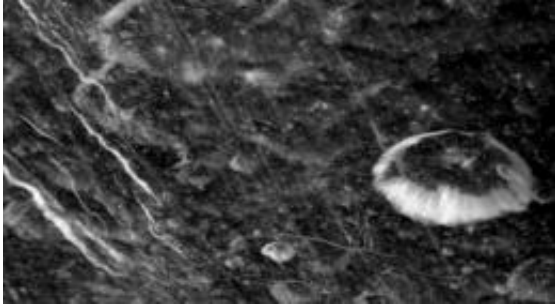


Cassini Finishes Saturnian Doubleheader

April 12 2010



This image was taken on April 7, 2010 by NASA's Cassini spacecraft. The camera was pointing at Saturn. But, by appropriate orientation of the spacecraft, the cameras were able to capture Dione in the sights. Image Credit: NASA/JPL/Space Science Institute

(PhysOrg.com) -- NASA's Cassini spacecraft completed its double flyby this week, swinging by Saturn's moons Titan and Dione with no maneuver in between. The spacecraft has beamed back stunning raw images of fractured terrain and craters big and small on Dione, a moon that had only been visited once before by Cassini.

The Titan flyby took place April 5, and the Dione flyby took place April 7 in the UTC time zone, and April 6 Pacific time. During the Titan flyby, an unexpected autonomous reset occurred and Cassini obtained fewer images of Titan than expected. But the cameras were reset before reaching Dione, which was the primary target on this double flyby.

Scientists are poring over data from Dione to discern whether the moon

could be a source of charged particles to the environment around [Saturn](#) and material to one of its rings. They are also trying to understand the history of dark material found on Dione.



Saturn's moon Dione. While pointed at Saturn, Cassini's cameras were able, by appropriate orientation, to spy the icy moon. Image Credit: NASA/JPL/Space Science Institute

A fortuitous alignment of these moons allowed Cassini to attempt this doubleheader. Cassini had made three previous double flybys and another two are planned in the years ahead. The mission is nearing the end of its first extension, known as the [Equinox](#) Mission. It will begin its second mission extension, known as the Solstice Mission, in October 2010.

More information:

More information about the Titan flyby, dubbed "T67," is available at:
saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/mission/flybys/titan20100405/

More information about the Dione flyby, dubbed "D2," is available at:
saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/mission/flybys/dione20100407/

Provided by JPL/NASA

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