

# EXERCISE 15

## IDENTIFICATION OF AN UNKNOWN BY X-RAY POWDER DIFFRACTOMETER TRACING

### PURPOSE OF EXERCISE

To understand the steps involved in the identification of an unknown mineral using the diffractometer tracing of its powder diffraction effects. As in exercise 14, you will need to refer to the Powder Diffraction File of the JCPDS.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** If you have completed exercise 14 before beginning this assignment, you will find that identification of unknown crystalline materials is a great deal faster by diffractometer technique than it is by film. This is so because a diffractometer tracing provides you with a graphical display of each peak position relative to a direct reading  $2\theta$  scale, as well as to a reasonably quantitative, direct reading relative intensity scale.

A powder X-ray diffractometer is a great deal more complex and expensive than a powder camera mounted on an X-ray generator. A diffractometer, in conjunction with an X-ray generator, consists of a goniometer (a device that measures the angular location in terms of  $2\theta$  for a diffraction peak), an X-ray counting device (such as a Geiger, a scintillation, or a proportional counter for measurement of peak intensity), and an electronic readout system (see Fig. 15.1). On nonautomated powder diffractometers the graphical result is a diffractometer chart obtained over a  $2\theta$  region of about  $6^\circ$  to  $80^\circ$ , during a time period of about 45 minutes. On an automated diffractometer the same results are printed out on an  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ -inch page in about 15 minutes. In either case, the final diagram shows peak locations with respect to a horizontal  $2\theta$  scale, as well as relative intensities of the peaks in terms of a vertical scale. To search the JCPDS file for identification of the unknown, an investigator needs at the minimum to convert the  $2\theta$  values of the three most intense peaks on the graph to  $d$  values [using the *X-ray Diffraction Tables* of Fang and Bloss (1966), or, if these are not available, by using Table 14.1, or by solving the Bragg equation as outlined in section 2 of assignment 14]. It is strongly suggested, however, that to be certain the identification is completely unambiguous, the investigator should compare the  $d$ s of another ten or so peaks in the pattern with the published pattern on which the identification is based. Even though the identification of an unknown is based on matching of the three most intense X-ray diffraction lines, all other lines in the unknown pattern and those of the selected matching reference pattern should show good agreement in  $d$  values and intensity.

### MATERIALS

The diffractometer tracing in Fig. 15.2 and Table 15.1 for data tabulation. A  $90^\circ$  triangle is useful for locating peak positions accurately on the diffractometer tracing with respect to the horizontal  $2\theta$  scale. You need access to the  $2\theta$ -to- $d$  conversion tables of Fang and Bloss (1966), *X-ray Diffraction Tables*. If these are not available, the  $2\theta$  values can be converted to their appropriate  $d$ s by solving the Bragg equation with the help of an electronic calculator. Figures 15.3 and 15.4 should allow for unambiguous identification of the unknown. To check the  $d$ s and the intensities of all the diffraction lines on the pattern, you will need access to a microfiche or card edition of the JCPDS file.

**REFERENCES** See listing in exercise 14.

### ASSIGNMENT

1. Using the diffractometer tracing in Fig. 15.2, assign  $2\theta$  values to each of the peaks. Carefully locate each peak position with reference to the horizontal  $2\theta$  scale. Write the  $2\theta$  appropriate to the peak next to it on the figure. Number the peaks from left to right. Enter the peak numbers and  $2\theta$  values into Table 15.1.
2. Read the relative intensities of all the peaks, by measuring the height of the peak on the vertical scale and subtracting the background value in the area of the peak. Assign the value of 100 to the most intense peak. If the height of the tallest peak is  $y$  divisions (where  $y$  is some number less than 100), multiply all the other peaks by the ratio of  $100/y$  to obtain their values relative to 100. Enter these relative peak heights into Table 15.1.
3. Convert the  $2\theta$  angles to  $d$  values using the *X-ray Diffraction Tables* of Fang and Bloss, or Table 14.1, or calculate each  $d$ , using the Bragg equation as outlined in section 2 of the assignment in exercise 14. Because the pattern shows no  $\alpha_1 - \alpha_2$  doublets, use the CuK $\alpha$  column in Fang and Bloss.
4. Using the  $d$  values of the three most intense peaks, identify the substance with Fig. 15.3 or 15.4.
5. After identification, make sure the additional five  $d$  values listed in Fig. 15.3 or 15.4 show good agreement with the data from your pattern.
6. If a JCPDS file is available, locate the complete reference card on the substance and make sure *all* peaks and their intensities of both the "unknown" and the substance you identified it to be show good correspondence.

# EXERCISE 15

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

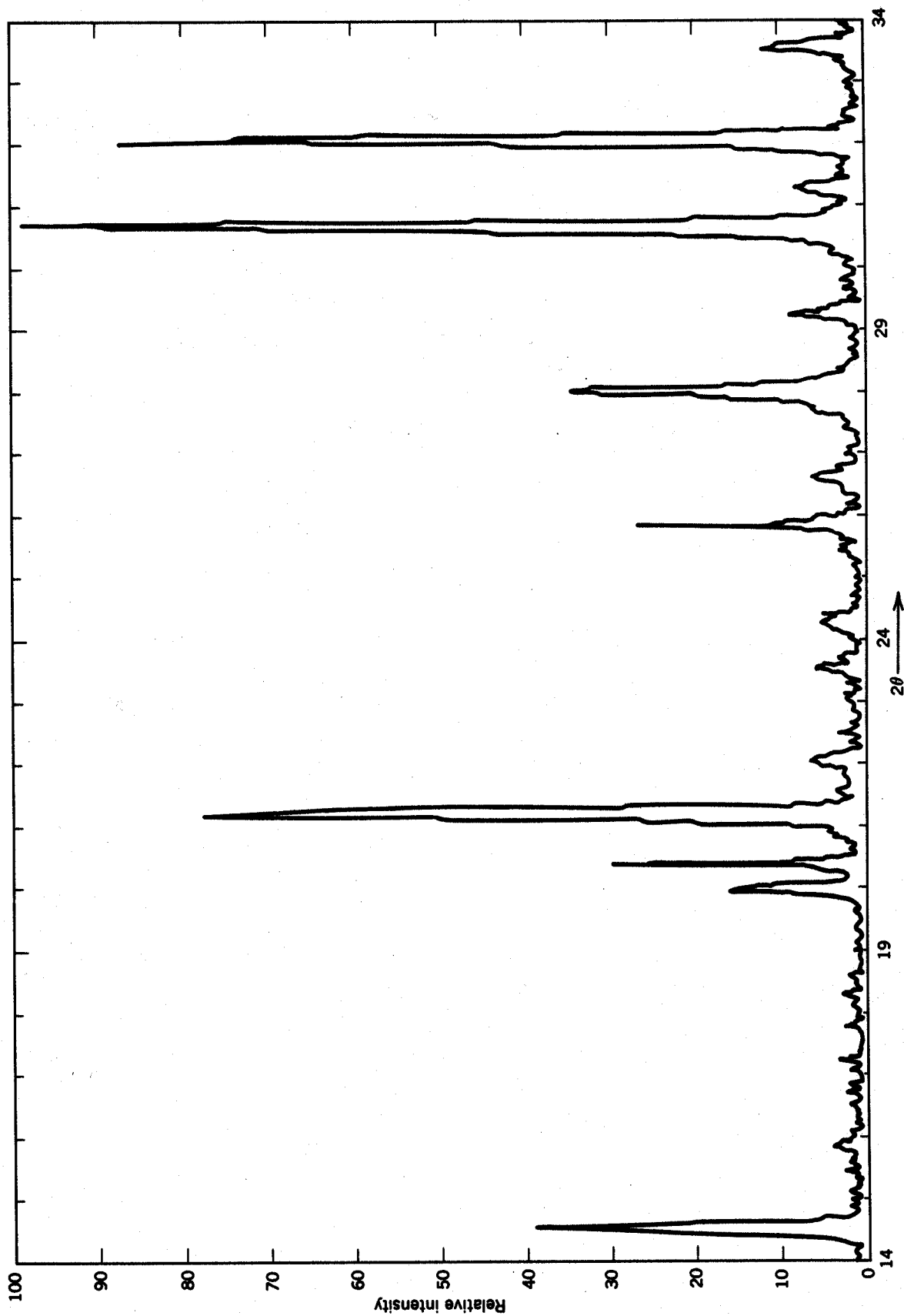


FIGURE 15.2 Diffractometer tracing for the unknown that is to be identified in this exercise. The X-ray radiation was produced by a Cu target X-ray tube. The  $2\theta$ -angle scale is horizontal. The relative intensity scale is vertical.

# EXERCISE 15

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

**TABLE 15.1** Record of Measurements Obtained from the Diffractogram in Fig. 15.2.  
Refer to the diffractogram in Fig. 15.2.

Line Number <sup>a</sup>	2θ angle	d	I	Published 2θ values for the three most intense lines in the pattern of Fig. 15.2. <table><tr><td>2θ</td><td>I</td></tr><tr><td>30.62</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>31.97</td><td>90</td></tr><tr><td>21.06</td><td>75</td></tr></table>	2θ	I	30.62	100	31.97	90	21.06	75
2θ	I											
30.62	100											
31.97	90											
21.06	75											

<sup>a</sup> Line numbers go consecutively from left to right.

Mineral identified as: \_\_\_\_\_  
JCPDS file no.: \_\_\_\_\_



