

# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Physical and astronomical constants</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Shape and dimensions of the Milky Way . . . . .	1
1.2 Rotation and spiral structure . . . . .	6
1.3 The Milky Way at all wavelengths . . . . .	10
1.4 The role of the HIPPARCOS satellite . . . . .	12
<b>2 The solar neighborhood</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 The fundamental parameters of stars and the Hertzsprung-Russell diagram . . . . .	17
2.2 The local stellar disk . . . . .	21
2.3 Kinematics and dynamics of the stars of the local disk . . . . .	25
2.4 High-velocity stars . . . . .	30
2.5 The interstellar matter near the Sun . . . . .	31
<b>3 Structure and components of the Milky Way</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Dimensions and rotation of the Galaxy . . . . .	37
3.2 Stellar populations in the Galaxy . . . . .	44
3.2.1 The stellar halo . . . . .	46
3.2.2 The bulge . . . . .	47
3.2.3 The thick disk . . . . .	48
3.2.4 The thin disk . . . . .	50
3.3 The interstellar medium in the Galaxy . . . . .	51
3.3.1 The atomic “neutral” medium . . . . .	51
3.3.2 The molecular medium and the interstellar dust . . . . .	55
3.3.3 The ionized medium . . . . .	60
3.3.4 Supernova remnants, bubbles and hot gas . . . . .	63
3.4 Radiation fields, magnetic field, cosmic particles and radio radiation . . . . .	64
3.5 The spiral structure of the Galaxy . . . . .	72
3.6 Dark matter in the Galaxy . . . . .	75
3.6.1 The contribution of baryons . . . . .	77
3.6.2 A gas contribution? . . . . .	79
3.6.3 Distribution of dark matter in the Galaxy . . . . .	80
3.6.4 An alternative possibility: modified gravity . . . . .	82

<b>4</b>	<b>The galactic center</b>	<b>85</b>
4.1	Bar and bulge . . . . .	85
4.2	The interstellar matter at the galactic center . . . . .	87
4.3	The black hole . . . . .	90
4.3.1	The close environment of the black hole . . . . .	90
4.3.2	Flares near the black hole . . . . .	93
4.3.3	The black hole itself . . . . .	94
4.3.4	Gas in-falling onto the black hole . . . . .	98
4.4	Conclusion . . . . .	101
<b>5</b>	<b>Galactic dynamics</b>	<b>103</b>
5.1	Dynamics of the barred spiral structure . . . . .	103
5.2	Cycle of the bar evolution, migrations, multiple waves . . . . .	109
5.2.1	Destruction and re-formation of bars . . . . .	110
5.2.2	Migrations . . . . .	112
5.2.3	Secondary bar, multiple waves . . . . .	113
<b>6</b>	<b>The chemical evolution of the Galaxy</b>	<b>121</b>
6.1	The formation of the Galaxy . . . . .	122
6.2	The production of elements in stars . . . . .	123
6.3	Modeling the chemical evolution . . . . .	127
6.4	The chemical evolution of the halo and the bulge . . . . .	131
6.5	The chemical evolution of disks . . . . .	134
<b>7</b>	<b>Formation and evolution of the Galaxy</b>	<b>139</b>
7.1	The thin and thick disks . . . . .	139
7.2	The formation of the bulge . . . . .	142
7.3	The formation of the halo : cosmological or not? . . . . .	144
<b>8</b>	<b>The Galaxy among its companions</b>	<b>147</b>
8.1	A spiral among the spirals – the Hubble classification of the Galaxy . . . . .	147
8.2	The satellites : the Magellanic Clouds and dwarf elliptical galaxies . . . . .	149
8.3	Capture of the Sagittarius dwarf, and many others: the tidal streams . . . . .	152
8.4	Galactic wind, high velocity clouds, cosmic accretion . . . . .	154
8.5	APPENDIX . . . . .	157
8.6	List of the principal Milky Way satellites, sorted by increasing distance . . . . .	157
<b>9</b>	<b>The future</b>	<b>159</b>
	<b>Appendix 1. Stellar parameters</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>Appendix 2. A few basic notions concerning the observations of the interstellar medium</b>	<b>167</b>
	<b>Glossary</b>	<b>169</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>177</b>
	<b>Index</b>	<b>181</b>