

Atlas of the Moon

by Antonin Rükl, edited by Gary Seronik

Sky Publishing, 2004. ISBN 1-931559-07-4. Pp 224, £25.24 (hbk)

Since its appearance in 1990, Rükl's *Atlas of the Moon* has become something of a standard reference work for the lunar enthusiast, and this revised edition is most welcome.

As it says on the cover, the book is intended for both the beginner and the more experienced lunar observer and this is one instance where the publishing blurb and reality happily coincide. The author is an observer's observer, having started out as a keen amateur astronomer and progressed to the position of Director of Prague Planetarium. Production values are high and the text is accurate and accessible throughout.

The Atlas contains a wealth of basic information in chapters such as 'The surface of the Moon', 'The motions of the Moon' and 'Observing the Moon' through to 'Origin and Evolution'. Several useful tables include lunar phases (updated for 2004-2014) and the calculation of co-longitude. The chapter on lunar cartography gives a clear explanation of selenographic coordinates which can be a puzzle for the beginner, and there is also a helpful glossary of terms.

At the back of the book are 'fifty views of the Moon' which remain unchanged in this edition, although the photographs are of high quality and cover a wide range of lunar objects.

The Atlas itself comprises seventy-six beautifully produced plates in a projection which reveals the telescopic Earth-centred perspective; they are supported by a comprehensive index of name formations. The accompanying pages give a brief description of major features along with their coordinates and the origin of names. There are separate, updated, maps of the libration zones. Accuracy is generally high and only keen lunarians will want to debate occasional points of topographical detail, which they will fill in for themselves at the eye-piece.

What then of changes made to this revised edition? The most obvious to the regular user will be the colour of the maps which have evolved from a green-grey to a somewhat starker blue. This will not be to everyone's taste, but it does seem to have the benefit of adding some contrast and definition to the drawings.

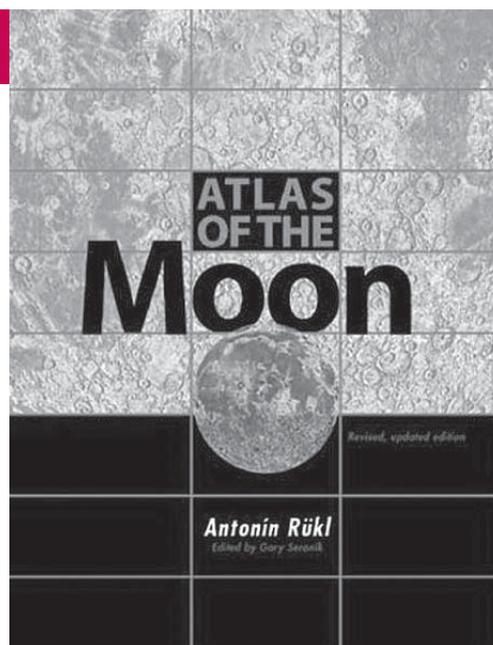
The language of geologists has been substituted throughout for that used historically

by selenographers. Thus terms like 'walled plain' are considered defunct. One has to question, however, whether such changes as 'network of valleys and clefts' amended to 'structure of valleys and lineaments' add anything of value in a book that otherwise avoids technical terms. The maps are updated to include current IAU-approved nomenclature.

Overall this Atlas remains one of the best available and can be thoroughly recommended for anyone interested in observing the Moon.

Colin Ebdon

Colin Ebdon is now retired and is the topographical coordinator for the BAA Lunar Section.



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