

Putting a Better Face on the 'Face' on Mars

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In my November/December 2000 cover article "The Face Behind the 'Face' on Mars: A Skeptical Look at Richard C. Hoagland," the NASA photos of the so-called "Face" were, regrettably, not as enhanced as other available NASA images.

The cover photo (also used on page 21) was the ubiquitous "Face" image from the 1976 Viking 1 mission—the image most familiar to everyone. But an enhanced version of that photo, revealing more of the shadowed side and eliminating the black dots (missing data points) is available from NASA, and we are pleased to now present it (figure 1a). A second, less familiar photo of the face was also obtained by Viking 1, and is shown in figure 1b.

The 1998 Mars Global Surveyor (MGS) image used in the article was, for technical reasons (related to the way NASA's mapping was being carried out), somewhat "stretched" along the "Face's" vertical axis. I had previously seen both this image and NASA's stretch-reduced version, but never together, and not until a reader (George J. Haas of the CydoniaInstitute.com Web site) complained did I appreciate the difference. Figures 2a and 2b show both the Jay Leno-ish version we used (left) and the one that more faithfully shows the "Face's" true proportions. *Mea culpa.*

NASA has also published a "light-

reversed" version of the same photo, to more closely simulate the Viking photos' lighting conditions. Some have remarked that this version does indeed look a bit more like a head, though that of a lion rather than a humanoid.

Mark Kelly, a graphic artist, has performed additional "enhancements" to this image (e.g., slightly repositioning some features and adding shading around the "eyes"), thus exaggerating its humanoid qualities. Not surprisingly, Richard Hoagland's "Enterprise Mission" Web site refers to Kelly's creation as the "properly processed and ortho-rectified version" of the photo, i.e., presumably showing the "Face" as it *really* looks. You compare and judge (see figures 3a and 3b).

In my article's opening paragraph, I myopically referred to "Cydonia" as if it encompassed merely the few hundred square miles of terrain containing the "Face" and the other "monuments." Cydonia is actually much vaster, and though the area around the "Face" was of no interest to NASA, the far northern portion of Cydonia was initially the preferred landing site for Viking 2, being about as close as a lander could get (due

to the mission's latitude constraints) to the edge of the North Polar Ice Cap, and thus to the possibility of encountering atmospheric water. Ultimately, however, the terrain appeared too rugged to risk a landing there.

Hoagland associate Michael Bara, whose vitriolic response to my article is featured on the "Enterprise Mission" Web site, argues that the "Face" is situated in what was likely an ancient Martian ocean, and is thus (contrary to my article's opening remarks) an excellent place to search for traces of past life. However, I understand the prevailing informed opinion (though not unanimous) to have been, both at the time of the Viking mission and Mars Global Surveyor, that Cydonia was most likely never an ocean, and that its features are the result of erosion by other forces (e.g., wind) rather than water.

Bara also says that Hoagland didn't write any of the words attributed to him in the promotional material for the Sierra Leone Mars stamp set—that "the whole 'quote' was written by [stamp promoter Alan Shawn] Feinstein and used without Hoagland's permission." If so, I am happy



Figure 1a. An enhanced version of the Viking 1 photo #35A72.

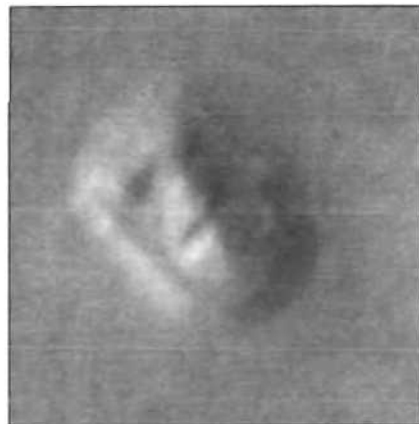


Figure 1b. An enhanced version of Viking 1 photo #70A13.

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Figure 2a. The "stretched" Mars Global Surveyor image (used in the original article).



Figure 2b. NASA's rectified/unstretched version.

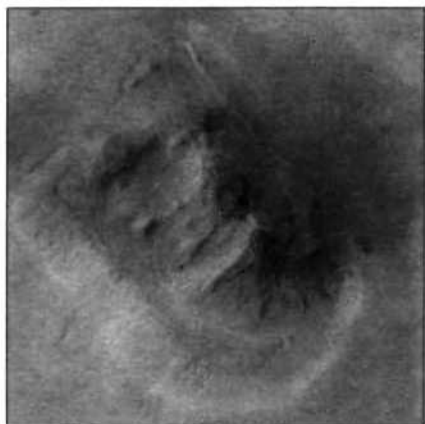


Figure 3a. NASA's "light reversed" image of the MGS photo.



Figure 3b. Graphic artist Mark Kelly's so-called "properly processed and ortho-rectified version" of the same image.

to clarify the record, though I wonder what part of the quote Hoagland could possibly find disagreement with.

And Bara decries my admittedly ridiculous "earthlings—from our own future" reference (re: the possible architects of the "Face") as a "blatant attempt to put words in [Hoagland's] mouth." I didn't ascribe my nutty idea to Hoagland, but little did I know at the time (nor does Bara's complaint hint at) how close I had actually come to Hoagland's current view—if only I had instead said "our own past." The following is verbatim from Richard Hoagland's appearance on Mike Siegel's (Art Bell's) *Coast to Coast A.M.* radio program from the night/morning of November 17/18, 2000:

The model that I am most comfortable with now is that the human race is a lot older—a lot more extraordinary—than we have ever been told. And the fact [is] that we once used to live all over the solar system—that the extraterrestrials are *our* guys. *We're* the guys that built the stuff on Mars . . .

and the stuff that we think we are now seeing on [our own Moon and on] the moons of Jupiter. . . . There is so much that we are now getting glimmers of. . . . [My next book] is going to be called *The Heritage of Mars: Remembering Forever*, because my thesis now, based on almost twenty years of doing this [research] . . . is "history is not as we've been told." . . . It has been carefully manipulated so we are not allowed to see this breathtaking heritage, because it would not benefit a few who are in control . . . and who want us to live this diminished existence not knowing who we really are because, frankly, it would threaten the power structure.

Two additional clarifications: A reader has informed me that the split between Hoagland and Chuck Harder was not permanent, and that Hoagland has been a frequent guest on Harder's radio program during the past few years. I have also learned that NASA's Lewis Research Center was renamed some time ago in honor of John Glenn. □

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occurred in 1955 when "a white cow in the distance in the pitch darkness gave some onlookers a scare" ("Fisher's Ghost" 1957).

Clearly the story of Fisher's ghost has many of the elements that make a tale worth telling—and retelling: an historical basis, intrigue and murder, a quest for justice, and a spine-tingling resolution. Not surprisingly, the "ghost" seems to have taken on a life of its own.

Acknowledgments

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