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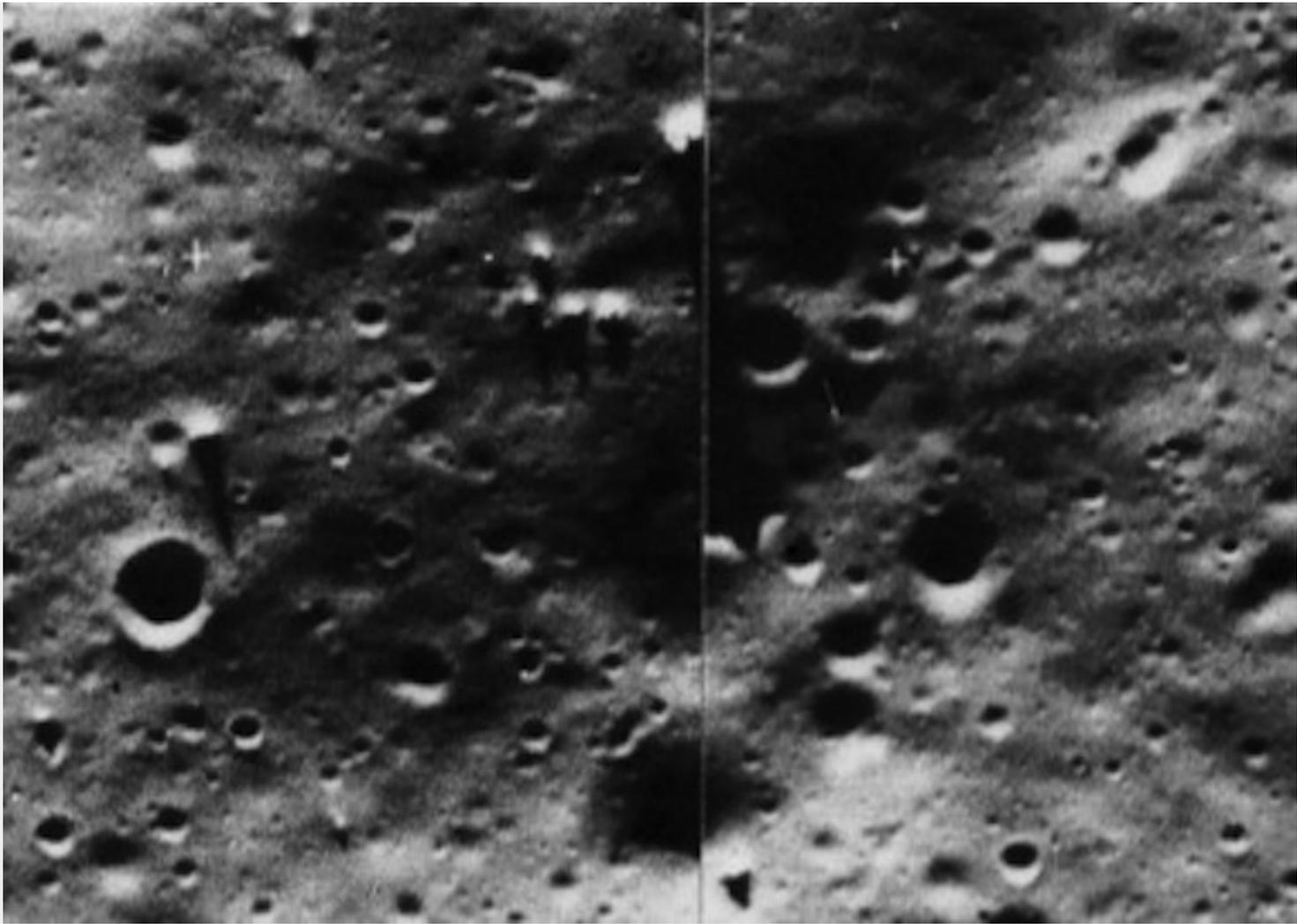


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## ASU Researchers Propose Looking for Ancient Alien Artifacts on the Moon

by Paul Scott Anderson on December 29, 2011

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*The "Blair Cuspids" photographed by Lunar Orbiter 2 in 1966. Credit: NASA*

Two researchers at Arizona State University (ASU) have made a rather controversial proposal: have the public and other researchers study the high-resolution photographs of the Moon already being taken by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO), to look for [anomalies that may possibly be evidence of artifacts](#) leftover from previous alien visitation. The theory is that if our solar system had been visited in the past, the Moon would have made an ideal base from which to study the Earth. The paper has just been recently published in the journal *Acta Astronautica*.

Professor Paul Davies and research technician Robert Wagner admit that the chances of success are very small, but argue that the endeavour would be worth the minimal investment required. The photographs are already being taken on a regular basis by LRO. Any interesting finds could be examined by others including

imaging professionals. Shape-recognizing software could also be used to help discern any possible artificial artifacts from natural ones.

From the abstract:

*The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) has a low probability of success, but it would have a high impact if successful. Therefore it makes sense to widen the search as much as possible within the confines of the modest budget and limited resources currently available. To date, SETI has been dominated by the paradigm of seeking deliberately beamed radio messages.*

*However, indirect evidence for extraterrestrial intelligence could come from any incontrovertible signatures of non-human technology. Existing searchable databases from astronomy, biology, earth and planetary sciences all offer low-cost opportunities to seek a footprint of extraterrestrial technology. In this paper we take as a case study one particular new and rapidly-expanding database: the photographic mapping of the Moon's surface by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) to 0.5 m resolution. Although there is only a tiny probability that alien technology would have left traces on the moon in the form of an artifact or surface modification of lunar features, this location has the virtue of being close, and of preserving traces for an immense duration.*

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*Systematic scrutiny of the LRO photographic images is being routinely conducted anyway for planetary science purposes, and this program could readily be expanded and outsourced at little extra cost to accommodate SETI goals, after the fashion of the SETI@home and Galaxy Zoo projects.*

Of course, it has been said by some that such artifacts have already been found and known about for decades but hidden from the public by NASA, et al. An entire cottage industry has grown around this idea. There are actually a handful of anomalies from various missions that would be interesting to see at much higher resolution via LRO, such as the well-known "[Blair Cuspids](#)" photographed by Lunar Orbiter 2 in 1966, although by far most unusual-looking objects are easily explained. It's the same problem as with Mars; so many anomalies found by amateur observers are the product of pareidolia, lighting effects, image defects or even

geology. Separating out any genuine anomalies from all of the noise would be a tedious and time-consuming task. On the other hand, we now have much better cameras in orbit around the Moon (and Mars) and more advanced photographic analysis techniques available.

Yes, the chances of finding anything are very small, maybe even nonexistent in the opinion of some, but if we have the images being taken anyway, and the willingness of some to study them, then why not? If nothing is found, no harm done. If something was found, well that's another story entirely...

The abstract for the paper is [here](#). (The paper itself costs \$31.50 US to download).

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### About Paul Scott Anderson

Paul Scott Anderson is a freelance space writer with a life-long passion for space exploration and astronomy and has been a long-time member of The Planetary Society. He currently writes for [Universe Today](#) and [Examiner.com](#). His own blog [The Meridiani Journal](#) is a chronicle of planetary exploration.

Tagged as: [Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter](#), [Moon](#)

• *Anonymous*

What makes them think that ANYONE would find monkey-people like us at all interesting? This is worst sort of money and time wasting racial narcissistic wild goose chase.

○

*Anonymous*

Wouldn't we find a world full of monkey people interesting?

○

*Anonymous*

And besides, who travels all those light years just to leave a little Arthur c Clarke reference?

I think the biggest danger is public perception! "Oh! I heard we are going back to the moon to look for aliens" ha ha

○

*Anonymous*

I doubt we'll find alien artifacts either, but don't presume to know too much about extraterrestrial interests and motivations,

however advanced they may be.

After all, we study insects and microbes, do we not?

■

*Anonymous*

I don't think that we are interesting enough to examine. Our society will go the way of most. We will ultimately implode and destroy ourselves.

■

*Anonymous*

"I don't think that we are interesting enough to examine"

Again, \*you\* don't think so. ETs may or may not have different standards of what constitutes 'interesting.' Extraterrestrials may have numerous examples against which to make a statement of how interesting or typical our civilization is. But we ourselves certainly have nothing for comparison, at this time. We may be 'quite unusual,' or 'just another.' You can't know, with only ourselves as a data point.

"Our society will go the way of most. We will ultimately implode and destroy ourselves. "

(shrug) Even if that ultimately proves true (and you can't know that, either), it may be no less interesting from the ET equivalent of an anthropological or sociological point of view. Even if only as an example of what \*not\* to do.

Assertions like yours and barzuk's, say more about the speaker's own view of the human condition, than how extraterrestrials may actually behave.

■

*Anonymous*

I absolutely agree with your comments. Essentially, we don't know the perspective of ET's (if they exist). We only have our own viewpoints. However, I tend to feel more comfortable underestimating mankind's significance to the universe.

○

*Anonymous*

Why do you say "racial narcissistic"? What does race have to do with anything? We are just speculating on information availability. No?

●

*Anonymous*

I've been a member of the Moon Zoo for a while. A year ago(?) when I started, I'd looked at some thousands of images. Then... I came across one image that intrigued me. Running somewhat diagonally top to bottom I found a frame of what I at first thought were Lunikhund tracks. The trail was composed of a series of regularly spaced linear holes.. as though something had passed overhead and bored holes into the surface as it went along.

I marked it as exceptional and tried to send it in a message to the Moon Zoo people? When I went back to confirm, the image was gone. I requested and got a spreadsheet of my image viewing profile and went back thru all of them to find this image again... It was not there.

○

*Anonymous*

Wow, great story. I wish I knew what happened.

○

*Scott Myers*

It's probably in a file cabinet at Area 51.

○

*Torbjörn Larsson*

I think you mean [Lunokhod](#).

The rest is the usual conspiracy theory. The simplest explanation would be that the identity of the image was forgotten.

Also, the Moon Zoo uses an image database so is dynamical. Thus expect images to disappear or be cleaned up if they are plagued with technical problems such as signal artifacts.

○

*Anonymous*

Aqua4U, your story and others (including my own experiences) intrigues me. I always thought that science was about the examination of the possible and "seemingly" impossible. I'm not sure if NASA is hiding anything that suggest other civilizations exist. However, I do (in my humble opinion) feel like they (NASA) are hiding what we (DOD, black project etc.) already knows exist. What cracks me up is that we actually claim this is science when we appear to be afraid of examining all available evidence. Sometimes I think that NASA (and government as a whole) tries to ferment conspiracy theories by pretending to hide evidence that does not exist. To be considered scientific, research needs to have access to all available information with an open mind.

●

*Anonymous*

ANYONE would find human activities very humorous if looked long enough... maybe they needed a laugh?

●

*Anonymous*

ANYONE would find human activities very humorous if looked at long enough... maybe they needed a laugh?

○

IVAN3MAN\_AT\_LARGE

OK, dude, we heard you the first time already! 😊

• *Anonymous*

This should at best be part of some general survey project, say some protocol to look for anomalies.

As for finding ETI in general and related issues:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbgYKrRR05o&feature=endscreen&NR=1>

LC

• *Bruce Thomas*

This is just another way for someone to waste more money. Coming up with ideas such as this is a waste of money. The country is in a very deep hole. Just keep coming up with ideas like this and someone's gonna backfill that hole with us in it.

○ *Anonymous*

Nobody's talking about launching any new rockets or space stations. The price of developing technologies related to this kind of exploration is minimal and will help us develop more ways to effectively use our resources (funding) for future scientific advancement. . We are already getting great data from LRO. No?

• *Anonymous*

Although finding alien artifacts is unlikely, the process of searching may turn up interesting discoveries. The unusual pattern at one point might not be ET's lunar base, but it could be an indicator of some interesting, heretofore unknown geological phenomenon.

Besides, scouring lunar photographs may provide a great amount of educational entertainment for amateur astronomers.

Although, if you will permit a naive question, wouldn't the Earth be the ideal base for studying the Earth?

• *Daniel Beck*

Some people's lack of imagination on here makes me sick. I agree there are maybe better things to spend your money on, but really, how much is this going to cost? Vs potential rewards? A smart investor ALWAYS puts some of their assets into high risk high yield accounts. Not every endeavor has to be a sure thing. In fact, many of the most important and amazing discoveries have happened only because some people took a long shot on something.

There are many anomalies on the moon that bear closer inspection, if these scientists are tasked with logging the formations and things they see that are of interest, whether they prove fruitful as alien in origin or not, geologists might find them important or useful as well.

Good science can be done here whether everyone believes in aliens or not.

○ *Anonymous*

I agree – there is likely to be spin-off science output. But public perception is important and if the public knows NASA is investing money in looking for aliens on the Moon, that could endanger its support from congress – which could have a negative effect on everything else NASA does. That's the reality, even if it's not a favourable reality. If the investigation goes ahead, it should really be downplayed or disguised as a general lunar survey.

○ *LUTHER G. BROSSA*

Any civilization that rejects the advances of others is doomed...

• *Torbjörn Larsson*

Physicist Davies is famous for his Templeton funded deism and his late obsession with the contexts of life. Remember his arsenic life infatuation that ended so poorly?

Usually the religious wants to make out humans as special and I suspect Davies is no different. He seems to have listened to the majority of biologists that point out that traits are contingent and hence complex tissue-forming multicellulars are likely to be rare elsewhere. So he seems to combine an eagerness in finding simple life everywhere, preferably from many independent abiogenesis events ("shadow biosphere"), with a similar eagerness to fail in finding complex life elsewhere.

Maybe that is why he proposes such natty projects.

• *Anonymous*

Even though detecting alien life forms will be extremely unlikely, it would be an interesting research, because it develops software to detect artificial things.

The software should at least detect the Apollo landers.

This software could then be used for future missions mapping different moons, asteroids,...

○ *Anonymous*

I agree completely. I'm hoping that we are able to travel to other galaxies in my lifetime. Anything that could speed the process of examining the details is worth it to our society. Especially since we are not talking about a tremendous outlay of funds. Let's do it!

*Anonymous*

I'm sure Richard Hoagland is first in line for the photographs!

*Anonymous*

I thought he already found everthing.

*http://twitter.com/JMaytum Julian Maytum*

I was going to nay nay this until I thought about it a little more. I think any time we get people thinking about life outside of planet earth it's a good thing. This looks like an exercise in futility to me but like I say.. if it gets people thinking.. why not. The general public is completely clueless and filled with incorrect information about anything outside of the planet (and a lot about our own planet) so I can't see it hurting.

*LUTHER G. BROSSA*

It's actually a great idea. The citizenry have – already – expended the monies to capture the images. Allow third-party access to the raw image-files. Conversion from native file-format translation to common file-formats, Ongoing analysis by interested parties is 'easy' enough. Those who (may) happen to make significant and/or contribution(s) to the program objectives, should be afforded recognition and residual compensation from media presentations. Knowing where exo-technology can be 'unearthed' tempts potentially unlimited gain to those who are first on-sight. Access will foster a productive economic strategy between the DOD objectives and civilian interests. Space is the place and there's every reason to develop aerospace programs that be aligned to public support...

*joe\_schmoe*

My concern is that it may well lead to a feeding frenzy for conspiracy theorists. Someone will find an image with an object that appears anomalous. The photo will go viral. A scientist will look at it an offer a perfectly reasonable explanation for it and someone (Hoagland maybe?) will scream "cover-up!"

*Anonymous*

What should we care if some photo goes viral? How does that hurt scientific advancements?

*Anonymous*

Like no one does that now?

*ITSRUF*

ASU? This must sound like a good idea to a bunch of ASU stoners to study before they party themselves out of college....

*Anonymous*

ARTIFACT: "Something viewed as a product of [intelligent] conception or agency rather than an inherent element":

Well, in that lunar light, one could say there is an entire global-face of evidence visible on the Moon's convulsed surface, battered by titanic hail-storm passage through ancient mist-shrouded history, as it remained ever faithful in Earth company. A global "artifact", revealing night after night, that man is not the only conscious being who has ever known the "off-world" vistas of the Solar System. Though unseen, or overlooked, our neighbor's cratered moonscape gives abundant – and explosive – impacting evidence of "advanced", or superior life beyond Earth, yet nearer than one could believe.

*Bob*

1000'S OF ANCIENT ALIEN ARTIFACTS AND QUALITY PHOTO'S FACEBOOK BOB DUBOISE st. charles mo. 63301

*Bob*

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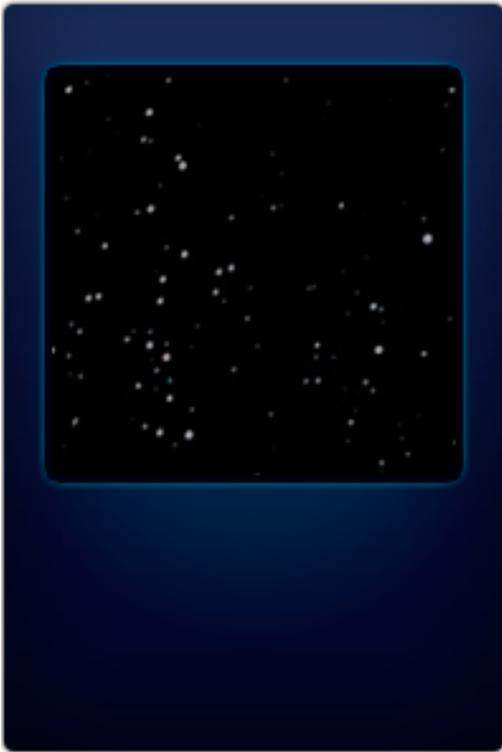
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