## Elemental Mapping of Co-Pr Nanostructured Powders by EELS Image Filtering

Y. Liu<sup>1,2</sup>, C. Nelson<sup>3</sup>, H. Tang<sup>2</sup>, and D.J. Sellmyer<sup>2</sup>

- 1. CLAIM, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2125
  - 2. Center for Materials Research and Analysis, University of Nebraska, Lincoln NE 68588
- 3. National Center for Electron Microscopy, MS 72-150, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, CA 94720

In current extremely high density recording media design, the signal to noise ratio SNR is related to the number of magnetic grains N in a recording bit by

$$SNR = 10 \log_{10} N \dots (1)$$

In earlier studies we have found that a metallurgical grain can act as a magnetic grain when grains are magnetically decoupled by a non-magnetic phase [1,2]. Alternatively, several metallurgical grains can be exchange-coupled together when they are small [3]. An ideal morphology is one in which the non-magnetic atoms are segregated at the grain boundaries forming the non-magnetic phase while keeping the grains closely packed.

In this work we have used electron energy loss spectrometry to map the magnetic elements and non-magnetic elements. The Pr-Co nanostructured powders were prepared by mechanically milling Pr<sub>20</sub>Co<sub>80</sub>, followed by annealing at 800°C for 1 min. The x-ray diffraction pattern (XRD) indicates a single phase PrCo<sub>5</sub> with the CaCu<sub>5</sub> type structure. The magnetic properties were measured at 295 K using a SQUID magnetometer. Intrinsic coercivity (H<sub>ci</sub>) of 17.5 kOe, remanent magnetization (M<sub>r</sub>) of 51.8 emu/g, saturation magnetization (M<sub>s</sub>) of 74.6 emu/g, and remanence ratio of 0.69 have been obtained from the powder. The remanence ratio higher than 0.5 is attributed to the weak exchange-coupling interaction between the nano-sized PrCo<sub>5</sub> grains in comparison with strong exchange-coupling with higher remanence ratio required in a permanent magnetic material [4]. We found Pr, a rare earth metal, segregate to grain boundaries in Co-Pr powder. Figure 1 shows an EELS map of Pr and Co. A Pr rich layer is clearly seen at the grain boundaries. This observation implies that Pr can be used as a non-magnetic phase in recording media. Thin films of Co-Pr system have been found to have a coercivity of 2-8 kOe [5], confirming its potential as a recording medium.

## References

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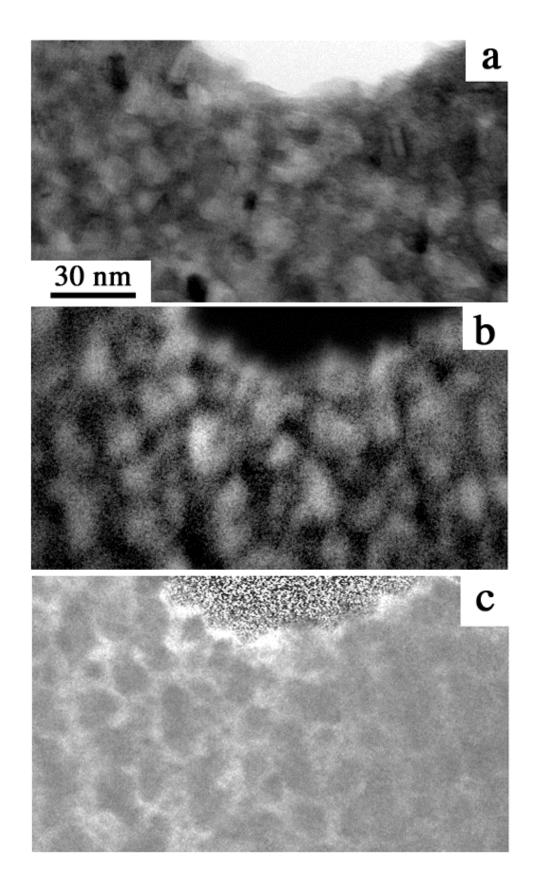


Figure 1. (a) bright field image, (b) Co map and (c) Pr map.