THE LUNAR OBSERVER

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR STUDENTS OF THE MOON OCTOBER 1998

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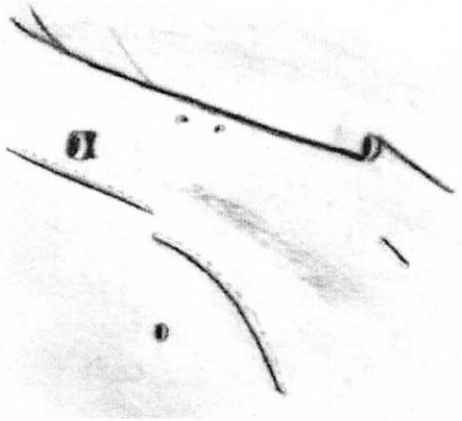
FEATURE OF THE MONTH

Cauchy & Vicinity (9°N - 38°E)



Sketch by Robert H. Hays, Jr. - Worth, Illinois
15cm Reflector - 170X - Seeing 4-6/10

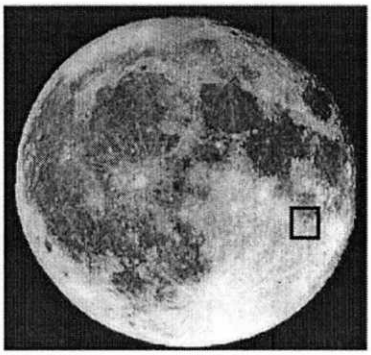
On the eastern portion of Mare Tranquillitatis lies the 12 km crater Cauchy. Rather ordinary under most angles of illumination, it does appear bright under a high sun. Although not very interesting in itself, Cauchy does lie in a very interesting part of Mare Tranquillitatis where it is straddled by a rille (Rima Cauchy) and a fault (Rupes Cauchy). Nearby are also two rather large domes, Tau and Omega Cauchy.

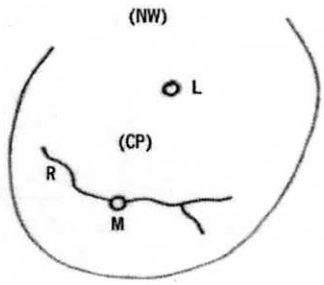
On the night of June 29, 1998, Robert Hays sketched the region and submitted the following report:

"I sketched this area after timing the occultation of the double star 49 Leonis. The main attraction isn't Cauchy but the narrow, intense shadows nearby, especially to the southwest. The shadow to the southwest of Cauchy was cast by the fault Rupes Cauchy according to the Lunar Quadrant Map. This feature was broken by the crater Cauchy B. Two rilles lie to the north and northwest of Cauchy. The one north of Cauchy is straight; the other curves around Cauchy A. Two tiny features near the fault appear to be a peak to the east and a craterlet to the west. Cauchy itself casts a conspicuous concave shadow."

Cauchy and vicinity can be found on Map #36 of Rukl's Atlas of the Moon and should be observed under all lighting angles beginning about five days after New Moon.

EXPLORING THE MOON





On the southern shore of Mare Nectaris lies the horseshoe shaped crater Fracastorius. Easily seen in a small telescope, at 124 km in diameter it could easily have been classified as a bay by early selenographers. The northern wall, located at NW on the simplified finder map above, is all but gone. Under a very low sun, however, its remnants can be seen in the form of minor hills and bumps. The remainder of the walls rise to a maximum of 1750 meters above the flooded interior and are peppered with small craters.

The largest craterlet on the floor of Fracastorius (L) is only 5 km in diameter and, as such, is a good target for beginning observers. What was once a central peak is now reduced to a few small hills atop a low circular plateau. These features, just as the remnants of the northern wall, must be viewed under a very low sun and can be a bit of a challenge.

Just south of the central peak area is a rille (R) that runs in an east-west direction and is interrupted by the small craterlet Fracastorius M. This craterlet is slightly smaller than L and measures about 4 km.

Although many of the more subtle features of Fracastorius can only be seen under a low sun, don't forget to observe this fine crater around the time of Full Moon. Under a high sun features such as a bright ray from the crater Tycho can be seen crossing the floor as well as an array of white spots and delicate streaks. Some have compared the floor of Fracastorius to that of Plato under similar lighting conditions.

As always, your sketches, images, and notes from this exploration are welcomed and encouraged.

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Observations Received During The Month

Colin Ebdon - London, England .....Sketches of Mare Crisium, Mercator & Kies, Sirsalis to Damoileu, North Polar Region, Triesnecker Rilles, Mons Piton

Fernando Ferri - Anzio, Italy ..... Sketch of Plato

David Lehman - Fresno, California ..... Photograph of Aristarchus

Donald Parker - Coral Gables, Florida ..... CCD image of Alpine Valley

Lunar Calendar For October 1998 (UT)

4.....09:00.....Moon 0.3 Degrees South of Jupiter

5.....20:12.....Full Moon

6.....13:00.....Moon at Perigee (357,623 km)

7.....02:00.....Moon 1.7 Degrees South of Saturn

12.....11:12.....Last Quarter

16.....03:00.....Moon 1 Degree South of Mars

20.....10:10.....New Moon (Start of Lunation 938)

21.....05:00.....Moon at Apogee (406,657 km)

28.....02:00.....Moon 2.2 Degrees North of Neptune

28.....11:47.....First Quarter

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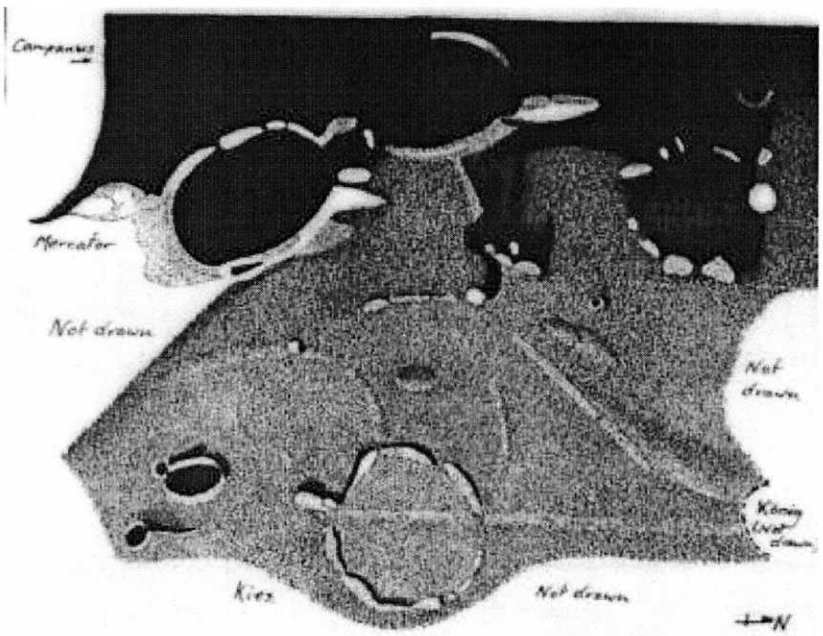
Topographical Studies



Region near Kies
Sketch by Colin Ebdon
London, England
25cm Newtonian
183X - 262X
Seeing: Poor
November 9, 1997

Plato
Sketch by Fernando Ferri
Anzio, Italy
90mm Refractor - 167X
June 3, 1998
(North: Down)