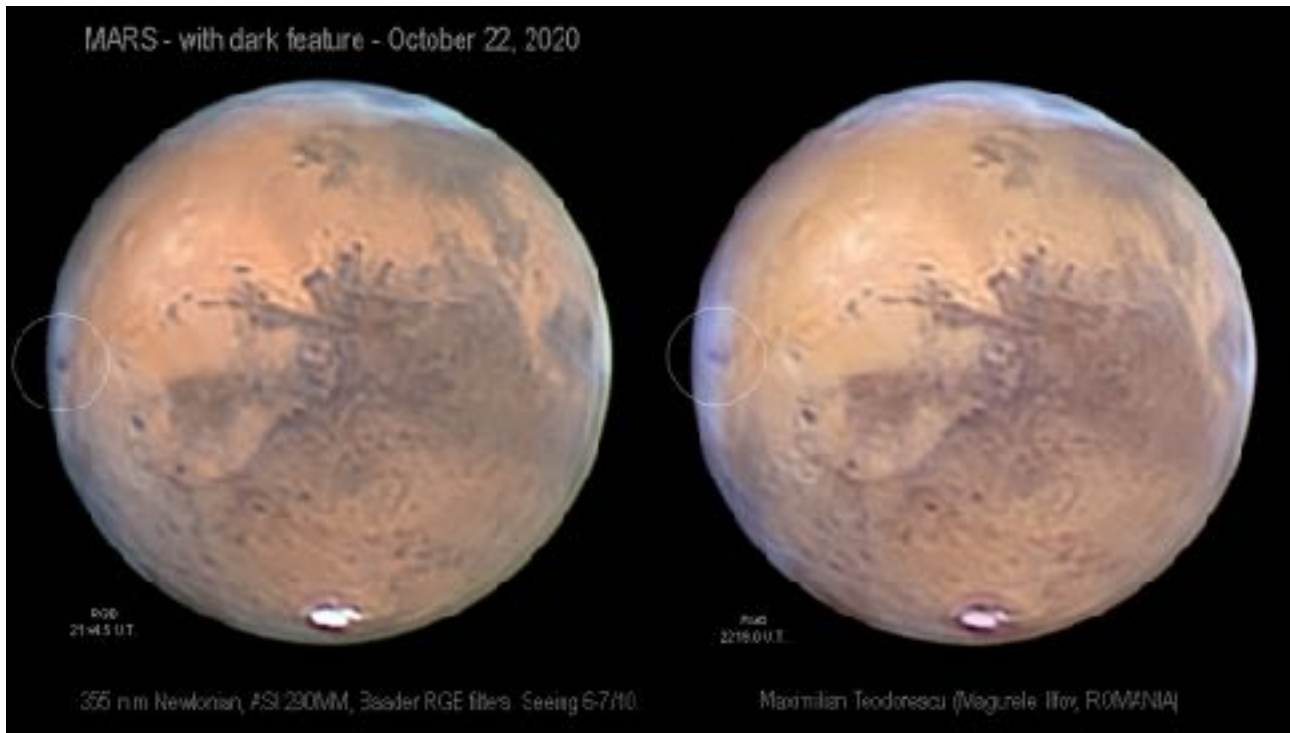
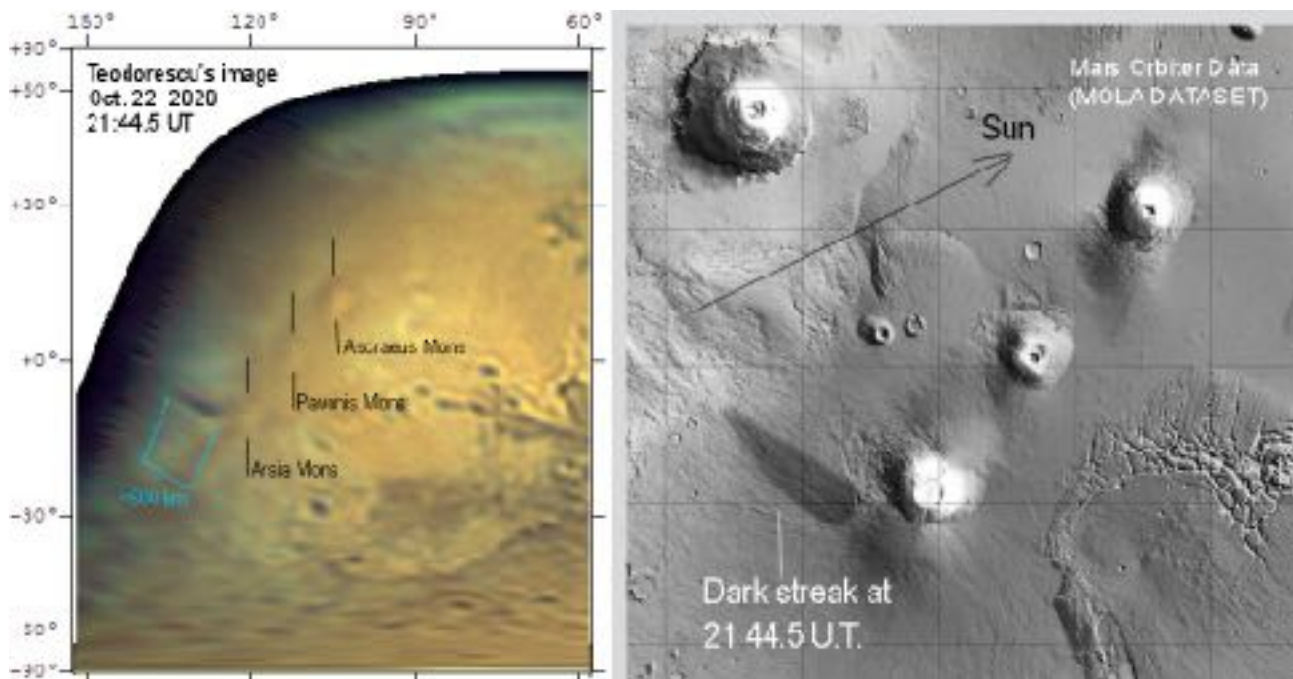


SUDDENLY, A DARK FEATURE ON MARS: On Friday night, longtime Mars photographer Maximilian Teodorescu of Magurele, Romania, looked at the Red Planet and noticed something he hadn't seen before. "There is a dark streak in the Tharsis volcanic plateau," he says. The mystery smudge is circled in these two images separated by about 40 minutes:



Fun: [Click here and cross your eyes](#) to merge the two images into a 3D Mars. "The feature was not visible just a few nights ago when I photographed the same region," says Teodorescu, who offers [an Oct. 19th image](#) for comparison. "Now, I have seen it two nights in a row ([Oct. 22nd](#) and [23rd](#)), and [other observers have seen it](#), too." What is it? Teodorescu's first thought was "it must be some kind of cloud or streamer of dust." Indeed, it is located in the same general area where [a long icy cloud](#) sometimes forms when wind whips around the summit of [Arsia Mons](#), an extinct volcano. To investigate further, Teodorescu projected the streak down onto a Mars Orbiter image of the region:



"The streak is about 600 km long," he says. "It is close to Arsia Mons, but not a perfect match. Perhaps it is a shadow of [the volcano's ice cloud](#) projected down onto lower Tharsis clouds."

Mars photographers everywhere are encouraged to keep an eye out for this dark feature whenever the Tharsis volcanoes are facing Earth.