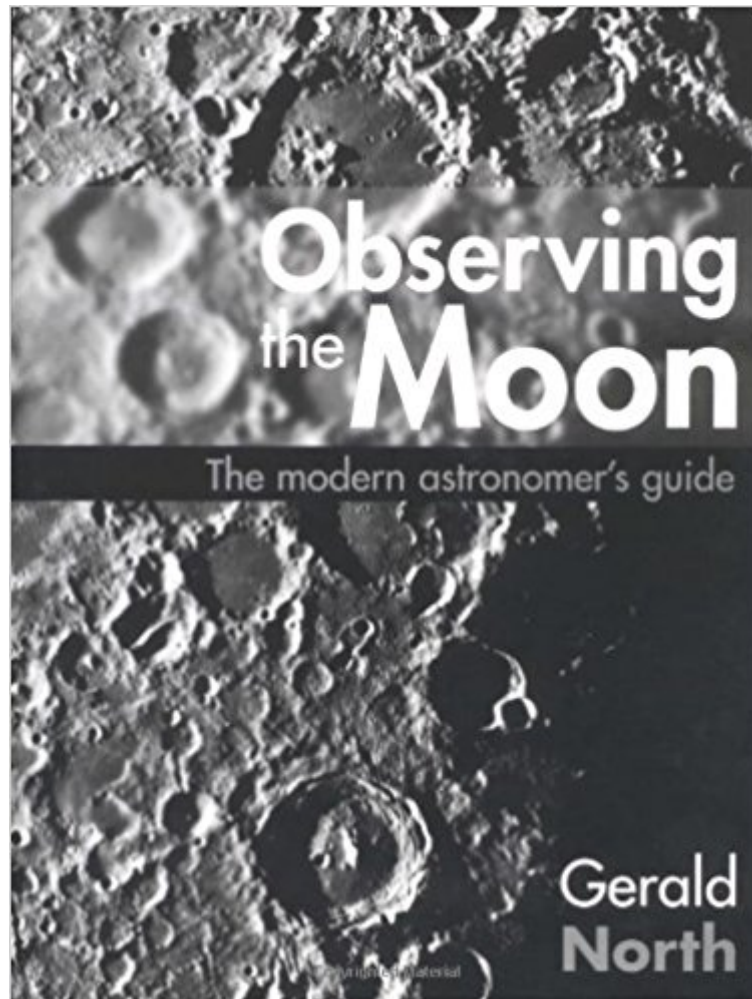


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Observing The Moon: The Modern Astronomer's Guide



Synopsis

What do scientists know about the Moon? What are some of the mysteries that remain to be solved? Written by an experienced and well-known lunar expert, this is a "hands-on" primer for the aspiring observer of the Moon. Whether you are a novice or already experienced in practical astronomy, you will find plenty in this book to help "raise your game" to the next level and beyond. Gerald North shares extensive practical advice and his sophisticated background knowledge of the Moon and of lunar observation. He covers the selection and construction of equipment and optimizing of existing equipment for such projects as drawing, photographing and CCD imaging of the Moon, together with analysis and computer processing images, and many other practical topics. Observing the Moon will allow both amateur and seasoned astronomers alike to immerse themselves in contemporary efforts to solve the lunar mysteries, as well as to enjoy more fully our Moon in all its magnificence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is difficult to know what to say about this book. The author has invested much time in preparing it, and Cambridge has done an excellent job of reproducing the many fine drawings and photographs included. Yet it leaves me surprisingly flat; I suspect this is a book which will sit on my shelf rarely opened. The book is strangely lopsided. Its longest and best section, fully half the book, is a set of detailed descriptions of forty-eight selected regions of the Moon, selected for their topographic variety and interest. Each region is illustrated by photographs and drawings under various

illuminations, and North provides descriptive text and an at-the-eyepiece tutorial. The drawings are typical of the British school of lunar drawing: meticulous pen and ink drawings which are striking to look at, but so stylized as to bear little resemblance to what one sees through the eyepiece. This massive descriptive section is preceded by seven short chapters to provide the reader, whom North typifies as an "interested amateur astronomer who is yet to become a lunar specialist," with the background necessary to begin observations of the Moon. After an introductory chapter, there are sections on the history of lunar observation, equipment and visual observation, photography, electronic imaging, the physical nature of the Moon, and reference sources. Following the large descriptive chapter, there is a chapter on transient lunar phenomena, obviously a subject dear to North's heart. Much of this material is superficial, but it is interlaced repeatedly with rather technical sections, almost as if the author wished to show off his scientific credentials. When I initially started to read the book, I gravitated to the chapter on reference sources.

North is a respected person in the amateur lunar community. Given that, I can't help but wish this book could have been somehow better. North starts out by giving a good account of the Moon itself, dealing with such concepts as gravity, tides, phases, libration, lunar coordinates, and occultations. He then goes forward to give a short account of pioneering lunar selenography. Then he goes onward with chapters dealing with drawing the Moon through a telescope and photographing the Moon with both cameras and CCDs. All of these chapters, while good, could have been more in depth, I think. A (very) short chapter on the Moon as it is studied from the desktop is included. This so barely scratches the surface the chapter is easy to miss. The largest portion of the book is a chapter (over 100 pages long) on selected lunar landscapes. This is a great part of the book and North does a great job with it. It seems the only part of the book that isn't cut short due to space considerations, but here more could possibly been done. Finally, there is a short, but good chapter on Transient Lunar Phenomena, the subject that North has been working on for some years. In the end, the most annoying part of the book for me was North saying again and again and AGAIN that "much more could be said about this, but I'm already over the page allotment that my publisher set." In the end, due to this, "Observing the Moon" is largely an average book...that has two GREAT books struggling to get out of it. Want a first book on the Moon? You can start with this, but it will only whet your appetite for more...which may not be a bad thing. Mr. North, I look forward to you working on the next version of this book.

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