

Jupiter brilliant

by James Stokley

In May the planet Jupiter will be visible from dusk to dawn. Directly opposite the sun on the 23rd, it rises in the east and sets in the west at sunrise. Considerably brighter than any of the stars, it is easily located in the south-east in the constellation of Scorpius.

The accompanying maps depict the sky as it looks about 11 p.m., local daylight saving time on May 1; 10 p.m. on the 15, and 9 p.m. on the 31st.

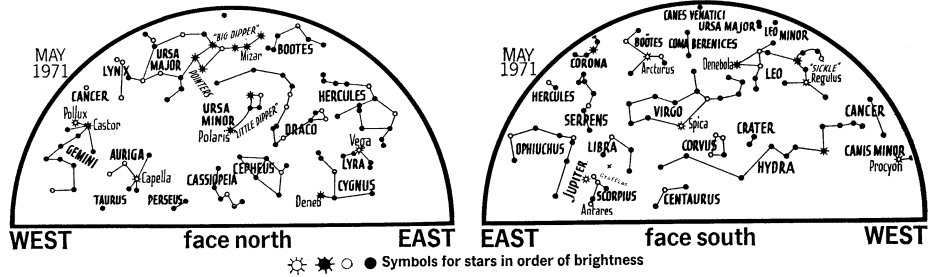
Jupiter is slowly moving from Scorpius into the constellation of Libra. The small X between these two groups shows where Jupiter will be in July.

Jupiter is near the star Beta Scorpii, which also has the seldom-used name Graffias. Moving westward, it passes this star very closely on May 12.

The planet is some 80 times brighter than the star, which will be lost in the glare around the time of occultation when they are closest.

Although Jupiter passes very close to Graffias, it will not hide the star, as seen from North America. It will do so from the Indian Ocean and adjacent parts of Africa, Australia and India. Such an eclipse, or occultation, of a star by a planet is rare. Astronomers from the University of Texas will observe the event from three different locations where it will be visible (SN: 4/17/71, p. 267). They hope to obtain new data about the structure and composition of Jupiter's atmosphere.

Below Jupiter is Antares, brightest star in Scorpius and easily recognized by its ruddy color. It is of the first magnitude but is so low that its light



is dimmed by atmospheric absorption. Other first-magnitude stars in the May nighttime sky are Vega (brightest star of May evenings) in Lyra; Deneb in Cygnus; Arcturus in Boötes; Spica in Virgo; Regulus in Leo; Pollux in Gemini; Capella in Auriga, and Procyon in Canis Minor.

The Big Dipper is seen high in the north in the constellation of Ursa Major. Below, in Ursa Minor stands Polaris, the pole star. It's at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper.

Mars will conspicuously appear low in the east at 2 a.m. As dawn is breaking Venus shines in the east.

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CELESTIAL TIMETABLE		
May	EDT	
2	3:34 a.m.	Moon in first quarter
5	5:00 p.m.	Moon farthest from earth, distance 251,800 miles
10	7:24 a.m. noon	Full moon Moon passes south of Jupiter
16	6:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Mars
17	8:00 a.m. 4:15 p.m.	Saturn behind sun Moon in last quarter
21	1:00 p.m.	Moon nearest earth, distance 226,800 miles
22	3:00 p.m.	Moon passes north of Venus
23	5:00 a.m.	Jupiter in opposite direction from sun
24	8:32 a.m.	New moon
31	8:42 p.m.	Moon in first quarter