

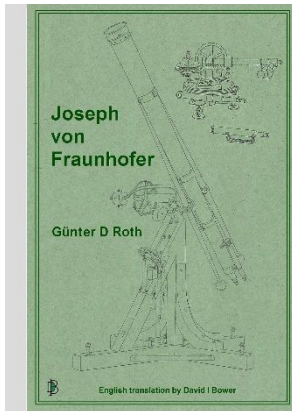
JOSEPH VON FRAUNHOFER

by **Günter D. Roth**

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The short life of Joseph Fraunhofer is interesting for many reasons. Although born in 1787 into a family of Bavarian glaziers and himself apprenticed at the age of eleven to a master glazier who frowned on his attempts to educate himself, he was by the age of twenty-two a partner and works manager in a newly established optical institute, with total responsibility for the production of optical glass and for designing the lenses to be made from it.

With his invention of the diffraction grating in his spare time and his use of it to study in detail the multitude of dark lines in the spectrum of the light from the sun and stars that now bear his name, he paved the way for the development of the science of astrophysics.

In spite of resistance offered at first by some established members of the Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences because of his lack of formal education, Fraunhofer became a member of the Academy, a professor and was also raised to personal nobility. He died at the age of thirty-nine from tuberculosis.

The book, originally published by Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft in the series *Grosse Naturforscher*, describes Fraunhofer's life and work on optics in a non-technical way and how it fitted within the social, scientific and commercial frameworks of the first quarter of the nineteenth century in Bavaria and Europe and offers some examples of his writing.



The book is a perfect-bound A5 pb of xiii + 180 pages with a frontispiece and nine illustrations in the text. It is obtainable from the publisher at 2 Welburn Avenue, Leeds LS16 5HJ, price £18, or £20 including post and packing in the UK, payable by cheque to *D.I.Bower* or through PayPal. For purchasers overseas post and packing will be charged at cost. Enquiries to david@dibower.co.uk.