



The Moon: Bill Leatherbarrow. KOSMOS. Reaktion Books Ltd, May 2018. ISBN 978-1-78023-914-9.
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As the author says in the preface, the aim of this book was not only to provide an accessible account of current lunar science, but to uncover the history of observation and discovery that gave rise to that science. Until the first decade of the 17th century, the surface of the Moon was largely ignored, assumed to be a reflection of Earth's own geographical aspect upon an otherwise perfect world orbiting our own. Galileo's telescopic observations of late 1609 were preceded by those in England by Thomas Harriot, observing a few months beforehand but Galileo was the first to describe the surface of the Moon in print.

For the next three centuries, the study of the Moon was by a succession of mainly European amateur observers drawing increasingly more detailed maps as telescopes became ever more powerful. By the end of the 19thC, the naming of lunar features was becoming confused. It wasn't until 1913 that an attempt, by Englishwoman Mary Blagg [Cheadle, Staffordshire], was made to collate the nomenclature from the most detailed amateur maps and eventually produce, with Karl Muller, an internationally agreed catalogue and map in 1935.

With the development of photography and the professionalization of astronomy in the 20th C, attention was turned to how the Moon's surface features had been created. Volcanism was considered to be the most obvious cause, but in 1949 a seminal work, *The Face of the Moon*, by American astronomer Ralph B Baldwin, was the first to put forward a cogent argument for an impact theory of crater formation although it was resisted for another twenty years. It was not until after the Apollo landings in 1969 and early 1970s that supporting evidence for the now-preferred impact theory became available.

During the past fifty years, lunar science has become increasingly sophisticated with high resolution photography and remote sensing from orbiting space craft but the study of the Moon by amateur observers continues to be a popular pursuit for its own sake.