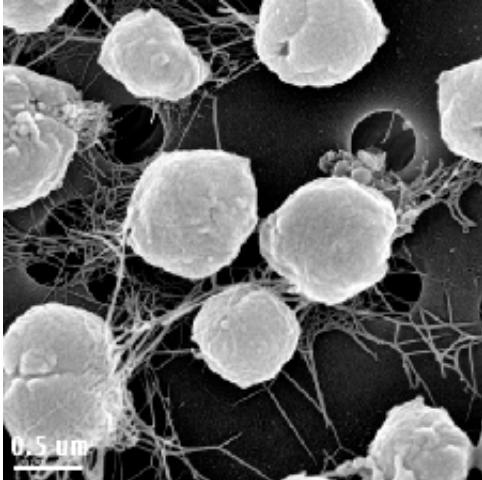


Seeking Life's Shadow

October 1 2009, by Shaun McCormack



Methanocaldococcus jannaschii, one of the microorganisms used in this research. Image credit: UC Berkeley Electron Microscope

They haven't yet figured out how to draw blood from stones, but a group of French researchers is offering new insight that could change how scientists search for signs of life in Martian rocks.

By studying the laboratory fossilization of microorganisms, scientists have caught a glimpse into how early Earth and potential Martian life might be preserved in rocks. The scientists focused on *Pyrococcus abyssi* and *Methanocaldococcus jannaschii*, extremophiles which thrive in piping hot (up to 176°F), oxygen-lacking (

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