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Sketch of ethnographical heads no. 40, Parsi. Messrs de Schlagintweit's ethnographical heads from India and High Asia 1854–1858. F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig. IOL X312. (By courtesy of the British Library.)

EDITORIAL SCORES AND IMPACT

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Last year major publishers announced extraordinary large price increases: Elsevier 39%, Springer-Verlag 30%, and Pergamon 29%. As a result libraries canceled subscriptions. This has been part of a downward spiral in what libraries are able to purchase. "Truly, the long-term solution to journal pricing really rests not with libraries but with the actions and reactions of those who write for and read these journals" (Dougherty, 1990). In the earth sciences, commercial publishers charge annual subscriptions in the 800 to thousand dollar range. By contrast for 1991 the cost of *Earth Sciences History* for individual members was only \$20 and that to institutions was \$30. But there is a price to pay that goes well beyond finances.

A prospective author called me recently to determine if *Science Citation Index* covers *Earth Sciences History*. "My dean and provost," he explained, "carefully assess the annual number of citations of their faculty as listed in '*Science Citation Index*.'" "In fact," he continued, "a recent chairman was appointed on the strength that last year his score in *Science Citation Index* exceeded one hundred, including—of course—self citations." The prospective author pleaded that he can only publish if *Science Citation Index* stands behind us. Needless to say this prospective author never became an actual author, because *Science Citation Index*

does not cover *Earth Sciences History*. As editor, I have made strenuous efforts to have our journal listed; in fact I have gone all the way to the top in the Institute for Scientific Information which is responsible for the index. Unfortunately, our subject history of the earth sciences is not considered to have sufficient "impact" to deserve being cited. Hence, and here I come back to the commercial publishers, if your dean and/or provost insist on knowing your annual score in *Science Citation Index*, you have no choice but to go to Elsevier or other commercial publisher. These journals will accept articles on the history of their specific earth-science specialties. But if you do, please remember you will have done your part in increasing the spiral of costs of journals and undercut Dougherty's special pleading that journal pricing rests with the actions of those who write for journals. To add insult to injury your library may have canceled its subscription to the journal in which you have published. Then you'll wish you had published in *Earth Sciences History*.

REFERENCE

- DOUGHERTY, RICHARD, editor. 1990. And the beat goes on: the continuing crisis in journal subscription prices: *Library Issues*, v. 10, No. 6, p. 2.