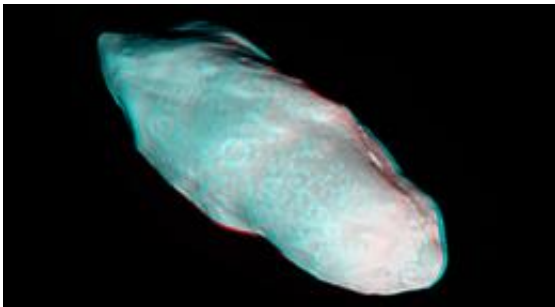


Behold the Violent History of Saturn's White Whale Moon

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Saturn's potato-shaped moon Prometheus is rendered in three dimensions in this close-up from Cassini. Image credit: NASA/JPL/Space Science Institute

(PhysOrg.com) -- Like the battered white whale Moby Dick taunting Captain Ahab, Saturn's moon Prometheus surges toward the viewer in a 3-D image from NASA's Cassini spacecraft.

The image exposes the irregular shape and circular surface scars on Prometheus, pointing to a violent history. These craters are probably the remnants from impacts long ago.

Prometheus is one of Saturn's innermost moons. It orbits the gas-giant at a distance of about 140,000 kilometers (86,000 miles) and is 86 kilometers (53 miles) across at its widest point. The porous, icy world was originally discovered in images taken by NASA's [Voyager 1 spacecraft](#) back in 1980.

Cassini's narrow-angle camera captured two black-and-white images of the moon on Dec. 26, 2009, and the imaging team combined the images to make this new stereo view. It looks different from the "egg-cellent" raw image of [Prometheus obtained on Jan. 27](#) because that view shows one of the short ends of the oddly shaped moon. In this 3-D image, the sun illuminates Prometheus at a different angle, making the moon's elongated body visible.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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