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Prominent Moon Crater Gets Beautiful Image
It has been captured by instruments aboard LRO

By Tudor Vieru, Science Editor
20th of January 2010, 09:21 GMT

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One thing that can be said for certain about the Moon is that it has had a rough life. Since it first formed, it has been constantly battered by asteroids, meteorites and comets, as evidenced by the massive amounts of impact craters that adorn its surface.

Tycho is average in size, astronomers say, but it is obvious that it is very young. According to geologists, as a crater gets older, its surface begins to get covered by smaller impact marks, and its edges start showing signs of erosion.

When astronauts return to the Earth's natural satellite, this crater may be high on the priority list, scientists believe. "Directly sampling material from within the crater would help us learn more about not just when Tycho formed, but the ages of terrains on other planets throughout the solar system."

Still, despite these estimates, geologists still need rock samples collected directly from the site, in order to give the most accurate ones possible. This is one of the main reasons why Project Constellation, NASA's new approach to space exploration beyond 2015, is currently taking a deep interest in this area.

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