

Eccentric Faces

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November 2004 (Revised February 2020)

The Totem

On September 27, 2004 NASA released a narrow angle image of the Cydonia area (MOC R1402211)¹ that has a set of three totemic profiled faces running along the ridgeline of an exposed sloping terrain (Figure 1).

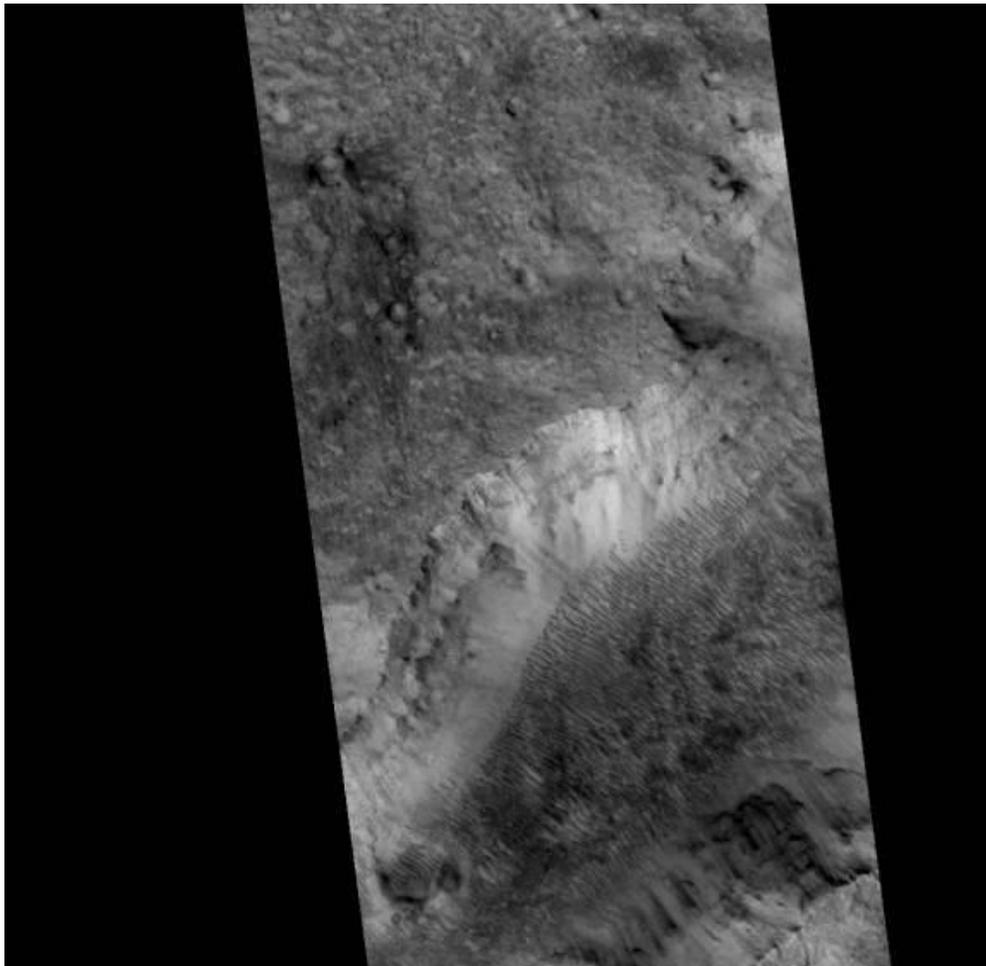


Figure 1
Totemic Faces
Detail MOC R-1402211 (2004)

In figure 2 I have boxed off each of the three profiled heads and labeled them A, B and C for review. Starting from the upper right side there is a serpentine headdress that crowns a small head which acts as a headdress to the head of an elderly man below it. Note the small serpent-like ornament hanging down in front of the old man's face. He appears to be a jester wearing a facial cap with an elaborate serpentine headdress. The jester has a squinting eye, a slightly parted mouth, strong jaw line and pointed nose.

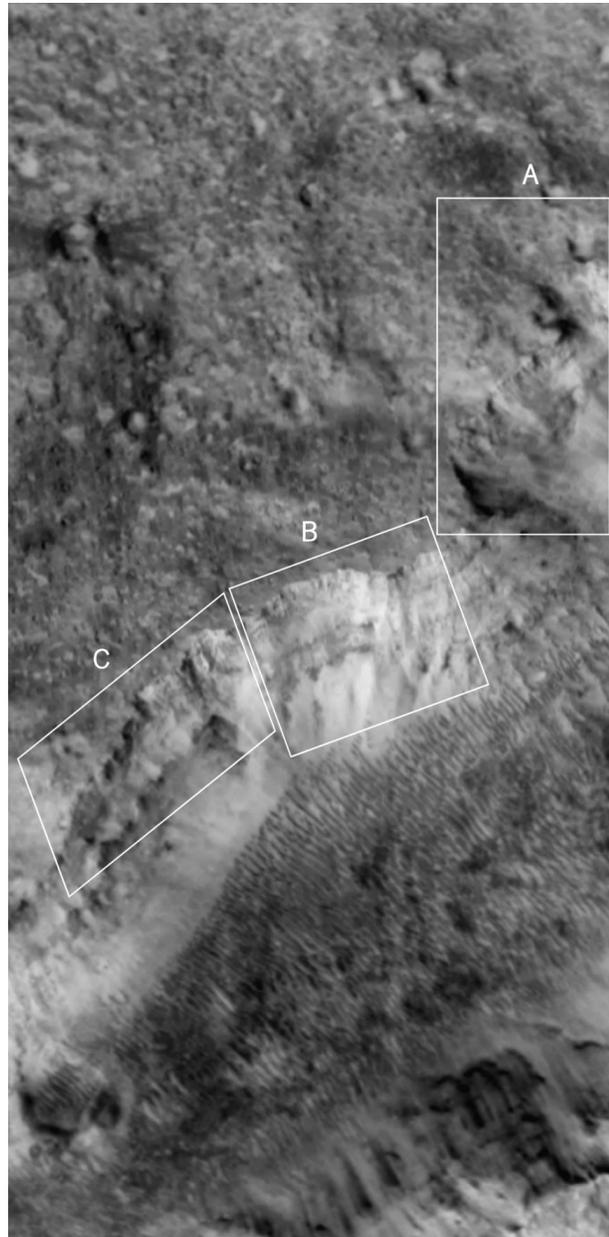


Figure 2
Totemic Faces
Boxed A, B, and C
Detail MOC R-1402211 (2004)

The Jester

Starting from the upper right side, I will begin with the Martian Jester Head labeled A in figure 2. Notice the serpentine headdress crowns a small head that acts as a cap on top of an elderly portrait of a Jester-like persona below it (Figure 3). The serpentine form extends up from the headdress and towards the west. Notice the serpent head appears to have a dark eye and an open mouth with whiskers. At the base of the serpentine headdress, just at the top of the facial cap, there is another serpent-like ornament dangling in front of the Jester's face.

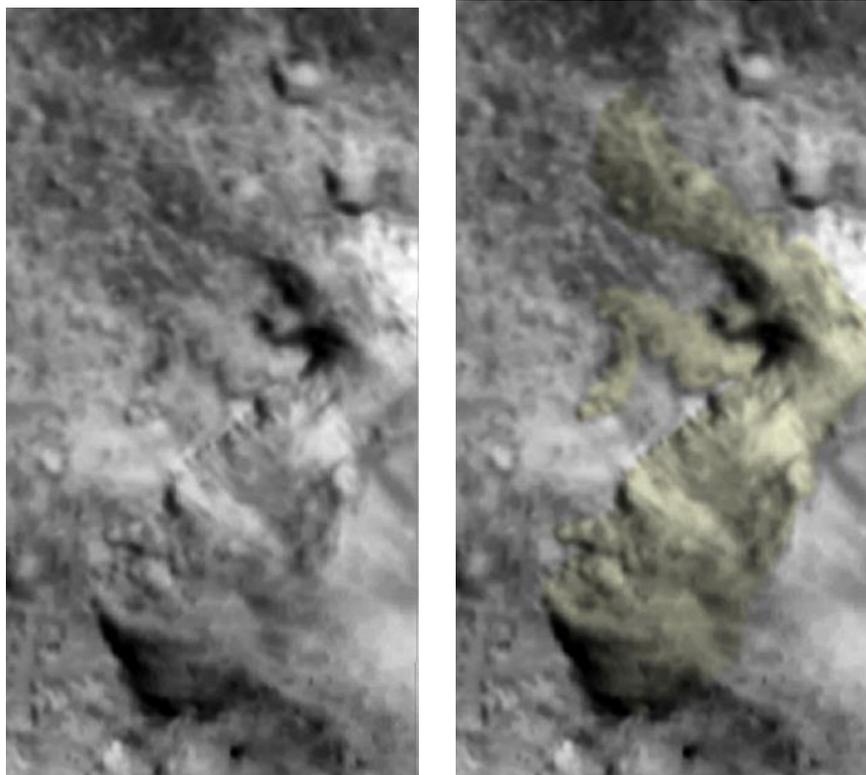


Figure 3

Martian Jester Head (Labeled A in Figure 2)
Left: Detail MOC R-14 02211 (Labeled A in Figure 2)
Right: Color wash

Note headband and crescent shaped headdress extends past the available data.

The overall characteristics of the crowned Jester head on Mars with all its hanging regalia reminds me of the Maya Jester God. The Maya Jester God is a signifier of rulership. (Figure 4) He is identified as personified head with a adornments dangling like the floppy cap 'n bells worn by medieval jesters.² He is normally depicted as a young male while at other times he has anthropomorphic features. Two examples of the Jester God are presented in figure 4.

The first is found in Tikal and the second is from Palenque. Notice their decorative headdress with hanging regalia.

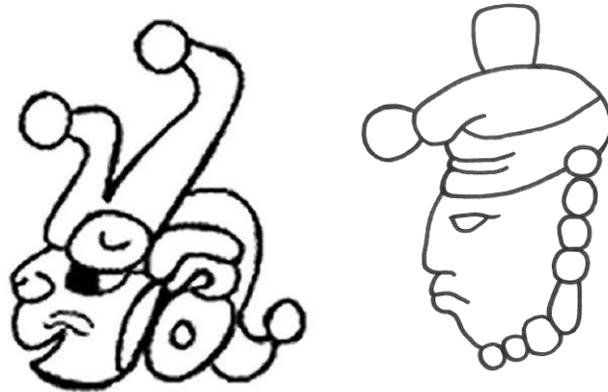


Figure 4

Jester God

Left: Detail Leiden Plaque, Tikal
Right: Detail Palace, House E, Palenque.

Itzamna

The Jester god was also related to the Maya Creation God Itzamna.³ He was presented as an old man with a large nose wearing similar jester-like headdress with hanging regalia. Two great examples can be found on Maya vessels showing his portrait (Figure 5). Notice the elderly appearance of the face and the decorative headdress with flowing regalia and plumage.



Figure 5

Itzamna - Maya God of Creation

Left: Detail of Maya vase, Justin Kerr photograph K4999
Right: Detail Maya vase, Justin Kerr photograph K3091

The Indian Chief

Following the serpentine shape of the totem, the second face is located at the center of the exposed ridge, labeled B in figure 2. Notice the stern face and feathered headdress that follows the incline of the ridge. The facial features appear to be lightly incised, while the feathers that flow from the headdress are faint as a result of erosion, therefore much of their details are difficult to ascertain. However we can still see the profiled face includes a forehead, brow, an eye form, thick nose and stern mouth and chin. The area above the head and to its southern side appears to consist of be highly feathered terrain. The overall impression of the portrait is that of an iconic Indian Chief wearing a war bonnet, or feathered headdress.

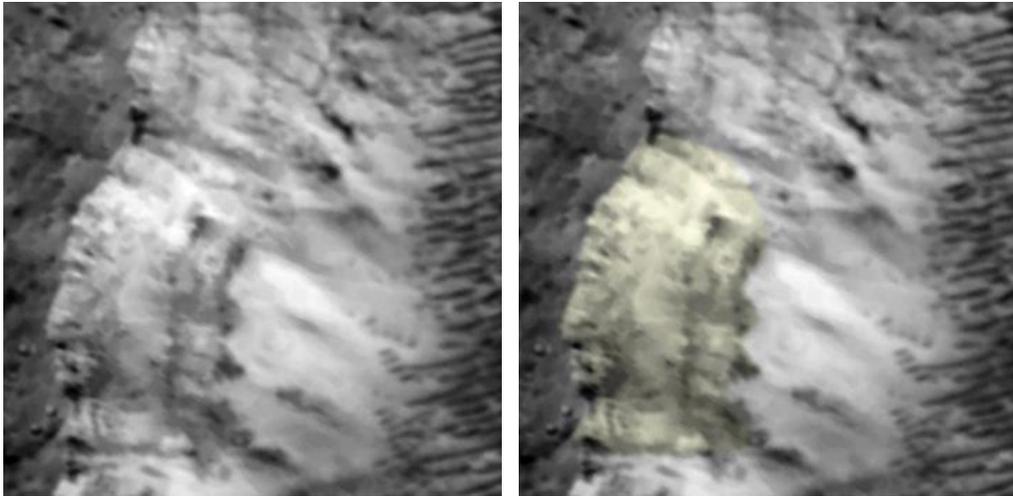


Figure 5

The Martian Indian Chief (Labeled B in figure 2)

Left: Detail MOC R-14 02211

Right: Color wash

The Martian Indian Chief resembles the portrait of the iconic Indian seen on the famous Quarter Eagle gold piece (Figure 6). Just as the North American Indians designated different stations of leadership with elaborate feathered headdress, the Aztec and Maya also incorporated feathers in their headdress. Figure 6 illustrates a fine example of a jade pendant of a Maya lord with a long, thick, flowing, feathered headdress.



Figure 6

Indian Chief with feathered headdress
Left: Quarter Eagle, 1921 (U.S. gold coin)
Right: Maya Jade Pendant
Image source: Justin Kerr photograph K9125

Were-Jaguar Masks

Below the Feathered Indian Chief with feathered headdress is the fourth and largest of the profiled heads that is labeled C in figure 2. Notice the sloping forehead, deep-set eye, prominent nose, protruding tongue, and the dark thick lips that provide a snarling aspect to the mouth (Figure 7). The down-turned mouth has a strong resemblance to those seen on Olmec were jaguar masks (Figure 5b). Notice the sloping forehead and snarling mouth.

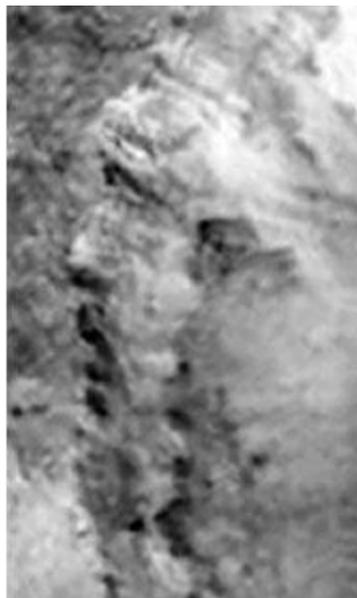


Figure 7

Profiled Head with down turned mouth
(Labeled C in figure 2)
Left: Detail MOC R-14 02211
Right: Olmec were jaguar mask (stone)
(Image source: Latin American Studies.org)

Kawil

The overall totemic design of this composite of profiled faces carved along this Martian ridgeline is reminiscent of the many eccentric flints discovered throughout Mexico that depict the God Kawil (God II). His is often depicted with a long nose and elaborate “smoking” objects coming out of his forehead. He is also associated with serpents and the lightning god, wearing similar elaborate headdress⁴ (Figure 8).



Figure 8

Maya Eccentric Flints

Left: Staff with head of Kawil, Justin Kerr photograph K2953
(Image source: Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.)

Right: Staff with head of Kawil, Justin Kerr photograph K2841

Many of these flints were extremely complex and of delicate design, featuring jagged profiles that were chipped along the edge of precious stones such as jade and obsidian. When the profiled head of the Martian Jester God is compared with the heads of Kawil on these eccentric flints, a common iconography is profoundly obvious (Figure 7). Notice the profiled heads with arching crest and protruding ornaments attached to their headdresses.

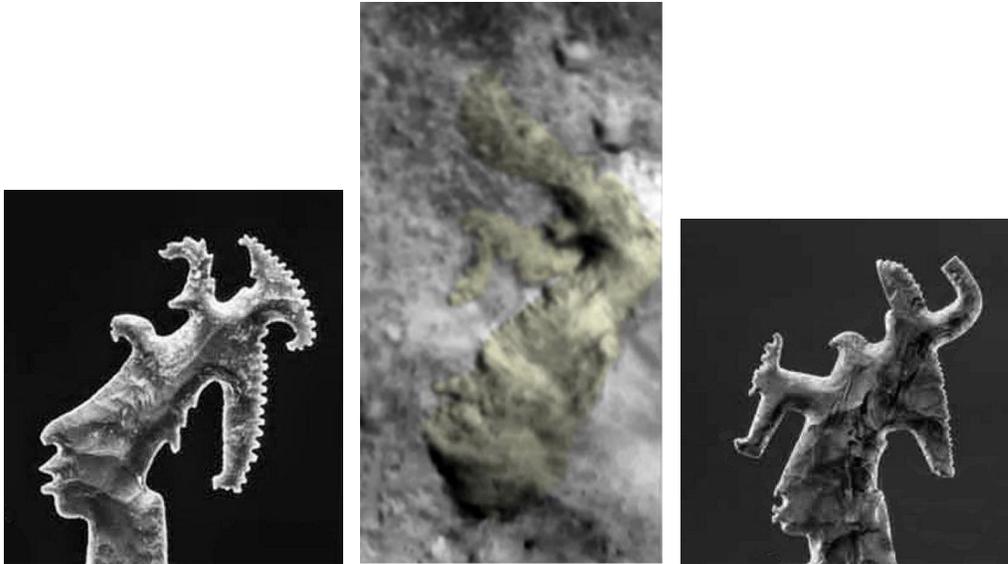


Figure 7

Eccentric Flint Comparison

Left: Maya God Kawil (Detail of K2953 figure 8)

Center: Martian Jester Head (Detail of figure 2)

Note the headdress extends past the available data

Right: Maya God Kawil (Detail of K2841 figure 8)

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Footnotes

1. Mars Viewer, *Pit and trough east of Cydonia Mensae* , R1402211, Dated February 20, 2004.

2. Linda Schele and David Freidel, *A Forest of Kings The Untold Story of The Ancient Maya*, (Quill: New York, 1990), 411.

3. Steve Glassman and Armando Anaya, *Cities of the Maya in Seven Epochs, 1250 B.C. to A.D. 1903*, (McFarland, 2014), 59.

4. Linda Schele and David Freidel, *A Forest of Kings The Untold Story of The Ancient Maya*, (Quill: New York, 1990), 414.