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# NEW CRITERION FOR LUNAR CRESCENT VISIBILITY

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**Abstract.** A new criterion for lunar crescent visibility has been established using 737 observations, almost half of them obtained by the Islamic Crescent Observation Project (ICOP). This criterion is based on two variables, viz. the topocentric arc of vision and the topocentric crescent width. The new model is able to predict the visibility of the lunar crescent both for naked eye and optically aided observations. From the database we found a Danjon limit of 6.4 degrees.

Keywords: Crescent, Moon

### 1. Introduction

The lunar crescent visibility has been studied by many astronomers since the Babylonian era, with as a result currently more than 12 different criteria for lunar crescent visibility, based on a number of sightings in different lunar conditions. Many of these criteria were developed by Islamic astronomers, since a number of Islamic religious events are directly related to lunar crescent sighting. For example, the new Lunar (Hijric) month begins on the next day of sighting the new crescent at west after sunset.

### 2. Lunar crecsent visibility criteria

### 2.1. BABYLONIAN CRITERIA

The Babylonian deduced that the lunar crescent is visible by naked eyes if the two following conditions are satisfied at local sunset:

- 1. Age of the Moon is larger than 24 hours.
- 2. Lag time of the Moon (The interval time between sunset and moonset) is larger than 48 minutes.

<sup>\*</sup>Vice-President of "Crescents, Calendars and Mawaqeet Committee" of AUASS.

### 2.2. MUSLIM ASTRONOMERS

Many Muslim astronomers had developed their own criteria or had studied and discussed the issue of the lunar crescent visibility in their literatures. Such as: Ibn Tariq, Habash, Al-Khwarzmi, Al-Khazin, Al-Tabari, Al-Fahhad, Al-Farghani, Thabet Bin Qurrah, Al-Battani, Ibn Maimon, Al-Biruni, Al-Sufi, Ibn Sina, At-Tusi and Al-Kashani (Ilyas, 1994; Doggett and Schaefer, 1994). For example, Ibn Tariq's criterion depends on the Moon's altitude at sunset and the Moon's lag time. In our modern time, Mohammad Ilyas developed several criteria for crescent visibility.

### 2.3. RECENT AND MODERN CRITERIA

At the beginning of the 19th century, Fotheringham and Maunder developed criteria for lunar crescent visibility, and in 1977 Bruin got his own criterion. Recently, Schaefer discussed the issue of the lunar crescent visibility extensively, and he included the atmospheric conditions in his work. Schaefer developed a criterion based on 295 observation records he obtained from several resources (Schaefer, 1988, 1996; Doggett and Schaefer, 1994). Yallop (1997) used the same database which Schaefer established, but he made a comprehensive revision and corrections for some of the records. South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) developed a criterion based on Schaefer's database in addition to some other observation records from different resources (Caldwell and Laney, 2001).

## 3. Islamic crescent observation project (ICOP)

The Islamic Crescent Observation Project (ICOP) was established in 1998 as a global project organized by the Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Sciences (AUASS) and the Jordanian Astronomical Society (JAS). Its primary aim as the only project of its kind is to gather information about the crescent observations at the start of each lunar month in different countries and regions through out the world.

At the beginning of each lunar month, ICOP members send their results of observations to the coordinator of ICOP, and these results are being published immediately on the Internet at ICOP's home page at http://www.icoproject.org. After seven years of extensive work for ICOP members, we were able to obtain a new large database for young lunar crescent observations. This database in addition to the old database were used to develop a new criterion to predict the visibility of the young lunar crescent, either by naked eyes or by optical aid.

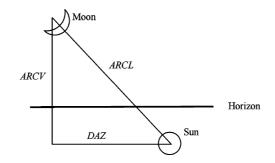


Figure 1. Basic geometric variables for crescent visibility prediction.

### 4. Visibility criteria variables

Below is a list of the most frequent observing parameters which have been used to predict the visibility of the lunar crescent. The three most basic parameters are shown in (Figure 1):

- Moon's age (*Age*): The interval time between conjunction and the time of observation.
- Moon's lag time (*Lag*): The interval time between sunset and moonset or moon-rise and sunrise.
- Moon's altitude: The angular distance of the Moon above the horizon.
- Arc of light (*ARCL*): The angular separation (elongation) between the Sun and the Moon.
- Arc of vision (*ARCV*): The angular difference in altitude between the Sun and the Moon.
- Relative azimuth (*DAZ*): The angular difference in azimuth between the Sun and the Moon.
- Crescent width (*W*): The width of the lit area of the Moon measured along the Moon's diameter.

The visibility of lunar crescent cannot be predicted reliably using only one of the above parameters. In particular, using *Age* or *Lag* only, as quite frequently done, has no predicting value at all, as shown clearly by Schaefer (1996).

At least two parameters should be used together in order to obtain accurate results, one related to the intrinsic brightness of the crescent, the other to its distance to horizon (itself closely related to atmospheric extinction).

Contrary to a rather common assumption, the Moon's age is very poorly related to its intrinsic brightness. For example, a 10 hours Moon located on the ecliptic would have nearly the same brightness than a 0 hour Moon 5 degrees away from the ecliptic. A significantly better parameter for our purpose is the *ARCL*, since the width of the lunar crescent increases with the Moon's elongation from the

Sun. It is not perfect however, since for the same ARCL, the width of the crescent is maximum when the Moon is at perigee and minimum at apogee. The best parameter for incorporating the Moon intrinsic brightness is thus directly the width (W) of the crescent.

Regarding the second parameter, ARCV gives directly the angular distance of the Moon above the horizon and should be used in conjunction with W.

Tables I, II and III, show the criteria of Maunder, Indian and Bruin respectively (Yallop, 1997).

Table IV shows the SAAO criterion, where *DALT* is the apparent altitude, in degrees above the horizon, of the lower edge of the moon at sunset. If the crescent is below *DALT2*, naked-eye visibility will be improbable. Visibility with optical aid may be possible, but increasingly unlikely approaching *DALT1*. Below *DALT1*, visibility is impossible even with optical aid. (Caldwell and Laney, 2001).

		TAB	LE I		
	ľ	Maunder	criterion		
DAZ	0°	5°	10°	15°	20°
ARCV	$11.0^{\circ}$	$10.5^{\circ}$	9.5°	$8{\cdot}0^{\circ}$	$6{\cdot}0^{\circ}$

TABLE II Indian criterion													
DAZ	0°	5°	10°	15°	$\begin{array}{c} 20^{\circ} \\ 6 \cdot 2^{\circ} \end{array}$								
ARCV	10∙4°	10∙0°	9∙3°	8∙0°									

	TABLE III													
	Bruin criterion													
W	0'.3	0'.5	0'.7	1'	2′	3′								
ARCV	$10.0^{\circ}$	8.4°	$7.5^{\circ}$	<b>6</b> ∙4°	4.7°	4.3°								

TABLE IV
SAAO Criterion

DAZ	<b>0</b> °	5°	$10^{\circ}$	15°	$20^{\circ}$
DALT1	6.3°	5.9°	<b>4.9</b> °	3.8°	$2.6^{\circ}$
DALT2	$8.2^{\circ}$	$7.8^{\circ}$	6.8°	5.7°	4.5°

### 5. New lunar crescent criterion

I've combined all the available lunar crescent observations into one large database, consisting of the following records:-

- 294 records from Schaefer list (Schaefer, 1988, 1996; Doggett and Schaefer, 1994).
- 6 records from Jim Stamm list (Private Communication).
- 42 records from SAAO list (Caldwell and Laney, 2001).
- 15 records from Mohsen Mirsaeed list (Private Communication).
- 57 records from Alireza Mehrani list (Private Communication).
- 323 records from ICOP.

So the new criterion is based on 737 records, and the visibility prediction is done adopting the following two variables:

- Airless Topocentric ARCV.
- Topocentric crescent width *W*.

The 737 records are listed in Table VI, and the calculations were done using the software Accurate Times found at (http://www.icoproject.org/accut.html). All the calculations were done at best time of observation, which can be approximated by the following equation (Yallop, 1997):

$$T_b = T_s + (4/9)Lag \tag{1}$$

where:  $T_b$ : Best Time;  $T_s$ : Sunset time; Lag: Moon's lag time.

The new criterion is shown in Table V.

Where:

- Zone A ( $ARCV \ge ARCV3$ ): Crescent is visible by naked eyes.
- Zone B ( $ARCV \ge ARCV2$ ): Crescent is visible by optical aid, and it could be seen by naked eyes.
- Zone C ( $ARCV \ge ARCVI$ ): Crescent is visible by optical aid only.

	TABLE V														
	New criteria														
W	0.1'	0.2'	0.3′	0.4′	0.5′	0.6′	0.7′	0.8′	0.9′						
ARCV1	5.6°	5.0°	4.4°	3.8°	$3.2^{\circ}$	$2.7^{\circ}$	2.1°	1.6°	1.0°						
ARCV2	$8.5^{\circ}$	$7.9^{\circ}$	7.3°	$6.7^{\circ}$	$6.2^{\circ}$	$5.6^{\circ}$	$5.1^{\circ}$	$4.5^{\circ}$	$4.0^{\circ}$						
ARCV3	12.2°	11.6°	$11.0^{\circ}$	10.4°	<b>9.8</b> °	9.3°	$8.7^{\circ}$	$8.2^{\circ}$	7.6°						

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TABLE VI Lunar crescent observation records (Group D)

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	Observer 5	Al-Muhammad Kriscinas	Hafiz	Katbeh	Mehrani	Stamm	Stamm	Fathy	Khadraoui	Menrani Menrani	Karem		Mirsaeed	odeh	Touma	MTrsaeed Vathob	Mircaed	Mirsaeed	Salie	Mehrani	Stamm	odeh Mehammadi	MULLAIIIIIAU	Pierce	Bach	Golden	Mehrani	Mehrani		Mohammadi			_	Mehrani		
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	Observer 5	Schaefer odeh Gharaybeh Mehrani Mehrani Patchick Al-Muhaumad Mehrani Schmidt Kacem Merani Bach Mehrani Schwaar	менгант
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	<i>w</i> 18	53112 53172	17F	121	101	15 29	120	202	201	202	12	204 204	99	27 04	12	15	17		с С	51	10	11	1	21	14	22	ΠC	3	u uo
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	6 6	018.4 -097.0 018.4	-006.2 -084.1 170 5	018.5	051.7	020.8	020.8	029.0	-084.8	-009-1	-085.5	-081.0018.4	-080.3	-111.8	-117.6	-117.6	034.9	003.4	-095.4	051.4	039.7	102.4	050.9	050.9	-111.7	052.5	-084.5	1.000	
	Observer 5	salie Pearce Salie	Stamm Austin		Mehrani Isiaq	Katbeh	Caldwell Torabineiad	Amirzadeh	VICCUT Heaslip Stamm		Hunereid odeh	Stamm Ebrahim	Наfiz	Menranı Torabineiad	McMahon	Moran	אפוון מוו	Isiaq	Pearce schmidt	Boroujerdi		ຕູ	Mirsaeed	arza	$\mathbf{x}$	۰0	Victor		
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	Date Observer Long 4 5 6	31-01-1995 Mirsaeed 051.3 18-06-2004 Mehrani 050.0 02-07-2000 Mehrani 051.2	I E 18-06-2004 Al-Muhammad 050.0 C M 04-06-1997 034 9	20-04-2004 Haji Ali Ahmad 114.9 15-09-2004 Mehrani 050.1	C E 26-05-1998 035.2	I E 10-00-2004 Kriusharshi 046.0 A E 24-05-1990 Bieda -110.5	A M 24-04-1990 Bortle -073.7 T F 14-06-1999 Guessoum 048.0	B E 24-05-1990 Stamm -111.0	I E 18-00-2004 Saap D M 11-01-1994 Mirsaeed 051.3	B M 02-07-1989 Stamm -111.0 32.4	I E 17-10-2001 Bahali 102.4	E 08-02-1997 018.4 F 05-05-1989 Pearson -105.5	A E 26-06-1987 Stamm -084.1	I E 12-12-2004 Stamm -110.7	I E 22-01-2004 Kacem 003.7	A E 05-10-1861 Schmidt 023.7 3	A E 05-11-1983 Stamm -084.1 37.2	B F 16-03-1991 Stamm -111.0 32.4	I E 02-05-2003 Tahir 114.9 05.0	I E 19-05-2004 Stamm -111.0 32.4	I E 26-12-2000 ESSa 039.7 -04.0 T F 18-06-2004 Hadi 035.9 32.0	E 13-10-1996 034.9	C M U8-U3-1997

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	ARCL 17	12.2 12.0	10.9 12.4	11.5	10.9	$9.9 \\ 10.7$	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.1	19.2	9.01 9.01	0.8	11.7	10.0	11.7	10.1	0.01	10.1	9.9	10.1	6.6								
	<i>DAZ</i> 16	8.6 8.0	. 0 . 0	7.2	0.0	2.2	3.0 11 4	3.2	2.0 m	2.9	18.1	40 7.7	0.4	7.2	1.0	7.1	2.5	4 C	1.6	40	2.3	0.6	2.0	11.7	3. L	11.6	0.1	0.1	5.0 4.0	
	<i>ARCV</i> 15	8.9	9.9 8.7	0.0	9.1 1 4 1	9.6 9.8	0.7 2	9.7	2.0	9.7	0.1	- 8 - 8		6.9	٥. م		8.0 8.0	00	6.6	6. 6	10.0	6.6	9.7	×. ~	0.01 8 8 8		10.1	10.1	1.UL	
	<i>Lag</i> 14	46 40	4 4 7 2	48	44					0 m												43	44	47	0 C T	44	58		20 27	
	<i>Аде</i> 13	21.3 23.4	22.4 21.8	20.3	23.5 23.5	17.8 19.0	21.0 23.8	19.8	19.8	19.8 19.8	42.3	21.8 -18_1	-18.0	20.2	22.2	20.3	-17.3	- 10. 5	20.7	18.4	17.7	18.2	19.2	24.5	0.22	24.4	20.6	20.4	то. 8 - 19.3	
	JD 12	2451728.217 2453264.125	4523/8 452909	452112	451935	446412 452200	2446973.632 2452939 072	2443577.473	2443577.473	2443577.470	2447801.155	24469/3.6/1 2443458 033	2452494.554	2451640.141	2451551.254	2451816.216	2452198.589	2411328.770 2443193.494	2403003.179	2452879.983	2449719.684	2452112.071	2452200.117	2452939.099	245321/3.309	2452939.093			2449747.630	
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	Lat 7	30.4 26.2	30.5 32.4	32.6	29.6	-32.4 26.6	33.5 0.5	42.7	42.7	41.3 41.3	31.3	30.7	35.6	32.6	06.5 -33 0	-33.9	35.7	43.8	38.0	05.3	19.8	04.1	24.6	m m m	32.5	32.6	42.3	-30.1	35.6	
	Long 6	035.5	-009.7	051.7	052.5	020.8	-112.1	-073.8	-073.8	-072.9	034.6	-122.0	051.3	051.7	003.4	018.4	052.3	-087.7	023.7	102.9	-155.5	073.3	046.5	050.1	003.7	051.7	-071.1	-071.0	051.3	
	Observer 5	оd Ма	st St	ž	ŏĔ		Ď	- 8 - 8	ă	Piaruli	5	Σű	Ξ.	ž		ຳບິ	Ξ		SC <sup>2</sup>	P N	20	Sa		Σ.			-			
	Date 4	02-07-2000 15-09-2004	13-04-2002 26-09-2003	21-07-2001	25-01-2001	12-12-1985 17-10-2001	26-06-1987	09-03-1978	09-03-1978	09-03-1978	01-10-1989	26-06-198/ 10-11-1977	08-08-2002	05-04-2000	07-01-2000 28-09-2000	28-09-2000	16-10-2001	22-11-1889 18-02-1977	05-02-1867	28-08-2003	01-01-1995	21-07-2001	17-10-2001	26-10-2003	15-09-2004	26-10-2003	08-02-1921	28-06-1995	30-01-1995	
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	19	4.41	4 43	4.44	4.52				4.55		4.58		4.0	4.02		4.64	4.64		4.75	4.76	4.77		4./9	4.04 104		4 84						4.95		ext page
	$^{W}_{18}$	25	24	7 4 7	18	22	23	16	18	21	50	9 i	Ω,	9 C	101		18	17	19	64	19	77	916	11	14	17	24	20	43	21	22	47	77	u uo
	ARCL 17	13.4	12.6	9.21 10.3	10.7	12.1	12.4	10.1	11.1	12.0	12.8	T0.3	T0.7	7.01		11.0	11.0	11.1	11.0	21.2	11.2	12.2	10. 7	11.9	10.7	10.7	12.6	11.5	17.3			17.6		(Continued on next page)
	<i>DAZ</i> 16	10.0	8.7	8.7 7	4.2	7.6	8.0	0.0	4.9	7.3	80 0 80 0	×.		0 r		- «	. 4	4.7	4.6	20.3	5.1	7.2	- ' - '	9	- 0		8.2	5.7	15.5	6.9	7.2	16.0		(Co)
	ARCV 15	9.0	6.5 0.5	9.2 101	- 6	9.4	9.4	10.1	6.6	9.6	6.9	1.01	T0.	7.0T		0	5	10.1	10.0	5.9	10.0	9.8	то. ТО.	م م	3.3 10 3	10.01	9.6	10.0	7.8	9.9	9.9	7.5	9.9	
	<i>Lад</i> 14			40 64																														
	Age 1 13	28.3	21.9	21.9	18.6	21.1	20.3	-17.9	19.8	21.6	-21.3	19. Z	20.4	- T0.0	1.17 73.5		20.3	23.9	-19.4	40.1	19.6	22.6	- 18.4	20.02	20.02	20.6	-21.1	20.0	35.0	21.5	21.0	30.7	26.4	
	00 12	2451581.258	2451256.225	2421220.222 2420573 251	2443902.565	2452112.214	2452496.194	2452582.604	2451816.167	2452880.147	2453350.622	2450842.5/6	2450635.1//	2402082.099	245224242222	017 5052642 2457643 770	2422434.282	2451935.125	2452966.616	2400345.160	2451256.130	2452024.152	2449/18.184	2432490.102	2432490.102 2443577 516	2443577.516	2453350.631	2451728.174	2452230.174	2451816.249	2451640.184	2452555.219	2409883.174	
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(C	Ele 8	350	350	200 213	30	500	750	1100	105	1500	1500	1/40	10 1		000	200	150	620	1100	122	1500	1500	4 L 8 0	1500	000T	244	.08	420	175	550	850	175	213	
	Lat 7	-33.9	-34.0	-33.9 49 4	47.6	32.6	-34.0	35.6	26.2	32.6	32.6	34.2	-33.9	0.15 0.15	0.1C	- 33 9	43.5	24.6	35.8	38.0	29.6	32.6	79. 29. 29.	9.70	40.5 20.5	40.5	29.4	-32.4	49.6	32.5	32.0	49.6	50.6	
	Long	018.4	018.4	018.7	-122.3	035.9	018.4	051.3	032.7	051.7	051.6	- 118.1	018.5	0.1CO	2 970	018.0	002.0	046.5	051.4	023.7	052.5	051.7	- L2	7.120	-080	-089.0	048.0	020.8	008.7	003.7	035.9	008.7	005.7	
	Observer 5	Caldwell	caldwell	schoch	Peterson	Gharavbeh	Ebrahim	Mirsaeed	Nahli	Mehrani	Mehrani			Menrani	ner dees	saau Ehrahim	Triou	Saab	Mehrani	Schmidt	Mohammadi	Mehrani	0'Meara	Jangnor pan Mahani		Phelns	Khushaish	Caldwell	Kaufmann	Kacem	odeh	Kaufmann	DeCroupet	
	Date 4	06-02-2000	18-03-1999	16-03-1915	-01-1	21-07-2001	-08-	04 - 11 - 2002	28-09-2000	28-08-2003	11-12-2004	28-01-T0-87	02-0/-T99/	7-11- 	11-01-2002		19-04-1920	25-01-2001	23-11-2003	27-10-1859	18-03-1999	24-04-2001	31-12-1994		09-06-2002	200-	-12-2	02-07-2000	-11-2	-09-2	05-04-2000	07-10-2002	07-12-1885	
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TABLE VI

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		7 19	4 4 9 4 9 4 9 4 9 4 9 4 9 4 9 4 9
		<i>w</i> 18	77771282822822822822823842282822222222282828
		ARCL 17	01011111111111111111111111111111111111
		<i>DAZ</i> 16	ала са
		ARCV 15	$\begin{array}{c} 1000000000000000000000000000000000000$
		<i>Lад</i> 14	77777774747477777777777777777777777777
		<i>Age L</i> 13	20.9 20.9 20.9 20.9 20.9 20.9 20.9 20.9
		JD 12	2443577.529 2443577.529 2451581.111 2452584.239 2452584.239 2452584.239 2452584.239 2452584.239 24525939.103 2446914.518 2446914.518 2446914.518 2446914.518 2446914.518 2446914.518 2452260.229 2452260.229 2452260.2335 245260.2335 245260.2335 245260.2335 245260.2335 245260.2335 245260.2335 245260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452260.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.2335 2452760.235 24
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TABLE V	(Continued)	z6	>>>>+>+>>>
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		Lat 7	441.6 441.6 441.6 441.6 441.6 441.6 448.6448.6 448.6 448.6448.6 448.6 448.6448.6 448.6 448.6448.6 448.6448.6 448.6 448.6448.6 448.6 448.6448.6448.6
		Pong 6	$\begin{array}{c} -093.6\\ -093.6\\ -093.6\\ 0018.4\\ 0018.4\\ 0018.4\\ 0018.4\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.4\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.4\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.4\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.5\\ 0018.4\\ 0018.5\\$
		observer 5	
		Date 4	$\begin{array}{c} 09-03-1978\\ 09-03-1978\\ 01-02-1099\\ 05-01-10999\\ 05-11-2002\\ 05-11-2002\\ 05-11-2002\\ 05-11-2002\\ 02-11-2002\\ 02-11-2002\\ 02-12-1987\\ 02-04-1987\\ 02-04-1987\\ 02-04-1987\\ 02-04-1987\\ 02-04-1987\\ 02-04-1987\\ 02-05-1999\\ 02-05-1999\\ 02-05-1999\\ 02-05-2002\\ 01-1999\\ 02-05-2002\\ 02-05-1099\\ 02-05-2002\\ 0$
		Э.	<u>маматат</u> и по
		Я 2	<b>ααμμημηαυααααααααααυμημαμησημαααμαααα</b>
		N0. 1.	22222222222222222222222222222222222222

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			e)
	19	22222222222222222222222222222222222222	ext pag
	$\frac{W}{18}$	2230013370881148120 22301337088128128128112811281222 23300133708812812812812812812812812812812812812812	u uo
	ARCL 17	332006008994220266994919086811	(Continued on next page)
	<i>DAZ</i> 16	86550005199821012585558	(C <i>o</i> )
	ARCV 15	$\begin{array}{c} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 $	
	Lag 14	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	
	<i>Age</i> 13	$\begin{array}{c} & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & &$	
	DC 12	2446914, 547 2453027, 268 24553027, 268 24557556, 157 24557162, 157 2455116, 116 2455116, 116 24552861, 317 24552861, 317 24458014, 533 24458014, 533 24458014, 559 24458014, 559 24458014, 559 244520586, 506 244520586, 505 244520541, 559 244520586, 505 244520541, 559 244520541, 559 24452055, 506 259 24452055, 506 259 24452055, 506 259 24552054, 550 24552054, 550 24552054	
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TABLE VI (Continued)	z 6	>>>>нн>>ннн>н >ннн>>ннн>>>>н	
C T	Ele 8	244 2200 55500 11195 1195 610 6510 6510 6510 6510 5500 6510 5500 6510 5500 550	
	Lat 7	42.7 42.7	
	Long	$\begin{array}{c} -084.5\\ -0182.4\\ 0035.8\\ 0035.8\\ 0035.7\\ 0052.4\\ 0035.2\\ 0035.2\\ 0035.2\\ 0035.2\\ 0035.2\\ 0046.5\\ -1199.3\\ 0119.3\\ 0035.4\\ 0035.8\\ 0035.4\\ 0035.8\\ 0035.$	
	Observer 5	Ebrahim Odeh Mehrani Kacem Aram Seidelman Seidelman Seidelman Korycansky Haasdyk Haasdyk Haasdyk Haasdyk Haasdyk Byrd Byrd Byrd Byrd Byrd Byrd Byrd Byrd	
	Date 4	28-04-1987 22-01-2004 18-05-1999 18-06-2003 30-06-2003 30-06-2003 30-06-2003 30-06-2003 1999 01-05-1998 01-05-1998 13-11-1922 28-04-1987 13-11-2001 13-11-2001 13-11-2001 13-11-1997 28-04-1988 13-04-2003 13-04-1987 28-04-1987 28-04-1987 12-04-2001 28-04-1997 12-04-2001 28-04-2001 28-04-1997 12-04-2001 28-04-1907 28-04-1907 28-04-1907 28-04-1907 28-04-2001 28-04-2001 28-04-2001 28-04-2001 28-04-1907 28-04-1907 29-01-1097 28-04-1907 28-04-1907 29-01-1097 29-01-1097 29-01-1097 29-01-1097 29-01-1097 29-01-1097 2004 2004 2004 2004 2004 2004 2004 200	
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	N0.1	20000202020202020202020202020202020202	

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		19 19	19999999999999999999999999999999999999
		<i>w</i> 18	845688889292720239999999999999999999999999999998888899999
		ARCL 17	14211211111111112112111111111111111111
		<i>DAZ ,</i> 16	нөө4нүккиинникоонноонногоко408080704 1
		<i>ARCV</i> 15	11000901111111111111111111111111111111
		Lag / 14	00000000000000000000000000000000000000
		<i>Age L</i> 13	220.0 20.0 20.0
		, DC 12	2440683, 540 2452762, 360 2451816, 483 2451816, 483 2451816, 483 2451816, 483 24451318, 454 2443518, 454 2443518, 454 2443518, 454 2443518, 454 2443518, 459 2452200, 148 245328, 459 245328, 459 2443518, 464 2443518, 464 2443518, 464 2443518, 464 2443518, 464 2443518, 464 2443518, 464 2443518, 464 2443518, 464 245325, 439 2443518, 464 2453280, 279 2453518, 464 2453518, 464 2453518, 464 2453518, 464 2453518, 466 2453518, 466 2453518, 467 2453518, 467 2453518, 470 2453518, 470 24555518, 470 24555518, 470 24555518, 470 24555518, 470 245
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TABLE V	(Group A)	z6	>>>>+++>>>>+>>>>+>>>>>+>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>
Ţ	))	Ele 8	$\begin{smallmatrix} 224\\ 250\\ 250\\ 250\\ 250\\ 222\\ 222\\ 222\\ 222$
		Lat 7	44.227 44.277 44.2777 44.2777 44.2777 44.2777 44.27777 47.27777 47.27777777777
		9 Fong	$\begin{array}{c} -088.0\\ -0095.5\\ -0033.5\\ -0033.5\\ -0033.7\\ -0033.7\\ -0033.7\\ -0033.7\\ -0033.7\\ -0033.7\\ -0033.7\\ -0033.7\\ -0031.1\\ -0031.2\\ -0031.5\\ -0031.$
		Observer 5	Quigley McKenna Victor Farooq Barrani Fry Barrani Fry Menor Bannor Barrani Fry Minyifaki Sykes Minyifaki Sykes Minyifaki Bonno McPartlan McPartlan McPartlan McPartlan McPartlan McCraw Morris Yucel Johnson Morris Yucel Johnson Meraning Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem Bricker Kacem
		Date 4	$\begin{array}{c} 06-04-1970\\ 02-05-2003\\ 22-06-1876\\ 28-09-2000\\ 22-06-1876\\ 28-09-2000\\ 22-04-1978\\ 09-01-1978\\ 00-01-1978\\$
		3 Е	<u>ΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΖΜΜΣΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜΜ</u> ΜΑΝ
		ЯС	<b>ϤΗΗ</b> ϤΗϤΗϤϤϤϤϤΗΙΟϤϤΟϤϤϤϤΗΗϤϤϤϤϤΗΗϤϤϤϤ
		N0. 1.	125220200000000000000000000000000000000

	19	6.18 6.18	6.20 6.24	6.25	0.25 75	6.26	6.26	6.31 6.31	6.32	6.39	0 39	6.39	6.40	6.44	6.44 6.44	6.45				6. 65 6. 65			6.68 89	0.71 6 71	6.73	6.73	6.74	<u>6.76</u>			6.82	
	$_{18}^{W}$	18 18	37 37	26	020	19	19	24	. 2	48	74	29	25	20		47	20	25	7 r	51	88	29	7	4 c 7 t	15	37	19	41	797	10	21	21
	ARCL 17	11.5 11.6	11.5 15.6	13.9	11.6	11.5	11.5	0.21 13.3	22.0	17.8	17. o	14.6	13.6	11.5	11.v	18.6	12.0	13.6	12.L	11.8	15.1	20.2	14 0	110.0	12.2	16.4	11.9	16.4	20.2	14.3 14.9	11.8	11.8
	<i>DAZ</i> 16	1.1	0.5 12.2	8.9 0.8	۲- م	0.1	0.1	×.~	20.8	15.4	8.6 11 +	10.0	7.9	0.0		16.3	2.6	2.8	0.0 10.0	1.71	10.9	18.5	%.	1 4	10	12.9	0.1	13.1	18.6	۲0.5 10.3	0.4	0.7
	ARCV 15	11.5 11.5	$^{11.5}_{9.8}$	10.8	11.4	11.5	11.5	11.1	7.2	8.9	10.2	10.7	11.0	11.5	11.5 71	9.1	11.7	11.2	7.11	11.7	10.6	8.0 , 8	11.1	ч./ 11 х	11.8	10.2	11.9	10.0	8.0 100	10.8	11.8	11.8
	Lag 14	61 58	60 56	67	09	200	59	2 C 7 4	39.	72	٥ 1 2	81	53	65	л с О	80	70	63	50	61 64	60	4 0 1	25	0 00	0.5	60	53	65	04 L	n b n	61	72
	<i>4ge</i> L 13	22.2 23.6	22.2 25.6	31.1	1.12	22.9	22.9	29.62	44.8	32.0	1.62	31.8			10.1	41.9	23.8	27.8	0.07	19.9	28.5	-35.0	26.3	7.12	25.2	36.0	26.5	27.6	-35.2	23.62	19.5	19.4
	, 12	2440742.576 2422729.585	2440742.576 2452998.024	2452732.622	2450813.13/ 2450813 137	2446914.588	6914.	2451108.145	2401350.248	2452083.342	2404479.192 2451403.203	2453175.692	2451462.152	2443518.489	2443518.489 2443518 489	2427602.303	2446914.624	2453205.183	2452451.028 717170	2443134.456	2452643.558	2451312.602	24526/3.110	2403382.1/U	2451581.170	2445674.451	- t.,	2452998.083	2451512.593	2452L41.024 2452643 544	2422906.192	2448007.513
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	<i>DAZ</i> 16	6.50 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 1
	<i>АRCV</i> 15	10111111111111111111111111111111111111
	<i>Lag</i> 14	00000000000000000000000000000000000000
	<i>Аде</i> 13	27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 2
	JD 12	2453175 559 24532614.079 24525614.079 2452500.228 2455200.228 2455200.228 2455201467 2455200256.246 24552024.286 24552024.286 24552024.286 24552024.286 245520146.647 245520146.647 24552014.647 24552014.647 24552014.647 24552014.647 24552014.647 24552014.647 24552014.647 24552058.244 24552058.264 24552058.264 24552050.307 24552058.264 24552058.264 24552058.264 24552058.266 2455258.266 2455258.256 2455258.256 2455258.256 2455258.256 245556 2455566 245556 245556 245556 245556 245566 245566 245566 245
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	9 Fong	$\begin{array}{c} -081.8\\ -081.4\\ 0051.4\\ 0051.4\\ 0035.6\\ -1074.0\\ 0021.7\\ 0031.7\\ 0031.7\\ 0031.7\\ 0031.7\\ 0031.4\\ 0032.3\\ 0003.4\\ 0032.4\\ 0003.4\\ 0003.4\\ 0003.4\\ 0003.4\\ 0003.4\\ 0003.3\\ 0003.3\\ 0003.3\\ 0003.4\\ 0003.3\\ 0003.4\\ 0003.4\\ 0003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 00003.3\\ 000003.3\\ 000003.3\\ 000003.3\\ 0000000000$
	Observer 5	Torabinejad Mehrani Ikels Merartlan Hafiz O'Meara Mehrani Kacem Kacem Kacen Kacen Karimun Klenola Hafiz Isiaq Schmidt Kathan Katheh Mohammadi Whitmell Bugon Bugon Bugon Bugon Bugon Bugon Bugon Ratha Mohammadi Whitmell Torabinejad Torabinejad
	Date 4	$\begin{array}{c} 18 & -06-2004\\ 05-112-2002\\ 05-112-2002\\ 09-01-1978\\ 22-01-1978\\ 22-01-1978\\ 18-07-1878\\ 18-07-2002\\ 11-05-2002\\ 11-05-2002\\ 12-01-2999\\ 05-111-2002\\ 25-09-1999\\ 05-111-2002\\ 25-09-1999\\ 05-111-2002\\ 113-05-2002\\ 113-05-2004\\ 133-04-1999\\ 05-014$
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TABLE VI

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	ARCV 15	11111111111111111111111111111111111111	
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	Observer 5	Touma Mehrani Schoch McPartlan Khakoo Khakoo Kahernov Mayoof Sahajraktarevic Sahajraktarevic Sahie Mehrani Odeh Stamm Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Mehrani Stamm Khakoo Fatterson Mehrani Mehrani Stamm Mehrani Mehrani Stamm	
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ARCL 17	20.4 14.1 13.0 18.6 14.3 14.3
<i>DAZ</i> 16	18.0 6.6 7.6 2.4 7.3 7.3
<i>АRCV</i> 15	9.7 12.5 12.2 12.7 12.7 12.3
<i>Lад</i> 14	59 65 55 51 56
<i>Age</i> 13	42.6 28.1 -23.1 21.9 37.1 23.4
дс 12	2444434.529 2427572.250 2452496.297 2452496.257 2453294.090 2437760.346
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<b>z</b> 6	>>>>>
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9 Pong	-070.7 036.2 -110.5 009.8 057.1 -028.2
Observer 5	Schaefer Andreko Bieda Dukku Amirzadeh Thackeray
Date 4	$\begin{array}{c} 13-07-1980\\ 14-05-1934\\ 23-05-19930\\ 09-08-2002\\ 15-10-2004\\ 05-04-1962\\ 05-04-1962 \end{array}$
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N0. 1.	180 117 280 548 711 711 126
	Observer Long Lat Ele N B T JD <i>Age Lag ARCV DAZ ARCL</i> 5 5 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

- Zone D (*ARCV* < *ARCV1*): Crescent is not visible even by optical aid.
- Notice that *ARCV1*, *ARCV2* and *ARCV3* are airless and topocentric, thus the calculated *ARCV* must be the same as well.
- The visibility at the beginning of each zone highly depends on the atmospheric conditions, acuity of vision, experience of the observer and looking at the location of the crescent. That means you might not expect to see the crescent even by optical aid if your *ARCV* is just at the beginning of Zone C if the atmospheric conditions are hazy or unfavorable.

Predicting the visibility of the lunar crescent by this new criterion can be also calculated using the following equation:

$$V = ARCV - (-0.1018 W^3 + 0.7319 W^2 - 6.3226 W + 7.1651)$$
(2)

where: *ARCV*: Airless and topocentric arc of vision in degrees. *W*: Topocentric crescent width in arc minutes.

 $V \ge 5.65$ : Zone A.  $2 \le V < 5.65$ : Zone B.  $-0.96 \le V < 2$ : Zone C. V < -0.96: Zone D.

### 6. Lunar crescent observations database

Table VI below lists the 737 records, where Columns numbered 1 to 19 have the following meaning:

- 1. Record number, sorted chronologically.
- 2. Reference source, where: A (Schaefer list), B (Stamm list), C (SAAO list), D (Mirsaeed list), F (Mehrani list) and I (ICOP).
- 3. Morning (M) or evening (E) observation.
- 4. Local date of observation, in the form dd-mm-yyyy.
- 5. Name of the observer.
- 6. East longitude of the location of observation.
- 7. Latitude of the location of observation.
- 8. Elevation of the location of observation in meters.
- 9. Visibility by naked eyes; Invisible (I), visible (V) or blank if not tried.
- 10. Visibility by binocular; Invisible (I), visible (V) or blank if not tried.
- 11. Visibility by telescope; Invisible (I), visible (V) or blank if not tried.
- 12. Julian date at the time of calculations (Best Time).
- 13. Topocentric age of the Moon (Age) in hours at Best Time.
- 14. Lag time of the Moon (*Lag*) in minutes.
- 15–17. Topocentric arc of vision (*ARCV*), topocentric relative azimuth (*DAZ*) and topocentric arc of light (*ARCL*), all in degrees at Best Time and are not corrected for refraction.

- 18 Topocentric crescent width (W) in arc seconds at Best Time.
- 19 Visibility prediction value (V) described in Section 5.

### 7. Youngest crescent observations

## 7.1. TOPOCENTRIC AGE

From Table VI the youngest crescent seen by optical aid is Stamm #310 detection at a topocentric age of 13 hr. 14 min. Running a close second is Mirsaeed #549 observation with 13 hr. 18 min. With the naked eye, the youngest crescent detected is at 15 hr. 33 min. from Pierce #274.

Stamm's observation:

Geocentric new moon: 20 January 1996, at 12:50 UT. Topocentric new moon: 20 January 1996, at 11:43 UT. First visibility: 21 January 1996, at 00:57 UT. Geocentric age: 12:07. Topocentric age: 13:14.

Mirsaeed's observation:

Geocentric new moon: 07 September 2002, at 03:10 UT. Topocentric new moon: 07 September 2002, at 01:29 UT. First visibility: 07 September 2002, at 14:47 UT. Geocentric age: 11:37. Topocentric age: 13:18.

Pierce's observation:

Geocentric new moon: 25 February 1990, at 08:54 UT. Topocentric new moon: 25 February 1990, at 08:22 UT. First visibility: 25 February 1990, at 23:55 UT. Geocentric age: 15:01. Topocentric age: 15:33.

7.2. LAG TIME

Minimum crescent lag time is respectively 21 min. with optical aid (Stamm #737) and 29 min. with the naked eye (Ashdod #286).

### 7.3. TOPOCENTRIC ARCL (ELONGATION)

The minimum elongation crescent seen by optical aid is 6.4 degrees (Stamm #797, at the time of last visibility at 13:09 UT); for naked eye observations this is 7.7 degrees (Pierce #274, at the time of first visibility at 23:55 UT.).

### 8. Danjon limit

Danjon (1936) found that no crescent can be seen when the Moon is less than 7 degrees from the Sun, because the arc length of the crescent is then zero. He attibuted this effect to the shadow of the lunar mountains. McNally (1983) found a Danjon limit of 5 degrees and explained it by atmospheric turbulence (seeing) effects. Schaefer (1991) found that a Danjon limit of 7 degrees and showed that in that configuration the Moon brightness per unit length of lies actually below the eye's detection threshold. From our large database, we find a Danjon limit of 6.4 degrees from observation #697.

### 9. Conclusion

Based on a large database combining historical sightings plus our own observations in the frame of the ICOP project, we have derived an accurate criterion for crescent visibility prediction either by the naked eye or with optical aid.

The crescent width is a good parameter to describe the intrinsic crescent brightness, in contrast to the age of the Moon, as is the arc of vision to include the effect of atmospheric extinction, and hence estimate the apparent crescent brightness.

The Islamic Crescent Observation Project (ICOP) has been a vital contributor in crescent sighting, with more sightings done in 6 years than all combined observations from the year 1859 to 2000! Also, having several observers in different locations, especially those at high latitudes and altitudes did indeed provide very valuable additional information on crescent visibility.

The best Danjon limit by optical aid is 6.4 degrees.

## Acknowledgments

I'd like to deeply thank ICOP members who participated seriously in the project, and made this large database available for establishing an accurate crescent visibility prediction criterion.

#### References

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Yallop, B.: A method for predicting the first sighting of the new Crescent Moon', RGO NAO Technical Note No. 69 (1997)

# Table of Corrections

Number	Location	Error	Correction
Error number one	Page 45, Table VI, Group (C), Observation number 737, column 4	02-11-2006	02-11-2005
Error number two	Page 62, Section 7.3, first line	(Stamm #797)	(Stamm #697)