1: Competence Held Hostage* #1.] And all relevant academic institutions permit such behavior to continue, year after year, without the slightest criticism.

**B7** *Isis* Editor Margaret Rossiter has thrown the same *DIO* copies (& all others) into her wastebasket, this despite the *DIO* Publ. Statement (inside back cover) explaining that each issue constitutes a submission-for-publication (to such journals as *JHA* & *Isis*, so long as they continue refusing to cite *DIO*). Rossiter claims (1994/4/22) she couldn't understand the matters at issue. Comments: [a] The bold-print subtitle of the article "Muffia Orbitalium" (comprising most of *DIO 1.2-3*) explicitly refers to *Isis*' involvement. (As does *DIO 2.1*'s inside-cover.) . . . [b] The central *JHA-Isis* errors which *DIO 1.2* (§G9) exposes are . . . arithmetic. [Note added 2005: In 2002-3, *DIO* was delighted to see Margaret Rossiter courageously spearheading *Isis*' liberation from Muffia rigidity. See *Isis 93*:500.]

**B8** But *Isis*' leaders are not alone in suppressing public [awareness] of the *JHA-Isis* [orbital foulup].

**B9** When the Johns Hopkins Univ Hist.sci Dep't received (written receipt: 1992/10/30) news of [*JHA*'s orbital mess], the Dep't's R.Kargon (late of *Isis*' Board) secretly induced JHU's library to cancel its *DIO* subscription. (See *DIO 2.1* p.2.)

**B10** The Muffia has sworn on a stack of *Almajests* that it will never cite *DIO*. And, when H.Thurston was attempting to publish DR's discovery of the below-cited [§B11] Greek→Babylonian link, a leading Muffiosio exclamationarily attempted to dissuade Thurston from citing DR at all. For 25 yrs, this sort of censorship has been the *sole* effective Muffia tactic against the Ptolemy-skeptic dissenters it loathes: R.Newton & DR. (Muffiosio's demonstrated preference for running away and hiding is perfectly understandable, given their uniformly-disastrous record when attempting direct scholarly reply. See, e.g., *DIO 1.1* ¶5 §A, fn 15, fn 20, *DIO 1.3* fn 288, *DIO 2.1* ¶4 fn 65, *DIO 2.3* ¶3 fn 31 & §C31.)

**B11** And now, Muffia capo Noel C. Swerdlow is organizing for MIT (!) a Dibner Institute ancient astronomy conference 1994/5/6-8, crammed (naturally) with his Muffia pals. But NCS neither invited DR nor even informed him of the event's occurrence. This, even though the main theme of the Dibner conference is Babylonian & Greek astronomy — and DR is discoverer of one of the major links between the two (intimately related to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hipparchan solar orbit cited above): the first firm evidence of Babylonian use of Greek astronomical information. (See *DIO 1.1* ¶6 §A.) This discovery is praised by the Dibner conference's K.Moesgaard (*DIO 2.1* ¶2 §D) and by no less than B. van der Waerden (*DIO 1.1* ¶6 fn 4). Cited by Dibner conference's C.Walker 1993 (Graz 1991/9 conference proceedings) & the Amer.Astr.Soc.'s HAD Bibliography. (Uncited by *Isis*' rigorously *DIO*-frei *Current Bibliography*, which instead lists both [orbital papers]!) The DR Greek→Babylonian discovery is regarded by Hugh Thurston's *Early Astronomy* (Springer 1994 pp.123&128) as the main evidence suggesting that Muffiosio may have things reversed, when promoting their endearingly whacky central fundamentalist tenet: that lowgrade Babylonian astronomical math inspired high pre-Ptolemy Greek math astronomy. See *DIO 1.1* ¶6 §B9-§B13 (pp.53-54). [Also here at ¶9 §K9.]

**B12** The head of the Dibner Institute, Jed Buchwald, is currently on *Isis*' Council. (I am told that he was formerly at the Univ Toronto's Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology — [whence] the [orbital] papers were issued!) Buchwald has refused to accept or return three recent

DR phonecalls.<sup>4</sup>

**B13** Is the Hist.sci community proud of the foregoing record? — not to mention its failure to arrange a debate of the closely-related 25-yr Ptolemy Controversy? Does it wish to continue indefinitely condoning the censorial behavior of the Muffia, the *JHA*, & *Isis*? (I am hoping that the Dibner Inst will not add its reputation to this list.)

**B14** For years, Muffiosio have slandered DR behind-the-back, instead of engaging in face-to-face open debate, as DR has repeatedly urged (*American Journal of Physics* 1987/3 p.236, *DIO passim*, & 1994/4/20 to Dibner Institute). The upcoming Dibner Inst gathering represents a convenient opportunity finally to arrange such an encounter, since Muffiosio Swerdlow, Toomer, B.Goldstein, Aaboe, Jones, Pedersen, Britton, Graßhoff, etc. will all be on hand. [In the event, Pedersen did not appear.]

**B15** I also request the opportunity to cross-examine these scholars, regarding their logic, slanders, & the more sensational among the *dozens* of hilarious Muffia scholarly-pratfalls which *DIO&JHA* have pointed out over the last few years. (The Muffia, with customary integrity, hasn't publicly acknowledged any of them.) See enclosed 45-item partial catalog:<sup>5</sup> [*DIO 4.1* ¶4 §A]. See also "Black Affidavit" (*DIO 1.3* ¶10, pp.176-177), which accents some of the funniest.

**B16** More importantly, I further request that (as thoroughly as possible in the limited time before the Dibner meeting) this DR catalog BE REFEREED BY COMPETENT SCHOLARS — preferably by real scientists, not the same Hist.sci see-no-evils who've allowed the Ptolemy Controversy to fester for a quarter century. (Many of the muffs listed are so obvious that they will require but minutes to check out. Hist.sci archons should have done this a *long* time ago.)

**B17** At the proposed debate, Muffiosio will greatly outnumber skeptics (see *DIO 2.1* ¶2 §H20). Well, that's OK by DR. Question: just how high must the odds be, before Muffia braves are willing to openly debate those they have never hesitated to slander in private?

**B18** The following 45 (yes *forty-five*) errors by Muffiosio (& Muffia-circle scholars & forums) have been pointed out serially since *DIO*'s inception, over 3 years ago. (Many are displayed in the satirelet, "Black Affidavit": *DIO 1.3* ¶10.) [Note added by DR: The 45-item catalog of Muffia muffs was attached to this 4/26 letter to *Isis*; but it will not be repeated here, since it was printed in its entirety at *DIO 4.1* ¶4 ("Casting Pearls Before Pyglets") §A. I should add that this 45-item collection is not just an exercise in superficial carping. Most of the items are substantial errors — indeed, in many cases, the error guts the entire thesis of the argument or paper it appeared in.] From those responsible for creating and/or promoting this impressively Reputable-looking collection of quasi-kwank<sup>6</sup> literature, there has been: no response at all. Except the above-noted attempted suppression of *DIO* itself.

<sup>4</sup> 1994/4/15, 4/17, & 4/20. My concerns about the upcoming Dibner conference were very briefly indicated (4/20) to the Dibner sec'y and my phone number (410-889-1414) was left with her on all 3 occasions. (There is always an answering machine on here. I.e., Buchwald did not phone back while I was out.)

<sup>5</sup> It will save time if the Muffia will, previous to the conference, simply cite those DR-listed errors which it does not agree to. This substantial catalog of Muffia muffs is enclosed here because the very same Muffia has for years baselessly claimed that the work of their nemeses R.Newton & DR are riddled with scores of serious mistakes, even though Muffiosio have yet to meet challenges to produce the alleged lengthy list of alleged RN-DR errors — a list which continues to exhibit a Joe-McCarthy-like elusiveness: *DIO 1.3* fn 252. Having themselves noisily & haughtily raised the issue of proneness to errors, Muffiosio have only published a very occasional mote (to support this broad-brush smear-falsehood against others' work), & showing no interest in tending to the beams in their own eyes.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., *DIO 1.1* ¶5 fn 12; and *DIO 1.2-3* §E4, §G3, & §M7.

**B19** The day before embarking for M.I.T., DR ran into sometime *Isis* person and HsS biggie Robert Kargon on the Johns Hopkins campus (Ames Hall→Gilman Hall, 1994/5/4, 13:10 EDT). I asked him straight out why he had, behind my back, gotten my journal *DIO* removed from the JHU Library. His sneering reply: “You call that a journal? No refereeing . . .” (In light of *Isis*’ [orbital] affair, ironic comment here would be too easy.) So I replied that he should go right ahead and referee it. Kargon: “That’s really how I’m going to spend my time.” (Catch-22, anyone?) As Kargon tried fleeing, as fast as his feet could blur, DR commented (to his back) on the arrogance, and asked why it was impossible to correct such *JHA-Isis* errors as 128 – 65 = 65 (see *DIO* 1.2 §G9 and *DIO* 4.1 ¶4 & *Competence Held Hostage* #1), simply because he didn’t like the journal announcing the errors. Kargon spoke without the slightest (deliberate) humor & with naked contempt for *DIO*’s “screed”; as for his action at the Library, he explained (implying no censorship intended) that JHU’s library can only hold so many journals. (I wasn’t previously aware of Kargon’s librarian credentials, nor of his concern over library space problems.)

**B20** I arrived at M.I.T. late on 5/5, and appeared next morning at the conference, to the obvious joy of Muffiosi. I there handed out the following letter to the participants & the audience.<sup>7</sup> (Throughout the 3 days, the former usually outnumbered the latter.)

To: Attenders of 1994/5/6-8 Dibner Institute Conference,  
 “Ancient Astronomy & Celestial Divination” 1994/5/6  
 From: Dennis Rawlins, *DIO* & *The Journal for Hysterical Astronomy*  
 Box 19935, Baltimore, MD 21211-0935 (phone: 410-889-1414)

**B21** Many of you attending this conference are probably unaware that it was organized by a cult, which my journal, *DIO*, has entitled “the Muffia”: a narrow, scientifically inept (though occasionally useful & productive) clique that has for decades pretended to total proprietorship of the ancient astronomy field. (Muffia capos participating in this conference include: N.Swerdlow, . . . B.Goldstein, A.Jones, A.Aaboe.)

**B22** Muffiosi’s standard tactics towards heterodoxy: [1] Systematically non-cite or slander work that dissents from the Muffia’s own exceedingly peculiar interpretations of Babylonian & Greek astronomy. [2] Flee every one of the debate-challenges issued for years by DR. (E.g., *American Journal of Physics* 1987/3 & *History of Science Society Newsletter* 1991/7. By phone to Dibner Institute 1994/4/20. By letter to Hist.sciSoc 1994/4/26, with attached 45-item partial catalog of Muffia scholarly muffs, both serious & humorous — frequently both.)

**B23** I have come to this conference — emphatically *uninvited* — to provide (insofar as that may be possible from the floor) the shunned other-sides of the two central ancient astronomy controversies: [A] the interrelation of Babylonian & Greek astronomy, and [B] the honesty of the honest Muffia’s hero, C.Ptolemy.

[A] The Muffia follows its late don, Otto Neugebauer, in contending that high Greek math astronomy was (before Ptolemy) heavily dependent upon crude indoor Seleukid-era Babylonian astrology (which lacked trigonometric orbits — or even a latitude for Babylon!), a notion which *J.Hyster.Astron.* 1.2 (§G3) compares to “trading Chartres for a shack.”

[B] Muffiosi revere & laud the Serapic-priest-astrologer Claudius Ptolemy as “the Greatest Astronomer of Antiquity”, though Ptolemy has been known to knowledgeable astronomers for centuries (since Tycho, 1598) as a massive plagiarist and indoor faker of alleged “observations”. Two simple examples. [i] Ptolemy’s grossly erroneous solar “observations” agree 50 times better

with Hipparchos’ indoor solar tables than with the actual outdoor position of the Sun. See, e.g., D. Rawlins *American Journal of Physics* 55:235 (1987) p.236. [ii] Ptolemy’s fabrications were so clumsy that he inadvertently assigned discrepant dates to the same celestial event (the 136 AD evening greatest elongation of Venus): 136/12/25 (*Almajest* 10.1) & 136/11/18 (*Almajest* 10.2). DR (*idem*): “That is, Ptolemy in the *Alm* states that he *observed* first-hand the *same celestial event* on two different occasions *thirty-seven days apart* — a blunder unique in astronomical annals, and the coup-de-bloop for the notion that Ptolemy was a legitimate scientist.”

**B24** In faithful imitation of the unfalsifiability that characterizes better-known fundamentalists, the Muffia claims that such revelations have not altered in the slightest [a] its high evaluation of Ptolemy, or [b] its precisely-null evaluation of modern skeptics. (Curious contrast: *DIO* recognizes some merit here&there in Muffia output and has therefore praised it on numerous occasions. But, as with one voice, Muffiosi profess to find *exactly* zero value in *all* DR output.) The cultishly-cohesive Muffia is actually proud of that unblemished record.

**B25** History of ancient astronomy is too wonderful a field to be left exclusively to persons so lamentably lacking in the very skills and attitudes which are the hallmarks of science.

**B26** If you are interested in open & evidence-responsive discussion, technical competence, unexpected new revelations of the roots of high ancient astronomy, plus occasional supplementary-satire shirt-unstuffings, then you are urged to get on the mailing list for *DIO* & *The Journal for Hysterical Astronomy*.

**B27** A few sample *DIO-JHA* copies will be available from me (until the supply is exhausted), either at the conference or at my room [# 1907] in the Cambridge Center Marriott (617-494-6600) . . . .

**B28** Attached to this 5/6 handout were photocopies of: [a] the 45-item list, [b] *DIO*’s 4/26 letter to *Isis*, & [c] “Black Affidavit” (*DIO* 1.3 ¶10).

**B29** As pointed out at *DIO* 4.1 fn 2, “HsS’s standard submit-a-formal-ms reply (contra *DIO* 1.2fn 165), to *DIO*’s 4/26 letter [text above at §B2-§B17], evaded the debate-challenge (by delay) & *no-commented* the 45-item list, despite emphatic 4/26 urging that the list be ‘REFEREED BY COMPETENT SCHOLARS — preferably by real scientists’ . . .” (See §B16.) We will reprint that HsS letter (1994/5/16) below (§B31-§B33), after a few further comments here: [a] The HsS 5/16 letter is in just the same tradition — and is about as sincere — as the Hoskin letter quoted above at §A5. [b] My encounters with numerous tooth-grinding Hist.sci people (§B19 & fn 11) did not encourage me to believe that *Isis* was genuinely anxious to publish *DIO*’s accounts of its hilarious attempts at technically competent astronomical scholarship.

**B30** Particularly disturbing was the fact that the HsS letter begins with the blatantly false claim (§B31) that HsS & *Isis* were unaware that the *DIO*’s sent them were submissions to *Isis*. (Resorting to deception is frequently attractive to a certain type, since it can provide short-term relief from an irritating critic. I will not here re-discuss the deeper, longterm damage one thereby suicidally cooperates in permitting an imagined enemy to inflict: see *DIO* 1.3 §P3.) Given the HsS’ concern at the threat it perceives in *DIO*, it is incredible on the face of it that not a single one of numerous high HsS recipients of *DIO* ever noticed this. (And the point is, in any case, irrelevant to the necessity of retracting errors one is informed of in detail: especially key errors, which have appeared prominently in one’s own journal.) Moreover, on 1993/12/31, DR directly mailed copies of *DIO* 1.2-3 to both of those top HsS and *Isis* officials who were responsible for the orbital disaster (lead paper of *Isis* 1991/9): Stephen Brush (1991 HsS President) and Ronald Numbers (1991

<sup>7</sup> [Note added 1994/10: The audience, from time to time, included 0 Gingerich, G.Toomer, D.Pingree, G.Saliba, and my former Kirkland House (Harvard) tutor, physicist & historian Erwin Hiebert.]

*Isis* Editor), with LARGE-LETTERED handwritten notes<sup>8</sup> on both copies, at the Table of Contents (p.94 = inside front cover), reading: “SEE p.140” (S.Brush) and “SEE pp.123, 140” (R.Numbers). At p.140, one finds (§J7) the plain *DIO* declaration: “See inside back-cover *DIO* [publisher’s] statement: this *DIO* analysis is hereby submitted to *Isis*, with no editorial constraints whatever.” *Isis*’ (post-conference) letter follows:

To: DR, *DIO*, P.O.Box 19935, Baltimore, MD 21211-0935 1994/5/16

From: *Isis* [Jon Harkness, Managing Editor]

**B31** I am sorry that we did not recognize previous issues of *DIO* that you have sent to our office as formal submissions to *Isis*. I must confess that somehow we missed the third paragraph of the inside back cover. [DR note added 1994/10: See fn 8.]

**B32** Now that we do recognize your work as a submission to *Isis*, we must ask that you come a bit closer to meeting the guidelines in the “Suggestions for Contributors to *Isis*” found in the front matter of each issue of *Isis*. Indeed, if we are to take *DIO* seriously as a publication (which I expect is your desire),<sup>9</sup> item 7 of our “Suggestions” precludes us from considering something that you have already published in *DIO*.

**B33** Please send us a *manuscript* (following the guidelines of our “Suggestions”), & we will be happy to consider your work for publication in *Isis*.

**B34** Reactions: [a] Having already submitted unpublished work to *Isis* in the past, only to find it later published under another author’s name (*DIO* 1.2 §I13), I was not about to repeat that mistake. (So scholarship must either be submitted to *Isis* — risking theft — or it isn’t *citabile*? How nice for archons.) [b] *Isis* appears to be under the curious impression that DR fervently desires *DIO* to be blessed by the imprimatur of being taken seriously by the HsS. Comments: [i] I think that the question which is most germane to HsS wellness is rather: when will *DIO* start taking *Isis* seriously? [ii] DR knows perfectly well that he is already taken in deadly earnest in higher HsS councils. (Given the distinctly non-blasé reactions to *DIO*, cited at §B19 and fn 11, it would be fruitless for the HsS even to try denying this.) Indeed, upon learning of *DIO* 1, the HsS tried calming the anticipated storm by publishing a note on the new journal — but then foolishly undid its own pretense by giving Muffia nonsense pageone *Isis* coverage — while not citing any *DIO* research, not even in years of *Isis*’ minutely-complete annual *Current Bibliography*: see *DIO* 1.2 fn 178.

**B35** But the most critical questions are, as usual, the unstated ones. [a] What of the 45-item list of Muffia&HsS muffs? It was not copyrighted at the time. (It’s since become so in *DIO* 4.1 ¶4 §A.) And what of refereeing and-or publishing it (§B42 & fn 11)? Also: why no contact with Hugh Thurston, an expert at both the math and the literature, who (as *Isis* was informed: §B4 & §B38) had already examined the matter? [b] What sort of games are we playing? DR submits *DIO* analyses for years *without reply or a single citation of his results*, and then is supposed to believe *Isis*’ sudden expression of desire for *more* scholarship? After all these submissions, Rossiter then asks rather (4/22) for a letter for publication; but, when it’s sent (4/26), it isn’t published. Instead, *Isis* re-reverses direction, lies (§B30) with characteristic Hist.sci adeptness,<sup>10</sup> & asks for: yet another ms. (This ever-changing, ever-doing-nothing editorial act is so familiar that DR explicitly declined to jump through any more hoops: fn 11.) [c] Bottom line: *Isis* has published false science and is ducking its responsibility to retract. This evasion has been accomplished with such sly subtlety that it has merely been boldprint-headlined in *DIO* 4.1’s *Competence Held Hostage* #1, now read by hundreds of leading scholars the world over. (When it comes to natural comedy — of the shifty-eyed Jonathan Winters variety — there’s nothing that’s

<sup>8</sup> Of which DR retains photocopies.

<sup>9</sup> *Isis* is a bit confused here: see §§B34&B35.

<sup>10</sup> *DIO* 2.1 p.2 *Info-Note*.

quite up to a gang of scurrying careerists.) [d] In its hope to have DR pre-censor his *DIO* 1.2-3 exposures of Hist.sci buffoonery, *Isis* pretends that DR must write its retraction for it — as if DR must act as a truth-double for Hist.sci, or as if *Isis* cannot tell the truth unless DR is pulling puppet strings to move its tongue. Comments: [i] DR has already submitted plenty of material which *Isis* is free to use. (As for copyright: *Isis* can break its own rule. It has certainly treated DR exceptionally in the past when it felt like it! — see *DIO* 1.2 §I13 item [c]. And DR is asking no fee for reprinting *DIO* matter. Moreover: if *Isis* has a rule against citing *DIO*’s findings, then in *Isis*’ eyes §B32 these results are effectively unpublished, which should permit their publication in *Isis* as fresh material. [How’s that for turning censorship against itself?]) [ii] Without DR’s permission, *Isis* can retract anytime it suffers an unexpected attack of integrity. Indeed, it could long since have simply refereed and cited *DIO* 1.2-3’s exposure of its orbital mess — but it still hasn’t done even this (or, indeed, ever cited any *DIO* research), which says about all that needs to be said of its pretense to editorial propriety. With these thoughts in mind, and with some distaste for corresponding at all with professional smoothies (an upfront person is always at a disadvantage when dealing with such types), I finally replied:

To: M.Rossiter & Hist.sci Soc, Cornell U, Ithaca, NY 14850 1994/7/6

From: DR, *DIO*, Box 19935, Balto, MD 21211-0935 (410-889-1414)

**B36** I have received the History of science Society’s predictably non-responsive 1994/5/16 reply to *DIO*’s 1994/4/26 open letter to the Society. Your just-send-us-a-manuscript reply (§B31-§B33) evaded the 4/26 letter’s entire substance. (Will you even *allege* that this was accidental?) In case the HsS is trying to be funny, trust me: you don’t have to try.

**B37** *DIO*’s 4/26 letter detailed high History-of-science atrocities, attaching a 45-item list of often-astounding scholarly errors (most easily-verifiable) published by leading Hist.sci forums, including your Society’s *Isis*. And the elementary-school-level Muffia muffs of Alexander Jones’ 1991/5 lead *JHA* paper — repeatedly cited in the list — underlie Jones’ 1991/9 *Isis* lead paper. The 4/26 letter asked that you seek scientifically able parties to referee these matters. (See, e.g., *DIO-J.HA* 1.2 §§E3-E4, F3, 112, J2, J7, G9, & fn 73.) However, the HsS has reported no alien contacts since.

**B38** Cambridge-trained mathematician (& 1994 Springer astronomy-history author) H.Thurston: [a] has *already refereed* the 1991 *JHA-Isis* Jones errors (1<sup>st</sup> detected&published by *DIO*) and [b] has verified the ordmag 1’ fits of all three *DIO* Greek orbits that solve the very Hipparchos solar-position trios which Jones declared unfittable. *Thurston’s phone numbers were provided in DIO’s 4/26 letter*, but you haven’t phoned him. Just how bad is Hist.sci innumeracy? You can’t even dial the 10 digits that will put you through to Thurston? *Science*’s Eliot Marshall says it was easy.

**B39** In this context, your submit-an-ms ploy is comparable to answering a warning about the Inquisition by, rather than launching prompt opposition to suppression, instead: requesting that the notice be re-written, double-spaced, and re-submitted in quadruplicate (as per the 5/16-recommended “Suggestions for Contributors to *Isis*”) to a Church organ.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For reasons obvious from the 4/26 letter & *DIO-J.HA* 1.2 fn 165, I won’t jump through the editorial hoops of a journal whose censorial priorities are intimately known to me in advance. If you dears hope [a] to eventually find a technical excuse for continued inaction, or, failing that, [b] to try minimizing the debacle by ignoring refereeing and just running an inevitably-obfuscatory reply by reclusive Jones, then: you can play these games without my further input. An editor now suggesting submission of *yet another* DR ms to *Isis* (contra *idem*) has the same grip on reality as one who, after gagging&robbing (1983&9) a visitor to his house, then plans to meet criticism by straightforwardly mailing the victim a polite invitation to a 2nd visit. Facts (most already published & sent you) that are causing *DIO* to disrespectfully decline: [a] Involved Hist.sci archons have reacted with evasion, disdain, and-or naked hostility to Hist.sci-critic DR’s inconvenient fertility. They ought (see last parenthesis of *DIO-J.HA* 1.2 §D4) to have *long since*

**B40** We can save alot of wasted correspondence if we cut right to the bare facts you're unilaterally avoiding.

**B41** Even while your *History of science Society Newsletter* (e.g., 1994/1 p.1) boasts of *outward* signs of HsS success (increased circulation & funding), the HsS continues to suffer a systematic decline in *substantial* technical competence and thus integrity. Which is why the Society is running scared-censorial with respect to *DIO*: you're worried that the larger academic community will catch on. Well, given the [simple] math errors supporting your [leadoff] 1991/9 *Isis* paper (Jones), HsS' trepidation is understandable. In striking contrast to *Isis*' suppressive fear of *DIO*'s criticisms: the lead article of our current *DIO 4.1* severely attacks a central *DIO* scholarly position, as well as *DIO*'s entire approach to science-history. *DIO* has sufficient confidence in the soundness of our work that such publication (and this intensely self-critical event will certainly not be unique) is no problem for us.<sup>12</sup>

**B42** I repeat my 4/26 request that you REFEREE (& publish): [a] the Jones math errors underlying *JHA-Isis*' paper-pair, & [b] *DIO*'s discovery of the 3 historic orbits Jones declared unfindable. (*Isis*' honest printing of the resulting ref report would constitute a hypothetical metamorphosis which you can accomplish on your own, without editorial-formality-botheration of *DIO*. See *DIO-J.HA 1.2* §113[c] and fn 165.) Until you perform refereeing (which you know should've preceded your cart-before-horse invitation of a DR ms for *Isis*), further correspondence is pointless.

**B43** Nonetheless, *DIO* stands by its unequalled and regrettably-unmutual invitation (fn 12) to **verbatim** *DIO* publication of a Hist.sci Soc and-or Muffia manuscript (up to 15 pp), on this or any other scientific-history subject. In brief, Hist.sci's years of monumentally unprincipled treatment of *DIO* (and R.Newton & DR) will not be returned in kind.

cc: David Lindberg (HsS Pres), Eliot Marshall (*Science*), etc.

**B44** No reply has been received.

headed Andrew D. White's 1896 lesson at *Hist Warfare Science with Theology . . . 1:77-78*. (Careerist-identification test: do *historians* not care how *history* will rate their rôle in key scholarship's reception?) These archons include: reply-squasher Thackray, library-sterilizer Kargon, return-to-sender Hoskin, wastebasket-case Rossiter, chat-ducker Buchwald, & back-turner Toomer. [b] You haven't reported refing the material *DIO* has sent HsS (including the 4/26 letter's 45-item list, which you can ref&publish, anytime) & haven't phoned volunteer-ref Thurston. [c] During *DIO*'s 3 1/2 years, math-inept *Isis* (even its *Current Bibliography!*) and *JHA* have set a vacuum-seal ban on all citations of the seminal findings & achievements of numerous mathematically able *DIO* papers. (Hist.sci archons have long arrogantly promoted their own handsome journals as judicious Class, privately [§B19] scorning *DIO* as unrefereed [!!!] Trash. So confrontation-comparison of *DIO*'s impregnable math vs. Hist.sci's 45-gaffe list, is a HsS inversion-nightmare.) [d] Buchwald (HsS&Dibner) & you ignored, until 8 days too late, the 4/26 letter's urging that face-to-face debate be arranged at the then-upcoming 5/6-8 Dibner Inst-Muffia conference. [e] At the Dibner meeting, *DIO* sample issues were stolen. [f] DR's last submission to HsS' *Isis* met with censorship (1983) and (effectively) theft (1989). (By the very scholar HsS censorship had protected! See what I mean about effortless risibility?) You don't even reply to *DIO*'s 4/26 report of *Isis*' behavior on this. (Details: *DIO-J.HA 1.2* §113 & fn 164. See also fn 56-58.)

<sup>12</sup> Indeed, *DIO* is willing to print whatever scholarship you, the Muffia, and-or the *JHA* wish to send us, however blunt. We have (*DIO-J.HA 1.2-3* fn 16 & fn 174 and *DIO 2.1* ¶2 fn 22) long regularly cited our detractors' papers & praised their valid findings. (This, even while you & Muffiosi *utterly* refuse to cite *DIO*'s achievements, referring instead to each others' censorial output. Standard Hist.sci policy, noted at *DIO-J.HA 1.2* §C11: *cite the non-citers and non-cite the citers.*) HsS is increasingly a business, whose image-protection priorities prevent it from consistently matching *DIO*'s open policy: [a] HsS is pretending to be more competent (or less incompetent) — especially in math & math astronomy — than it actually is. [b] It pretends to referee archonal papers when there is in fact no substantial refereeing going on: *DIO-J.HA* §§B4, C6, & F4. (I know this both from [output]: [ . . . *DIO-J.HA 1.2* §B4] and from direct inside testimony.) Indeed, *nearly 3 years later you still haven't* reported refereeing Jones' 1991 Sept *Isis* fantasy: you didn't seriously referee it beforehand (despite 1991 January warnings in *DIO 1.1*, re-published at *DIO-J.HA 1.2* §§B1&C5-C6), and (5/16) didn't even acknowledge *DIO*'s recent 1994/4/26 suggestion of refereeing (& didn't phone Thurston).

## C Oddly Large Errors

**C1** In *J.HA 1.2* (§F3), DR resuscitated an R.Newton letter which threw light on one of 0 Gingerich's dimmer effusions. I later came upon a DR letter of the same period which did likewise, so I provide its text here. The letter comments on the peculiar coincidence that all of Ptolemy's perfectly theory-accordant Mars "observations" (*Almajest* 10.7-8) are pretty near orbital octants, where the equant theory (adopted by Ptolemy) is least satisfactory.<sup>13</sup> (See R.Newton *Crime of Claudius Ptolemy* 1977 p.302.)

To: Robert Newton

1980/11/11

From: DR

**C2** The [item] 0 added (since the [SAO] preprint of 1977) to his [1980] Sept. *QJRS* paper was (p.262, bott.) that *both* observational and theoretical errors were far larger for Mars (than for Jup. & Sat.). 0 doesn't say so, but the devastating point here . . . is that: if there were lots of observations in the big hypothetical data bank 0 believes in, then why didn't [the allegedly-just-selecting-not-fudging] Ptolemy choose non-octant [observations], where the [errors] would be much smaller? That is, in a large collection of real observations, there would be . . . more data of small error than large; thus, even "selected" (theory-accordant) observations (0's hypothesis ii) would tend to cluster around the times when the theory's error is null . . . . This is obviously not the case for Mars.

**C3** Similarly, one sees that, of the four alleged solar observations reported by Ptolemy (*Almajest* 3.1&7), most are from the least accurate seasonal points of his solar orbit (¶6 §A2): A.Equinox & S.Solstice, which are more than half again worse than his V.Equinox, and nearly twice as bad as his W.Solstice.

**C4** Alleged observations of the W.Solstice are entirely unreported by Ptolemy, though the WS is the most accurate of his solar theory's 4 seasonal points. At epoch 140 AD, the lateness error of Ptolemy's solar theory was about:  $26^h 1/2 + [10^h 3/4] \sin[\lambda - 38^\circ]$ , where  $\lambda$  = true longitude. The errors of this theory<sup>14</sup> at the cardinal points were:  $20^h - [VE]$ ,  $35^h - [SS]$ ,  $33^h [AE]$ ,  $18^h [WS]$ .

**C5** Again (as at §C2): if Ptolemy were merely selecting theory-accordant observations from a real data-pool (instead of entirely fabricating the alleged observations), wouldn't we expect most of his data to be reported for his solar theory's most accurate cardinal points, the V.Equinox & the W.Solstice?<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This is so perverse that one wonders if Ptolemy was attempting to refute a critic — or (one may speculate) an ancient who had a theory that was (vs. the equant) more accurate at the octants. (Not necessarily a Keplerian theory, though I wouldn't rule out such.)

<sup>14</sup> The errors of "observation" were  $20^h + [VE]$ ,  $35^h 1/2 [SS]$ ,  $33^h$  [both AE]. The two  $1^h$  disagreements with theory (VE&SS) occurred because Ptolemy's fabrications were not carried out from his solar tables but rather by the simple-arithmetic method discussed at ¶6 §A2. For the irony of these discrepancies, see *J.Hyster.Astron 1.2* fn 64.

<sup>15</sup> [Note added 1995: Of course, if there were no prior W.Solstice observations (and none are extant), then Ptolemy wouldn't have anything to compare a contemporary WS to. But, that alibi doesn't apply to his V.Equinox situation, where even if we use an overlarge (vs. *DIO 1.1* ¶6 fn 13) standard deviation  $\sigma = 6$  hrs for these data (this being the upper error limit suggested by Archimedes, Hipparchos, & Ptolemy: *Almajest* 3.1), then the respective Gauss-distribution probabilities of Ptolemy's AE & SS errors (both many millions to one) are ordmag 10,000 and 100,000 times the Gaussian probability of his VE error. I recommend to the reader the instructive but oft-neglected discussion at R.Newton *Crime of Claudius Ptolemy* (Johns Hopkins Univ 1977) pp.343-344 (also p.92), demonstrating that *no matter what we choose for  $\sigma$* , the probability of Ptolemy's observations being real is minuscule. Reasoning summarized at R.Newton *Origins of Ptolemy's Astronomical Parameters* (U.Md & Johns Hopkins U. 1982) p.43.]