Giordano Bruno Journal Club Plan

Intro: (go to quotation slide)
In the 12th Century chronicles of Gervase of Canterbury there is a report of fantastic events in the night sky. Around an hour after sunset on a June evening, 1178, a “flaming torch sprang up” from the Moon, spewing out “fire, hot coals, and sparks.” In 1976, this description was interpreted as an eyewitness account of an impact on the Moon. The impact site was suggested to be Giordano Bruno, a fresh-looking 20 km crater just over the eastern limb of the Moon.

This hypothesis has proven difficult to test over the years and in the scientific literature is usually described as an “intriguing, improbable idea.” It has featured as such in Carl Sagan’s Cosmos series, John Lewis’s popular science books, and no doubt many more. In the less-reputable literature, the hypothesis is often accepted as fact and related to the Tunguska event, decline of Pacific civilizations, and so on.

I will be trying to test this hypothesis with you today. The presentation will be a mixture of my own work and other people’s. I’ll try to be clear about which is which.

Title (slide)
Acknowledgements
Quotation
Monk picture
Talk structure
Importance
Closer look at GB
A16 metric photo (skip past)
Samples
Crater counting
Weathering
Laser ranging
Meteor storm
Other chronicles
Quotation (skip past and turn on OHP of same)
Gervase’s report
Conclusions on hypothesis (turn off OHP, back to slide)
Age of GB
What did witnesses actually see?
Why is idea still around?