Similar coherence between heavy-hole and light-hole excitons has been reported in (*33*). These are examples of quantum coherence involving a nonradiative superposition of states, which leads to many novel phenomena such as the Hanle effect, dark states, lasing without inversion, electromagnetically induced transparency, and population trapping [see (*33*) and references therein]. However, unlike the QD system, atomic Zeeman coherence does not necessarily involve two differentiable electrons, in contrast to the experiment we present here.

Finally, it is critical to note that while the simple discussion related to Fig. 1 shows the origin of the entanglement, the discussion is considerably over-simplified; it completely disregards the possibility that fast dephasing of the Zeeman coherence could lead to an unobservable effect, even if the single-exciton states themselves were long-lived. In the language of NMR, this is saying that a long $T_1$ and $T_2$ associated with the single-exciton states does not guarantee a comparable $T_2$ for the Zeeman coherence. The magnitude of the decoherence rate, $\gamma_{ij}$ ($1/T_2$), in Eq. 2 can be determined by comparing the relative strength of the coherent and incoherent contribution. The dephasing rate of the radiative coherence was already shown in (*24*) to be ~20 ps and is comparable to the energy relaxation rate, $\Gamma$ ($1/T_1$). This measurement further gives the decay rate of the Zeeman coherence as ~20 ps, which again is similar to the energy relaxation rate and shows that the pure dephasing of the two-exciton coherence is not significant in QDs. By exchanging the spectral position of the pump and the probe (the polarization has to be changed accordingly, too), the relative time scale of incoherent spin relaxation can also be estimated. As expected, the Zeeman splitting has reduced this process to an unobservable level (>100 ps).

In summary, we have inferred from our measurements entanglement of an excitonic system in single GaAs QDs and shown the importance of exciton-exciton Coulomb interaction for this observation. Our results are explained by a three-level model in a two-exciton basis. The next step, though more challenging, is to recover the same type of entanglement between coupled QDs [as proposed, for example, in (*13, 14*)]. This would allow for scaling the experiment to larger systems.

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# Evidence That the Reactivity of the Martian Soil Is Due to Superoxide Ions


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**The Viking Landers were unable to detect evidence of life on Mars but, instead, found a chemically reactive soil capable of decomposing organic molecules. This reactivity was attributed to the presence of one or more as-yet-unidentified inorganic superoxides or peroxides in the martian soil. Using electron paramagnetic resonance spectroscopy, we show that superoxide radical ions ($O_2^-$) form directly on Mars-analog mineral surfaces exposed to ultraviolet radiation under a simulated martian atmosphere. These oxygen radicals can explain the reactive nature of the soil and the apparent absence of organic material at the martian surface.**


The 1976 Mars Viking Landers performed a series of experiments in which soil samples were analyzed for evidence of life. Biological responses were not detected; however, the soil samples from the surface as well as from ~10 cm beneath the immediate surface were found to be chemically reactive (*1*). Upon the introduction of water vapor, oxygen was released from the soil samples in larger quantities than would be expected from physical adsorption in equilibrium with the ambient atmosphere (*2*). Furthermore, isotopically la-

beled organic nutrient solutions were decomposed when exposed to the soil (*3*). It was also discovered that the surface was devoid of organic molecules above part-per-billion levels (*4*), including molecules that are likely delivered by meteoric infall (*5*). These results are consistent with a hypothesis that there is one or more reactive oxidants present at the martian surface (*6*). However, none of the candidates described in the existing literature (*7*) provide a complete explanation for the soil reactivity.

Here, we propose that superoxide radical ions ($O_2^-$) are responsible for the chemical reactivity of the martian soil. We demonstrate in the laboratory a process for the formation of $O_2^-$ on Mars on the basis of known environmental elements, including ultraviolet (UV) photons, atmospheric oxygen, mineral grain surfaces, and extremely low concentrations of water vapor. The formation of reactive oxygen species, such as $O^-$, $O_2^-$, and $O_3^-$, on material surfaces under similar conditions has been well established in the laboratory (*8–10*). The UV photons mobilize electrons, which are subsequently trapped at the surface and are readily captured by oxygen molecules, thus forming surface adsorbates (*11*).

We extend the applicability of this process to Mars by investigating the formation of oxygen radicals on natural mineral surfaces under Mars-like atmospheric conditions and radiation environment. Our experiments were based on electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) detection and identification because of its high sensitivity to species with unpaired electrons (*12*). We selected labradorite, a plagioclase feldspar, as the mineral substrate in our experiments (*13*) because of its abundance in basalts and its presence in reconstructions of Mars Global Surveyor thermal emission spectrometer data (*14*).

A broad EPR scan (over 6000 Gauss) of the plagioclase feldspar under 6 mbar of a Mars gas mixture is dominated by iron and manganese impurities (Fig. 1). A narrow scan (over 40 Gauss) of the same sample before and after a 20-hour exposure to a low-pressure mercury vapor lamp (peak flux at 254 nm) shows a UV radiation-induced change (Fig. 2). This feature is located at the g = 2 region (*12*) of the spectrum, confirming the production of radical species. The sample was placed on a cold plate maintained at –30°C during exposure, and the UV photons were transmitted through a portion of the tube not used for the EPR analyses (*15*).

Three samples of plagioclase feldspar were pumped down to $10^{-6}$ torr, backfilled with different partial pressures of oxygen (10 mtorr, 1 torr, and 700 torr), and then exposed to UV radiation for 5 hours. The lowest concentration represents the approximate partial pressure of oxygen on Mars. Larger signal intensities resulted from samples with greater concentrations of oxygen, indicating that the radical species are derived from oxygen (*16*). Thermal tests show that the oxygen radical signature survived heating to 200°C (Fig. 3). These results are consistent with adsorbed superoxide anions ($O_2^-$) forming on the feldspar grains: $O_2^-$ is known to be stable at temperatures in excess of 300°C, whereas the other common oxygen radicals, $O^-$ and $O_3^-$, do not survive beyond 100°C (*17*). The shape and g values (2.0046 for the primary resonance) of the features in our spectra are also consistent with $O_2^-$.

Our experiments demonstrate UV-induced production and retention of superoxide ions on Mars-analog mineral surfaces under a simulated martian atmosphere at and above ambient temperatures of the martian surface. The key elements in this formation process are all present on Mars: UV radiation, mineral surfaces, atmospheric oxygen, and extremely low concentrations of water vapor. We expect $O_2^-$ to form and to be stable in the absence of reactants at the martian surface. In contrast, many of the suggested oxidants, such as hydrogen peroxide (*18*), will decompose either in the presence of transition metal oxides or exposure to the daytime UV radiation flux (*7*). The plagioclase feldspar samples used in the laboratory experiments exhibit the characteristic EPR signals from $Fe^{3+}$ and $Mn^{2+}$, yet the $O_2^-$ remains on the grain surfaces. Of the radical species most commonly formed by UV exposure in the presence of oxygen ($O^-$, $O_2^-$, and $O_3^-$), $O_2^-$ is the least reactive and hence the most stable. It is also the most likely oxygen radical species to be present in the range of temperatures (~140 to 300 K) (*19*) at the martian surface (*11*). Our

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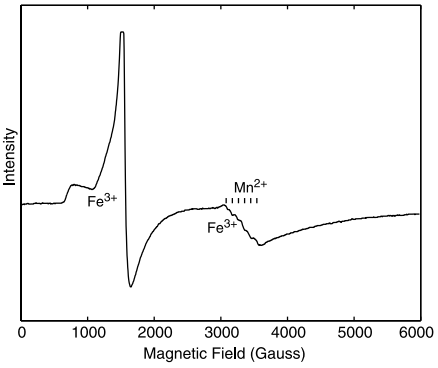


**Fig. 1.** Intensity versus field strength for a wide range X-band (~9 GHz) EPR scan of plagioclase feldspar, a likely component of the martian regolith. The signal contains broad iron as well as manganese features. The values on the vertical axis in this and subsequent plots are in arbitrary units because the scale is dependent on the choice of receiver gain factor.

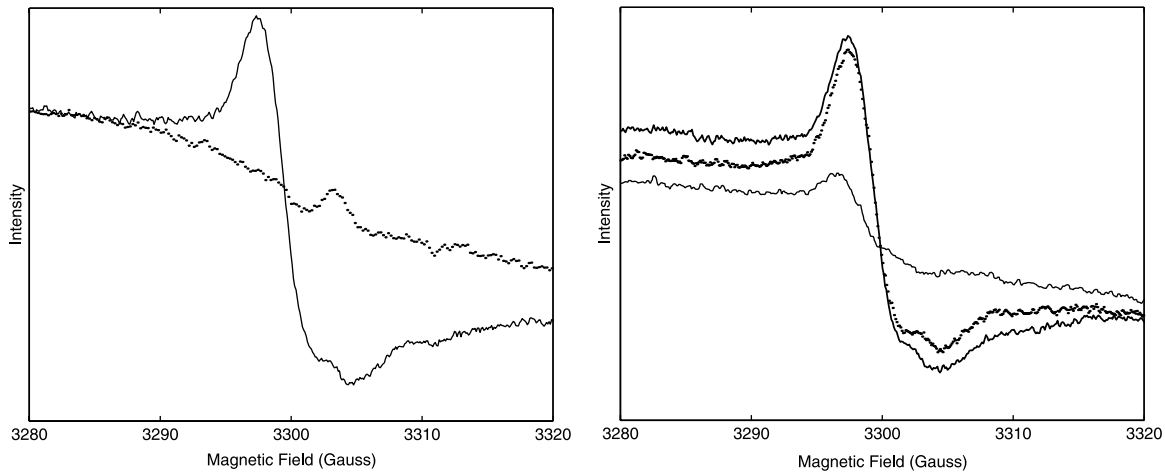


**Fig. 2 (left).** Detailed EPR scan over a 40-Gauss range of the sample scanned in Fig. 1 before (dotted line) and after (solid line) treatment by UV photons for 20 hours under a simulated martian atmosphere. The signature of adsorbed oxygen radicals is evident after irradiation. **Fig. 3 (right).** A feldspar sample with adsorbed oxygen radicals produced by exposure to UV radiation (thick line), after heating to 100°C for 1 hour (dotted line), and after an additional heating cycle to 200°C for 1 hour (thin line). The signal intensity is reduced by 10% at 100°C, but 30% of the original signal remains after the second heat treatment at 200°C.

experiments show little or no degradation of the signal in samples maintained at room temperature for over 1 week. Furthermore, the temperature stability of this species (Fig. 3) is consistent with results from the Viking gas exchange experiment where soil reactivity persisted after heating to 145°C under a He purge for 3.5 hours (*2*, *20*).

The Viking experiments found that soil samples collected from underneath a rock and from about 10 cm beneath the surface exhibited reactive characteristics similar to soil at the immediate surface. Photogenerated oxygen radicals must, therefore, be mobile to provide an adequate explanation of the spacecraft data. Experimental studies clearly show that $O_2^-$ molecules undergo two-dimensional diffusion across material surfaces (*21*). Hops between adsorption sites on $SiO_2$ substrates occur on time scales of $2 \times 10^{-8}$ s to $2.6 \times 10^{-9}$ s at −196°C and 25°C, respectively (*22*, *23*). This mobility of $O_2^-$ varies with the composition of the substrate (*24*), but the range of measured and calculated repositioning times is between $10^{-9}$ and $10^{-3}$ s (*25*). These values are short relative to geologic time scales and are consistent with diffusion over the cm-scale distances necessary to explain the reactivity of subsurface soils (*26*).

The reactivity of oxygen ions has been investigated extensively, and experimental data show that alkanes, alkenes, aromatics, and other hydrocarbons are efficiently oxidized by $O_2^-$ adsorbed on surfaces (*27*, *28*). In the presence of water, the superoxide ion reacts to produce oxygen, the perhydroxyl radical, and the hydroxyl radical (*29*)

$$2O_2^- + H_2O \rightarrow O_2 + HO_2^- + OH^-$$

The release of oxygen during the humidification and injection of water into martian soil by the Viking Landers can be explained by this reaction. The decomposition of organic nutrients in the Viking experiments is consistent with the production of $HO_2^-$ and $OH^-$ species after the aqueous solutions were introduced. The absence of organic molecules, including those delivered by meteoric infall, at the martian surface is likely due to decomposition by oxygen radicals and/or by the products of $O_2^-$ reactions with atmospheric water vapor.

Analyses at the Viking 1 landing site showed that a 1-$cm^3$ soil sample produced 690 nM of oxygen after 50 hours at 100% relative humidity (*30*). On the basis of the reaction described above, a bulk density of 1.3 $g/cm^3$ (*30*) and an estimated surface area of 17 $m^2/g$ (*31*), we estimate an abundance of $4 \times 10^{12}$ superoxide ions per $cm^2$ of soil surface area on Mars. Using laboratory calibrations with the free radical DPPH (1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl) and a measured surface area from gas adsorption of 4.2 $m^2/g$ for our feldspar samples, we estimate that we produced $\sim 8 \times 10^9$ $O_2^-$ ions per $cm^2$ of mineral surface area under a simulated martian atmosphere in a 20-hour exposure. This irradiation time, which is geologically short, does not allow adequate time for ion diffusion through the sample, so a more appropriate comparison is between the abundance per $cm^2$ of soil surface on Mars to what is produced in the lab per $cm^2$ of cross section exposed to the UV lamp (~2 $cm^2$). Using 2 $cm^2$ as the appropriate area, we calculate a production of $10^{13}$ $O_2^-$ ions per $cm^2$ of surface, which is consistent with the abundance of $4 \times 10^{12}$ ions/$cm^2$ estimated for Mars.

In the laboratory, we produced a total of $3 \times 10^{13}$ $O_2^-$ ions in the 100-mg feldspar sample after 20 hours of exposure. Most of these superoxide radicals, however, were generated in the first hour of exposure with an easily measurable signal ($10^{13}$ spins) after only 30 min under the UV lamp. We estimate the initial formation rate in the experiments to be at least $10^9$ $O_2^-$ radicals per second, which corresponds to a quantum yield of $\sim 10^{-6}$ radicals per photon (*32*).

An approximate integral of the solar UV model presented in (*33*) indicates that $\sim 10^{13}$ photons between 2000 Å and 3500 Å interact with each $cm^2$ of martian surface per second during daylight hours (*34*). This incident power is a factor of $\sim 10^2$ lower than in our experiments and suggests that $O_2^-$ radicals can form at a rate of $10^7$ per $cm^2$ of cross-sectional area each second at the martian surface. The $4 \times 10^{12}$ superoxide ions per $cm^2$ of soil surface area on Mars inferred from the Viking Lander results could form in less than 2 weeks if all the grain surfaces were exposed to the incident photons. Thus, the formation time is rapid. This process may be limited by the rate of exposure of surfaces not previously populated with $O_2^-$, either by overturning of the soil or by diffusive transport of superoxide ions to greater depths in the regolith (*35*).

On the basis of our experiments under simulated martian conditions, we expect adsorbed superoxide radicals ($O_2^-$) to form readily on mineral grains at the surface of Mars. The stability, mobility, and reactivity of $O_2^-$ are all consistent with the Viking Lander results, and we believe that the presence of these oxygen radicals is the most straightforward explanation for the unusual reactivity of the martian soil and for the apparent absence of organic molecules.

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13. Labradorite samples from Ponderosa Mine, Oregon (*37*) have a low concentration of paramagnetic cations, which minimizes interference with the characterization of the reactive adsorbates. To increase the surface area available for adsorption, we crushed and sieved the samples to retain particles less than 75 micrometers in size. Samples (100 mg) were placed inside 4-mm diameter supracil EPR tubes, vacuum dried to minimize adsorbed water, and sealed under a simulated martian atmosphere. The gas mixture was obtained from Matheson Gas Products (Rancho Cueamonga, CA) and was certified to contain 2.7% $N_2$, 1.6% Ar, and 0.2% $O_2$ in a $CO_2$ carrier.
14. Spectra of the bright martian soils obtained from the thermal emission spectrometer were reconstructed with a mixture consisting of 12% labradorite (*38*). In addition, recent analyses suggest that low albedo regions of Mars contain greater than 35% feldspar with the dominant phase being plagioclase (*39*).
15. During exposure to the ultraviolet photons, the powdered sample was shifted to the upper one-third of the ~20-cm tube. The remaining two-thirds of the tube was shielded from the lamp. The shielded, lower portion of the tube was used for EPR analyses of the sample so that radiation damage to the tube would not appear as a false signal.
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35. The concentration of oxygen in the martian troposphere (~0.13% by volume) is high enough to allow more than $10^{18}$ collisions with each cm$^2$ of soil surface area each second. This value is at least 10 orders of magnitude greater than the total number of oxygen radicals we expect to form on Mars in 1 s; therefore, we conclude that the oxygen abundance is not a limiting factor.
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# Osmium Isotopic Evidence for Mesozoic Removal of Lithospheric Mantle Beneath the Sierra Nevada, California

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**Thermobarometric and Os isotopic data for peridotite xenoliths from late Miocene and younger lavas in the Sierra Nevada reveal that the lithospheric mantle is vertically stratified: the shallowest portions (<45 to 60 kilometers) are cold (670° to 740°C) and show evidence for heating and yield Proterozoic Os model ages, whereas the deeper portions (45 to 100 kilometers) yield Phanerozoic Os model ages and show evidence for extensive cooling from temperatures >1100°C to 750°C. Because a variety of isotopic evidence suggests that the Sierran batholith formed on preexisting Proterozoic lithosphere, most of the original lithospheric mantle appears to have been removed before the late Miocene, leaving only a sliver of ancient mantle beneath the crust.**

Lithospheric removal, in the form of detachment, foundering, or peeling away of the lithospheric mantle with or without lower crust into the convecting mantle, has been predicted by various geodynamic models (*1–4*) and may have important geochemical implications (*5*, *6*). For lack of a better term, these forms of lithospheric removal are referred to here as "delamination" in order to distinguish them from lithospheric removal associated with extension or upwelling-induced erosion (*7*). Finding direct evidence for delamination is difficult: although delamination is predicted to cause increased magmatism, changes in magmatic composition, high elevations, high rates of uplift, and low $P_n$ velocities (*8–12*), these phenomena can also be explained by extension or active upwelling.

The extinct Mesozoic Sierra Nevada arc is one place where removal of the underlying subcontinental lithospheric mantle (SCLM) has been proposed. The Sierra Nevada is characterized by high elevations, low $P_n$ velocities (*9–11*), and variable xenolith assemblages (*12*). The latter have been interpreted to reflect delamination of an eclogitic lower crust (*12*). Because the Sierra Nevada was built on Proterozoic lithosphere, as evidenced by radiogenic Sr and ~1.6 Ga Sm-Nd model ages in batholithic rocks (*13*, *14*), the present Sierran SCLM should be young if delamination occurred during or after arc formation. However, many Cenozoic basalts [18 million years ago (Ma) to the present] erupted throughout the Sierra Nevada and western edge of the Great Basin have high $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$, low $^{143}Nd/^{144}Nd$, and low $^3He/^4He$ ratios, which collectively have been interpreted to derive from ancient [>0.8 billion years ago (Ga)] lithospheric mantle (*15–17*). Here, we use Os isotopes and major-element partitioning between mineral phases (thermobarometry) in lithospheric mantle xenoliths to determine the age of the SCLM and to estimate their pressure and temperature conditions, thereby allowing us to evaluate the extent and nature of SCLM removal.

The Re-Os isotopic system is the most robust method of dating the formation of SCLM (*18–21*), which is stabilized by conductive cooling and partial melting in the uppermost mantle. The latter produces a buoyant, refractory residue, having a low Re/Os ratio (Re is incompatible and Os is compatible in the residue during partial melting), which correlates with other indicators of fertility such as Ca and Al. Such a residue, if isolated in the SCLM, will develop low time-integrated $^{187}Os/^{188}Os$ relative to the convecting mantle. Ideally, one can use the Re/Os ratio of a peridotite along with its $^{187}Os/^{188}Os$ ratio to determine a Re-Os model age by extrapolating back to the point in time to where the peridotite's $^{187}Os/^{188}Os$ ratio intersects the mantle evolution curve (*21*). However, a number of factors may lead to Re/Os ratios that are not truly representative of the residual peridotite (*22*). In these cases, there are two other ways of determining model ages. "Re depletion" model ages ($T_{RD}$) assume that Re/Os is zero, and therefore yield minimum ages. For the most refractory peridotites, $T_{RD}$ ages approximate the time of the melting event. Alternatively, major elements such as Ca and Al can be used as proxies for Re/Os, with the age of the melting event inferred from the $^{187}Os/^{188}Os$ intercept at $Al_2O_3 = 0$ (*23*). The Mg# [Mg/(Mg + Fe)] may also be used as an inverse proxy (*23*).

The large contrast between the age of the original Sierran lithosphere (~1.6 Ga) and the age of its hypothetical removal (Mesozoic and younger) is within the resolution of the

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