much of the information on those four non-elements, but I am sure she was not responsible for dating Dimitri Ivanovich's death to "February 2 [January 30 according to the old Julian calendar] 1907"; since dates in the two calendars were separated by more like 14 days than 4, they cannot both be right.

Conceivably there are other errors among *The Lost Elements*, but there are also just an enormous number of fascinating, believe-it-or-not facts, to which I shall return often. Conflict-of-interest statement: my copy of the volume was a complimentary one, provided by the third author at a session on lost elements at the 2014 August meeting of the American Chemical Society, where I spoke on Nebulium and Coronium, but also on helium and technetium in stars. — VIRGINIA TRIMBLE.

Les Constellations des Potins d'Uranie, by Al Nath (Venngeist, Duttlenheim, France), 2014. Pp. 296, 21 × 15 cm. Price €29 prepaid, inc. worldwide shipping (about £21) (paperback; ISBN 978 2 9542677 2 2).

This work, written under the pseudonym of Al Nath by a long-time professional astronomer, gathers together 50 articles that have been written for various journals under the general heading of 'Potins d'Uranie' (which may be loosely translated as 'Gossip by Urania'). The whole series of individual articles, which cover a wide range of astronomical topics, short biographies of astronomers, and similar material, is written in a light-hearted manner. They began in 1977 and continue today. All are available in pdf versions at http://www.potinsduranie.org. (A visit to the website is highly recommended.) This book is a compilation of those articles dealing with the constellations, together with others linked to various celestial objects.

The pieces generally begin with the retelling of some legends about the heavens — from the American Pacific north-west, for example — various folktales or other accounts, followed by a description of a constellation linked (sometimes tenuously) to the preceding text. The folktales and local reminiscences generally relate to the area referred to as 'les Hauts-Plateaux', which is more formally known as the 'Haut Fagnes' region of eastern Belgium, adjacent to the German border. This area, now a German–Belgian nature reserve, is a high plateau with large areas of upland bogs of sphagnum moss, rather than being a sedge or reed fen as might be inferred from the name 'Fagne'.

This region is part of Walloon-speaking Belgium, and some of the words used are in the specific local dialect, so will almost certainly be unfamiliar to many readers of French. Many of the dialect usages are specifically explained, but for other words an excellent Walloon dictionary that may be of assistance in some (but not all) cases may be found at http://www.lexilogos.com/wallon_langue_dictionnaires.htm.

The book is profusely illustrated, with about 400 pictures, most in colour, with images of astronomical objects, portraits, charts of the constellations (taken from Wikipedia), and many illustrations from atlases, such as those by Bayer, Bode, and Hevelius.

As mentioned, the links between tales and the constellations are sometimes somewhat tenuous or rely on the use of puns. I don't doubt that I have missed many of the latter, and I have still to figure out why a fictional Scots sailor, Jim McCullogh, is introduced from time to time, especially when he is said to be disembarking from a TGV Atlantique at Paris-Montparnasse or travelling on an ICE (Inter-City Express) between Leipzig and Hamburg. In the first case it appears to be to introduce a bistro called *Le Chien qui fume*, itself introducing

the canine constellations (CVn, CMa, & CMi), and in the second, to introduce the *Auerbachs Keller* in Leipzig, the Leipzig Observatory, and the constellations of Crater and Libra.

Quite apart from the tales concerning the constellations, many of which will already be familiar to most astronomers, there are other interesting nuggets within the introductory tales. One that I may mention is that the church of the village of the Hauts-Plateaux has a twisted spire like that of Chesterfield Parish Church, although the helicoidal form was apparently introduced deliberately in the belief that it would lessen wind resistance. (Helicoidal vanes are added to certain cylindrical chimneys for just such a reason.)

One might wonder who would benefit from reading this book, given that many of the astronomical tales and biographies are familiar, and that it is not only in French, but includes Walloon words and material. One article (No. 6 'Le catalogue d'Hipparque retrouvé?') makes the point that too many scientists are unaware of material published in other languages, and tend to rely upon web search engines to find papers of relevance. But without entering search terms in other languages, valuable references may go undetected. So perhaps all astronomers should read this book — learning French if necessary — to broaden their horizons. — STORM DUNLOP.

How to Find the Apollo Landing Sites, by J. L. Chen (Springer, Heidelberg), 2014. Pp. 253, 23·5 × 15·5 cm. Price £31·99/$34·99 (paperback; ISBN 978 3 319 06455 0).

This book describes itself as being "for everyone who wants to be able to connect the history of lunar exploration to the Moon visible above". It seeks to meet its aim by offering a practical guide to the location of the Apollo landing sites for users of small-to-medium telescopes. It also covers the sites of the Ranger-probe impacts, as well as those of the unmanned Surveyor craft. Obviously the detail of such sites is not visible in Earth-based telescopes and the book makes use of recent imagery from the *Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter* (*LRO*) to show close-up views of landing sites and of the hardware left behind. Along the way it provides an outline account of the aims, events, and achievements of each mission covered.

The main problem with this volume is its scattergun approach, which means that it is difficult to identify a purposeful line of argument or even envisage a clearly defined target readership. It tries to be 'all things to all men', dipping — often very briefly — into such disparate topics as the phases and motions of the Moon, lunar geology, how to choose a telescope and mounting, types of eyepieces (including some of historical interest only), anecdotes surrounding the lunar landings, and even speculation about future missions and how they might be funded. The result is a volume that lacks clear direction and coherence, and all the topics raised have been covered better elsewhere. The reader seeking sound guidance on practical lunar observation would be better advised to consult Gerald North's *Observing the Moon: The Modern Astronomer's Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); Don Wilhelm's classic *To a Rocky Moon* (University of Arizona Press, 1993) gives a much more secure account of lunar geology and the science of the US Moon programme; and Philip Stooke's magisterial *International Atlas of Lunar Exploration* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) offers a much more complete and systematic description of man's missions to the Moon.