

Evolved gas analyses of sedimentary rocks and eolian sediment in Gale Crater, Mars: Results of the Curiosity Rover's Sample Analysis at Mars instrument.

Brad Sutter¹, Amy McAdam², Paul Mahaffy², Douglas W. Ming³, Jennifer Eigenbrode², Elizabeth Rampe³, Heather Franz², Caroline Freissinet⁴, Andrew Steele⁵, Christopher House⁶, Doug Archer⁷, Charles Malespin², Rafael Gonzalez⁸, Jennifer Stern² and Daniel Glavin², (1)Jacobs Technology, Houston, TX, US, (2)NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD, (3)NASA Johnson Space Center, Houston, TX, (4)Institut Pierre Simon Laplace, CNRS, Laboratoire Atmosphères, Milieux, Observations Spatiales, Guyancourt, France, (5)Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington D.C., DC, (6)Department of Geosciences, Penn State, University Park, PA, (7)Jacobs, Houston, TX, (8)Laboratorio de Química de Plasmas y Estudios Planetarios, Instituto de Ciencias Nucleares, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México D.F., México

The Sample Analysis at Mars instrument evolved gas analyzer (SAM-EGA) has detected evolved water, SO₂, NO, CO₂, CO, O₂, and HCl from two eolian sediments and nine sedimentary rocks from Gale Crater, Mars. The SAM-EGA heats samples to 870°C and measures evolved gas releases as function of temperature. These evolved gas detections indicate nitrates, organics, oxychlorine phase, and sulfates are widespread with phyllosilicates and carbonates occurring in select Gale Crater materials. CO₂ and CO evolved at similar temperatures suggesting that as much as $2373 \pm 820 \mu\text{gC/g}$ may occur as organic carbon in the Gale Crater rock record while relatively higher temperature CO₂ detections are consistent with carbonate ($<0.70 \pm 0.1 \text{ wt } \% \text{ CO}_3$). Evolved NO amounts up to $0.06 \pm 0.03 \text{ wt } \% \text{ NO}_3$ have been detected while O₂ detections suggests chlorates and/or perchlorates ($0.05 \text{ to } 1.05 \text{ wt } \% \text{ ClO}_4$) are present. Evolution of SO₂ indicated the presence of crystalline and/or poorly crystalline Fe and Mg sulfate and possibly sulfide. Evolved H₂O ($0.9 - 2.5 \text{ wt } \% \text{ H}_2\text{O}$) was consistent with the presence of adsorbed water, hydrated salts, interlayer/structural water from phyllosilicates, and possible inclusion water in mineral/amorphous phases. Evolved H₂S detections suggest that reduced phases occur despite the presence of oxidized phases (nitrate, oxychlorine, sulfate, and carbonate). SAM results coupled with CheMin mineralogical and Alpha-Particle X-ray Spectrometer elemental analyses indicate that Gale Crater sedimentary rocks have experienced a complex authigenetic/diagenetic history involving fluids with varying pH, redox, and salt composition. The inferred geochemical conditions were favorable for microbial habitability and if life ever existed, there was likely sufficient organic C to support a small microbial population.