

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-82364-7 - Cambridge Illustrated Dictionary of Astronomy  
Jacqueline Mitton  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

### CAMBRIDGE ILLUSTRATED DICTIONARY OF ASTRONOMY

This lavishly illustrated new dictionary, written by an experienced writer and consultant on astronomy, provides an essential guide to the universe for amateur astronomers of all ages. It can be used both as a comprehensive reference work, and as a fascinating compendium of facts to dip into.

Around 1300 carefully selected and cross-referenced entries are complemented by hundreds of beautiful color illustrations, taken from space missions, the Hubble Space Telescope, and other major observatories on Earth and in space. Distinguished stellar illustrator Wil Tirion has drawn 20 new star maps especially for inclusion here. A myriad of named astronomical objects, constellations, observatories, and space missions are described in detail, as well as biographical sketches for 70 of the most luminous individuals in the history of astronomy and space science. Acronyms and specialist terms are clearly explained, making for the most thorough and carefully assembled reference resource that teachers and enthusiasts of astronomy will ever need.

**JACQUELINE MITTON** trained as an astronomer at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. She is the author or co-author of over 20 astronomy books for both children and adults, and has also been a consultant or contributor to many other reference books. She has been editor of the *Journal of the British Astronomical Association*, and the annual *Handbook of the British Astronomical Association*. As Press Officer of the Royal Astronomical Society, she made regular contributions to TV and radio about astronomical developments. She continues to keep up-to-date with recent astronomical advances.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-82364-7 - Cambridge Illustrated Dictionary of Astronomy  
Jacqueline Mitton  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

CAMBRIDGE ILLUSTRATED DICTIONARY  
of **Astronomy**

JACQUELINE MITTON



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-82364-7 - Cambridge Illustrated Dictionary of Astronomy  
Jacqueline Mitton  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi  
Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521823647](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521823647)

© J. Mitton 2007

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2007

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-82364-7 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

## Preface

There is always something new in astronomy. Exciting discoveries follow one after another at a dizzying pace, thanks to the batteries of giant telescopes perched on mountain tops and equipped with the latest technological innovations, observatories orbiting high above the troublesome atmosphere, and spacecraft exploring the worlds of the solar system from close quarters. Keeping abreast of it all can be a challenge!

For this illustrated A-to-Z, I have made an up-to-date selection of 1 300 entries covering hundreds of named astronomical objects as well as the terms and abbreviations most commonly encountered in astronomy. I have also included biographical entries on 70 people who have made significant contributions to the development of astronomy. Three hundred entries are illustrated, nearly all in color.

The idea for an illustrated dictionary grew from the dictionary I originally compiled in 1988–90, the most recent edition of which was published by Cambridge University Press in 2001. But this is a new book with a fresh style, which I hope will appeal to a wide range of readers young and old – not just as a reference source in which to look things up, but also as a book full of fascinating facts and beautiful pictures to dip into anytime.

### *Using the book*

The alphabetical order takes no account of word breaks or hyphens. Entries beginning with a Greek letter are treated as if the letter were spelled out.

Words printed in italics and preceded by the symbol ► have their own entries, but not all possible cross-references are indicated in this way. The symbol ➤ preceding a word or words in italics means “see also.”

### *Acknowledgements*

I am deeply grateful to the numerous individuals who have provided me with advice and information and indebted to the countless reference sources I have consulted since I began to compile my dictionary database in 1988. It is impossible to list them all but I would particularly like to thank my husband, Simon, for his support and for his assistance in compiling the biographical entries. Any errors or omissions, however, I accept as being my own responsibility. I would like to thank the many organizations that have freely

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-82364-7 - Cambridge Illustrated Dictionary of Astronomy  
Jacqueline Mitton  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*Preface*

made their superb pictures available and those who have given me individual permission to use their copyright images. A full list of credits can be found at the end of the book. Finally, I would like to thank Cambridge University Press for their continuing support during the preparation of this book.

***Jacqueline Mitton***  
***November 2006***