

SS16: X-ray diffraction and X-ray spectroscopy (mini-project)

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March 4, 2022

Abstract

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1 Introduction

X-rays are an important experimental tool and have been for more than a 100 years now — from the first Nobel Prize for their discovery, and still now. In this experiment, we will first verify Moseley's Law, and then use X-ray spectroscopy to analyse several samples of metal as well as coins from various places around the world.*finish this intro at the end.*

First, we introduce some of the background theory behind X-rays and their production.

1.1 X-ray atomic spectra

The emission spectra of atoms is due to energy transition of shell electrons from a higher energy level to a lower energy level. We are interested in X-rays specifically, which are due to transitions in the inner electron levels of high- Z atoms. These are shielded from the outer electron layers (the higher Z , the better the shielding **CHECK**) and are mostly unaffected by the chemical structure of the sample i.e. by the surrounding atoms. Therefore, we can take an energy level of an electron to be $E_n = -R(Z)/n^2$ where $R = R_\infty(Z - b)^2$ is the modified Rydberg constant for a given Z , b is some parameter, and R_∞ is the hydrogen Rydberg constant. Then, the energy of an emitted photon by a transition from level n_i to n_f is given by:

$$\varepsilon = R(Z) \left(\frac{1}{n_f^2} - \frac{1}{n_i^2} \right). \quad (1)$$

We can rewrite this at fixed n_i , n_f (i.e. for a given line) as:

$$\sqrt{\varepsilon} = m \times Z + C, \quad (2)$$

where m , C are some constants. This relationship is known as 'Moseley's Law'.

The name convention of the energy levels of low- n in X-ray notation is described in Table 1. Usually, the lines which are due to a transition from a higher energy level to a K1 level are referred to as K-series; similarly for L-series and so on.

Quantum numbers				Atomic notation	X-ray notation
n	l	s	j		
1	0	1/2	1/2	1S1/2	K1
2	0	1/2	1/2	2S1/2	L1
2	1	1/2	1/2	2P1/2	L2
2	1	1/2	3/2	2P3/2	L3
3	0	1/2	1/2	3S1/2	M1
3	1	1/2	1/2	3P1/2	M2
3	1	1/2	3/2	3P3/2	M3
3	2	1/2	3/2	3D3/2	M4
3	2	1/2	5/2	3D5/2	M5

Table 1: Table describing the connection between X-ray notation and Atomic notation. [cite source](#). Maybe add the old Siegbahn notation - used later in text? can do that in the text rather than table.

1.2 X-ray production

In practice, we produce X-rays by bombarding a sample of some material with high energy electrons or X-rays which removes one of the inner shell electrons from the sample atom. This produces a vacancy in the shell. The vacancy is filled by some electron of a higher n orbit (see Figure 1), and the fall of potential energy of the electron is compensated by an emitted X-ray (ignoring higher order effects like the *Auger effect*).

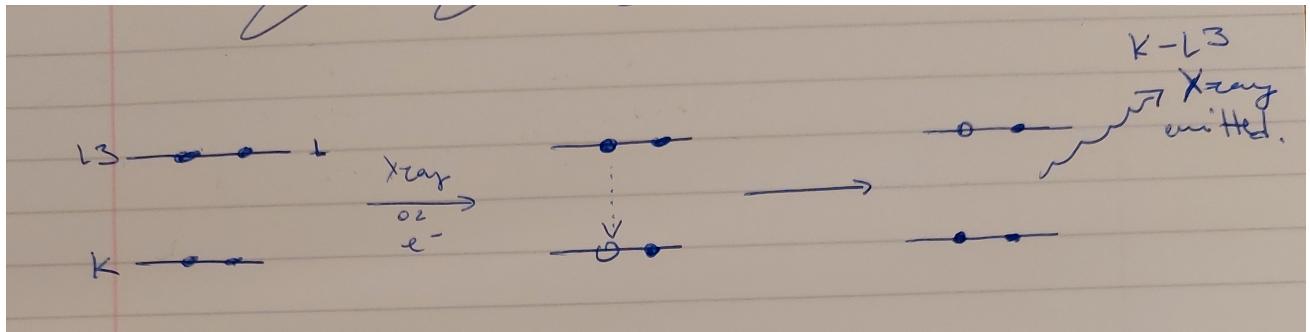


Figure 1: Schematic of the emission process for a K-L3 transition.

Usually, small laboratory X-ray tubes use an electron source. Because of that, we observe a continuum of X-ray radiation imposed on top of the emission lines. This radiation is called *bremsstrahlung* (“braking”) radiation. Its source is the interaction between decelerating electrons and stationary charges in the sample lattice. The maximal energy of a bremsstrahlung continuum is limited by the energy of the decelerating particle. If electrons accelerated by a potential difference V , then the maximal energy is given by:

$$\varepsilon_{\max} = eV \quad (3)$$

Suppose we use one such continuous X-ray source for the production of X-rays from a sample. We will take the K-series as an example. To produce a vacancy, need an X-ray of energy $\varepsilon_{\text{in}} = -E_1 = R(Z)$. The resultant energy of the emitted X-ray will be given by (1). Take for example the K-L transition. Its energy will therefore be (ignoring fine-structure):

$$\varepsilon_{\text{out}} = R(Z) \left(1 - \frac{1}{2^2} \right). \quad (4)$$

A process like this one, in which $\varepsilon_{\text{in}} \neq \varepsilon_{\text{out}}$, is called *fluorescence*.

1.3 Composition analysis

As said above, the X-ray emission is relatively independent of the composition of the sample. We can use this fact to perform a composition analysis on a sample by exposing it to the continuous bremsstrahlung of a source; this will allow the different components to fluoresce. The signal will give us information not only *which* elements are present (given that the source is high enough to allow fluorescence), but their relative contribution — the intensity of the signal will depend only on the number density n . Suppose we measure the intensity of a two-metal alloy with the peaks in the K-L3 line as I_a and I_b . This tells us that:

$$\frac{I_a}{I_b} = \frac{n_a}{n_b}, \quad (5)$$

where n_a and n_b are the number densities of materials a and b. From that, we could easily calculate percentage compositions for number densities or mass densities ($\rho = n \times (\text{molar mass})$).

2 Experiment

Our experiment consists of the setup presented in Figure 2. First, we have an X-ray source with a molybdenum anode, which produces some characteristic K_α X-rays that can be used for diffraction experiments (see the first experiment part of SS16 [put reference](#)) and some continuous bremsstrahlung (see Section 1.2 for more details). These X-rays are focused through a circular aperture towards a target sample. The incident X-rays excite inner shell electrons, and the targets emit mostly in the characteristic X-rays of K,L, and M series. We detect these via an energy spectrometer that is sensitive in the region of our experiment. The setup parameters are: tube voltage $V = 35\text{ kV}$, emission current 1 A , exposure time $t = \text{ask Darryl}$. This, according to (3) and (4), allows us to produce, for example, K_α X-rays with energy up to 26.25 keV from samples with atomic numbers up to at least 50, ignoring contribution of b .

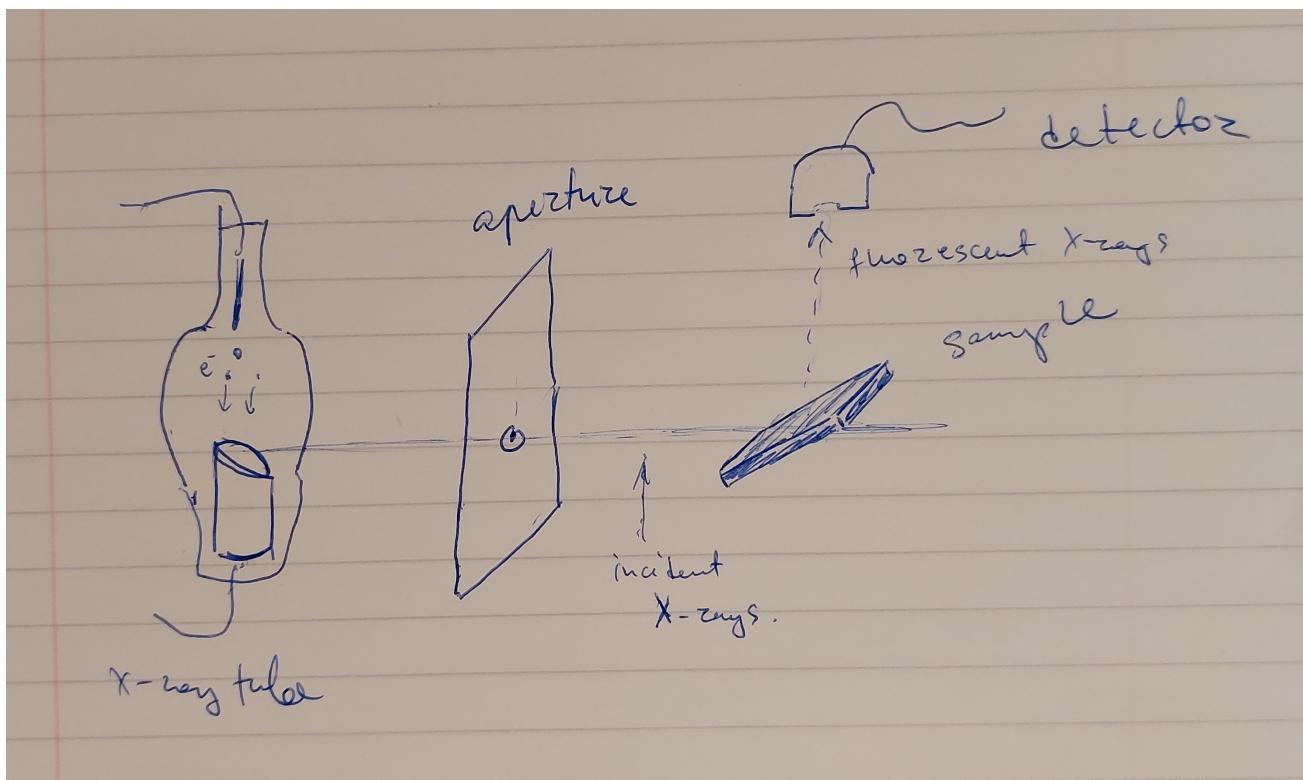


Figure 2: Diagram of the experimental setup. More info in the text of Section 2.

To operate the apparatus and extract data, we use the software provided by the labs *CASSY Lab 2*. The program has a built in database for the X-ray emission lines of most elements. It also allows for calculating a peak centre and fitting gaussian profiles with specified energy to find the intensity of emission lines.

Before we can do any work that has to do with determining energies or referring to energy values from a database, need to set the scaling of the measurement apparatus. We will do so with two of the labelled provided samples - for Fe and Ag. These cover a wide range of values in the bremsstrahlung spectrum, so they are a good way to set the scaling. The particular lines which we use to calibrate are the Fe K_α with $E_{Fe} = 6.40 \text{ keV}$ and the Ag K_α with $E_{Ag} = 22.17 \text{ keV}$.

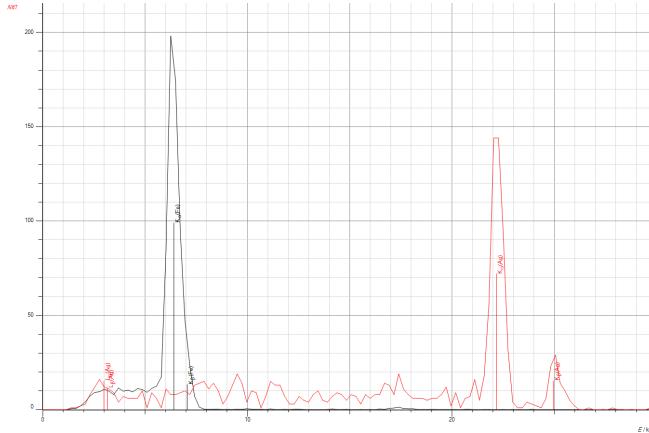


Figure 3: These are the Fe (black) and Ag (red) spectra used for calibration.

The first part of the experiment will test the validity of Moseley's Law with the help of several samples of known substances.

The second part and third part of the experiment will utilise our knowledge about X-rays to learn more about the composition of some samples provided for us, and about some metal coins from around the world.

3 Result and Analysis

3.1 Moseley's Law

We measure the line energy values from the labelled samples. These are mainly in two groups:

- those, whose K_α lines lie in the observable range (excluding our two calibration points);
- those, whose L_α lines lie in the observable range.

We expect to see a straight line fit for the two groups of lines. The scaling constant m depends purely on the line we are observing, i.e. on the n_i, n_f for the given line. We can predict the ratio of the constants for the two series. Following (1) and Moseley's law, we get:

$$m_K \propto \left(1 - \frac{1}{2^2}\right)^{1/2} = \sqrt{\frac{3}{4}}, \quad m_L \propto \left(\frac{1}{2^2} - \frac{1}{3^2}\right)^{1/2} = \sqrt{\frac{5}{36}} \Rightarrow \frac{m_K}{m_L} = \sqrt{\frac{27}{5}} \quad (6)$$

Results presented in Figure 4.

We see that these both follow our expectations - have good fits to the model. We can deduce that our description of X-ray emission works sufficiently well for our purposes (given experimental accuracy etc), so we can proceed to use X-ray K and L series lines as a signature of a given element in spectral analysis.

Also, can calculate ratio from given values:

$$\text{predicted: } \frac{m_K}{m_L} = \sqrt{\frac{27}{5}} = 2.324, \quad \text{observed: } \frac{m_K}{m_L} = \frac{0.1026}{0.0411} = 2.496. \quad (7)$$

Agreement is not so good, but we have not taken into account many other effects like change of energy due to being in a state $l \neq 0$ etc. So, not too bad. **can expand a bit maybe.**

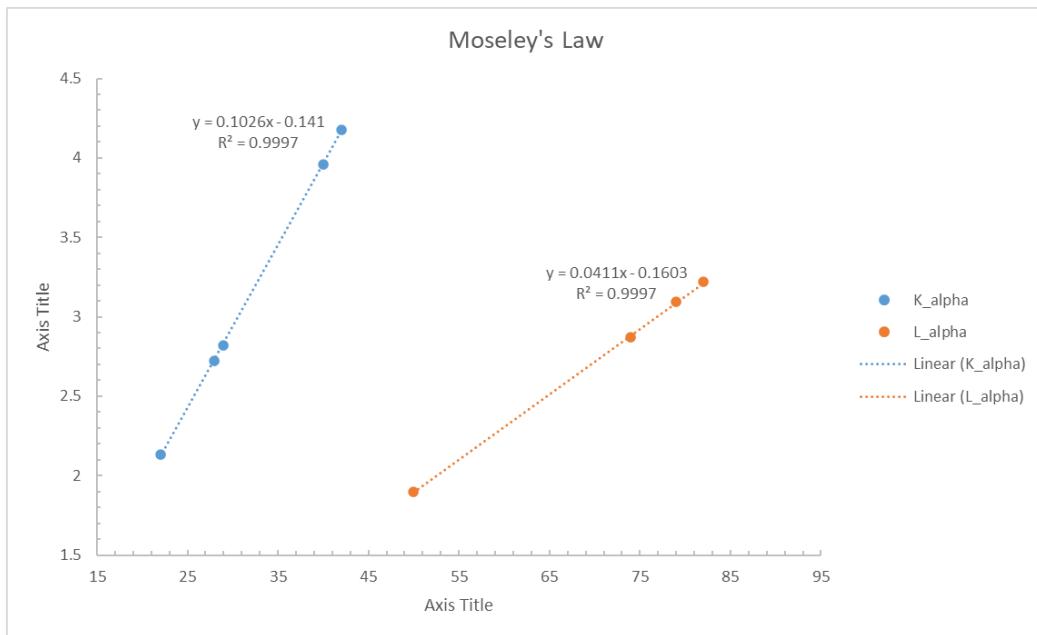


Figure 4: $\sqrt{\text{energy}}$ vs Z number for given samples: [list samples. produce better final Figures.](#)

3.2 Provided alloys and semiconductors

Now, can move to more interesting analysis. We will use fluorescence to determine the composition of the semiconductors from the non-MP part and of some unlabelled samples that are provided in the physics lab.

3.2.1 Semiconductors

The semiconductors are part of the non-MP experiment, where we determined their structure by determination of the lattice constant. Here, we provide an independent confirmation of our previous results.

3.2.2 Unlabelled alloys

The lab has two boxes of unlabelled metallic samples - alloys of different metals. We can determine their composition and ratios by using [ref 1.3](#).

3.3 International coins

This is our final task. The lab has a box of various coins from around the world, the content of which we can again interpret using our fluorescence method.

The results can be summarised in Table 2. We can see that almost all coins are made of an alloy featuring Ni, Cu, or Zn. [discuss why](#)

[maybe additional analysis based on raw material cost of coins + a deeper inquiry?](#)

4 Conclusions

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No	Country	Denomination	Ni	Cu	Zn	Other
3	United Kingdom	50p old	yes	yes	no	no
4	United Kingdom	50p new	yes	yes	no	no
5	United Kingdom	20p new	yes	yes	no	no
6	United Kingdom	10p old	yes	yes	no	no
7	United Kingdom	10p new	yes	no	no	no
8	United Kingdom	2p new	no	yes	no	no
9	Singapore	1 dollar old	yes	yes	no	no
10	Singapore	50c old	yes	yes	no	no
11	Singapore	20c new	yes	no	no	no
12	Bulgaria	50 stotinki	yes	yes	yes	no
13	Bulgaria	5 stotinki	no	yes	no	no
14	European Union	50c	no	yes	yes	no
15	European Union	2c old	no	yes	no	no
16	European Union	2c new	no	yes	no	no
17	Romania	10 bani	yes	no	no	no
18	Norway	1 krone	yes	yes	no	no
19	Switzerland	20 centim	yes	yes	no	no
20	Sweden	1 krona	yes	yes	no	no
21	Japan	1 yen	no	no	no	no
22	Hong Kong	10c	no	yes	yes	no
23	Uganda	200 schillings	yes	yes	no	no
24	USA	25c	yes	yes	no	no
25	USA	1c	no	yes	yes	no
26	Canada	25c	yes	yes	no	Fe?
27	Brazil	5 centavos	no	yes	no	no

Table 2: Table of measured values.

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A Energy spectra plots

Add more energy spectra plots here, which do not fit/not vital for main text.