

THE KORDYLEWSKY CLOUDS – AN EXAMPLE FOR A CRUISE PHASE OBSERVATION DURING THE LUNAR MISSION BW1

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ABSTRACT

The LUNAR MISSION BW1 is an academic small moon orbiting spacecraft which is currently under development by the Institute of Space Systems (IRS), Universitaet Stuttgart, Germany. This probe is part of the Stuttgart Small Satellite Program and will be designed, build and operated by the institute itself. The launch of the 1 m cube all electrical spacecraft of approx. 200 kg is planned for the end of the decade. Before arriving in lunar orbit to perform remote sensing experiments the satellite will spend between 12 and 24 months in cis-lunar space during its cruise phase. In addition to the regular propulsion operation phases there is room for science opportunities for doing remote sensing as well as in-situ measurement experiments.

Measurement of dust distribution or observations of Near Earth Objects (NEO) will be interesting topics. An opportunity not to be missed might be the study of the faint Kordylewsky Clouds at the Lagrangian points L4 and L5 of the Earth-Moon-System. Discovered in 1956 by Polish astronomer K. Kordylewsky it is an elusive feature hard to observe from Earth. It is assumed that the clouds consist of captured particles of small size. The clouds extend up to a diameter of approx. 10000 km.

This paper will discuss the possibilities of remote sensing observation of the Kordylewsky Clouds during the LUNAR MISSION BW1 cruise phase. Which observation methods will be employed, what kind of instruments might be feasible and how can such a campaign fit into the spacecraft operations? Scientific issues as composition, origin, movement and physical properties will be addressed. What can be gained by including a ground-based (amateur/outreach) observation campaign?

INTRODUCTION

In October 1956 the Polish astronomer Kazimierz Kordylewski (1903-1981) observed the Lunar Libration Clouds at the libration points L4 and L5 visually for the first time. In March and April of 1961 he took photographs

of the clouds and published his findings in Acta Astronomica [1]. Since then a number of observers have obtained visual evidence ([2], [3]), photographic exposures ([4], [5]) or took measurements in wavelengths of 400-600 nm (OSO-6 observations [6]).

While in the past some scientists were able to observe the elusive Kordylewski clouds, other scientists have tried to find them but failed. More than 50 years after the first observation even the existence is still disputed by some researchers. Not surprisingly we know very little about the orbital and physical properties of the libration clouds. At the same time a number of future space missions plan to either pass through the L4/L5 libration points or have been chosen as a place to build Mars-bound spacecrafts. Before we attempt to use and occupy this region of space, it is necessary to positively prove or disprove the existence of the Lunar Libration Clouds and extensively study its properties.

The faint clouds are hard to detect from Earth and were never the primary target of a space based mission. A dedicated or carefully arranged space based mission with many observing opportunities will have the capability of finally answering the question about the existence and properties of the Kordylewski clouds. We propose a dedicated search and measurement campaign for the Kordylewski Clouds during the cruise phase of the Lunar Mission BW1 spacecraft.

CURRENT KNOWLEDGE

The crews of Gemini 12 [7], Apollo 14 [8] and Apollo 16 [9] took images of the libration point region but no final results were published. In 1991 the Japanese Hiten (Muses-A) spacecraft passed through L4 and L5 but did not find an increase in dust particle ([10]). However there is a good chance that Hiten passed the libration points but missed the libration clouds which according to Simpson [4] orbit around L4/L5 in distances of several degrees.

Current knowledge based on scientific observations according to Roach [6] are:

- there is sufficient material at the-Earth-Moon libration points L4 and L5 to produce a solar counter glow of 20 S_{10} Vis brightness,
- these libration clouds are about 6 degrees in angular size as seen from the Earth,
- these libration clouds move around the libration point, over an elliptical zone with a semi-major axis of about 6 degrees along the ecliptic and a semi-minor axis of about 2 degrees perpendicular to the ecliptic,
- the libration clouds are closer to the Moon during the northern summer months, and

away from the Moon during the northern winter months with respect to the Lagrangian point,

and according to Winiarski [5]:

- brightness is about half the brightness of the counter glow,
- color is much redder than the counter glow,
- this might indicate that the particles are of a different nature as in the counter glow.

SPACE-BASED OBSERVATIONS

A long duration cruise phase in cis-lunar space would provide excellent opportunity to study the Kordylewski Clouds over a long period of time and under a variety of different observing conditions. One suitable mission is the moon orbiter Lunar Mission BW1 of the Stuttgart Small Satellite Program accomplished by the Institute of Space Systems (IRS), Universitaet Stuttgart, Germany. With a launch not earlier than 2010 its flight to the Moon will last 12-24 months because of its low-thrust electric propulsion system and depending on the final launch configuration.

During the flight multiple measurements in various phase angles can be accomplished. Possible scientific objectives are:

- definition of orbital parameters,
- monitoring of halo movement over time,
- properties of the halo orbit,
- measurement of the variation of brightness with phase angle,
- implications for particle sizes and materials,
- upper and lower limits for particles, total mass and density
- spectral signatures,
- origin of the particles,
- link to the sodium tail reported to come from meteoroid impacts on the lunar surface [12]

LUNAR MISSION BW1 AND DUST INSTRUMENTS

The Lunar Mission BW1 is the fourth small satellite project of the "Stuttgart Small Satellite Program" initiated in 2002 at the Institute of Space Systems (IRS), Universitaet Stuttgart, Germany [15]. Three other different small satellite projects (earth observation/technology demonstration, electric propulsion systems/UV astronomy, reentry vehicle/GNC software) and ground segment facilities (integration

laboratory, ground station, control centre) are currently under construction or development with participation of Diploma/Masters and Ph.D. students [16].

The small lunar orbiter equipped with solar-electric propulsion system which will provide approx. 1 kW power will perform remote sensing and technology demonstration experiments in a high-inclined low lunar orbit. Different potential technology demonstration topics (e.g. electric propulsion systems, target pointing observation, autonomous GNC, FPGA on-board computer, radio frequency and microwave communication and radio science, impact experiment) are identified as well as different potential scientific objectives for cis-lunar and lunar exploration (e.g. high resolution multi spectral, imaging, reflectance measurements, landing site and remnant observation, lunar impact flash detection).

Launched not earlier than 2010 as a piggyback payload with approx. 200 kg launch mass and a size of approx. 1 m cube into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) the satellite will be transferred to the Moon using two different electric propulsion systems (thermal arcjet and a cluster of instationary magneto plasma dynamical pulsed thrusters).

In addition to planned imaging systems (VIS/NIR, TIR and panoramic camera) as well as radio science experiments (in S/Ka band) a miniaturized piezo-based dust detector is under discussion.

In the field of dust research the Institute of Space Systems (IRS) is cooperating with the cosmic dust group of the Max-Planck-Institute for Nuclear Physics (MPI-K), Heidelberg, Germany to develop an advanced dust telescope. The dust telescope is a combination a dust trajectory sensor for identification and a large area mass analyzer to determine the elemental composition [13].

OBSERVATION SIMULATION

The contact times to the Lunar Libration Clouds and their equatorial coordinates at those times were calculated using the Satellite Tool Kit software developed by AGI (Analytical Graphics, Inc.). STK performs complex analysis of land, sea, air, and space assets, and shares results in one integrated solution.

In this case STK was used to solve the inter-visibility problems between a ground based observer, the Lunar Mission BW1 spacecraft

and the L4 and L5 points. The observer's position was assumed to be the building of the Institute of Space Systems, Stuttgart, Germany (lon.: 9° 00' 30" E / lat.: 48° 40' 25" N).

Since the clouds are very faint, the following constraints had to be taken into account to calculate the possible observation times for the ground based observer to guarantee dark sky:

- max. sun elevation angle: -18°
- max. lunar elevation angle: -1°

For the contact times from the spacecraft to the clouds, a geostationary-transfer orbit (GTO) was simulated as a worst case scenario and sun and lunar exclusion angles of 20° were included.

The simulations show that it is possible to observe the clouds from the Lunar Mission BW1 spacecraft almost any time during the transfer through cis-lunar space. A simulation conducted with a trajectory close to the last orbit before lunar capture (305,000x180,000 km, 21 deg inclination, similar to the SMART-1 capture orbit [14]) showed the spacecraft can get as close as 58,000 km to the clouds. This close proximity will significantly enhance the observation quality.

The contact times of a ground based observer to the L4 and L5 libration points are much shorter. Due to the constraints mentioned above 10 to 15 opportunities are available each month to observe the clouds from the assumed position. The duration lasts from a few minutes up to six hours.

The tables below list the longest contact durations and the equatorial coordinates for each month from February 2007 until February 2009.

OTHER OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Study of the Kordylewski Clouds performed by Lunar Mission BW1 shall be accompanied by observations both from ground and from airborne instruments. Especially ground based observation campaigns are ideally suited for Educational and Public Outreach activities. Measurements from Earth are hard to obtain and thus rare. We can raise their number by including the many observers from the amateur astronomers domain. As a first step we have calculated the positions of the Kordylewski Clouds for the upcoming years and will publish favourable observing times to the general public.

A long-run Kordylewski Cloud observing campaign provides an additional training environment for spacecraft mission controllers and mission designers.

Some of the best previous results regarding the Lunar Libration Clouds were accomplished with NASA's Kuiper airborne observatory (KAO) [11]. Therefore using the new NASA/DLR airborne observatory SOFIA (Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy) will be an excellent choice for future studies. We propose SOFIA observations for mission preparation as well as coordinated ground-based and airborne observations during the cruise phase of the Lunar Mission BW1. The German SOFIA activities are operated and coordinated by the German SOFIA Institute (DSI) located at the Institute of Space Systems (IRS), Stuttgart.

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IRS - L4

Month	Access No	Start Date and Time [UTCG]	End Date and Time [UTCG]	Duration [min]	Begin			End		
					RA [HMS]	Dec [DMS]		RA [HMS]	Dec [DMS]	
Feb 07	21	19 Feb 07 19:31:12.124	20 Feb 07 01:37:26.947	366,25	03:47:11.5071	E 25:08:24.4127	N	04:03:32.2076	E 26:00:19.5404	N
Mar 07	34	20 Mar 07 19:54:17.331	21 Mar 07 01:47:40.379	353,38	05:33:36.0615	E 28:31:39.7062	N	05:50:28.1167	E 28:35:00.7690	N
Apr 07	45	18 Apr 07 20:20:11.156	19 Apr 07 01:18:21.505	298,17	07:20:14.5582	E 26:32:27.9220	N	07:33:50.6530	E 25:55:27.1845	N
May 07	58	18 May 07 21:54:41.988	19 May 07 00:38:58.750	164,28	09:56:52.5887	E 14:01:13.5207	N	10:02:57.9996	E 13:19:44.7843	N
Jun 07	---	NO CONTACT		---	NO CONTACT					
Jul 07	69	22 Jul 07 22:08:39.359	23 Jul 07 01:04:42.853	176,06	18:31:19.6989	E 27:46:36.9640	S	18:37:49.1656	E 27:37:28.5204	S
Aug 07	81	21 Aug 07 21:27:19.027	22 Aug 07 02:23:12.281	295,89	20:46:07.5233	E 20:36:23.9038	S	20:56:04.4908	E 19:44:22.4612	S
Sep 07	94	19 Sep 07 20:53:01.814	20 Sep 07 02:45:51.521	352,83	22:03:00.8558	E 12:47:12.7207	S	22:14:08.5697	E 11:28:18.7593	S
Oct 07	111	18 Oct 07 20:50:19.015	19 Oct 07 02:52:34.789	362,26	23:18:12.5846	E 03:11:16.2898	S	23:29:23.5077	E 01:41:49.5730	S
Nov 07	125	14 Nov 07 18:41:14.277	15 Nov 07 00:41:58.981	360,75	23:02:31.1182	E 05:01:55.4734	S	23:13:28.6831	E 03:35:42.7916	S
Dec 07	140	12 Dec 07 17:43:36.962	12 Dec 07 23:43:46.336	360,16	23:34:02.0863	E 00:35:21.1902	S	23:45:06.0180	E 00:52:47.6293	N
Jan 08	158	13 Jan 08 21:52:06.656	14 Jan 08 03:53:28.198	361,36	03:40:15.0200	E 24:54:28.8984	N	03:55:05.2816	E 25:38:44.4494	N
Feb 08	169	9 Feb 08 19:39:23.341	10 Feb 08 01:41:05.517	361,70	03:20:03.2018	E 23:49:31.4379	N	03:34:52.7531	E 24:41:50.9849	N
Mar 08	183	9 Mar 08 20:01:25.018	10 Mar 08 01:54:27.120	353,04	05:05:11.6765	E 27:46:22.6085	N	05:21:14.6968	E 27:56:13.8207	N
Apr 08	194	7 Apr 08 20:28:00.378	8 Apr 08 01:32:21.150	304,35	06:53:35.5215	E 26:26:55.8933	N	07:07:27.7877	E 25:54:49.9241	N
May 08	208	6 May 08 21:06:04.178	7 May 08 00:36:29.982	210,43	08:35:37.6957	E 20:12:03.8531	N	08:44:29.9065	E 19:27:18.5693	N
Jun 08	219	6 Jun 08 22:42:31.960	6 Jun 08 23:58:35.900	76,07	11:55:17.2635	E 03:01:14.1534	S	11:57:59.2784	E 03:22:11.6235	S
Jul 08	229	10 Jul 08 22:30:57.969	11 Jul 08 00:29:10.495	118,21	17:48:49.5302	E 27:29:22.5809	S	17:53:17.9934	E 27:26:52.5330	S
Aug 08	241	9 Aug 08 21:44:35.211	10 Aug 08 01:56:31.606	251,94	20:06:56.6769	E 22:01:25.9600	S	20:15:27.5526	E 21:24:05.9877	S
Sep 08	253	7 Sep 08 21:00:01.021	8 Sep 08 02:37:13.207	337,20	21:23:45.2836	E 15:14:26.0124	S	21:34:16.0638	E 14:07:56.1699	S
Oct 08	270	7 Oct 08 21:46:33.628	8 Oct 08 03:43:34.024	357,01	23:20:33.5222	E 01:08:49.2810	S	23:31:10.8986	E 00:13:34.7225	N
Nov 08	283	3 Nov 08 19:34:12.304	4 Nov 08 01:29:59.859	355,79	23:02:50.0443	E 03:13:39.6574	S	23:13:17.0604	E 01:53:36.9904	S
Dec 08	305	5 Dec 08 23:09:35.993	6 Dec 08 05:04:32.711	354,95	02:43:56.0432	E 21:13:28.5446	N	02:56:59.3060	E 22:07:37.1831	N
Jan 09	321	2 Jan 09 22:08:58.746	3 Jan 09 04:04:29.401	355,51	03:20:13.6704	E 23:38:42.2764	N	03:33:42.0994	E 24:20:55.3509	N
Feb 09	348	26 Feb 09 19:00:28.516	27 Feb 09 00:55:32.622	355,07	03:41:24.3413	E 24:39:50.9353	N	03:55:20.9804	E 25:15:16.9709	N

Table 1. Longest contact durations from the IRS building to the L4 Libration Point

IRS - L5

Month	Access No	Start Date and Time [UTCG]	End Date and Time [UTCG]	Duration [min]	Begin			End		
					RA [HMS]	Dec [DMS]		RA [HMS]	Dec [DMS]	
Feb 07	23	11 Feb 07 20:58:37.403	12 Feb 07 03:02:13.189	363,60	12:30:21.0485	E 05:29:55.8666	S	12:41:35.6802	E 06:58:50.3978	S
Mar 07	38	11 Mar 07 19:52:45.082	12 Mar 07 01:52:33.362	359,81	12:57:43.4278	E 09:06:27.6894	S	13:08:58.1515	E 10:31:07.9201	S
Apr 07	50	9 Apr 07 20:05:40.776	10 Apr 07 01:29:49.053	324,14	14:18:24.7386	E 18:13:46.8680	S	14:29:39.4842	E 19:17:51.1927	S
May 07	64	8 May 07 21:09:25.578	9 May 07 00:37:37.781	208,20	15:53:22.9911	E 25:19:59.8812	S	16:01:35.0491	E 25:45:04.4958	S
Jun 07	76	8 Jun 07 22:47:02.997	8 Jun 07 23:58:45.623	71,71	19:45:33.9525	E 24:58:23.1333	S	19:48:33.8573	E 24:48:21.6295	S
Jul 07	83	11 Jul 07 22:29:17.631	12 Jul 07 00:29:57.037	120,66	00:52:05.8170	E 08:57:12.5220	N	00:56:24.0795	E 09:29:28.4745	N
Aug 07	96	10 Aug 07 21:31:33.099	11 Aug 07 01:52:36.557	261,06	03:14:12.8249	E 23:15:47.6796	N	03:24:24.8600	E 23:56:25.9619	N
Sep 07	108	8 Sep 07 20:45:12.655	9 Sep 07 02:14:02.876	328,84	04:51:26.2145	E 27:46:10.3647	N	05:04:38.5629	E 28:02:17.5650	N
Oct 07	124	8 Oct 07 21:37:26.811	9 Oct 07 03:38:05.448	360,64	07:28:08.8262	E 25:42:44.7558	N	07:41:18.8615	E 25:01:52.0196	N
Nov 07	137	4 Nov 07 19:29:58.658	5 Nov 07 01:29:40.191	359,69	07:10:38.5108	E 26:17:53.1546	N	07:23:56.3186	E 25:42:52.5967	N
Dec 07	153	2 Dec 07 18:29:10.772	3 Dec 07 00:27:52.341	358,69	07:47:01.5322	E 24:16:41.3064	N	07:59:48.8499	E 23:29:40.7862	N
Jan 08	189	31 Jan 08 20:49:40.173	1 Feb 08 02:49:56.504	360,27	11:52:25.8723	E 02:10:06.7351	S	12:02:55.6606	E 03:33:19.9395	S
Feb 08	206	28 Feb 08 19:40:31.333	29 Feb 08 01:39:45.088	359,23	12:17:56.7684	E 05:32:46.0744	S	12:28:30.5000	E 06:54:18.5842	S
Mar 08	223	28 Mar 08 19:40:50.508	29 Mar 08 01:20:06.472	339,27	13:30:25.9827	E 14:14:54.5221	S	13:41:04.4248	E 15:23:18.2251	S
Apr 08	237	27 Apr 08 20:58:38.278	28 Apr 08 01:03:30.722	244,87	15:44:45.8792	E 24:58:15.0358	S	15:53:51.1477	E 25:24:16.1684	S
May 08	252	27 May 08 22:08:33.411	28 May 08 00:06:05.375	117,53	18:20:39.8824	E 27:02:55.1982	S	18:25:24.4023	E 26:56:30.3919	S
Jun 08	262	30 Jun 08 23:02:09.622	30 Jun 08 23:53:33.710	51,40	00:26:58.6268	E 07:13:17.1880	N	00:28:54.4069	E 07:27:41.2438	N
Jul 08	271	30 Jul 08 21:58:20.716	31 Jul 08 01:30:02.636	211,70	02:53:15.3249	E 22:04:00.8128	N	03:02:11.6562	E 22:40:55.5652	N
Aug 08	280	28 Aug 08 21:14:13.221	29 Aug 08 02:37:45.779	323,54	04:33:32.2161	E 26:52:16.2885	N	04:47:41.2656	E 27:10:57.2209	N
Sep 08	292	26 Sep 08 21:04:22.135	27 Sep 08 02:59:06.520	354,74	06:18:20.7229	E 26:55:14.1358	N	06:33:06.2240	E 26:32:58.7400	N
Oct 08	306	24 Oct 08 20:05:32.820	25 Oct 08 02:02:02.536	356,50	06:59:47.9318	E 25:24:42.1492	N	07:13:50.7021	E 24:47:44.7732	N
Nov 08	320	21 Nov 08 19:10:23.260	22 Nov 08 01:05:54.632	355,52	07:40:39.6277	E 23:07:40.7718	N	07:53:56.7315	E 22:17:48.7051	N
Dec 08	339	23 Dec 08 22:51:50.433	24 Dec 08 04:47:07.625	355,29	11:30:39.1745	E 00:43:36.5496	S	11:41:08.2453	E 02:03:49.8338	S
Jan 09	352	19 Jan 09 20:42:11.056	20 Jan 09 02:37:35.867	355,41	11:15:21.2273	E 01:05:42.6594	N	11:25:54.5205	E 00:15:12.5535	S
Feb 09	365	16 Feb 09 19:35:24.366	17 Feb 09 01:30:51.014	355,44	11:42:47.7303	E 02:24:36.0414	S	11:53:25.6327	E 03:45:19.5205	S

Table 2. Longest contact durations from the IRS building to the L5 Libration Point