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Nota di contenuto	I ntroduction -- An introduction to Denning and an outline of the monograph. Prologue: The End -- a short prologue account of a trip that I undertook to Bristol in the hopes of finding Denning's grave site. 1. A Man of Parts -- the biographical details of Denning's life and times. 2. In Quest of Meteors -- a detailed look at Denning's contributions to meteor astronomy. 3. Ever Watchful -- a detailed look at Denning's many contributions to astronomy in general, and specifically planetary observations and comet searching. 4. Meteor Astronomy in Britain (1800-1930) -- a discussion and account of the beginnings of meteor astronomy in England, providing brief biographical accounts of the key players. 5. The Astronomical Register -- a study of the first journal dedicated to amateur astronomers. This chapter will analyse the rise and development of amateur astronomy in mid-19th century England. It will address issues of the readers locations, their interests and the astronomical equipment that they

were using. 6. The Observing Astronomical Society -- a study of the first British amateur astronomy society, detailing its origins and the observational programs that it initiated. 7. Epilogue -- a final few words. Appendix 1: Meteor Showers -- this appendix will introduce the reader to the key technical terms, and provide a present-day review of the physical properties of meteoroid streams and meteor physics. Notes and References.

Sommario/riassunto

This book provides a detailed biographical account of the industrious late nineteenth-century astronomer William Frederick Denning who, in later life, rose to be a celebrated public figure and a highly respected amateur astronomer. The book also examines Denning’s many contributions to the astronomy of his time. As an indomitable promotor of amateur astronomy, Denning was closely involved in the formation of the short-lived, but historically pivotal, Observational Astronomy Society (OAS) in 1869. Readers will learn about the origins and the observational programs initiated by the OAS, and the author also presents a series of biographical sketches of its most industrious members. Furthermore, by examining Denning’s letters and publications, the author shows how he helped to nurture the growth of amateur astronomy, also teaching amateur observers how to make their efforts scientifically useful. A stalwart observer and enthusiast himself, Denning was a key player in the development of meteor astronomy in England, culminating in his being invited, in 1922, to be the first President of Commission 22 (meteors, meteorites and interplanetary dust) of the newly formed International Astronomical Union. The text follows the development and rapid growth of meteor astronomy during the nineteenth century, focusing upon the key observations and important theoretical advances. In addition, it pays tribute to pioneering practitioners, who, along with Denning, set out to unravel the story and secrets of the shooting stars. While not an openly forthright or strident figure, Denning, at the height of his career, became embroiled in two public and controversial issues. The first related to his pseudo-scientific theory of optical blurring, and his belief that large-aperture telescopes performed less efficiently than smaller-aperture telescopes when used in the study of planetary disks. The second concerned the mysterious issue of stationary meteor shower radiants—an apparent observational reduction that was completely at odds with both the standard theories of gravitational dynamics and the generally accepted notion of meteoroid stream structure. The book explores these two controversies and uses them to examine Denning’s outlook on scientific methodology.