The Cambridge Companion to
John Herschel

It has been said that being scientific in Victorian England meant to be as much like John Herschel as possible. This volume shows readers what it meant to be John Herschel (1792–1871), one of England's most prominent polymaths. Drawing on his published oeuvre and recent scholarship, as well as an immense amount of surviving archival material and correspondence, these essays present the first ever comprehensive account of Herschel's life, work, and legacy. From mathematics and astronomy, to philosophy and politics, the volume sheds new light on his crucial role in the history of Victorian science and explores a wide array of issues in the history of nineteenth-century culture, philosophy, mathematics, and beyond.

STEPHEN CASE is a professor in the Department of Chemistry and the Geosciences, Olivet Nazarene University, and the author of *Making Stars Physical: The Astronomy of Sir John Herschel* (2018).

LUKAS M. VERBURGT is Gerda Henkel Stiftung Research Scholar and affiliated to the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study. He has authored and coedited several books and numerous articles on the history of science and philosophy in nineteenth-century Britain.

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Edited by

Stephen Case
Olivet Nazarene University

Lukas M. Verburgt
Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities
and Social Sciences

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Contributors

WILLIAM J. ASHWORTH is Reader in History at the University of Liverpool. He is the author of *Customs and Excise: Trade, Production and Consumption in England 1640–1845* (2003), *The Industrial Revolution: The State, Knowledge and Global Trade* (2017), and *The Trinity Circle: Anxiety, Intelligence, and Knowledge Creation in Nineteenth-Century England* (2021).

STEPHEN CASE is a professor in the Department of Chemistry and the Geosciences at Olivet Nazarene University. He is the author of *Making Stars Physical: The Astronomy of Sir John Herschel* (2018) and the forthcoming *Creatures of Reason: John Herschel and the Invention of Science*.

TONY CRILLY is Emeritus Reader in Mathematical Sciences at Middlesex University. His principal research interest is the history of mathematics. He has written and edited works on fractals, chaos, and computing, is the author of *Arthur Cayley: Mathematician Laureate of the Victorian Era* (2005), and is completing a biography of mathematician Thomas P. Kirkman.

EDWARD J. GILLIN is Lecturer in the History of Building Sciences and Technology at the Bartlett School of Sustainable Construction, UCL. His books include *Entente Imperial: British and French Power in the Age of Empire* (2022), *Sound Authorities: Scientific and Musical Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2022), and *An Empire of Magnetism: Global Science and the British Magnetic Enterprise in the Age of Imperialism* (2024).

GREGORY A. GOOD is Director Emeritus of the Center for History of Physics, American Institute of Physics. He writes about the history of the earth sciences from the time of John Herschel to the twenty-first century. His current books are on astronomers' research on the earth and on space weather.

CAROLIN LANGE is an artist specializing in experimental photography and spectroscopy of the 19th century. Her work has been exhibited internationally at the Platform for Contemporary Art TENT and at the Center for Art and Media ZKM, among others. She is currently an M4C funded PhD candidate at the Photographic History Research Centre at De Montfort University, Leicester.

OMAR W. NASIM is Professor of the History of Science at the University of Regensburg in Germany. Nasim's research centers on the formation of knowledge historically considered, especially at the intersections of material, visual, and intellectual cultures. He is the author of the award-winning book *Observing by Hand: Sketching the Nebulae in the Nineteenth Century* (2013) and, more recently, *The Astronomer's Chair: A Visual and Cultural History* (2021).

CHARLES H. PENCE is a lecturer at the Université catholique de Louvain in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, where he directs the Center for Philosophy of Science and Societies (CEFISES). He also serves as a coeditor of the journal *Philosophy, Theory, and Practice in Biology* (*PTPBio*). His work centers on the philosophy and history of biology, with a focus on the introduction and contemporary use of chance and statistics in evolutionary theory.

STEVEN RUSKIN'S work focuses on the history of nineteenth-century science, specifically astronomy, exploration, and the field sciences. He is the author of *John Herschel's Cape Voyage: Private Science, Public Imagination, and the Ambitions of Empire* (2004) and *America's First Great Eclipse: How Scientists, Tourists, and the Rocky Mountain Eclipse of 1878 Changed Astronomy Forever* (2017).

LUKAS M. VERBURGT is currently a Gerda Henkel Stiftung Research Scholar and affiliated as Research and Project Associate to

the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences. His main research focus is the changing relationship between science and philosophy in the long nineteenth century, especially in Victorian Britain. He is the author of numerous articles and (co)editor of several volumes, including *Aristotle's Syllogism and the Creation of Modern Logic* (2023) and the forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to Charles Babbage*.

KELLEY WILDER is Professor of Photographic History and Director of the Photographic History Research Centre at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK. She has published widely on material cultures of nineteenth- and twentieth-century photography and science, including *Photography and Science* (2009) and *Documenting the World: Film, Photography and the Scientific Record* (2016, with Gregg Mitman).

EMILY WINTERBURN has served as Curator at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, and as a research fellow at the Centre for History and Philosophy of Science, University of Leeds. She is the author of *The Stargazer's Guide: How to Read Our Night Sky* (2009) and *The Quiet Revolution of Caroline Herschel: The Lost Heroine of Astronomy* (2017).

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Chronology

1792	Born, March 7, only child of William Herschel and Mary Pitt (née Baldwin) in Slough
1800	Attended Eton College for three months
1800–09	Educated at a private school in Hitcham, near Slough, led by George Gretton, graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, and later dean of Hereford
1802	Traveled with his parents to Paris, where his father and others, including Pierre-Simon Laplace, had an audience with Napoleon Bonaparte
1809	Entered St John's College, Cambridge
1809–10	Occasional factory visits around Britain with his father, recorded in a "Travel Diary"
1813	Graduated Senior Wrangler; awarded First Smith's Prize; elected fellow of St. John's College (relinquished upon his marriage in 1829); elected fellow of the Royal Society; founding member and first president of the Analytical Society; publication of *Memoirs of the Analytical Society*, composed together with Charles Babbage
1814	Entered Lincoln's Inn to train for the Bar
1815	Returned to Cambridge as mathematics "subtutor" and examiner at St. John's College
1816	Publication of translation of S. F. Lacroix, *An Elementary Treatise on the Differential and Integral Calculus*, cotranslated with Babbage and George Peacock; left Cambridge in October for the family house in Slough

	("Observatory House") to be "going, under his father's direction, to take up star-gazing"
1820	Publication of *A Collection of Examples of the Application of the Calculus of Finite Differences*; founding member of the Astronomical Society of London, renamed Royal Astronomical Society in 1831
1821	Awarded Royal Society's Copley Medal for mathematical contributions to its transactions
1821–23	Collaboration with James South on the (re)observation of double stars
1822	Death of father, William Herschel, aged 83
1823	Publication of work on optical spectra of metal salts in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*
1824–27	Secretary of the Royal Society
1825	Awarded French Academy of Sciences' Lalande Prize with James South; invented the actinometer, to measure heating power of the sun's rays
1826	Awarded Astronomical Society's gold medal for work with his father
1827	Publication of "Light" in the *Encyclopaedia Metroplitana*
1827–29	First period as president of the Astronomical Society, later periods followed in 1839–41 and 1847–49
1829	Marriage to Margaret Brodie Stewart (1810–84)
1830	Candidate for presidency of the Royal Society, lost to the duke of Sussex; birth of first of a total of twelve children, Caroline Herschel (†1909)
1831	Publication of *A Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*; made Knight of the Royal Guelphic Order
1832	Elected Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
1833	Publication of *A Treatise on Astronomy*; awarded French Academy of Sciences' Lalande Prize
1834–38	Lived and worked at Feldhausen, Cape Town, South Africa, where he erected a twenty-foot reflecting telescope, the site of which was marked by a stone obelisk in 1842; produced 131 botanical illustrations with his wife, using a camera lucida (later published as *Flora Herscheliana*)

1836	Awarded Astronomical Society's gold medal; elected Foreign Honorary Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences; birth of second son, Alexander Stewart Herschel (†1907), astronomer
1837	Endorsement of Charles Lyell's gradualist (or "uniformitarian") view of geological change, included in Babbage's unofficial *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*
1838	Created baronet of Slough in the county of Buckingham
1839	First glass-plate photograph, showing his father's forty-foot telescope
1839–40	Read two papers on "photography" (a term of his coinage) to the Royal Society
1840	Awarded Royal Society's gold medal for contributions to the development of photographic techniques
1841	Birth of fifth daughter, Amelia Herschel (†1926), with William Whewell as godfather
1842	Invented the cyanotype process (blueprints)
1847	Publication of *Results of Astronomical Observations made at the Cape of Good Hope*; awarded Royal Society's Copley Medal for Cape "Results"
1849	Publication of *Outlines of Astronomy*
1850–54	Master of the Mint
1854	Elected member of the American Philosophical Society
1855	Birth of ninth daughter, Constance Anne Herschel (†1939), later lecturer in natural sciences at Girton College, Cambridge
1859	Published a study of color blindness in *Philosophical Magazine*
1864	Publication of *General Catalogue of Nebulae and Clusters*
1865–71	Compiled a catalog of all known double and multiple star systems, which appeared posthumously in 1874 as *General Catalogue of 10,300 Multiple and Double Stars*
1866	Publication of *The Iliad of Homer: Translated into English Accentuated Hexameters*
1871	Died, May 11, at home in Collingwood, Kent, aged 79; received a national funeral and buried in Westminster Abbey, London