

Microscopy AND Microanalysis

Table of Contents Preview
Volume 13, Number 5, October 2007

Editorial

Charles Lyman

Materials Applications

Error Quantification in Strain Mapping Methods

Elisa Guerrero, Pedro Galindo, Andrés Yáñez, Teresa Ben, and Sergio I. Molina

Determination of the Inelastic Mean-Free-Path and Mean Inner Potential for AlAs and GaAs Using Off-Axis Electron Holography and Convergent Beam Electron Diffraction

Suk Chung, David J. Smith, and Martha R. McCartney

Composite Structure of Liquid Crystal/Polymer Nanotubes Revealed by High-Angle Annular Dark-Field Scanning Transmission Electron Microscopy

Andreas K. Schaper, Hiroki Kurata, Taiyo Yoshioka, and Masaki Tsuji

Laser-Assisted Atom Probe Tomography of Oxide Materials

Christian Oberdorfer, Patrick Stender, Christoph Reinke, and Guido Schmitz

Application of Focused Ion Beam to Atom Probe Tomography Specimen Preparation from Mechanically Alloyed Powders

Pyuck-Pa Choi, Tala'at Al-Kassab, Young-Soon Kwon, Ji-Soon Kim, and Reiner Kirchheim

A Universal Equation for the Emission Range of X-Rays from Bulk Specimens

Raynald Gauvin

Conditional Random Surveying for Particle Deposition on a Mica Surface

Jianzhong Fu, Elia V. Eschenazi, and Kyriakos D. Papadopoulos

Biological Applications

An Improved Holey Carbon Film for Cryo-Electron Microscopy

Joel Quispe, John Damiano, Stephen E. Mick, David P. Nackashi, Denis Fellmann, Teddy G. Ajero, Bridget Carragher, and Clinton S. Potter

Salmonella–Host Cell Interactions, Changes in Host Cell Architecture, and

Destruction of Prostate Tumor Cells with Genetically Altered *Salmonella*

Zhisheng Zhong, Robert A. Kazmierczak, Alison Dino, Rula Khreis, Abraham Eisenstark, and Heide Schatten

Comparative Observation of the Recombinant Adeno-Associated Virus 2

Using Transmission Electron Microscopy and Atomic Force Microscopy

Heng Chen

On the Structural Diversity of Sialoliths

António P. Alves de Matos, Patrícia A. Carvalho, Arlindo Almeida, Luís Duarte, Rui Vilar, and Jorge Leitão

Subdaily Growth Patterns and Organo-Mineral Nanostructure of the Growth Layers in the Calcitic Prisms of the Shell of *Concholepas concholepas*

Bruguère, 1789 (Gastropoda, Muricidae)

Nury Guzman, Alexander D. Ball, Jean-Pierre Cuif, Yannicke Dauphin, Alain Denis, and Luc Ortlieb

Calendar of Meetings and Courses

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Dear Abbe

Dear Abbe,

Lately my light microscopes are looking pretty sad and are not performing as they have in the past. I notice that everyone using them seems to treat them badly and it gets worse as the microscopes degrade. I try to keep them up, but they revert back to their nasty appearance the next day. Have you ever encountered this problem before?

Dejected in Des Moines

Dear Dejected,

It would seem that your microscopes are suffering from what is commonly known as Sick Scope Syndrome or "SSS". SSS is a serious condition in which a microscope develops a very poor self-image and initiates a downward spiral of self destruction. Fortunately this is only a virtual self-image and not a real self-image and the condition is treatable. Symptoms can include intentional misalignment, binge bulb blinking, and drifting focus. While a number of self-help books are available (e.g. Users are from Mars: Lenses are from Jena) I personally prefer a tough love approach. Try mistreating an old student scope within clear sight of the SSS patient. Any scope that sees you cleaning the lenses of another with one of those scratchy brown paper lab towels will usually come right around and once again return to peak performance.

Dear Abbe,

I have a T-shirt from my halcyon days as a student. It is the Pink Floyd cover art with a prism breaking up light into its visible wavelengths. Lately I've realized that the wavelength order coming out the other side is upside down. Was this done on purpose?

Perplexed in El Paso

Dear Perp,

Most people are familiar with the Rosicrucians and the Templars, but few are aware of the outcast and misaligned sect of these legendary and mystery-shrouded orders. This obscure sect consisted of the less popular guys who wore horn-rim glasses and played "Dungeons and Crusaders". Rudely shunned by their more renowned brothers, these mystical nerds were rumored to be masters of optical secrets – rosifractiary and rosiphasic methods of lens making. They designed and guarded the legendary Rosicrucian Sample Stage (the Rosistage) and indulged in medieval psychedelic rock and roll. "Pink Floyd" (a corruption of *Pingue Fluad*) were the keepers of the mystical microscopical scrolls. The legend claims that if you view a sample placed on the Rosistage and adjusted for Kohler illumination, a vision of Nick Mason would briefly appear and your sample would suddenly be revealed in "wavelength-reversed phase" or WARP. This phenomenon is illustrated in the ancient symbolism of the Order of Pink Floydists evident on your shirt. My friend Robert Hooke was a member, as was my great grandfather Percival Abbe. Dan Brown and Oliver Stone are rumored to be collaborating on a movie project about the group but I don't think you or anyone else will be hearing much about it anytime soon. My advice to you? Stop asking questions about this, and burn the shirt!

Conundrums and curiosities are readily answered by Herr Abbe! Please send in your perplexing ponderings to his nominally competent assistant at jsields@cb.uga.edu