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The Blair Cuspids: A Legitimate Lunar Anomaly?

1 Comment

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These days, news sites and blogs are rife with claims of the discovery of artifacts, anomalies, and alien spaceships all over the lunar surface.

The majority of these purported anomalies are spotted in the multitudes of existing lunar photos supplied by NASA over the years; stories which often suppose that the mystery objects in question were "missed" at the time folks back in NASA's photo labs were airbrushing out all the weird stuff often accompany these grainy pictures, sometimes featuring "enhancements" by amateur moon watchers.

Mars appears to be no different really, at least as far as anomalies go, with everything from monkeys and [bunker entrances](#), to [sightings of Bigfoot](#) turning up all over the place. No, seriously... you haven't seen the "Martian Bigfoot"?



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Quit pretending you don't see the resemblance...

Among the more recent headlines involving the appearance of mysterious lunar structures had been the claim of a massive "spire" some interpreted to be a flying saucer landing pad, which my friend Lee Spiegel over at the *Huffington Post* [had a little fun with](#) the other day.

There are however, from time to time, images that turn up that *do* have a little more potential, as far as Martian or lunar anomalies go. Often neglected from such conversations in recent years are the so-called "Blair cusps", a series of alleged "spires" which were first photographed in 1966 by Lunar Orbiter 2.

Thomas O'Toole wrote of the discovery in a *Washington Post* article on November 23, 1966, which described the "6 Mysterious Statuesque Shadows" as follows:

Ranging from one about 20 feet long to another as long as 75 feet, the six shadows were hailed by scientists as one of the most unusual features of the moon ever photographed.

One scientist described the needle-like shadows as the moon's "Christmas tree effect." Still another description called it the "Fairy Castle" effect. On seeing the picture, one scientist wanted to call the region the moon's "Valley of Monuments."

The region of the moon where the shadows turned up is just to the western edge of the moon's Sea of Tranquility. It is an area just north of the moon's equator, slightly to the east or right, of center.

Scientists said they have no idea what is casting the shadows. The largest shadow is just the sort that would be cast by something resembling the Washington Monument, while the smallest is the kind of shadow that might be cast by a Christmas tree.



The Blair cusps (credit: NASA)

Needless to say, it was indeed a fascinating discovery at the time, leading scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey to conclude the strange, elongated shadows were "cast

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by rock piles ranging from 16 to 75 feet high." Quoting one of the USGS scientists, Dr. Thor Karlstrom, *Newsweek* weighed in on the matter the following week noting:

"They might be blocks of material ejected from a crater by the impact of some object," speculates Dr. Thor Karlstrom, one of the USGS scientists who studied the pictures for NASA's Langley Research Center. Or the rocks could be volcanic material ejected through faults in the moon's crust – a view which adds to the impressive evidence already accumulated by Lunar Orbiter I that the moon has had the same turbulent geological past as the earth. The structures might also be eroded cones of old volcanoes. "Any of these possibilities could conceivably be correct," says Karlstrom.

Things really began to get interesting when on February 1, 1967, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an article citing the opinions of William Blair, an anthropologist and member of the Boeing Company's biotechnology unit, who at the time stated that while the "spires" may not be the work of any "transitory intelligence," they were nonetheless worthy of interest to scientists.

Blair said, in a statement published by the *LA Times*, that, "If such a complex of structures were photographed on earth, the archaeologist's first order of business would be to inspect and excavate test trenches and thus validate whether the prospective site has archaeological significance."

The article continued:

Blair says that when he went over the photo with a compass and protractor he found that the spires formed a basic X, Y and Z right-angle coordinate system, six isosceles triangles and two axes consisting of three points each.

The anthropologist also discovered in the photo, he says, what appears to be a large rectangular shaped depression or pit directly west of the largest spire, estimated to be as tall as 70 feet.

Blair says the shadow cast by this depression seems to indicate four 90-degree angles and resembles the profile of an eroded pit structure.

Apparently Blair analyzed the photograph of the alleged lunar spires, referencing an occasion where he had once employed aerial survey maps while attempting to locate an archaeological site in the American southwest. Blair became proficient at spotting what appeared to be geometric patterns in earthen structures because, "except for primitive, nomadic peoples, man tends to construct single and multiple structures in geometric forms."

A dissenting opinion was cast by Dr. Richard Shorthill, an expert on lunar topography with the in-house Scientific Research Laboratory, also at Boeing. "Pick some [lunar features] at random," Shorthill said, "and you eventually will find a group that seems to conform to some kind of pattern."

Blair responded thusly:

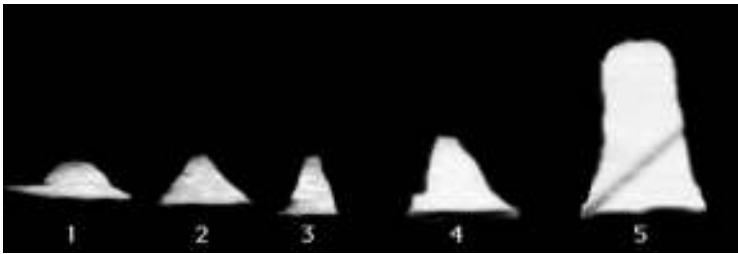
If this same axiom were applied to the origin of such surface features on earth, more than half of the present known Aztec and Mayan architecture would still be under tree and bush studded depressions – the result of natural geophysical processes.

The science of archaeology would have never been developed, and most of the present knowledge of man's physical evolution would still be a mystery.

So in Blair's opinion, the objects were certainly of some significance to science, despite the resolute disagreement by his colleagues at Boeing. However, Lan Fleming, a Computer Systems Analyst in the Artificial Intelligence Department at Southwest Research Institute from 1987-1990, would eventually weigh in on the matter as well. Fleming argued that the cusps were dismissed as a result of "uncritical thinking", and rather than trying to split hairs over the low-resolution images released by NASA in 1966, went about trying to locate larger format 8x10 copies of the images taken by Lunar Orbiter 2.

"When the photograph was released," Fleming wrote in 1996, "the NASA public affairs office identified it according to a numbering system that has since become obsolete, so there was no way authenticate the image or to access the photographic support data listing the sun angle at the time and place of the photograph. This information on the illumination geometry is of critical importance in evaluating the validity of the official explanation of why the shadows were so long."

With the help of Fran Ridge of the the Lunascan Project, as well as Mike Lomax and the staff at the National Space Science Data Center, Fleming was able to determine the correct frame number in question, and thus locate better quality negatives which depicted the so-called "Blair cusps".



Rough shapes of the cusps looking head-on, based on Lan Fleming's calculations of the shadows cast by the objects in the Lunar Orbiter 2 images.

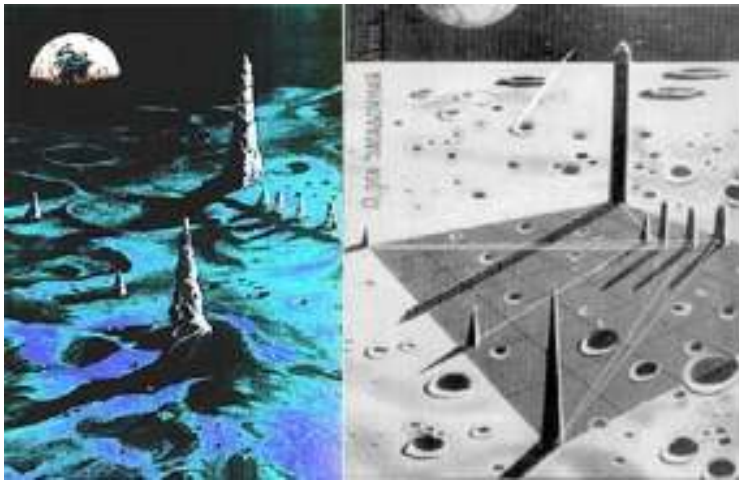
Citing an excerpt from Fleming's original 1996 report, *The Blair Cusps: A Mystery Revisited*, Fleming describes how he was able to determine the proper angle from which the sun illuminated the objects, along with other supporting technical data, which did seem to suggest that the "spires" weren't simply your average, run of the mill "lunar rocks":

With the correct frame number, we were also able to quickly reference the photographic support data in the Lunar Orbiter 2 catalog to find the angle of sun light illuminating the objects in the photograph. The catalog data showed that the sun was in the East at an angle of 79.1 degrees from the lunar vertical, or 10.9 degrees above the lunar horizon. While this sun angle is in fact low, it is by no means low enough to support the claim that the shadows were cast by common boulders. From the support data, it was also determined that this region is located at lunar coordinates 15.5 degrees East, 5.1 degrees North.

Of equal intrigue had been the fact that, by adjusting the contrast of the photo depicting the area around the Blair cusps, an "unusually regular rectangular depression" was found to exist very close nearby. Of this mysterious feature, Fleming noted:

When an unusual feature such as this trench is found in close proximity to other unusual features of an entirely different kind, such as the "Cusps", it is reasonable to suppose that the possibility for an artificial origin of all the features is substantially increased. This is so because a common geological explanation is made more difficult and an appeal to improbable coincidence

becomes more necessary to support a natural origin for the disparate features.



Russian artistic renderings suggesting various interpretation of the appearance of the Blair cuspids, ranging from geological formations to "obelisks".

None of this may conclusively reveal structures on the lunar surface that would indicate, now or at any time before, the presence of some "transient intelligence." However, the fact that the objects were determined to be anomalous enough that many technically-minded scientists gave them such consideration certainly bolsters their credibility.

Whether natural, or manufactured, perhaps the Blair cuspids would make for a unique addition to any future exploration of the moon in the coming years, whether that be of the manned variety, or one of our friendly robotic probes.

TAGS: bigfoot, Blair Cuspids, lunar spire, moon anomalies, nasa

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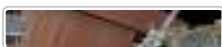
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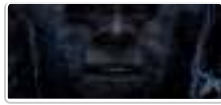


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