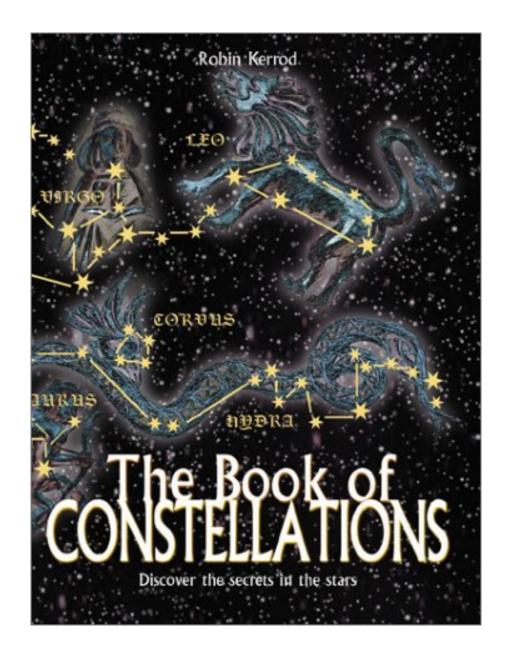


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About the Author

Robin Kerrod is an English freelance writer and editor. He is also author of both astronomy books contained in The Sky at Night, an introductory kit for amateur astronomers, published in North America by Barron's.

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About the Author

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THE BOOK OF CONSTELLATIONS 2002

Robin Kerrod presents the constellations known to the ancient Greeks. They looked at the stars and saw mythological creatures. They imagined gods and goddesses, heroes and fantastic creatures woven around racy stories. Astronomy and mythology were one. Of the 48 constellations listed by Ptolemy in his Almagest (The Greatest), a few actually look like what they are supposed to be. Leo the lion does resemble a crouching lion, and it is believed that the Sphinx in Egypt might have been inspired by Leo. In Greek mythology, Hercules strangled the Nemean Lion and made a cloak from its skin. The Sickle forms Leo's head with the first magnitude star Regulus at its end. Cygnus the swan is another constellation that could pass for what the Greeks saw. The swan was said to be Zeus in disguise as he lusted for Leda, queen of Sparta. First magnitude Deneb is the swan's tail with Deneb, Vega and Altair forming the Summer Triangle. Kerrod maintains that the Greeks were far enough south to see Crux the Southern Cross. Crux is the smallest but brightest of the constellations and points to the south celestial pole. There are two first magnitude stars: Acrux and Bcrux. I was lucky to see Crux twice, the first time in Australia, the second time in Bolivia.

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