



Stone Circles

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This image covers a region southeast of the giant Hellas impact basin, which has distinctive properties in THEMIS temperature images. The daytime temperatures are relatively cold while nighttime temperatures are relatively warm. This tells us that the surface material conducts heat efficiently, like rocks rather than fine-grained materials. This image shows lots of boulders, and in places they form crude circular patterns. This could be due to the effects of many small impact craters (which we can no longer see, except perhaps for the boulder patterns). An alternative idea is that active processes on Mars can move large boulders (up to several meters in diameter) little by little over time.