

THE CAMBRIDGE
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
**AMATEUR
ASTRONOMY**

MICHAEL E. BAKICH



Contents

Foreword	vii
Preface	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
1 Background	1
1.1 The cosmic backdrop	2
1.2 Positional astronomy	16
1.3 Time and the calendar	21
1.4 The magnitude system	24
2 Equipment	29
2.1 Telescopes	30
2.2 Mounts and drives	42
2.3 Eyepieces	46
2.4 Filters	53
2.5 Telescope accessories	70
2.6 Binoculars	78
3 How to observe	83
3.1 Sketching what you observe	84
3.2 Astrophotography	88
3.3 Digital and video cameras	100
3.4 The CCD	103
3.5 Photometry	108
3.6 Spectroscopy	109
4 Observing tips	111
5 References, further information, and other points	125
5.1 Books and atlases	126
5.2 Catalogs of the deep sky	130
5.3 Software	135
5.4 Observatories	138
5.5 The social astronomer	144
5.6 Light pollution	150
6 What to observe: solar system	153
6.1 Nightfall	154
6.2 The Sun	156

6.3	The aurora	164
6.4	The Moon	166
6.5	Eclipses and transits	171
6.6	Mercury and Venus	180
6.7	Mars	186
6.8	Jupiter	194
6.9	Saturn	202
6.10	The outer planets	209
6.11	Asteroids	215
6.12	Comets	218
6.13	Meteors and meteor showers	226
7	What to observe: deep-sky objects	237
7.1	Double stars	238
7.2	Variable stars	245
7.3	Supernovae	250
7.4	Occultations	254
7.5	Nebulae	256
7.6	Star clusters	268
7.7	Galaxies	275
Appendix A	The constellations	287
Appendix B	The 30 brightest stars	289
Appendix C	The Messier marathon	290
Appendix D	The Caldwell catalogue	292
Appendix E	The brightest galaxies	295
Appendix F	The planets: angular size	300
Appendix G	The planets: brilliancy at opposition	301
Appendix H	The planets: distance from the Sun	302
Appendix I	The planets: orbital inclination and eccentricity	303
Appendix J	The planets: mass	304
Appendix K	The planets: orbital period and velocity	305
Appendix L	The planets: rotational period and velocity	306
Appendix M	The planets: size	307
Appendix N	The planets: volume	308
Appendix O	Satellite distances from the planets	309
Appendix P	Satellite size and orbital period	310
Appendix Q	Useful magnification ranges	311
Appendix R	Approximate telescopic limiting magnitude	312
	Glossary	314
	Index	341