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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [2000](#) -> [Jan](#) -> Cydonian Imperative: 'Dolphin' Features

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Cydonian Imperative: 'Dolphin' Features

From: **Mac Tonnies** <Alintelbot@aol.com>
Date: Fri, 14 Jan 2000 00:55:28 -0500 (EST)
Fwd Date: Fri, 14 Jan 2000 02:07:41 -0500
Subject: Cydonian Imperative: 'Dolphin' Features

{The following is a revision of an earlier essay dealing only with the feature dubbed the "Coat hanger" by Stanley McDaniel. I've since been looking closer at the large dolphin outline located near the City area and decided to offer my thoughts.
--Mac}

Dolphin-like Features at Cydonia

by Mac Tonnies

1. The Problem with Profiles

The so-called "Coat hanger" feature was one of several relatively small-scale anomalies discovered on the pictures returned by the Mars Global Surveyor. Located to the lower left of the "Face," the "Coat hanger" is most immediately interesting because of the unexplained "tracks" found at its base. The markings have a very high albedo, and while no definitive geological explanation has been put forward, it's possible that the "tracks" may be composed of water ice. (Similar bright marking can be found nearby on the irregularly shaped mesa next to the Face, and still others can be seen near the "tip" of the "City Pyramid" formation.)

So far, speculation regarding the Coat hanger's potential artificiality has been limited to the tracks' unusual linear configuration and unexplained albedo. But it has also been noticed that the "Coat hanger" feature itself is interesting in that it very closely resembles a bottle-nosed dolphin seen in profile.

Usually a feature of this sort would be dismissed; like the spattering of mud NASA has called "Kermit the Frog," all sorts of creatures seem to appear on the Martian surface in profile. While the Face was originally explained away for much the same reason, it has since been demonstrated, using data from both Viking and MGS, that it is a three-dimensional formation that retains facial aspects under a variety of lighting conditions and viewing angles.

2. Anomalous Characteristics

Why, then, is the Coat hanger an exception? In my opinion, the dolphin resemblance bears a closer look for the following reasons:

1.) Presence of previously mentioned "tracks" running parallel to "dolphin" shape.

2.) Proximity to Face. If the Face is artificial, then it's reasonable to presume that its builders left other artifacts in the same area. This contention has been born out by the presence of large anomalous surface formations such as the "Fort," "Cliff," "Tholus," and "D&M Pyramid," as well as a number of smaller (below Viking resolution) features revealed by the MGS that exhibit unusual characteristics.

3.) Apparent modified terrain. As in the case with the "Cliff" and "Crater Pyramid," the Coat hanger/Dolphin feature sits very near an apparent impact crater. Furthermore, there is a shallow groove running through the crater that appears to be a continuation of a more prominent, triangular "cut" located to the immediate left of the Coat hanger.

The reason why certain Martian crater rims appear to have been excavated in the distant past is unknown, though it's been suggested that the builders had a limited reliance on subsurface water and constructed facilities to exploit subsurface material uprooted by impact. The best examples of this hypothesis are the tunnel-like features extending from a crater directly south of the aforementioned Crater Pyramid, which may be the remains of an attempt to mine ice from the Martian surface. (This theory provides a potentially interesting vantage on the time-frame of the Cydonian builders as well.)

4.) Associated anomaly. Aside from the Face, the Coat hanger is positioned directly above a bright, circular dome, probably composed of the same material as the Coat hanger and "tracks." This domed feature exhibits a very high albedo, possibly due to ice. How, exactly, ice came to be localized in such a precise and intentional-looking manner remains an open question. If not ice, then what? Possibly the answer can only be arrived at by ground-based exploration.

Interestingly, the bright dome in question is accompanied by a very narrow, straight line suggesting a possible road. This line leads directly to the adjacent crater, and appears parallel with the line of unexplained "tracks" that frame the bottom portion of the proposed "dolphin."

5.) Internal detail. I compared the shape of the Coat hanger to that of a bottle-nosed dolphin and was interested to find that the salient dolphin features are present in the Martian formation. Granted, there are not many (i.e. dorsal fin, tail, nose), but they appear in proper proportion. The dorsal fin is appropriately sloped, not a random triangular feature.

I also noted what may well be an eyeball, with hints of structure, on the "dolphin's" "head." The "eye" is easily identifiable as a black speck --the only variation in the dolphin's regular albedo. Like the dorsal fin and tail, the eye is located precisely where it should be if the dolphin feature is, in fact, an artificial structure designed to resemble a dolphin (or other cetacean).

6.) Conclusion

New evidence indicates that a substantial ocean once existed in Mars' northern hemisphere. Indeed, it's been theorized that the Cydonian "City" complex once sat on a shoreline, with the Face emerging as an artificial island. Surely the presence of a "dolphin" next to the Face invites inquiry. Common skeptical argument will have it that it's absurd to see the likeness of a terrestrial animal on another planetary surface, to which I say, "What of it?" The Face, after all, appears human (or humanoid), and has successfully passed every test for artificiality posed to it thus far, using images from a variety of sun angles and resolutions.

While I am of the opinion that a definitive assessment of Cydonia will probably have to await a manned presence on Mars, I think the odds for Cydonia's anomaly being exclusively natural are arbitrarily low. Once the existence of probable extraterrestrial artifacts is admitted, even as an exercise in probability, the search for small-scale surface anomalies is warranted. Given the evidence above, I think the Coat hanger formation itself, and not just its attendant "tracks," falls into the range of "anomalous" and deserves future study.

7.) Second "Dolphin"?

Stanley McDaniel of SPSR was the first (to my knowledge) to draw attention to the regular, concave feature near the City Pyramid. This semi-circular (?) depression appears very evenly composed, and is connected to a smaller rectangular depression. The overall configuration of these two shapes shows perfect symmetry. The fact that this formation appears directly below the City Pyramid's "terrace" (a bifurcated rectangular feature located on the Pyramid's lower left "leg") seems to imply intentional design.

But to what purpose? My early examinations of McDaniel's depression were disappointing in that there seemed to be little or no context for such a feature, assuming artificiality. Granted, it's possibly fruitless to out-think hypothesized Martian architects. But rediscovering other images of the same region may provide an answer.

The depression and its attendant rectangle are not isolated features; they are portions of a sunken formation that resembles, to a high degree, a dolphin or other marine mammal seen in profile. My immediate reaction was to reject this resemblance as fancy, as profiles can be seen practically anywhere one cares to see them (see above). But the proximity of the "Coat hanger" (yet another dolphin-like feature) and the depression's very artificial appearance made me look more critically.

I now find the large dolphin-like impression more impressive than I did before; the "depression" is, on close examination, the proposed "dolphin's" head, the smaller rectangle its muzzle. There is a reasonably coherent dolphin-like appearance to the rest of the formation so as to make one wonder. Its size alone almost seems reason to dismiss it as a subjective mirage, but we shouldn't forget that the Cydonian structures (if structures they are) are big. The always-hypothetical Martians (whoever they were) built big...and evidently to last.

8.) Supporting Evidence of Artificiality

In 1999, NASA's Mars Global Surveyor took its fourth (and last) look at Cydonia when it imaged the Main City Pyramid for the second time, apparently to test the hypothesis that an unusual crater in the region contained ice. Interestingly, the crater in question was brought to mainstream scientific attention by SPSR itself (Malin Space Science Systems has yet to provide its rationale for taking this fourth Cydonia photo).

Researchers noticed that the supposed ice-crater was located approximately where the "dolphin's" blow-hole should be, raising the fascinating possibility that the "crater" was at one time a functioning fountain! Coincidence or not, the dolphin feature seems to possess some aesthetic properties consistent with what we "know" about Cydonian architecture:

a.) It would have been plainly visible to inhabitants of the Fort and Main City Pyramid, assuming the latter formations were habitable structures of some kind. And, like the Face and "Coat hanger," it's also visible from orbit. Its surface is noticeably brighter than the surrounding terrain (salt deposition?)

b.) It shares the same aquatic theme as the Coat hanger; both appear to represent cetacean creatures with dorsal fins, streamlined tails and proportionate heads. Though the dolphin depression isn't perfect, perhaps this can be accounted for by erosion or the destructive event that evidently toppled the Fort.

c.) Growing evidence places the City complex near a body of water, with the Face as an island. It's been suggested on the MUFOR Cydonia mailing list that the dolphin depression served as a tide-pool--in which case we're basically looking at a desiccated empty swimming pool as viewed from orbit.

9.) Why "Dolphins"?

One may as well ask "Why a humanoid face?" Neither formation has a right to be on Mars, according to our current evolutionary and exobiological paradigms. So the presence of two (count

them!) terrestrial likenesses at Cydonia doesn't bother me as much as one might expect.

If there is a "terrestrial connection" of some sort, and the two dolphin features can be established as artificial, this will certainly give us pause. But again: artificiality is still only a hypothesis. The above conjectures are written purely as exercises in reasoning; we must await future exploration.

-----*****Mars: The
Cydonian Imperative*****

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