



Columnar Jointing on Mars and Earth

ESP_o29286_1885



HiRISE first discovered columnar jointing on Mars in 2009. This jointing is an exciting discovery because it forms when molten lava is cooled quickly by liquid water resulting in columns of polygonal-shaped rock. Finding evidence like this for large amounts of liquid water on Mars is important for understanding the planet’s climate history and habitability.



The HiRISE camera onboard the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter is the most powerful one of its kind ever sent to another planet. Its high resolution allows us to see Mars like never before, and helps other missions choose a safe spot to land for future exploration. Thousands of images are available online at: uahirise.org.