

THE HISTORICAL SEARCH FOR STELLAR PARALLAX (ADDENDUM)

BY J. D. FERNIE

David Dunlap Observatory, University of Toronto, Richmond Hill, Ontario

I am much indebted to Dr. Joseph Ashbrook of Harvard College Observatory for drawing to my attention an error in the second part of the above paper which appeared in the October 1975 issue of the JOURNAL (Ferne 1975). On page 231 I stated that the idea of dynamical parallax was first put forward by F. G. W. Struve in 1837. In fact, however, Bessel had himself, in a letter of June 1, 1812 to Olbers, calculated the dynamical parallax of 61 Cygni, and so preceded Struve by a quarter-century (Ashbrook 1954).

This also modifies my statement on page 234 that Bessel chose 61 Cygni as a candidate for a trigonometric parallax search simply because it was the star of highest known proper motion. It also raises the interesting question of why Bessel waited 25 years before beginning a full attack on the trigonometric parallax of 61 Cygni. Possibly it was because Fraunhofer's heliometer was not available to him until 1829.

REFERENCES

- Ashbrook, J. 1954, *The Observatory*, **74**, 213.
Ferne, J. D. 1975, *J.R.A.S. Canada*, **69**, 153, 222.