

Ball Court Hacha on Mars

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**Yellowknife Bay**

While the Curiosity rover, was traveling through the John Klein site within the Yellowknife Bay<sup>1</sup> area of Mars it snapped this picture on SOL 172 with its left camera<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1). Notice the head –shaped stone in the upper fourth of the image, just to the right of center. The stone resembles a profiled head. Notice the eye, nose and mouth.



**Figure 1**

Mars rover Curiosity Sol 172, MAST\_LEFT (January 30, 2013)

Detail: Sol - 0172ML0009241020104981E01

Notated by the author

Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS.

A second view of the area was acquired on SOL 172 by the right camera (Figure 2). Notice the same head-shaped stone in the upper left hand corner of the image that resembles a profiled head. This formation was brought to the author's attention by independent Mars researcher Rami Bar Ilan in November of 2014.<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 2**

Profiled head (Boxed)

Mars rover Curiosity Sol 172, MAST\_RIGHT (January 30, 2013)

Detail: Sol - 0172MR0009241020201783E01

Notated by the author

Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS/The Cydonia Institute.

The profiled head has an overall almond-shape with highly modeled facial features that include a large eye socket and prominent nose and cheek bone (Figure 3). There is a short chin and a pair of full lip. The head has an arching forehead that extends down into the cheek area obscuring the ear, like a helmet. This odd object, which takes on the shape of a narrow profiled head is very different from the surrounding rocks and stones that all look like your typical broken rocks and stones.

**Figure 3**

Profiled Head

Detail: Mars rover Curiosity Sol 172 MAST\_RIGHT  
(January 30, 2013)

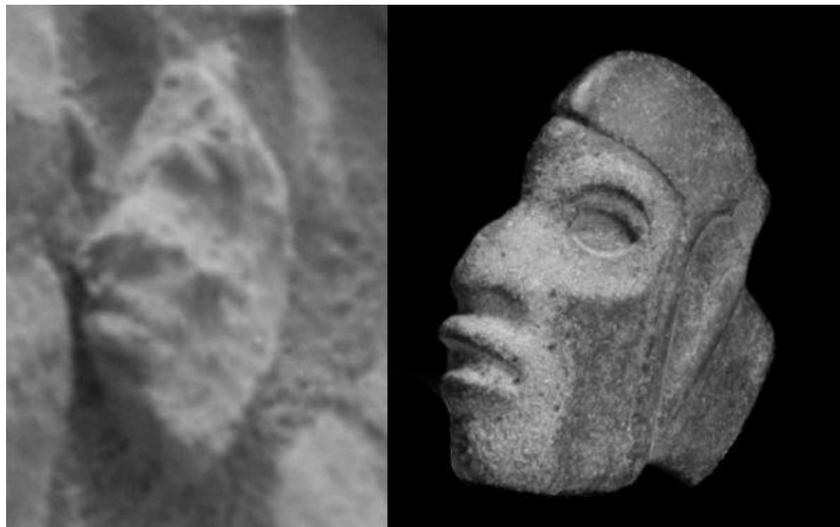
Sol - 0172MR0009241020201783E01

Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS/  
The Cydonia Institute.



**Stone Hacha**

The thin, narrow design of the profiled head strongly resembles the kind of stone hacha's that were produced by many of the Mesoamerican cultures, such as the Maya and Aztec. Located in the British Museum's vast collection is a Zapotec hacha that strongly resembles the head-shaped stone seen on Mars (Figure 4).



**Figure 4**

Martian profiled head compared to Pre-Columbian ball court hacha

Left: Profiled head. Sol 172 MAST\_  
Rotated and greyscale by The Cydonia Institute.  
Right: Zapotec Hacha (British Museum)

Stone hacha's were produced as narrow head-shaped axe-heads, hence the name, which is derived from the Spanish word for axe. They were worn during Mesoamerican ball games as an appendage to the U-shaped yoke, which was worn around the ball player's waist.<sup>4</sup>

A second example of a stone hacha produced by the Olmec is offered for comparison (Figure 6). Notice the alignment of the chin with the lower lip, the empty eye socket and the placement of the helmet's cheek guard.



**Figure 6**

Martian profiled head compared to Pre-Columbian ball court hacha

Left: Profiled head. Sol 172 MAST\_

Rotated and greyscale by The Cydonia Institute

Right: Olmec hecha (Veracruz)

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#### Footnotes

1. Emily Lakdawalla, *A new rover self-portrait and a new color image of Curiosity from orbit*, The Planetary Society, 2013/02/04. Link: <http://www.planetary.org/blogs/emily-lakdawalla/2013/0204-curiosity-sol-177-new-rover-self-portrait.html>
2. Mars Science Laboratory, *Curiosity Rover, Raw images, Sol 172*, Jan 30, 2013. <http://mars.nasa.gov/msl/multimedia/raw/?s=#/?slide=172>.

3. Rami Bar Ilan, Facebook, November 19,  
2014.<https://www.facebook.com/rami.barilan?fref=nf>.

4. E. Michael Whittington, *The Sport of Life and Death, Mesoamerican Ballgame*, (Thames & Hudson, 2002), 59.