

From:
Dennis Rawlins, *DIO: The International Journal of Scientific History*
Box 19935, Baltimore, MD 21211-0935

aeN5u
2007/5/30[corr]
Telephone 410-889-1414 Fax 889-4749

To:
Robert B. Partridge, Editor
Ancient Egypt, 6 Branden Drive
Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 8EJ, ENGLAND

Not Confidential
ancientegyptmag@aol.com
www.ancientegyptmagazine.com
Telephone 01565-754450 Publisher's Fax 0161 872 4721

Thanks for your pleasant 5/5 letter. But — “there are problems.” Nothing in your letter or proposed letter recognizes the seriousness of what you have done in launching a bungled and slanderous attack upon competent work. (*Can you name any expert who vetted Wall's article? Do **Kmt** or other Egypt journals publish, without review, contemptuous assaults on legitimate scholars?*) Nor do you notice my 4/7 inquiry: with so many new Egyptian speculations thriving, why was an attack-animal wannabee unleashed upon my obscure old 1985 paper *in the pages of a popular magazine*? You and Wall were not even aware of the eminence of the forum publishing the paper (or of the journal I've created), though — in case the instigator possessed merely my paper and not the whole Longitude Zero Symposium special *Vistas* issue — this is stated right in the paper's text, at p.265. The attack was launched by parties with no expertise in the relevant sciences. It could not possibly have “survived the scrutiny” of any astronomer. Wall had laughably scant acquaintanceship with the contents and high-school-level math of the very paper he was attacking! (I've encountered all sorts of “weird”, “alternative”, and “uninformed” scholarship over the decades, but would even Wall's most mystical regular combatants conduct research thusly?) How could you have let **AE** get dragged into a 3rd party spat?

Your proposed letter has some merit; mainly: it would help readers find sources. But it brushes off a gross offense as trivial and mushily acts as if everything here is a just matter of difficult-to-evaluate opinion. Comments:

[1] The **AE** article didn't merely “quote” my work. The entire article was aimed specifically at trashing the 1985 paper.
[2] Deciding (a little late!) that the evidence is “complex” translates: don't-bother-looking-up-all-that-technical-stuff.
[3] It's certainly fair to say in your letter that the evidence regarding the unit-fraction-latitude theory is subject to various interpretations, but there is nothing at all ambiguous about several points, e.g.:

[a] The article's careless denigrations are poor science, bristling with flat-out false numbers.

[b] The attack is about angles & maps. Inspired by one who couldn't read angles & wouldn't read maps. Or the paper.

[c] Without even getting into the Aswan-vs-Biga question, the odds are extremely high against Thebes and Amarna fitting so closely the unit-fraction theory suggested by the Giza pyramids.

In a spirit of non-vindictiveness, I have at least for now removed much of my 4/7 letter before posting it on our website, at www.dioi.org/ane.pdf. As for a projected letter in **AE**, how about something more along the lines of the following succinct and gentle summary? (This info would be better coming from you, but I doubt you're willing.)

The Feb-March article by John Wall at pp.[24-26] dismissed & rather misconstrued my theory (*Vistas in Astronomy* 28:255-268 [1985] pp.255-256) that monuments at the 4 most famous separate ancient Egyptian sites might have been knowingly (*not* ostentatiously) placed, by celestial means, upon latitudes equal to unit-fractions of a circle: Giza pyramids at 1/12, Amarna main temple at 1/13, Thebes-Karnak at 1/14, Aswan-Biga-Philae temples at 1/15. (See www.dioi.org/cot.htm#dthc.) **AE** readers should know that this was part of a professionally refereed paper, accurately rendered, and delivered at the National Maritime Museum symposium celebrating the 1984 centenary of the Greenwich meridian. While I have computed (www.dioi.org/ane.pdf) very high odds against four such agreements occurring to roughly 1' by chance, the 1985 paper noted that this does not prove the truth of the theory, which I have always regarded as a textually unsupported speculation. I additionally acknowledge the strength of Wall's counter-argument that the monuments are from eras that (as the 1985 article made clear) are widely separated in time.

The same 1985 paper presents (p.260) further Egyptian curiosities (www.dioi.org/cot.htm#agss):

[1] The *most accurate* nest of 5'-rounded latitudes in Hellenistic Egyptian Ptolemy's 160 AD *Geography*

(www.dioi.org/gad.htm) is Memphis at 29°50', Babylon (Giza) at 30°00', Oniou (Heliopolis) at 30°10'.

[2] The 3 sites cluster around the *most accurately* oriented building of antiquity, the Great Pyramid.

[3] These excellent latitude-measures may have been made by Egyptians, prior to the Greek conquest.

Dennis Rawlins, Publisher, *DIO: The International Journal of Scientific History*, www.dioi.org.

Hope this is efficiently concise (lots briefer than the misfire-attack, for sure) and properly balanced.

Genuine scholars always face their mistakes. Sadly, Wall has not sent anything here since mailing the original article. (Anonymously. Talk about “weird”.) I ask that you relay to him a question: who screwed up those four latitude endings, by misreading arcmin-tenths as arcsec? In this sort of situation, integrity is the best tension-relief cure.

Thanks again for your own reply. Best —