

Euler to Wettstein
Berlin, 27 September 1749
Letter 263 (2764)

[...] I ask you to forgive me for not having responded to your letter of June 30, only after having received that of 1 September with which you graciously honored me. I am very upset that you lost your child so soon; the same happened to us in regards to our twins who only lived seventeen weeks. Your approval of my thoughts on the diminishing years was encouraging, and I have no doubt that the more that the ancient observations are carefully observed, the greater my idea will be established. However, I will be very upset if Mr. Lemonnier has been mistaken on the contents of the Arabic manuscript, which he brought to my attention and since I already counted on the observations that I would find. I can see that today a great deal of attention is given to publishing the works of the ancient Arabs, however I preferred infinitely more the works where they provided a detailed description of their observations, rather than those that contain only their conclusions. The later of these is their catalogues of fixed stars which are practically useless to us; however their observations from which they determined the location of the stars is unknown to us. Since the authors did not possess knowledge of refraction and were only largely aware of the elevation of the pole and the obliquity of the ecliptic, since these points being particularly difficult, the conclusions at which they arrived can be of no illumination to us. We know for example that they applied themselves with great care in observing the sun; however there is nothing to be found in all these works that we have troubled ourselves to translate until now, because it would be through the suns' observations that I could verify my conjecture.

I fear that our subscribers will soon lose patience if the publication of the *Uranography* drags on much longer. However I have the honor of sending to you their names, and to thank you most graciously for Halley's tables and the paper on the solar system that you had the kindness to add. Do I dare to ask you to add on still the Bills of mortality published by the clergy since 1739 to the present with a copy

of Sherwin's Mathematical tables printed by W. Mouns and T. Pager. If you don't mind adding to all this a few pounds of tobacco I will be much obliged since my stock is getting smaller and smaller. I have been told from Basel that Mr. Robins had just published a work in which he continues to treat me horribly. If this is true I ask to also include a copy.

I have not seen any ideas of the Jew, Raphael Levi to find the longitudes. However, shortly you will have the pleasure to welcome Mr. Bruckner, our old friend from Saint Petersburg also suggests that he has made this discovery, however I fear that he will receive the same answer as the Jew. He will be stopping at the Hague where Monseigneur Stadhouder has employed him to create a globe, perhaps the Dutch are seeking to convince Mr. Bruckner to tell them of his discovery rather than the English so that they might take full advantage of this in navigation. Since Mr. Bruckner insists that he can determine longitude, not to within a degree or even two-thirds, or even to a half degree, to which the prizes are considered, but he insists that with the help of his machine one would not be mistaken to within one second. Therefore if 1 degree will award 10000 sterling, $\frac{2}{3}$ 15000 sterling, and $\frac{1}{2}$ 20000 sterling, then Mr. Bruckner would deserve an award of 36 million pounds sterling and a better deal could not be made.

As for Mr. Faure, I have carefully looked at his piece on the quadrature of the circle, which he has even sent to the king in the hope of gaining a royal emolument. You are absolutely correct that practically no one of those who have boasted until now of this discovery have been as mistaken as Mr. Faure. . However, it must be said that if the calculations that Messrs Bernoulli and Koenig had approved of, had been correct, his quadrature would have been proven. However, his calculations are such that nothing follows and he could have come to any conclusion however strange it might seem. However, Mr. Faure should have received my thoughts on his quadrature, since it has been some time that I gave the papers to a friend who was to make sure that he received them.

Yesterday, I had the honor to receive your brother-in-law, Mr. Sarazin along with Mr. Ryhiner, who has entrusted me to give his regards to you as well as Mr. Passavant who is most gracious in remembering you. The baron d'Andrie had given me the same

instructions before his departure, having left to take possession of his Baronetcy. Since Mr. Battier has left the Prince of Saxe-Gotha, we have no idea of what has happened to him. All of my family offers its regards as well; to Madame your wife as well as requesting that you give the same to that illustrious Society of Sciences to which I have the honor of being most perfectly associated [...]

P.S. There is a perfect opening for employment with a minister of the King for Mr. Baillard; I am only awaiting from him a few words in his hand to be able to conclude the deal in his favor. Unless you expressly ask for our almanacs, I dare not send any since I must shamefully admit that we have not added the old calendar style.

Mr. President Fasch from Amsterdam has been here for a few days. He has instructed me to offer his regards.

Mr. Bevis' lunar readings have given me as much pleasure as they will make me pay a horrible price for their calculations to verify my theory. I ask you to thank him infinitely on my part.

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