

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Science serves its readers as a forum for the presentation and discussion of important issues related to the advancement of science, including the presentation of minority or conflicting points of view, rather than by publishing only material on which a consensus has been reached. Accordingly, all articles published in *Science*—including editorials, news and comment, and book reviews—are signed and reflect the individual views of the authors and not official points of view adopted by the AAAS or the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

Editorial Board

ROBERT L. BOWMAN	WILLARD F. LIBBY
MELVIN CALVIN	GORDON J. F. MACDONALD
JOSEPH W. CHAMBERLAIN	EVERETT I. MENDELSON
FARRINGTON DANIELS	NEAL E. MILLER
JOHN T. EDSALL	JOHN R. PIERCE
DAVID R. GODDARD	COLIN S. PITENDRIGH
EMIL HAURY	KENNETH S. PITZER
ALEXANDER HOLLAENDER	ALEXANDER RICH
ROBERT JASTROW	DEWITT STETTEN, JR.
EDWIN M. LERNER, II	EDWARD L. TATUM
	CLARENCE M. ZENER

Editorial Staff

Editor

PHILIP H. ABELSON

<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Business Manager</i>
DAEL WOLFLE	HANS NUSSBAUM

Managing Editor: ROBERT V. ORMES

Assistant Editors: ELLEN E. MURPHY, JOHN E. RINGLE

Assistant to the Editor: NANCY TEIMOURIAN

News and Comment: DANIEL S. GREENBERG, JOHN WALSH, ELINOR LANGER, MARION ZEIGER, JANE AYRES

Europe: VICTOR K. McELHENY, Flat 3, 18 Kensington Court Place, London, W.8, England (Western 5360)

Book Reviews: SARAH S. DEES

Editorial Assistants: ISABELLA BOULDIN, ELEANORE BUTZ, BEN CARLIN, SYLVIA EBERHART, GRAYCE FINGER, NANCY HAMILTON, OLIVER HEATWOLE, ANNE HOLDSWORTH, ELLEN KOLANSKY, KATHERINE LIVINGSTON

Advertising Staff

<i>Director</i>	<i>Production Manager</i>
EARL J. SCHERAGO	RAYMONDE SALAMA

Sales: New York, N.Y., 11 W. 42 St. (212-PE-6-1858): RICHARD L. CHARLES, ROBERT S. BUGBEE
Scotch Plains, N.J., 12 Unami Lane (201-889-4873): C. RICHARD CALLIS

Chicago, Ill., 6 W. Ontario St. (312-DE-7-4973): HERBERT BURKLUND

Los Angeles 45, Calif., 8255 Beverly Blvd. (213-653-9817): WINN NANCE

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE: 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: 202-387-7171. Cable: Advancesci. Washington. Copies of "Instructions for Contributors" can be obtained from the editorial office. ADVERTISING CORRESPONDENCE: Rm. 1740, 11 W. 42 St., New York, N.Y. 10036. Phone: 212-PE 6-1858.

Mariner IV Mission

Scientifically, the results of the Mariner IV mission constitute the most important advance in space research since the discovery of the Van Allen radiation belts. Contributing to the value of the mission is the fact that the results of the various experiments are complementary; they also build on and extend previous findings of ground-based astronomy.

Useful data on particles, fields, and micrometeorites were collected during the voyage to Mars. Additional information was gathered after the fly-by, and more may be forthcoming when the spacecraft is once again fairly close to Earth. The major contributions, however, are the observations in the vicinity of Mars. Among the most important are the photographs (*Science*, 6 August). These show that, unlike Earth, Mars resembles the moon in topography. There are many craters, but there is no evidence of mountain chains.

Experiments on particles and fields reported in this issue show other major differences between the two planets. The magnetic field of Mars is not more than 1/1000 that of Earth, and the Red Planet has no radiation belt. An occultation experiment gives independent evidence that the atmosphere of Mars is tenuous and unlike that of Earth. A micrometeorite study shows that interplanetary dust is more abundant in the vicinity of Mars than near Earth.

The evidence from the photographs, the absence of a sizable magnetic field, and the character of the atmosphere all support the view that the history of Mars has been unlike that of Earth.

An example of a close relation between Earth-based findings and findings from Mariner is the estimate of the composition and density of the Martian atmosphere. Astronomers have known for some time that the atmosphere of Mars is thin and that it contains CO₂. Recently the estimates have been sharpened. Measures of infrared radiation indicate that the total pressure at the Martian surface is 11 millibars, of which about half is CO₂ (0.28 mole per square centimeter). The Mariner IV occultation experiment determined changes in radio signals from the spacecraft caused by passage through the atmosphere and the ionosphere of Mars. Preliminary interpretation of the data provides an estimate of the scale height of the atmosphere (~9 km) and its density. The pressure at the surface of Mars as estimated from the data (about 5 or 6 mb) is lower than estimates obtained in ground-based studies. This disagreement is not serious, and the discrepancy will probably diminish on further analysis. The important fact is that two very different kinds of measurements give essentially the same result. Half or more of the atmosphere of Mars is CO₂, and the total number of molecules per unit area is about 1/100 the number in the Earth's atmosphere.

The contrast between Earth and Mars can be stated in another way by listing the amounts per unit area of three volatile substances that have appeared at the surface of the planets in the past or are now present. For Earth the values are: H₂O, 3.2×10^5 g; CO₂, 1.8×10^4 g; N₂, 8×10^2 g. The corresponding values for Mars are: H₂O, ~0.01 g; CO₂, ~12 g; N₂, <10 g. The numbers are not strictly comparable, for most of the CO₂ that has reached the surface of the Earth is now incorporated in sedimentary rocks. Probably most of the H₂O that has appeared on Mars has been lost, the hydrogen having escaped and the oxygen having been consumed or lost. Nitrogen has not been detected on the planet, and the value given is probably an upper limit, derived from the pressure effect it exerts on CO₂.

The success of Mariner IV represents a superb engineering achievement by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The accomplishment required the proper functioning of 134,000 parts after 7 months in space. The magnitude of the success is highlighted by the failure of others to attain the goal. The Russians, who have some first-class engineering talent, have not succeeded in their dozen or so attempts at attaining close-in data from Mars or Venus.—PHILIP H. ABELSON