Ancient North Hellas Massifs Are Chock-Full of Feldspar

We discovered nearly 100 feldspathic outcrops in >4.1 billion-year-old rocks north of Hellas basin, Mars. These lithic windows into ancient crust-forming processes complement recent results from the Insight lander and inform interpretations of magma ocean modeling.

- The composition of Mars’ most ancient crust is relatively unconstrained.
- Mountainous blocks of crust were uplifted ~4.1 billion years ago by the Hellas impact from at least 8-km depth, providing a window into the ancient crust.
- We analyzed many ancient crustal exposures and found a surprising quantity of plagioclase feldspar.
- These outcrops may represent anorthositic members of a layered mafic intrusion in the primary crust of Mars.

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