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JEAN C. A. DOMMANGET (1924-2014)

*On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 died at the age of 90 years our estimated colleague, honorary Head of the Department of Astrometry and Celestial Mechanics at the Royal Observatory of Belgium, honorary member and former secretary of the Belgian National Committee for Astronomy, Dr. Jean Dommanget.*

Jean Dommanget was born in Brussels (Ixelles) on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1924. He started to work at the Royal Observatory of Belgium as a temporary aid in the Section of Double Stars headed by Dr. Sylvain Arend in 1947. While already employed, he studied further and obtained a university degree in Mathematical Sciences (1950), and a Ph.D. degree (1961). Since 1961, he was a member of the I.A.U. Commission 26 "Double Stars". Author of many different publications during his long career at the Royal Observatory, Jean Dommanget worked in various fields including the astrometry and dynamics of visual double stars, stellar occultations and the lunar profile, studies on the atmospheric turbulence, asteroids, solar and lunar eclipses, mathematical tools, orbital properties and stellar evolution of binary stars.

He also contributed to some important steps in the development of modern European astronomy. In 1955-57, he conducted a 1.5-yr prospection mission in South-Africa in order to help find a suitable site for the construction of a new European observatory (European Southern Observatory - E.S.O.). He later returned to take on the position of Director a. i. of the Boyden Observatory in Bloemfontein, South Africa. From 1967 till 1973, he was successively Vice-President and President of Commission 26. In 1981, he joined the Input Catalogue Consortium (INCA) of the European Space Agency's astrometric mission, Hipparcos, under the leadership of Dr. C. Turon where he headed the sub-group "Double Stars" of the Executive Committee. He was also a member of the "Selection Committee" who advised about the selection of the Hipparcos programme stars. At the request of Dr. M. Perryman, leading scientist of the Hipparcos mission, he joined the Double Star Working Group in 1993.

In particular, with the expert help of his assistant, Mr. O. Nys, he developed a new double star catalogue known as the "Catalogue des Composantes d'étoiles Doubles et Multiples" (C.C.D.M.) with one entry per component adapted to the needs of the Hipparcos Input Catalogue (HIC). The compilation of the C.C.D.M., based on the Index Catalogue of Double Stars (epoch 1976.5), took many years, and a 1<sup>st</sup> edition was published in 1994. He furthermore contributed to the publication of the Hipparcos Catalogue, Annex 1 - Double and Multiple Stars (ESA 1997, Vol. 6). Among his main achievements, his

continuous efforts regarding the inventory of the visual double stars for the Hipparcos space mission will no doubt be remembered for many years to come. Primarily, he will be remembered as an expert in the field of classical double-star astronomy.

Besides his national and international astronomical activities and responsibilities, Dr Dommanget has been for more than 30 years an active promotor, as well as former president, of the Comité PARA ([http://www.csicop.org/specialarticles/show/in\\_memoriam\\_jean\\_dommanget](http://www.csicop.org/specialarticles/show/in_memoriam_jean_dommanget)) that promotes the scientific methodology for the examination of so-called paranormal phenomena.

Lampens, P.

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