



# Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning

*Richard H. Allen*

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## **Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning** Richard H. Allen

Here is an unusual book for anyone who appreciates the beauty and wonder of the stars. Solidly based upon years of thorough research into astronomical writings and observations of the ancient Chinese, Arabic, Euphrates, Hellenic, and Roman civilizations, it is an informative, non-technical excursion into the vast heritage of folklore and history associated with the heavenly bodies.

From his studies of the writings of scores of ancient astronomers, the author has come up with a fascinating history of the names various cultures have given the constellations, the literary and folkloristic uses that have been made of the stars through the centuries, and the often incredible associations that ancient peoples established with the stars. He covers, for example, the origins of the lunar and solar zodiacs; the use of stars and constellations in the Bible and other sacred writings, poetry, etc.; the idea of the Milky Way; how star pictures were originally set up and why; astrology and the use of stars to tell people's fortunes; and many other star curiosities. In this regard, the book touches upon not only all of the constellations (including many that long ago dropped out of star catalogues), but their important stars and such other asterisms as the Hyades, the Pleiades, the Great Nebula of Andromeda, and the Magellanic Clouds.

The book is the only complete coverage of its kind in English. It is completely non-technical, hence accessible to etymologists, anthropologists, and amateur star-gazers. But it contains so much unique reading material on early astronomical theory, so many delightful accounts drawn from the pages of books almost impossible to find today, that even the practicing astronomer will find it refreshingly new and instructive.

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