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Is There 'Strife' on Mars?

From: legion@werple.net.au
Date: Sat, 21 Dec 1996 11:28:19 +1100 (EST)
Fwd Date: Sat, 21 Dec 1996 05:01:32 -0500
Subject: Is There 'Strife' on Mars?

>From The Electronic Telegraph UK News Thursday 19 December 1996

'Find adds to strife on Mars'

By Robert Uhlig, Technology Correspondent

THE existence of life on Mars has been thrown into further doubt after scientists found that two of the four lines of indirect evidence supporting the meteorite finding can be explained by non-biological processes.

When Nasa announced it suspected early extra-terrestrial microbial life on Martian meteorite ALH 84001, it based its claims on the fact that four compounds found inside the meteorite could be produced only by living organisms.

Most damaging of all to supporters of the Martian life theory is the suggestion by geoscientists in America that magnetite crystals inside the meteorite, assumed to be the product of bacteria, were not produced by a biogenic process.

"The biological explanation is becoming less and less plausible," said John Kerridge, a planetary scientist at the University of California at San Diego, who is familiar with the studies published or about to be published in the journal *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*.

San Diego scientists also found organic molecules called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in Antarctic ice were the same as those inside the meteorite's globules. They were also found in other meteorites that did not come from Mars.

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