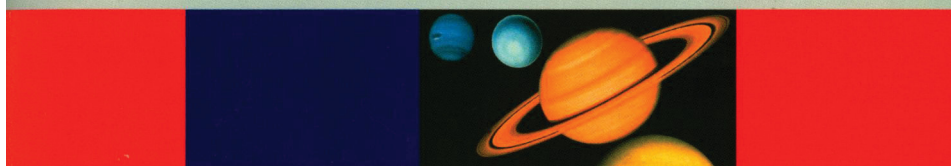
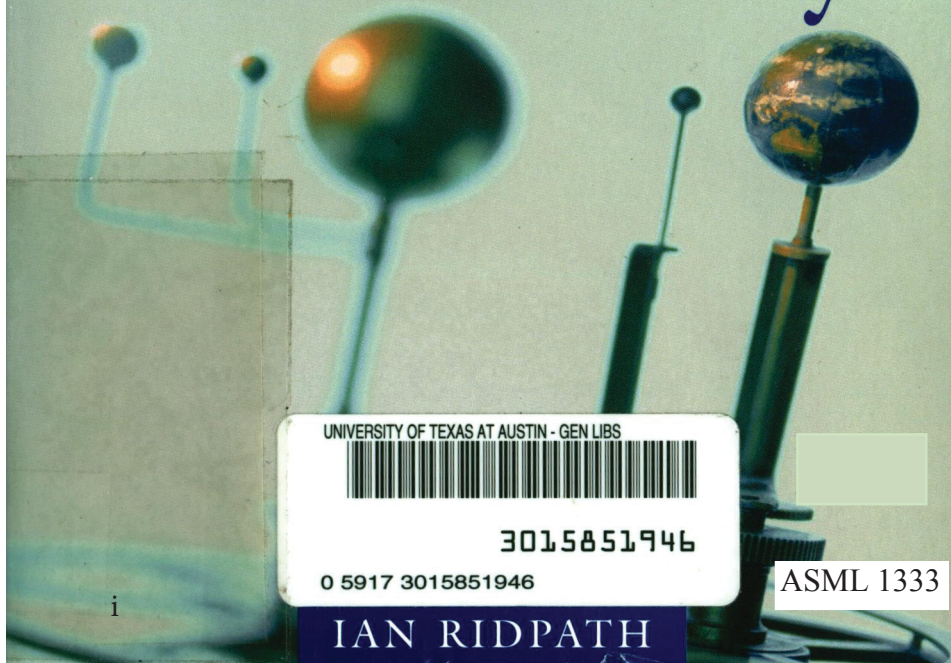


THE MOST EXPANSIVE DICTIONARY OF ITS KIND

# Oxford



## DICTIONARY OF Astronomy



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN - GEN LIBS



3015851946

0 5917 3015851946

ASML 1333

IAN RIDPATH

i

A Dictionary of  
**Astronomy**

---

REVISED EDITION

*Edited by*  
IAN RIDPATH

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

ii

---

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
and education by publishing worldwide in  
Oxford New York

Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai  
Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi  
São Paulo Shanghai Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press  
in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in the United States by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

© Oxford University Press 1997, 2003

The moral rights of the author have been asserted  
Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First published 1997  
Revised Edition 2003

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press,  
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate  
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction  
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,  
Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data  
Data available

ISBN 019-860513-7  
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Typeset by Kolam Information Services Pvt. Ltd., Pondicherry, India  
Printed in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

components. The \*Quadrantid meteor shower radiates every January from northern Boötes.

**boson** A particle such as a \*photon, a \*meson, an atomic nucleus of even mass number (e.g. the commonest type of helium nucleus), or the hypothetical \*graviton which has a zero or integer value of \*spin. They do not obey the Pauli exclusion principle. Bosons are named after the Indian physicist Satyendra Nath Bose (1894–1974). See also FERMION.

**Boss General Catalogue (GC)** Popular name for the five-volume *General Catalogue of 33,342 Stars* compiled in 1936–7 by the American astronomer Benjamin Boss (1880–1970). This catalogue contains positions and proper motions of all stars brighter than 7th magnitude over the whole sky, plus thousands of fainter stars for which accurate proper motions could be determined. It was a successor to the *Preliminary General Catalogue* of 6188 stars published in 1910 by his father, Lewis Boss (1846–1912), who also initiated the larger catalogue.

**boundary layer** In a planetary atmosphere, the level of the atmosphere in direct contact with the planet's surface, in which friction between the surface and the air plays a significant role in determining atmospheric movements. On Earth, the boundary layer lies at the base of the \*troposphere and varies in depth from a few hundred metres under stable conditions to 1–2 km when convection is strong.

**bound-bound transition** A change to the energy of an electron within an atom, or more rarely within a molecule, in which the electron remains attached (bound) to the atom or molecule both before and after the change. When the energy is increased, a photon is absorbed; when the energy is reduced, a photon is emitted. Bound-bound transitions produce the emission and absorption lines found in stellar spectra.

**bound-free transition** A change to the energy of an electron within an atom or a molecule in which the electron gains sufficient energy to escape. The electron goes from being bound to being free, and leaves behind an ion; hence this is another name for \*ionization. The energy for the change may come from a photon, resulting in the absorption bands known as *ionization edges* in stellar spectra, or from collisions with other atoms or particles (*collisional ionization*). If the energy comes from another excited electron within the atom, the process is known as *auto-ionization*.

**Bouwers telescope** A design of telescope identical to the \*Maksutov telescope, developed by the Dutch optician Albert A. Bouwers (1893–1972). His publication of the design in 1940, during World War II, predated that of the \*Maksutov telescope, but gained little publicity because of the German occupation of Holland.

**Bowen, Ira Sprague** (1898–1973) American astrophysicist. In 1927 he explained the origin of strong green lines in the spectra of planetary nebulae. They are \*forbidden lines produced by transitions between atomic states in doubly ionized oxygen (O III) and not, as W. \*Huggins had earlier speculated, by an unknown element termed 'nebulium'. This led to the correct identification of lines in the solar spectrum that had been similarly attributed to a hypothetical 'coronium', and thence to advances in the spectroscopic study of the compositions, temperatures, and densities of the Sun, stars, and nebulae.

**Bowen fluorescence** A mechanism that gives rise to certain strong emission lines from ionized atoms of oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen in diffuse nebulae. Extremely hot stars and accretion disks (at temperatures of 30 000 K or more) produce copious amounts of extreme ultraviolet radiation at 30.4 nm from singly ionized helium atoms. These photons excite the ions of C III and N III in surrounding gas because the ions have a transition very close to this wavelength. These excited ions then return to the