



THE PHANTOM SPHINX ON MARS DEFIES READY CLASSIFICATION

Question asked of MARS: Clearly, some of the things that you are finding on Mars might be statues and other things might be life forms. Doesn't this complicate your investigation of what constitutes evidence of life on Mars?

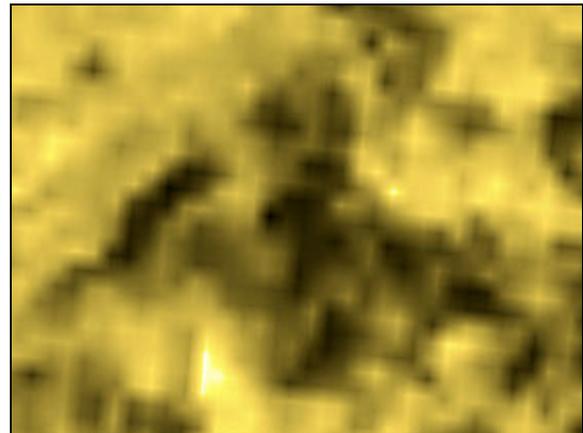


Andrew D. Basiago, president, Mars Anomaly Research Society (MARS): Absolutely! My position on this question is that Martian statues and structures, which have been the focus of most of the Mars anomaly research that has ever been done, constitute, at best, evidence of ancient life on Mars, including, I might add, ancient visitation to Mars. The major figures in contemporary Mars anomaly research have promoted the doctrine that Mars was *once* an inhabited planet, and evidence of statuary tends to support this conclusion. However, the new view of Mars that I am advancing that Mars is inhabited today requires evidence of life forms on Mars living in their natural state of existence.

Sometimes, the data from Mars provided to us by NASA is so ambiguous that we cannot conclude whether the object is an artifact or a being and hence rely on it as evidence of either ancient or modern life on Mars. These are the anomalies that possess what William Blake called "the human form divine" and science "the anatomy of a hominid" but that are too static or indistinct to reveal signs of life. In biology, we know that most life forms are mobile, so the fact that an anomaly is sessile sets up a rebuttable presumption that it is, in fact, a lifeless statue.

A Martian or a Mannequin

I would put in this category the anomaly found amid the landforms in North Sinus Meridianus that I am calling the "Phantom Sphinx" (*below*). This anomaly is either a Martian or a mannequin made by Martians or visitors to Mars. Its huge size suggests that it is probably a monument.



The Phantom Sphinx

The definitional ambiguity presented by such forms on Mars is compounded by the silence that has come from the major space agencies regarding the condign evidence of life that can be found in their photographs. The agencies that have placed robotic probes on the Red Planet, such as NASA, have shown an abiding reluctance to entertain – at least, publicly – a meaningful discourse about whether or not the data they are collecting shows evidence of life. Now that the US has made a public spectacle of putting probes on Mars, it should hold a probing public seminar about what it has found there.

Acknowledgments

MARS wishes to thank the independent Mars anomaly researcher Ross Curley for identifying and color-enhancing the "Phantom Sphinx."