UNRAVELLING STARLIGHT

Challenging traditional accounts of the origins of astrophysics, this book presents the first scholarly biography of nineteenth-century English amateur astronomer William Huggins (1824–1910). A pioneer in adapting the spectroscope to new astronomical purposes, William Huggins rose to scientific prominence in London and transformed professional astronomy to become a principal founder of the new science of astrophysics. The author re-examines his life and career, exploring unpublished notebooks, correspondence, and research projects to expose the boldness of this scientific entrepreneur. While Sir William Huggins is the main focus of the book, the involvement of Lady Margaret Lindsay Huggins (1848–1915) in her husband's research is examined, where it may have been previously overlooked or obscured. Written in an engaging style, this book has broad appeal and will be valuable to scientists, students, and to anyone interested in the history of astronomy.

BARBARA BECKER taught history of science at the University of California, Irvine, until her recent retirement. A leading authority on William Huggins, her research interests also include the role of amateurs in the development of nineteenth-century professional astronomy, and the role of controversy in shaping the substance and structure of scientific knowledge.



Sir William Huggins, c. 1905. (PRS 86A)

UNRAVELLING STARLIGHT

William and Margaret Huggins and the Rise of the New Astronomy

> BARBARA J. BECKER University of California, Irvine



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For Madge

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Most of the illustrations in this book were scanned by me from the volumes in which they originally appeared. One of these figures deserves special mention (see Figure 4.6). It is a reproduction of the frontispiece of William Huggins's booklet *On the Results of Spectrum Analysis Applied to the Heavenly Bodies* (1866) from the library of the late Gerald James Whitrow, FRAS (1912–2000). I was honoured to receive this small book as a gift in 2001 from Professor Whitrow's widow, Magda, through Peter Hingley's thoughtful agency. All of the book's illustrations are original photographs pasted neatly in place. They have faded over the years, of course. Readers wishing to see the details of the spectral map depicted in the frontispiece will find it reproduced more clearly elsewhere (see, for example, Huggins and Miller, *PTRSL* **154**, Plate XI; Huggins and Huggins, *Scientific Papers*, opposite p. 60). I wished to include a copy of this historic image in my own book both as a tribute to Professor Whitrow memory and to express my sincere gratitude to all responsible for the gift.

Other important historic images are included in this book thanks to the efforts and generosity of the following individuals and institutions. A portrait of William Huggins near the beginning of his long career (see Figure 2.1) appears in this volume with the kind permission of the Royal Astronomical Society and Photo Researchers, Inc. Mariana Oller scanned pages from the Tulse Hill Observatory notebooks, portions of which are reproduced in this volume with the kind permission of Wellesley College Library's Special Collections (see Figures 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 6.1, 6.3a, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 10.5, 10.6 and 12.3). Gregory Shelton successfully scanned the delicate - and difficult to capture - image of the nebula surrounding n Argus [Carinae] drawn by John Herschel and reproduced on Plate IX of his Results of Astronomical Observations made ... at the Cape of Good Hope (1847). The image is reproduced here (see Figure 5.1) courtesy of the US Naval Observatory Library. Imaging Services of the Cambridge University Library scanned an illustrated page from a letter written by William Huggins to George Gabriel Stokes (Add MS 7656.H1168, 2 January 1882). It is reproduced here (see Figure 11.2) by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. Ian Glass generously sent me an historic photograph which shows the coronagraph built by Howard Grubb and used by David Gill at the Cape Observatory to take routine photographs of the solar corona without an eclipse using William Huggins's prescribed method. It is reproduced here (see Figure 11.4) courtesy of the South African Astronomical Observatory.

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> *Chapel Hill* North Carolina 12 May 2010

Abbreviations

Journals

AA:	Astronomy and Astrophysics
AC:	Annales de Chimie
ACP:	Annales de Chimie et de Physique
ADB:	Australian Dictionary of Biography
AJ:	Astronomical Journal
AJP:	American Journal of Physics
AJS:	American Journal of Science
AJSA:	American Journal of Science and the Arts
AN:	Astronomische Nachricten
AP:	Annalen der Physik
APC:	Annalen der Physik und Chemie
APJ:	Astrophysical Journal
AR:	Astronomical Register
BJHS:	British Journal for the History of Science
BJP:	British Journal of Photography
CM:	Cornhill Magazine
CR:	Comptes Rendus Hebdomadaires des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences
DNB:	Dictionary of National Biography
DSB:	Dictionary of Scientific Biography
EJS:	Edinburgh Journal of Science
EM:	English Mechanic
EPJ:	Edinburgh Philosophical Journal
ER:	Edinburgh Review
IAJ:	Irish Astronomical Journal
IO:	Intellectual Observer
JAD:	Journal of Astronomical Data
JAHH:	Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage
JBAA:	Journal of the British Astronomical Association
JHA:	Journal for the History of Astronomy
JRASC:	Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

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MLPSM:	Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester
MNRAS:	Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society
NRRSL:	Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London
OBS:	Observatory
PA:	Popular Astronomy
PANSP:	Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia
PASA:	Proceedings of the Astronomical Society of Australia
PASP:	Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific
PJ:	Pharmaceutical Journal
PM:	Philosophical Magazine
PN:	Photographic News
PRI:	Proceedings of the Royal Institution
PRS:	Proceedings of the Royal Society
PTRSL:	Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London
QJRAS:	Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society
QJS:	Quarterly Journal of Science
RBAAS:	Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science
SM:	Sidereal Messenger
SP:	Science Progress
SS:	Social Studies of Science
ST:	Sky and Telescope
TC:	Technology and Culture
TOS:	Transactions of the Optical Society
TRMSL:	Transactions of the Royal Microscopical Society of London
TRSE:	Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh

Archival sources

CIT:	California Institute of Technology		
	GEH:	George Ellery Hale papers	
CUL:	Cambrid	lge University Library	
	ERP:	Ernest Rutherford papers	
	GGS:	George Gabriel Stokes papers	
	JCM:	James Clerk Maxwell papers	
	RGO:	Royal Greenwich Observatory	
DCL:	Dartmouth College Library		
	CAY:	Charles Augustus Young papers	
HLA:	Huntington Library Archives		
HUA:	Harvard	University Archives	
	ECP:	Edward C. Pickering papers	
LO:	Lick Ob	servatory	
	MLSA:	Mary Lea Shane Archives	
	ESH:	Edward Singleton Holden papers	

List of abbreviations

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NYPL:	New York Public Library		
	HD:	Henry Draper papers	
RASL:	Royal A	stronomical Society Library	
RSL:	Royal S	ociety Library	
	AS:	Arthur Schuster papers	
	JFWH:	John F. W. Herschel papers	
	JL:	Joseph Larmor papers	
SI:	Smithso	nian Institution	
	MAH:	Museum of American History	
SAAOA:	South A	frican Astronomical Observatory Archives	
	DG:	David Gill papers	
UEL:	Universit	ity of Exeter Library	
	JNL:	Joseph Norman Lockyer papers	
WCL/SC:	Wellesle	ey College Library, Special Collections	
YUL:	Yale Un	iversity Library	
	DPT:	David Peck Todd papers	

Organisations/institutions

BAAS:	British Association for the Advancement of Science
IUCSR:	International Union for Co-operation in Solar Research
JEC:	Joint Eclipse Committee
MIT:	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NAS:	National Academy of Science
DAG	

- RAS: Royal Astronomical Society
- RS: Royal Society