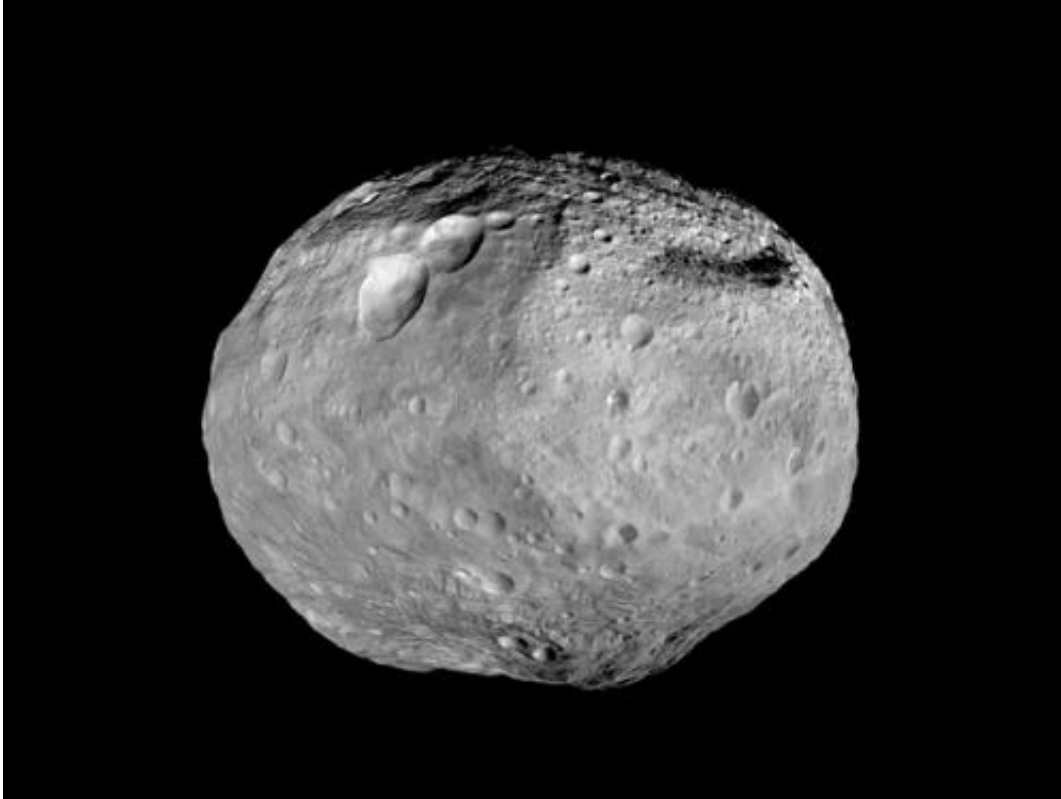


Vesta in Dawn's rear view mirror

September 11 2012

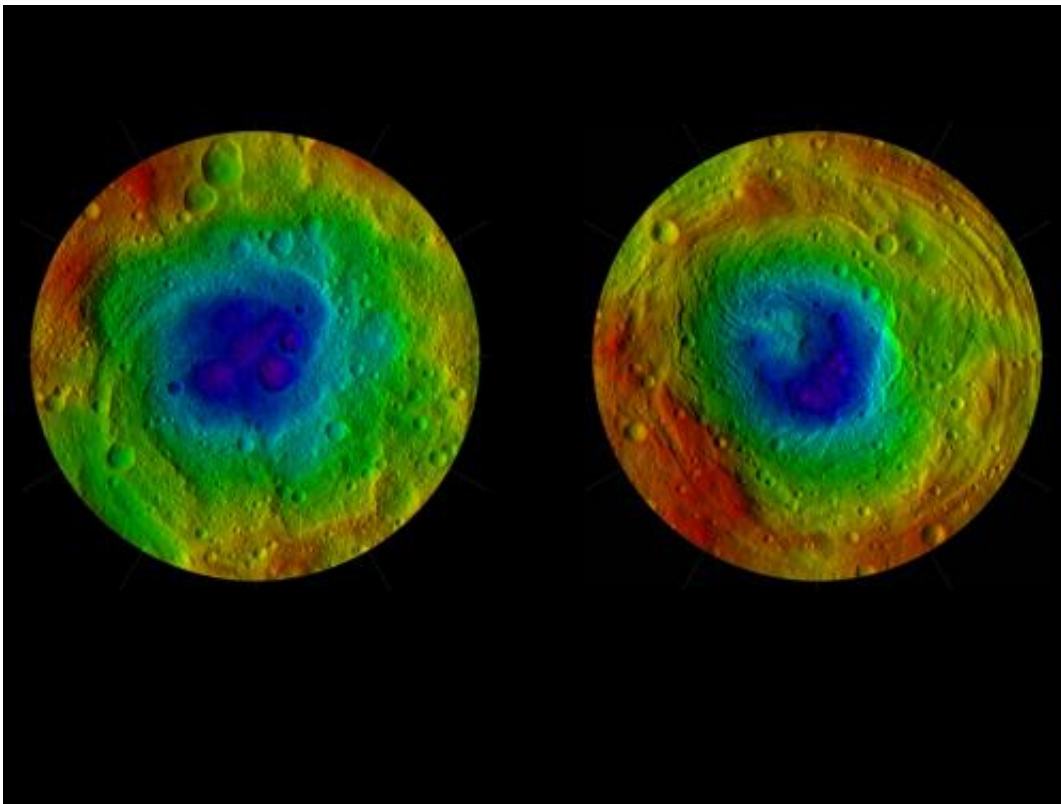


As NASA's Dawn spacecraft takes off for its next destination, this mosaic synthesizes some of the best views the spacecraft had of the giant asteroid Vesta. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/UCAL/MPS/DLR/IDA

(Phys.org)—NASA's Dawn mission is releasing two parting views of the giant asteroid Vesta, using images that were among the last taken by the spacecraft as it departed its companion for the last year.

The first set of images is a color-coded relief map of Vesta's [northern hemisphere](#), from the pole to the [equator](#). It incorporates images taken just as Dawn began to creep over the high northern latitudes, which were dark when Dawn arrived in July 2011. The other image is a black-and-white mosaic that shows a full view of the giant asteroid, created by synthesizing some of Dawn's best images.

"Dawn has peeled back the veil on some of the mysteries surrounding Vesta, but we're still working hard on more analysis," said Christopher Russell, Dawn's principal investigator at UCLA. "So while Vesta is now out of sight, it will not be out of mind."



This image from NASA's Dawn mission shows the topography of the northern and southern hemispheres of the giant asteroid Vesta, updated with pictures obtained during Dawn's last look back. Around the time of Dawn's departure from Vesta in the late summer of 2012, dawn was beginning to creep over the

high northern latitudes, which were dark when Dawn arrived in the summer of 2011. These color-shaded relief maps show the northern and southern hemispheres of Vesta, derived from images analysis. Colors represent distance relative to Vesta's center, with lows in violet and highs in red. In the northern hemisphere map on the left, the surface ranges from lows of minus 13.82 miles (22.24 kilometers) to highs of 27.48 miles (44.22 kilometers). Light reflected off the walls of some shadowed craters at the north pole (in the center of the image) was used to determine the height. In the southern hemisphere map on the right, the surface ranges from lows of minus 23.65 miles (38.06 kilometers) to 26.61 miles (42.82 kilometers). The shape model was constructed using images from Dawn's framing camera that were obtained from July 17, 2011, to Aug. 26, 2012. The data have been stereographically projected on a 300-mile-diameter (500-kilometer-diameter) sphere with the poles at the center. The three craters that make up Dawn's "snowman" feature can be seen at the top of the northern hemisphere map on the left. A mountain more than twice the height of Mount Everest, inside the largest impact basin on Vesta, can be seen near the center of the southern hemisphere map on the right. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/UCAL/MPS/DLR/IDA/PSI

These will be the last daily images during the cruise to Dawn's second destination, the dwarf planet Ceres. Other images will be highlighted as findings are made. Other data will be archived at pds.nasa.gov .

Dawn left Vesta on Sept. 4, 2012 PDT (Sept. 5, 2012 EDT). The spacecraft is using its [ion propulsion system](#) to travel to Ceres. It is expected to arrive in early 2015.

Provided by NASA

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