

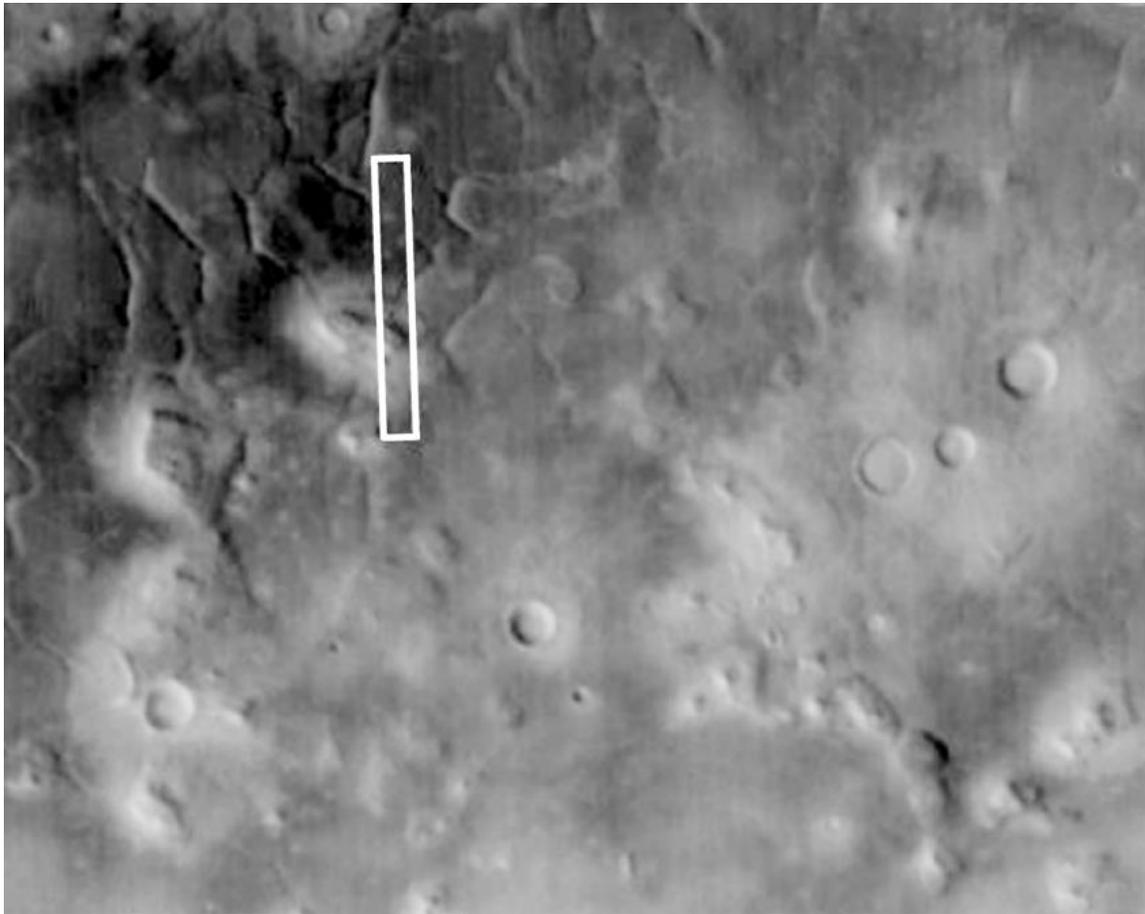
The Martian Howler Monkey

by George J. Haas

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## A Polygonal Mesa

In the spring of 2000 NASA released an image of the North eastern side of Cydonia area in MOC image M0400576 (Figure 1). The image was taken in the late afternoon with a resolution of 4.6 meters per pixel.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1**

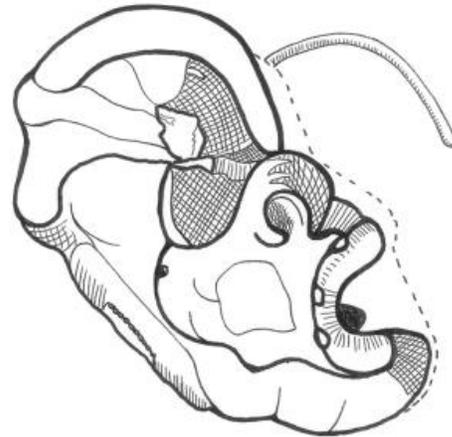
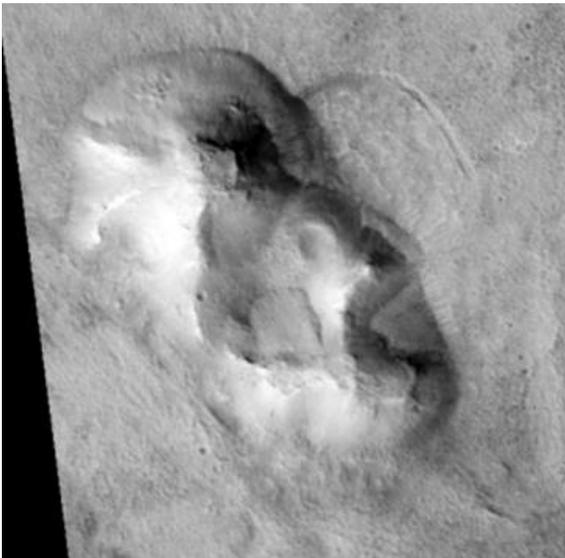
Northern region of Cydonia context image M04-00577

Notated with the location of MOC image M04-00576

Courtesy NASA/JPL//The Cydonia Institute

Southern area of Cydonia

The MOC image featured what NASA claimed to be an example of a giant polygonal mesa. The first thing I notice about this polygonal formation was its overt face-like appearance (Figure 2). The overall shape of the mesa conforms to facial features one would expect to see in a profiled head of a simian creature. Notice the large forehead and the fanning, or segmented pattern curving around the back of the skull. The facial features include a short broad nose and large nostril, similar to those seen within primates. The face also has a large empty eye socket, a gaping mouth with thick lips. On the western side of the mesa we noticed a flat bar-shaped formation, possibly serving as a rectangular ear bar that appears to be partially covered by debris. Beyond the mesa on the eastern side, is an arching groove cut into the flat plane. It begins at the front of the forehead and then curves southward ending abruptly. After completing a preliminary study, my first impression of the overall structure was that NASA had photographed another Martian geoglyph, this one in the form of a howler monkey.



**Figure 2**  
Polygonal Mesa  
Detail MOC 0400576 (2000)  
Left: The Martian Howler Monkey  
Right: Analytical drawing by George J. Haas

## God C

In the pantheon of Maya gods, there is a celestial god known as God C that is typically represented as a simian-faced figure and glyph<sup>2</sup> (Figure 3a). Most archaeologists believe the glyphs main design element is based on the facial features of the howler monkey<sup>3</sup> (Figure 3b). Although the meanings attributed to

the variant forms of God C glyphs are complex, they are normally read as sacred, divine or holy.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 3**  
The Maya God C  
Left: God C  
(Image source: Madrid Codex, p.78)  
Drawing by George J. Haas  
Right: Howler Monkey  
Detail of a Polychrome Bowl (reversed)  
Drawing by George J. Haas  
(Image source: After Photo by Justin Kerr K8640)

In its variant forms, it is also connected to sacred blood<sup>5</sup> and also has a celestial identification with the cardinal directions, most notably north.<sup>6</sup> At times it becomes the North Star in Ursa Minor, which is referred to as “guards of the North.”<sup>7</sup> In many Maya inscriptions and codices a profiled head of God C is commonly shown in the sky-bands (Figure 2c). In Maya Yucatec, God C was also called *Xaman Ek'*, which literally means “north star.”<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 4**  
God C in Skyband  
Drawing by George J. Haas  
(Image source: Madrid Codex, p.78)

Besides these Maya glyphs, portraits of howler monkeys are also seen on stone hacha's that were produced for the Mesoamerican ball game. The following two examples exhibit similar facial features as those seen within the polygonal mesa at Cydonia (Figure 5). The first is Maya stone hacha in the form of a howler monkey. Notice the broad curved forehead, the empty eye socket and the open mouth (Figure 5a). The second example is a stone hacha from Veracruz (Figure 5b). This hacha depicts a transformational image of a human and monkey face. Notice the spiraling headdress, the broad nose, the empty eye socket and the gaping mouth with thick lips. When these Mesoamerican sculptures and glyphs of howler monkeys are compared to the simian-faced mesa seen on the northern planes of Cydonia their intrinsic commonality becomes undeniable.



**Figure 5**

Monkey Faced Hacha

Left: Howler Monkey Head (Hacha)

Maya – Guatemala

Drawing by George J. Haas

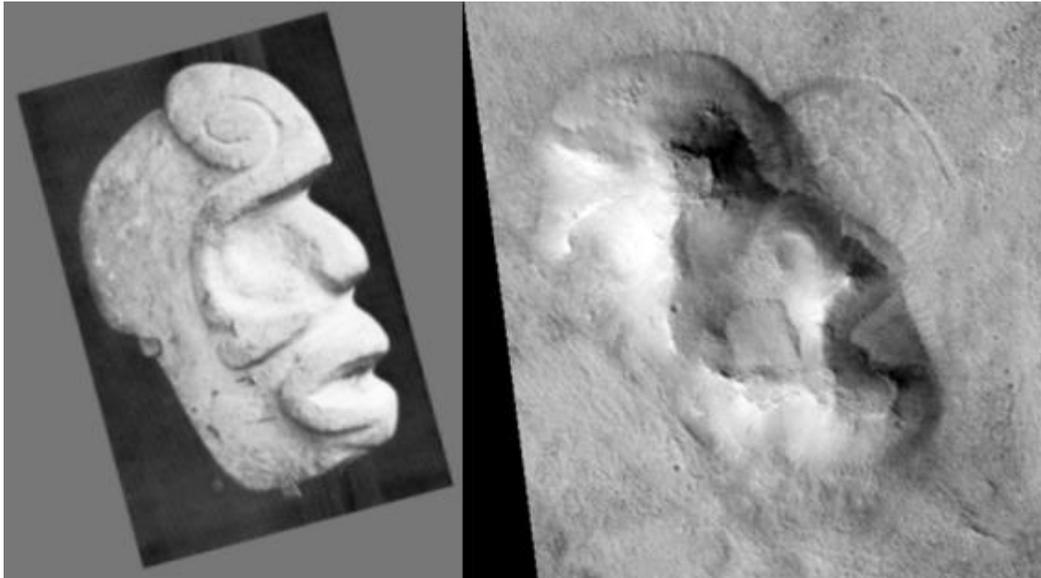
(Image source: Seeing with new eyes, Rebecca Stone-Miller)

Right: Helmeted Transformational Head (Hacha)

Olmec – Veracruz

(Image source: Ceremonial Sculpture of Ancient Veracruz, Dr. Marilyn M. Goldstein)

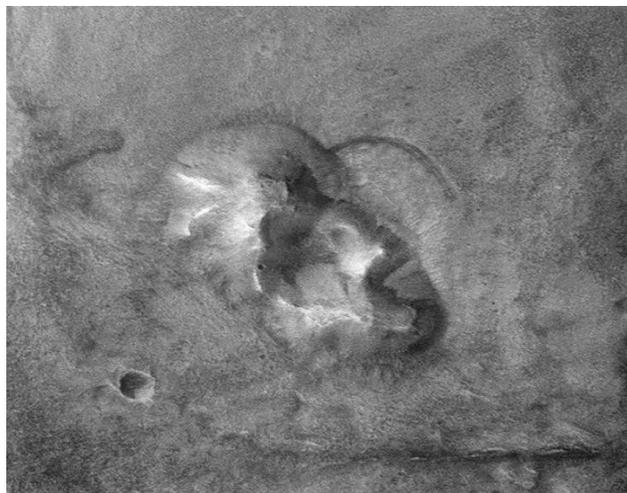
When these Mesoamerican sculptures and glyphs of howler monkeys are compared to the simian-faced formation seen on the northern planes of Cydonia their intrinsic commonality becomes undeniable. Most notable is the Helmeted Transformational Head (Figure 6).



**Figure 6**  
Comparison of Howler Monkeys  
Left: Helmeted Transformational Head (Hacha)  
Olmec – Veracruz  
Right: Martian Howler Monkey

## MRO CTX

Over the years there have been many additional images of the Howler Monkey geoglyph that can be examined; however most of them are of little use being taken at very low resolution by the Mars Odyssey THEMIS and the MRO HiRISE CTX cameras. However in 2008 the MRO HiRISE CTX camera did capture one image that is not as sharp as the early 2000 MOC image but, it can be used to confirm facial features (Figure 7).



**Figure 7**  
Martian Howler Monkey  
Detail MRO HiRISE CTX  
P16\_007203\_2222\_XN\_42N011W  
(2008)

The MRO HiRISE CTX image (P16\_007203\_2222\_XN\_42N011W) was taken at a higher elevation and with a little lower resolution of around 5.8 meters per pixel<sup>9</sup> leaving the facial features a bit granny and a little darker. Beyond those limitations, you can clearly see the head gear, eye socket, broad nose and large nostril, along with the gaping mouth with thick lips.

## Cardinal North

Beyond the overt relationship between the various incarnations of the Mesoamerican howler monkey and this polygonal mesa, their similarity goes far beyond chance. It goes far deeper by challenging all odds of probability when one considers that the area known as Cydonia is located at a latitude between 32° N to 42° N<sup>10</sup> and according to the ancillary data, provided by NASA, the center of this MOC strip zeros in on the planet at 42.27°N. Therefore, due to the fact that this polygonal mesa is seen in the lower third of the strip, it is strategically location right at the northern most point of Cydonia - at 42° N.

I find it to be well beyond coincidence that this polygonal mesa, which resembles a howler monkey, as described within the motifs of Mesoamerican iconography, and is the animal aspect of God C – a celestial marker for cardinal north, could be anything but an intentionally placed work of art.

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### Footnotes:

1. Mars Viewer, MOC, 0400576, *Intersection of 'giant polygon' crack and mesa/butte in Cydonia*, dated August 12, 1999.
2. John Montgomery, *Dictionary of Maya Hieroglyphics*, (Hippocrene Books, Inc. New York, 2002), p.155.
3. Susan Milbrath, *Star Gods of the Maya Astronomy in Art, Folklore, and Calendars*, (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1999), p.225.
4. Linda Schele and David Freidel, *A Forest of Kings, The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*, (Quill, New York, 1990), p.410.
5. Ibid, p.410.
6. Susan Milbrath, *Star Gods of the Maya Astronomy in Art, Folklore, and Calendars*, (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1999), p. 71, 75.
7. Ibid, p. 273.

8. Ibid, p. 273.
9. Mars Viewer, MRO HiRISE CTX, P16\_007203\_2222\_XN\_42N011W, *Cydonia Labyrinthus*, dated February 8, 2008.
10. William K. Hartmann, *A Traveler's Guide to Mars The Mysterious Landscapes of the Red Planet*, (Workman Publishing, New York, 2003), p.336.