

basis and a strong observational support to the scheme of Lindblad which has been an epoch-making conjecture.

Meanwhile, a further important property of stellar motions was being pursued. This was the so-called asymmetry of stellar motions. Astronomers at the time were groping around to explain ellipsoidal distribution and the asymmetry of motions. The phenomenon of asymmetry was explained in a simple and elegant manner by Lindblad through the rotation of the subsystems in the Galaxy. One should also recall the outstanding work of Oort, deriving his famous differential rotation formulae providing thus a further confirmation of the rotation of the Galaxy.

An astronomer's life is rich in surprises. Excitement and emotion arrive with an important new discovery, provided the astronomer has overall maturity and up-to-date information to see the relevance of the finding within the framework of the known Universe.

Discussion

D. DeVorkin : The original intent of the Solar Union was *not* to give formal papers but to conduct business and interact.

P. Pismis : Yes, and now it is the other way around.

The posters included in Astronomy Posters Abstracts are only given by title : *N. Donich - A Tragic Destiny of an IAU Pioneer* (M. Stavinschi, Bucharest Observatory, Roumania). *Outstanding Russian Astronomers B.V. Numerov and M.S. Zverev* (D.D. Polojentsev, Pulkovo Observatory, Russia). *The History of the International Latitude Service* (M. Meinig, Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie, Potsdam, Germany). *A. Orlov's and E. Fedorov's Contributions to the Soviet Latitude Service and the Connections of this Service with the ILS, BIH, IPMS* (A. Korsun, Main Astronomical Observatory, Kiev, Unkrainia)

WORK IN PROGRESS

THE BACKGROUND AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE GENERAL HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY

Owen Gingerich, *Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA*

The idea of a General History of Astronomy was conceived by P.G. Kulikovskiy, the first president of IAU Commission 41, and very much supported by Eugeniev Rybka, the second Commission president. At an editorial board meeting held in Cracow in 1972 (under the joint sponsorship of the IAU and the International Union for the History and Philosophy of Science) the general scope of the project was delineated, and subsequently

Michael A. Hoskin agreed to serve as General Editor, and he in turn negotiated a publishing agreement with Cambridge University Press.

The first half of the 20th-century volume, 4A, was published in 1984, and volume 2A, which was brought to completion by Curtis Wilson, appeared in 1989. Most of the subsequent delays have been caused by tardy authors. Hoskin is fond of pointing out that a convoy is only as fast as the slowest ship, and this has proved true of the GHA project.

However, volume 2B has been ready for over a year, and a lack of attention by the Cambridge University Press has prevented its appearance this year. The project finally seems to be back on track. John North has taken over the editorship of volume 1 from Olaf Pedersen, and Hoskin's own volume 3 should be ready within a year, as should my volume 4B.

Discussion

W. Orchiston : Is John North aware that the British Museum has a book titled "Astronomer before the telescope" in press, where there are already a number of authors who have already done the research and groundwork which may be suitable to be developed as chapters for the C.U.P. book?

O. Gingerich : The British Museum book has an excellent set of authors, and unfortunately for the GHA project, there will be a considerable overlap.

J.-C. Pecker : It would be necessary to insure that volume III contains the ingredients necessary to understand IVb-cosmology, such as Mach's ideas, or Michelson-Morley experiments about ether and light velocity .

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY

S. Dick, *US Naval Observatory, Washington DC, USA* gave a report in the name of John Lankford, Editor of the Encyclopedia.

Discussion

A. Gurshtein : The idea of this Encyclopedia is very important but unfortunately the situation is such as Prof. Gingerich described for General History but absolutely reversed. I was forced to give my entries before May of the last year and from that time tried to communicate with John Lankford several times by e-mail but in vain. The communication to discuss some current points should be improved.

S. Débarbat gave informations about the project of a **History of the BIH**, saying that **B. Guinot** (last director of the BIH) has still in mind to write on the subject on which he began to work from archival material.

A NEW WORKING GROUP IN HISTORY AND ITS ACTIVITIES : THE "ARBEITSKREIS ASTRONOMIEGESCHICHTE" OF THE ASTRONOMISCHE GESELLSCHAFT

P. Brosche, *Observatorium Hoher List, Bonn, Germany*

W. Dick, *Institut für angewandte Geodäsie, Potsdam, Germany*

The *Arbeitskreis Astronomiegeschichte of the Astronomische Gesellschaft* has been founded during the annual meeting of the society at Jena (Germany) on September 14, 1992. Aims of the working group are: (1)