



The Clementine atlas of the Moon

by Ben Bussey & Paul Spudis

Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. lii + 316. ISBN 0-521-81528-2, £50.00 (hbk).

As might be expected, the *Clementine Atlas* is no 'Field Guide' to keep one company at the eyepiece, but a substantial hard-backed book, intended as a complete reference work for both professionals and the serious amateur. The text throughout is both accessible and non-technical.

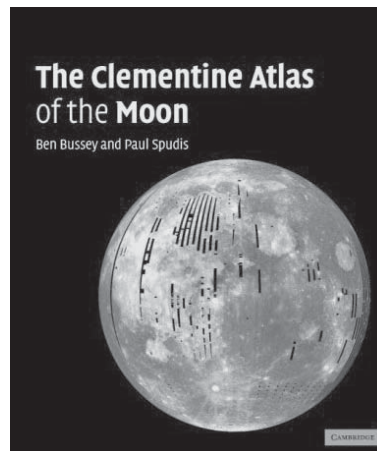
Part I contains an introductory chapter on the Moon, 'A short history of lunar exploration' and 'Recent lunar exploration from *Clementine* to today'. The section 'Atlas details' provides a clear outline of how the *Atlas* was produced. The opening chapter contains a basic error in that the orbital period of the Moon is incorrectly shown as just over 29 days, whereas this is the period of the Synodic month, or interval between successive identical phases. Unfortunately this is confused further by Figure 1 where the period is shown as 28 days.

The *Atlas* itself consists of 144 charts, mapping over 99% of the lunar surface in a uniform format. The left hand page of each pair consists of a photo-mosaic of *Clementine* UV-Visual images of the Moon. The right

hand page, which reveals the nomenclature, consists of a reprojected 'shaded relief image' of the same area. The scale approximates to 1cm to 25km on the lunar surface.

The overall aim of the authors is clearly stated in the preface: this work is intended to provide a comprehensive and up to date replacement for the late lamented *Times Atlas Of The Moon* (Times Newspapers Ltd 1969) but covering the entire lunar surface including the averted hemisphere, and containing the 'most complete database of lunar crater nomenclature in existence'.

The authors' credentials are impeccable; both are senior planetary scientists of considerable experience. Technically, they have achieved their aim of placing the entire Moon between two covers. But prospective purchasers should beware; this is not an Atlas to reveal the Moon in its full glory, and the rather small scale mitigates against enlightenment on



points of topographical interest.

Many of the photo-mosaics are images secured under a high sun-angle and sit uneasily with the accompanying shaded relief charts, themselves reproduced in a rather uninspiring soft-focus grey. Feature names are reproduced in a bold white italic upper case, often directly across the feature itself, thus obliterating what detail there is. To gain a North-South ori-

entation, the book must be turned sideways.

This *Atlas* will doubtless become a standard reference work on the basis of its completeness alone, but cannot be considered definitive in any other sense. At £50, it probably represents reasonable value for money.

Colin Ebdon

Colin Ebdon is Topographical Coordinator for the BAA Lunar Section and editor of *The New Moon*. Thanks to an early retirement, he can now observe the Moon more often.

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