Contents

1. Introduction

Since May 1981, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has used aircraft to collect cosmic dust (CD) particles from Earth's stratosphere. Specially designed dust collectors are prepared for flight and processed after flight in an ultraclean (Class-100) laboratory constructed for this purpose at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center (JSC) in Houston, Texas. Particles are individually retrieved from the collectors, examined and cataloged, and then made available to the scientific community for research. Cosmic dust thereby joins lunar samples and meteorites as an additional source of extraterrestrial materials for scientific study.

This catalog summarizes preliminary observations on 468 particles retrieved from collection surfaces L2021 and L2036. These surfaces were flat plate Large Area Collectors (with a 300 cm^2 surface area each) which was coated with silicone oil (dimethylsiloxane) and then flown aboard a NASA ER-2 aircraft during a series of flights that were made during January and February of 1994 (L2021) and June 7 through July 5 of 1994 (L2036). Collector L2021 was flown across the entire southern margin of the US (California to Florida), and collector L2036 was flown from California to Wallops Island, VA and on to New England. These collectors were installed in a specially constructed wing pylon which ensured that the necessary level of cleanliness was maintained between periods of active sampling. During successive periods of high altitude (20 km) cruise, the collectors were exposed in the stratosphere by barometric controls and then retracted into sealed storage containers prior to descent. In this manner, a total of 35.8 hours of stratospheric exposure was accumulated for collector L2021, and 26 hours for collector L2036.

2. Processing of Particles

Particle mounts designed for the JEOL 100CX scanning transmission electron microscope (STEM) are currently the standard receptacles for CD particles in the JSC laboratory. Each mount consists of a graphite frame (size ~3x6x24 mm) onto which a Nucleopore filter (0.4 μm pore size) is attached. A conductive coat of carbon is vacuum evaporated onto the mount and then a microscopic reference pattern is "stenciled" onto the carbon-coated filter by vacuum evaporation of aluminum through an appropriately sized template. Particles are individually removed from collectors using glass-needle micromanipulators under a binocular stereo- microscope. Each particle is positioned on an aluminum-free area of a Freon-cleaned (Freon 113), carbon-coated filter and washed in place with hexane to remove silicone oil. Each mount is normally limited to 16 particles. All processing and storage of each particle is performed in a Class-100 clean room.

This catalog is the fifth to be produced from the Large Area Cosmic Dust Collectors (LACs). These collectors have approximately one order of magnitude more collection surface area than the conventional collectors used for Cosmic Dust Catalogs 1-10.

3. Preliminary Examination of Particles

Each rinsed particle is examined, before leaving the Class-100 clean room processing area, with a petrographic research microscope equipped with transmitted, reflected and oblique light illuminators. At a magnification of 500X, size, shape, transparency, color, and luster are determined and recorded for each particle.

After optical description, each mount (with uncoated particles) is examined by scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and X-ray energy-dispersive spectrometry (EDS). Secondary-electron imaging of each particle is performed with a JEOL-35CF SEM at an accelerating voltage of 20 kV. Images are therefore of relatively low contrast and resolution due to deliberate avoidance of conventionally applied conductive coats (carbon or gold-palladium) which might interfere with later elemental analyses of particles. EDS data are collected with the same JEOL-35CF SEM equipped with a Si(Li) detector and PGT 4000T analyzer. Using an accelerating voltage of 20 kV, each particle is raster scanned and its X-ray spectrum recorded over the 0-10 keV range by counting for 100 sec. No system (artifact) peaks of significance appear in the spectra.

It should be pointed out that the SEM/EDS procedure used in preparing this catalog is different than that used in preparing Cosmic Dust Catalogs, Volumes 1-3 and 8. In these catalogs, EDS analysis was performed using the JEOL 100CX STEM operated at 40 kV. Only the EDS spectra exhibit differences that are likely to be noticed. These differences are a slightly higher background and more efficient excitation of high atomic number elements for EDS spectra collected at 40kV relative to those collected at 20kV. However, each catalog includes spectra of the same selected comparison standards, which allows comparison of spectra from one catalog to the next to be made. Please refer to Section 5 for a more complete discussion.

Following SEM/EDS examination, each particle mount is stored in a dry nitrogen gas atmosphere in a sealed cabinet.

4. Catalog Format

Each page in the main body of the catalog is devoted to one particle and consists of an SEM image, an EDS spectrum, and a brief summary of preliminary examination data obtained by optical microscopy. The unique identification number assigned to the particle appears at the top of the page. Sources of the descriptive data are as follows:

SIZE (µm) is measured using the original SEM image and its known magnification factor. For an irregularly shaped particle, the minimum dimension in the plane of the field of view is located and determined; then a second (maximum) dimension is measured at a right angle to the first. For a spherical or equidimensional particle, only a single size is recorded.

SHAPE is generalized to be spherical (S), equidimensional (E), or irregular (I). Particles having shape intermediate between S and E, or E and I, are not uncommon and may be denoted as S/E or E/I, etc.

TRANSPARENCY (abbreviated TRANS.) is determined by optical microscopy to be transparent (T), translucent (TL), or opaque (O). Significant variations in transparency within a particle are annotated on the SEM image.

COLOR is determined by optical microscopy using oblique (fiber optic, quartz halogen) illumination supplemented with normal reflected (tungsten-lamp) illumination. The distinction of dark (Dk.) from light (Lt.) particles is unambiguous, although the distinction of colorless (CL) from pale-colored conditions is sometimes problematical. Complex colorations of individual particles may be noted in the "COMMENTS" column and annotated on the SEM image.

LUSTER is determined by optical microscopy using reflected normal (tungsten-lamp) illumination and supplemented with oblique (fiber optic, quartz halogen) illumination. Commonly applied descriptions, adopted from mineralogical usage, include dull (D), metallic (M), submetallic (SM), subvitreous (SV), vitreous (V), and resinous (R). Lusters transitional between categories or difficult to identify are indicated accordingly (D/SM, SV/V, etc.).

TYPE indicates a provisional first order identification of each particle based on its morphology (from SEM image), elemental composition (from EDS spectrum), and optical properties. We emphasize that, for catalog purposes, types are defined for their descriptive and curatorial utility, not as scientific classifications. These tentative categorizations, which reflect judgments based on the collective experience of the CDPET, should not be construed to be firm identifications and should not dissuade any investigator from requesting any given particle for detailed study and more complete identification. The precise identification of each particle in our inventory is beyond the scope and intent of our collection and curation program. Indeed, the reliable identification and scientific classification of cosmic dust is one of many important research tasks that we hope this catalog will stimulate. We indicate particle "TYPE" only to aid the users of this catalog (especially those new to small particle analysis) in distinguishing possible cosmic dust particles from other particles which are invariably collected during stratospheric dust sampling. In this catalog, particles are organized according to their type. Categories used in this catalog are defined as follows:

C: Cosmic dust (variety unspecified) or other extraterrestrial material. In the strict sense, "cosmic dust" refers only to those particles which have not been modified during passage from interplanetary space to Earth's stratosphere. In this catalog, though, particle type "C" is used to conveniently group together all particles which are judged to be of extraterrestrial origin, including those that have apparently experienced strong ablational heating or melting. Type "C" particles are provisionally identified as those having one of the three following sets of attributes:

(a) irregular to spherical, opaque, dark-colored particles composed mostly of Fe with minor S and/or Ni.
(b) irregular to spherical, translucent to opaque, dark-colored particles containing various proportions of Mg, Si, and Fe with traces of S and/or Ni.
(c) irregular to faceted or blocky, transparent to translucent particles containing mostly Mg, Si, and Fe but with traces S and/or Ni.

Category (a) and (b) particles commonly display either complex, porous aggregate type morphologies or distinctively spherical shapes and dull to metallic lusters which distinguish them from terrestrial minerals. Their EDS spectra are reminiscent of those exhibited by meteoritic Fe-NiS minerals, or combinations of Fe-Ni-S phases with olivine and/or pyroxene. Category (c) particles display morphologies and EDS spectra which suggest that they are fragments of olivine or pyroxene crystals, neither of which are significant components of stratospheric volcanic ash. Particles which do not fall easily into categories (a), (b), or (c) but which possess some of the same attributes may be classified here as "C?".

TCA: Terrestrial contamination (artificial or man-made). Particles included in the "TCA" category are commonly irregular in shape (though a few may be spherical) and may be transparent, translucent, or opaque. Their EDS spectra commonly show Al, Fe, or Si as the principal peaks but with a variety of minor peaks including those of Cd, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Ni, Cu, or Zn and at abundances which are frequently much greater than those expected in common minerals. However, such compositions are similar to those expected for certain metal alloys. In some cases, a high intensity (relative to intensities of characteristic X-ray peaks) of continuum radiation occurs in the EDS spectrum, suggesting that low atomic number elements not detectable by the EDS (e.g., H, C, N, O) are abundant in the particle. Such "TCA" particles are tacitly inferred to by synthetic carbon based materials. (This category probably includes particles produced by or derived from aircraft operation or collector hardware, or possibly spacecraft debris. However, some of these particles are worthy of additional research and may represent true extraterrestrial "low Z" material).

TCN: Terrestrial contamination (natural). "TCN" particles may be transparent to opaque and may exhibit a variety of colors. However, they are commonly irregular in shape and distinctively rich in Si and Al with minor abundances of Na, K, Ca, or Fe. Some Fe-S particles are classified as TCN despite the fact that they may well be extraterrestrial. This action is due to the lack of conclusive investigations regarding these particular particles. Many particles containing only low-Z elements are also classified TCN for the same reason. Morphologies and EDS spectra of most "TCN" particles compare favorably with respective properties of silica polymorphs, feldspar, or silicic volcanic glass, three materials which are principal components of stratospheric volcanic ash. In addition, platy or porous aggregate-type particles of light color and Si, Al rich composition may be silicic clay minerals, common phases in Earth's surface soils. Irregular, reddish Fe rich particles may also be products of terrestrial rock weathering. Recognition of these and other phases as "TCN" particles is based mostly on CDPET's collective mineralogical experience and comparison with reference samples. Less commonly, the "TCN" category may include distinctive particles with apparently non-random shapes which are rich in low atomic number elements (as inferred from their EDS spectra having high levels of continuum x radiation and relatively small peaks for characteristic X-rays). Those rare particles are distinguished from "TCA" particles by their unusual, organized morphologies and probably represent biological contaminants.

AOS: Aluminum or aluminum oxide sphere. An AOS is transparent, subvitreous, vitreous to metallic in luster, colorless to pale yellow and at least approximately spherical. However, shape may range from nearly perfect sphericity to pronounced ellipticity and surface texture may range from very smooth to rough. Other spheres or irregularly shaped material may be attached to its surface. Al is the distinctively dominant (or only) peak in its EDS spectrum. A sphere displaying the attributes of an AOS except with major elements in addition to Al may be listed as "AOS?" or "?". Transparent Al rich particles of irregular shape would probably be listed as "TCA". Most AOS particles are products of solid fuel rocket exhausts.

Again, this system for provisional classification of particles is presented only as a first order attempt to distinguish particles which are probably extraterrestrial in origin from those which are probably contaminants. All particles will require careful research examination before they can be satisfactorily identified.

COMMENTS are included for particles with special features or histories. Any large cluster particles, which have broken apart on the LAC plate, have small portions present in the catalog as different "sibling" grains; the comments reflect these relationships. For example, any particle with a cluster number designation in the comments field represents a much larger parent particle remaining on the LAC plate, which is also available for allocation in part or in whole.

5. Analyses of Reference Materials

The usefulness of the SEM images and EDS spectra provided for particles in this catalog is enhanced by comparison with similar data products obtained for mineral standards of known composition. Accordingly, a typical EDS spectrum is presented for each of three standard minerals prepared as polished grain mounts (San Carlos olivine, USNM 111312/444; diopside JLC 99 63; Kakanui hornblende, USNM 143965; Allende Meteorite Bulk Powder, NMNH 3529). Analyses of these optically flat surfaces eliminate inter-sample geometrical variations so that effects of detection limits and compositional variations, in general, on relative peak heights in the raw spectra can be more readily assessed. Even so, the polished grain spectra should not be over interpreted because no corrections have been attempted for atomic number, absorption, or fluorescence effects. The spectra are presented simply as additional aids to the meaningful use of the sample particle EDS spectra. Investigators who might wish to compare performance characteristics of their EDS analytical systems with those of the system used by CDPET in preparing these catalog data should contact Curator/Cosmic Dust at the address given in Section 6. A short-term loan of a polished grain mineral standard can then be arranged.

As pointed out in Section 3, the EDS spectra included in this catalog were obtained using a primary electron energy of 20 kV whereas spectra in Catalogs 1-3 and 8 were obtained with a different instrument operated at 40 kV. Although the effects on EDS spectra to be expected from such a change are well known from X-ray spectrometric analysis, they are worth pointing out to avoid confusion among the readers of this catalog. The major effects of concern to Cosmic Dust

Catalog users can be seen by comparing the two "Allende (CV3) Meteorite Bulk Powder" spectra, one of which was obtained at 20 kV and the other at 40 kV, as presented in Cosmic Dust Catalogs 1-3 and 8 (only spectra collected at 20kV are presented in this catalog). In the 20 kV spectrum, the Si peak is more intense than the principal peak of Fe whereas the opposite is true for the 40 kV spectrum. In general, the 20 kV spectra in this catalog will show peaks of light elements enhanced relative to peaks of heavy elements when compared with 40 kV spectra published in Catalogs 1-3 and 8. The explanation is based both on geometrical differences between X-ray paths in the two EDS systems (the JEOL-35CF system is actually more favorable for light element analysis) and on electron and X-ray physics (X-ray emission by heavy elements is more intense at 40 kV than at 20 kV). Thus, readers are cautioned against attempting to quantitatively intercompare 40 kV spectra with 20 kV spectra. Still, the spectra in each catalog should continue to serve as originally intended. Namely, the sample and standard spectra in any given catalog will represent a self consistent data set.

6. Sample Requests

Scientists desiring to perform detailed research on particles described in this catalog should apply in writing to:

Curator/Cosmic Dust
Telephone: (281) 483-5128
Code SN2
NASA/Johnson Space Center
FAX: (281) 483-5347
Houston, Texas 77058
U.S.A.

Sample requests should refer to specific particle identification numbers and should describe the research being proposed as well as the qualifications and facilities of the investigator making the request. Publication reprints are frequently useful in sample allocation considerations. Additionally, requests for particles not yet passed through preliminary examination will be considered if the requester can demonstrate a strong need for them. NASA will arrange for a review of the scientific merits of each request and will inform the requester of the results. Approval of a sample request does not imply or include funding for the proposed research. Questions about NASA funding should be directed to:

Dr. Joseph Boyce
Discipline Scientist
Planetary Materials and Geochemistry Program
Code SR
NASA Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546

Although foreign scientists are welcome to request samples, NASA cannot provide funds to be spent outside the U.S.A. by citizens of other countries.

7. Acknowledgements

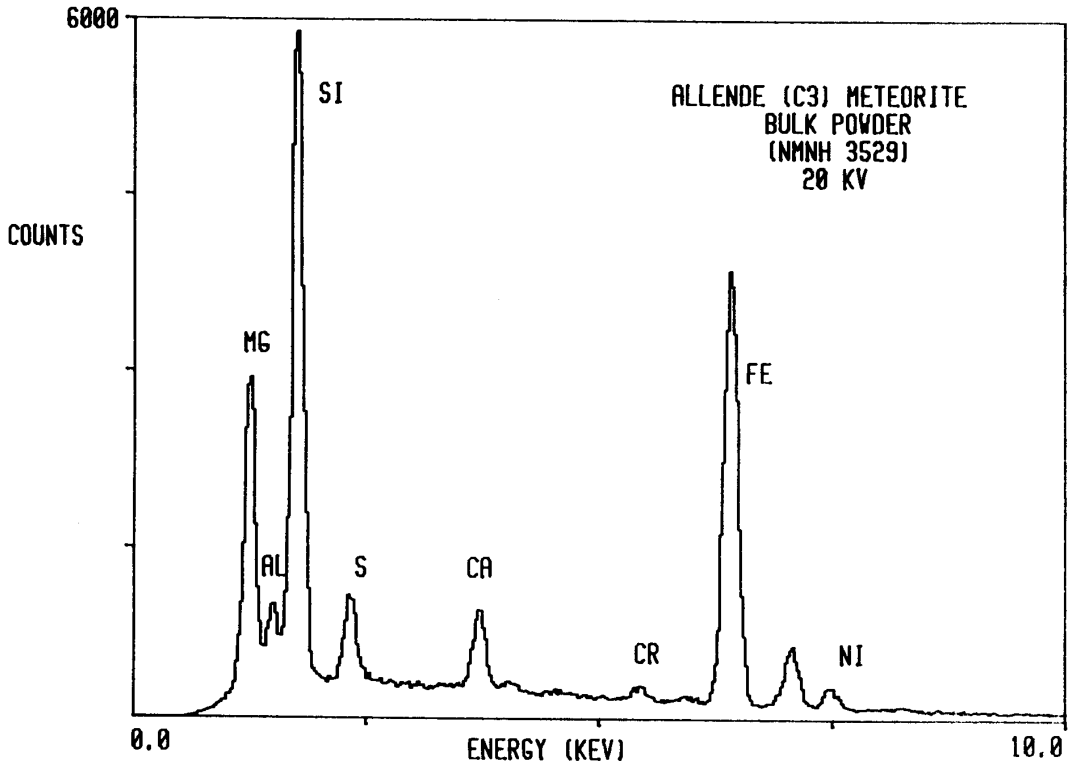
The ER-2 flight personnel at NASA/Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, California) performed the loading and unloading of the cosmic dust collectors on the ER-2 aircraft and provided flight log data and other critical assistance.

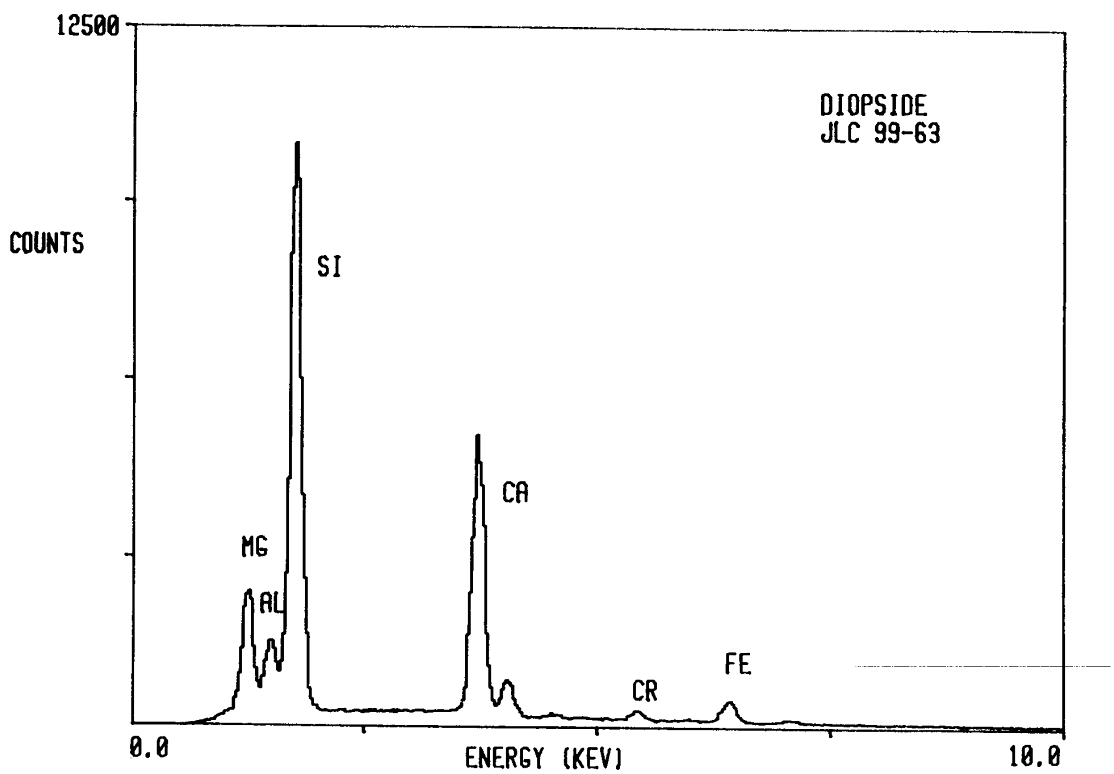
Eugene Jarosewich (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) kindly provided mineral standards and the Allende chondrite powder.

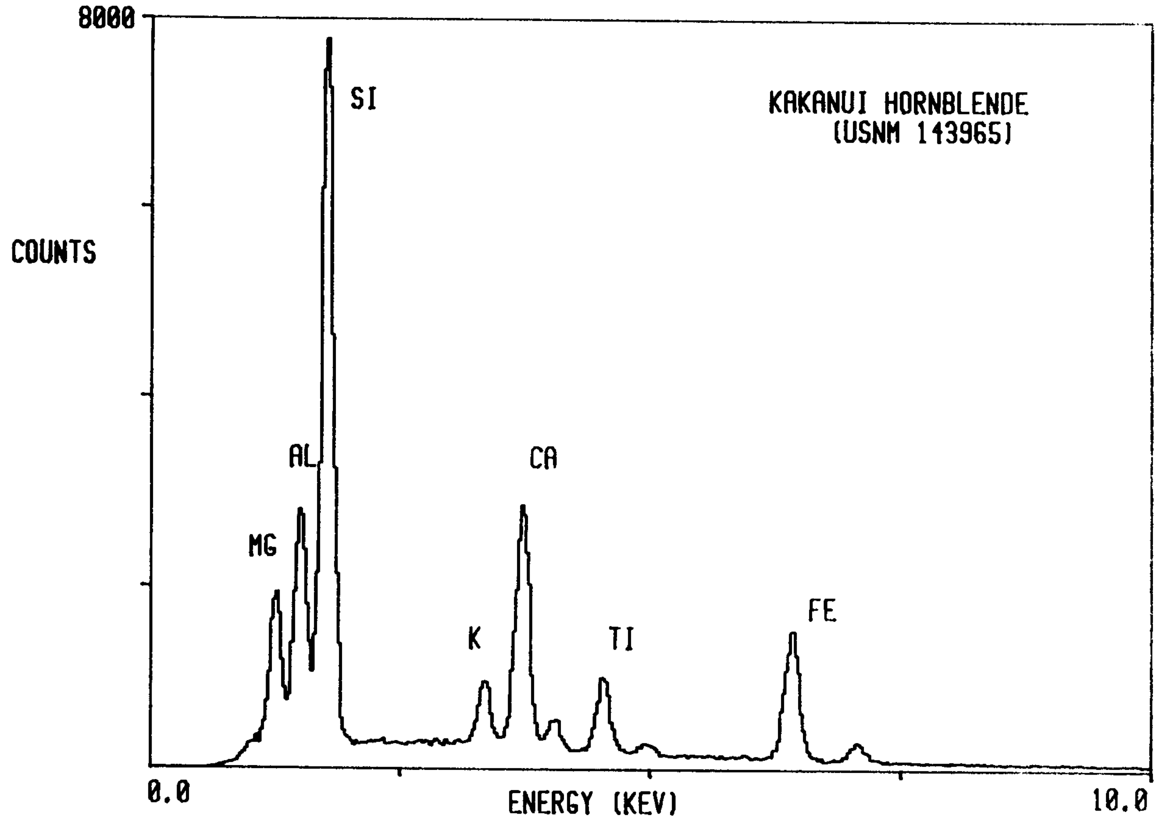
8. Particle Table of Contents

Since particles are arranged in this catalog by type, rather than sequentially by mount and number as in some previous catalogs, we include a sequential listing of particles and the page on which they may be found, for the user's reading pleasure.

Standard Spectra



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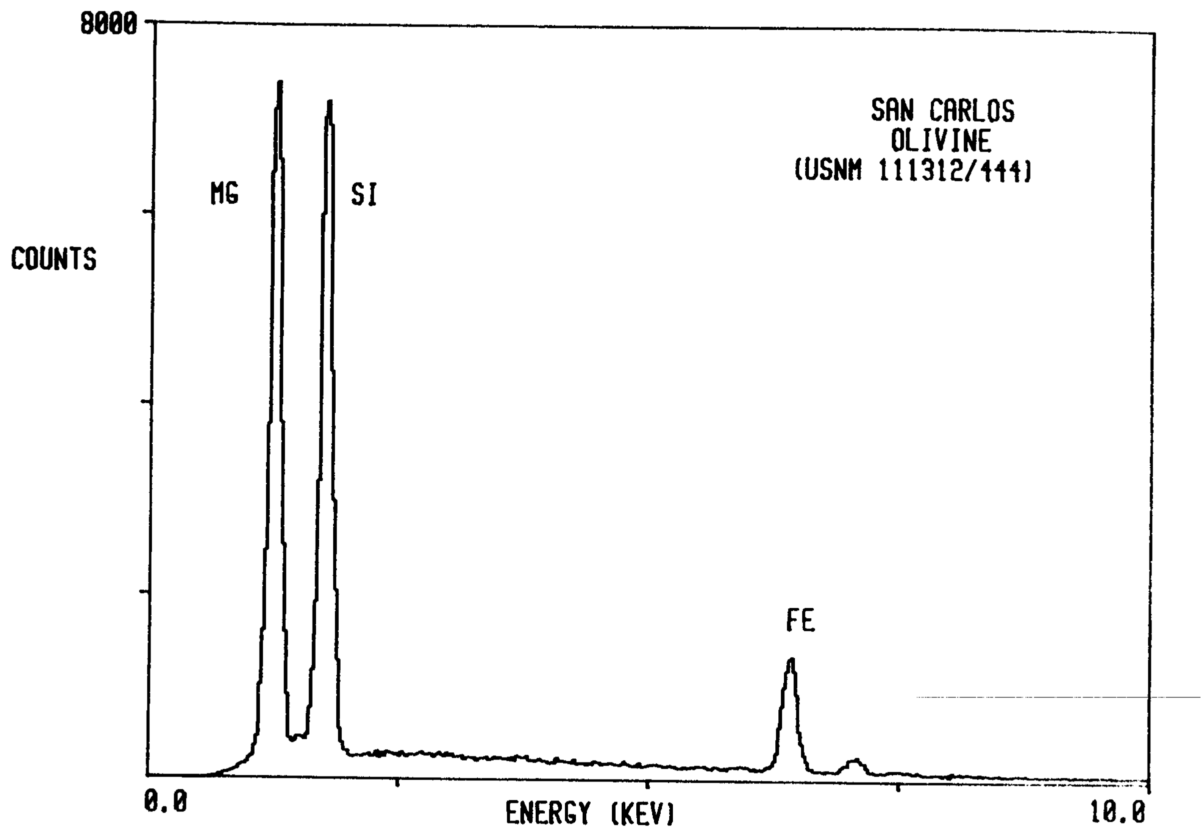
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