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Lunar Beagle and Lunar Astrobiology

Authors

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Abstract

The study of the elements and molecules of astrobiological interest on the Moon can be made with the Gas Analysis Package (GAP) and associated instruments developed for the Beagle 2 Mars Express Payload. The permanently shadowed polar regions of the Moon may offer a unique location for the “cold-trapping” of the light elements (i.e., H, C, N, O, etc.) and their simple compounds. Studies of the returned lunar samples have shown that lunar materials have undergone irradiation with the solar wind and absorb volatiles from possible cometary and micrometeoroid impacts. The Beagle 2’s analytical instrument package including the sample processing facility and the GAP mass spectrometer can provide vital isotopic information that can distinguish whether the lunar volatiles are indigenous to the moon, solar wind derived,
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