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OMB No. 0704-0188

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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 03/11/2015		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Conference Presentation		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> 2014-2015	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Preliminary Investigation into Pyrotechnic Chemical Products via Mass Spectrometry Techniques				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Jonathan Dilger, Eric Miklaszewski, Christina Yamamoto, David Dye				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Surface Warfare Center, Crane Division Code WXP, Building 3323 300 Highway 361 Crane, IN 47522-5001				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b> NSWCCR/RDTR-15/55	
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Innovative Science and Engineering Program				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A. Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> It is imperative for pyrotechnic testing facilities to operate with relatively low concentrations of any potentially hazardous chemical contamination. New regulations are already impacting the operation of these facilities and accordingly are driving toward the elimination of several currently utilized components (e.g., perchlorates and chromates) within pyrotechnic formulations. Meanwhile, the actual byproducts of many in-service multi-component pyrotechnics remain relatively unknown. Thus, it is important to characterize the gaseous and condensed-phase chemical species that arise following the deployment of pyrotechnic energetic materials to more adequately understand the potential impact that these species can present to the environment. These environmentally-objectionable chemical species can potentially arise from unreacted components of the original pyrotechnic formulation or as lower abundance species from undesirable side reactions within the combustion. Mass spectrometry (MS) enables the rapid analysis of these products with instrumentation that offers unparalleled sensitivity and techniques that provide exceptional information content. Here, we explore the utility of these measurements to qualitatively differentiate between unique pyrotechnic formulations that are designed to produce the emission of visible yellow light while eliminating the use of the perchlorate oxidizer that is currently included within the composition for the in-service yellow signal flare. Individual samples for each reacted pyrotechnic composition will be collected directly into a water-filled vessel, where these resulting aqueous samples can be introduced into the mass spectrometer via electrospray ionization. Pyrolysis-MS is then used to investigate the gaseous products that are formed from thermal decomposition of several individual components of the pyrotechnic formulation (e.g., epoxy binders, asphaltum, etc.). The identity and quantity of these chemical species will be compared against thermodynamic equilibrium calculations to assess the correlation of the actual reaction products with those predicted by theory.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> mass spectrometry, gas chromatography, pyrolysis, combustion products, pyrotechnics					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b> Unclassified			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>  UU	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  20	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Jonathan Dilger
<b>a. REPORT</b> U	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> U	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> U			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b> 1-812-854-1452

## **Preliminary Investigation into Pyrotechnic Chemical Products via Mass Spectrometry Techniques**

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It is imperative for pyrotechnic testing facilities to operate with relatively low concentrations of any potentially hazardous chemical contamination. New regulations are already impacting the operation of these facilities and accordingly are driving toward the elimination of several currently utilized components (e.g., perchlorates and chromates) within pyrotechnic formulations. Meanwhile, the actual byproducts of many in-service multi-component pyrotechnics remain relatively unknown. Thus, it is important to characterize the gaseous and condensed-phase chemical species that arise following the deployment of pyrotechnic energetic materials to more adequately understand the potential impact that these species can present to the environment. These environmentally-objectionable chemical species can potentially arise from unreacted components of the original pyrotechnic formulation or as lower abundance species from undesirable side reactions within the combustion. Mass spectrometry (MS) enables the rapid analysis of these products with instrumentation that offers unparalleled sensitivity and techniques that provide exceptional information content. Here, we explore the utility of these measurements to qualitatively differentiate between unique pyrotechnic formulations that are designed to produce the emission of visible yellow light while eliminating the use of the perchlorate oxidizer that is currently included within the composition for the in-service yellow signal flare. Individual samples for each reacted pyrotechnic composition will be collected directly into a water-filled vessel, where these resulting aqueous samples can be introduced into the mass spectrometer via electrospray ionization. Pyrolysis-MS is then used to investigate the gaseous products that are formed from thermal decomposition of several individual components of the pyrotechnic formulation (e.g., epoxy binders, asphaltum, etc.). The identity and quantity of these chemical species will be compared against thermodynamic equilibrium calculations to assess the correlation of the actual reaction products with those predicted by theory.



# HARNESSING THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY for the **WARFIGHTER**

**CAPT JT Elder, USN**  
Commanding Officer  
NSWC Crane

## ***Preliminary Investigation into Pyrotechnic Chemical Products via Mass Spectrometry Techniques***

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**Prepared for: EuroPyro**

**May 5, 2015, Toulouse, France**

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Technical Director  
NSWC Crane

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# Outline

**Problem:** How can we characterize the chemical byproducts that result from a pyrotechnic reaction?

**System:** Mk 144 Yellow Signal Flare (YSF)

**Team:** Dr. Eric Miklaszewski  
Dr. Douglas Papenmeier  
Matthew Neiswinger  
Christina Yamamoto

**Approach:** Pyrolysis / Gas Chromatography / Mass Spectrometry (Py/GC/MS)

**Data:** Mk 144 standard vs. new YSF formulation  
Individual ingredients from each formulation



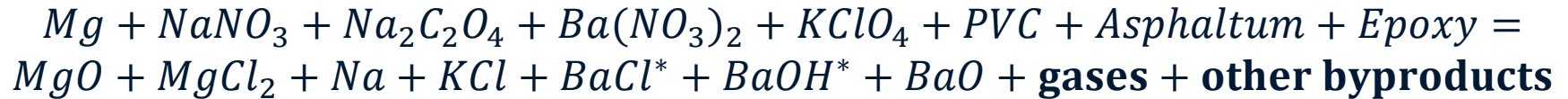
# Yellow Signal Flare Compositions

Reformulation of the Mk 144 as an environmentally-benign composition that still meets performance requirements with a focus to eliminate perchlorate oxidizers

	Mk144-Std	YSF-8
Mg	***	20.10
NaNO <sub>3</sub>	--	37.00
Na <sub>2</sub> C <sub>2</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	***	--
Ba(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	***	27.05
KClO <sub>4</sub>	***	--
PVC	--	10.90
Asphaltum	***	--
Epoxy	***	4.95



# What about the byproducts?



**Products of incomplete combustion are favored within “pyrolytic pockets”, areas characterized by poor micromixing of oxygen and the composition ingredients.**

	Mk144-Std	YSF-8
Mg	***	20.10
NaNO <sub>3</sub>	--	37.00
Na <sub>2</sub> C <sub>2</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	***	--
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KClO <sub>4</sub>	***	--
PVC	--	10.90
Asphaltum	***	--
Epoxy	***	4.95

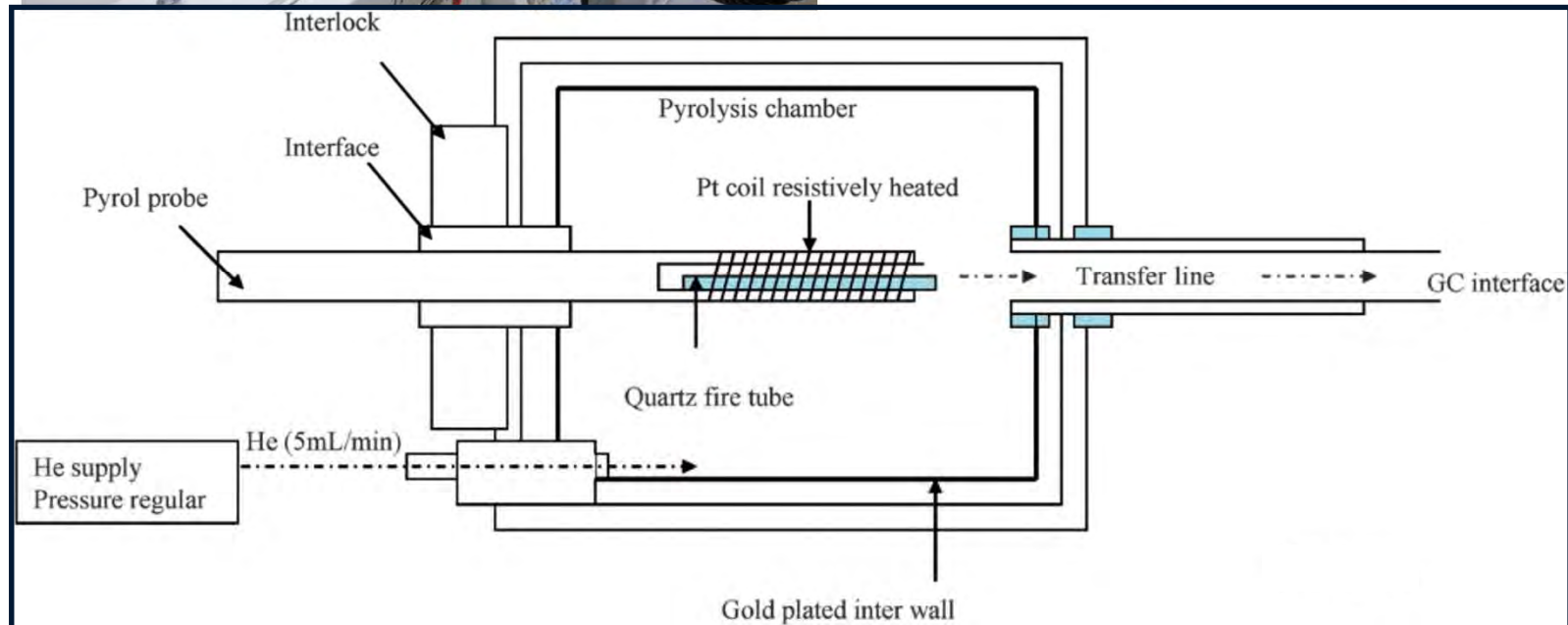


Mk 144 formulation

# Pyrolysis (Py)



- Pyrolysis Chamber
  - CDS 2000 pyroprobe
  - CDS 8000 preconcentrator
- Inert He buffer gas
  - GC compatible
  - *Anaerobic conditions*

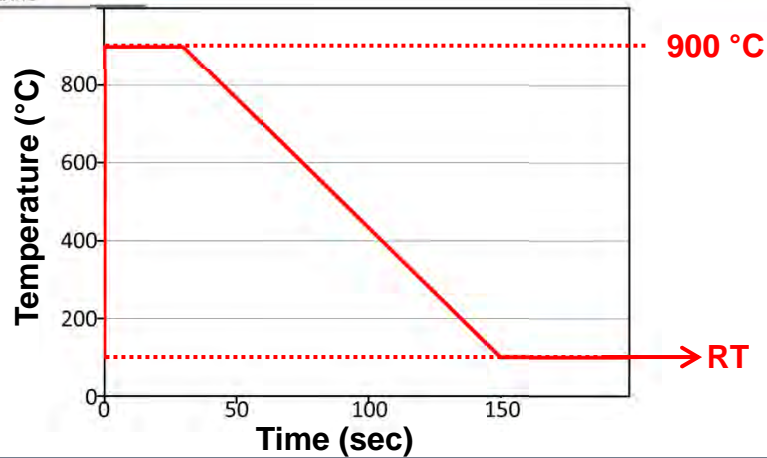


“Discrimination of bacteria using pyrolysis-gas chromatography-differential mobility spectrometry (Py-GC-DMS) and chemometrics”

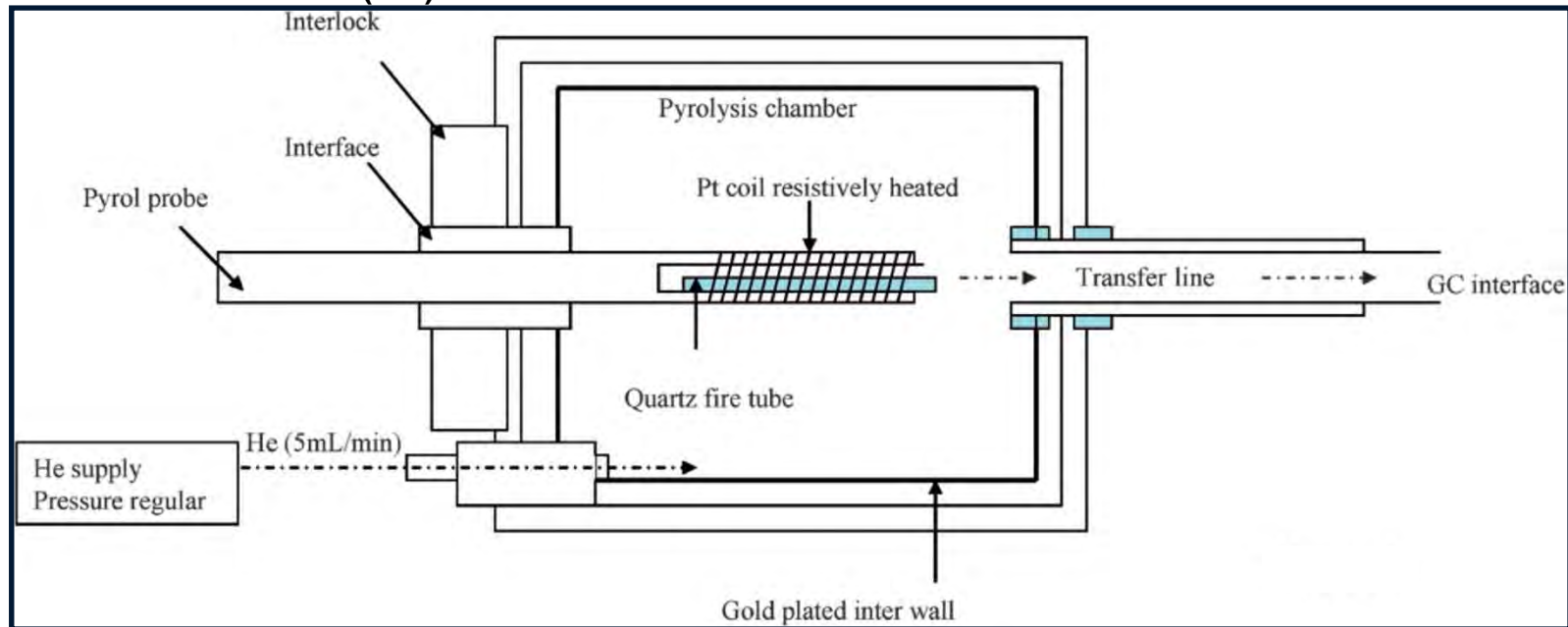
Goodacre *et al.*, Analyst 134 (2009), 557-563

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# Pyrolysis (Py)



- Quartz fire tube
  - 0.2 - 2 mg of sample
  - Quartz wool to seal
- Temperature ramp
  - Pt coil: 20 °C per msec
  - 900 °C held for 30 sec

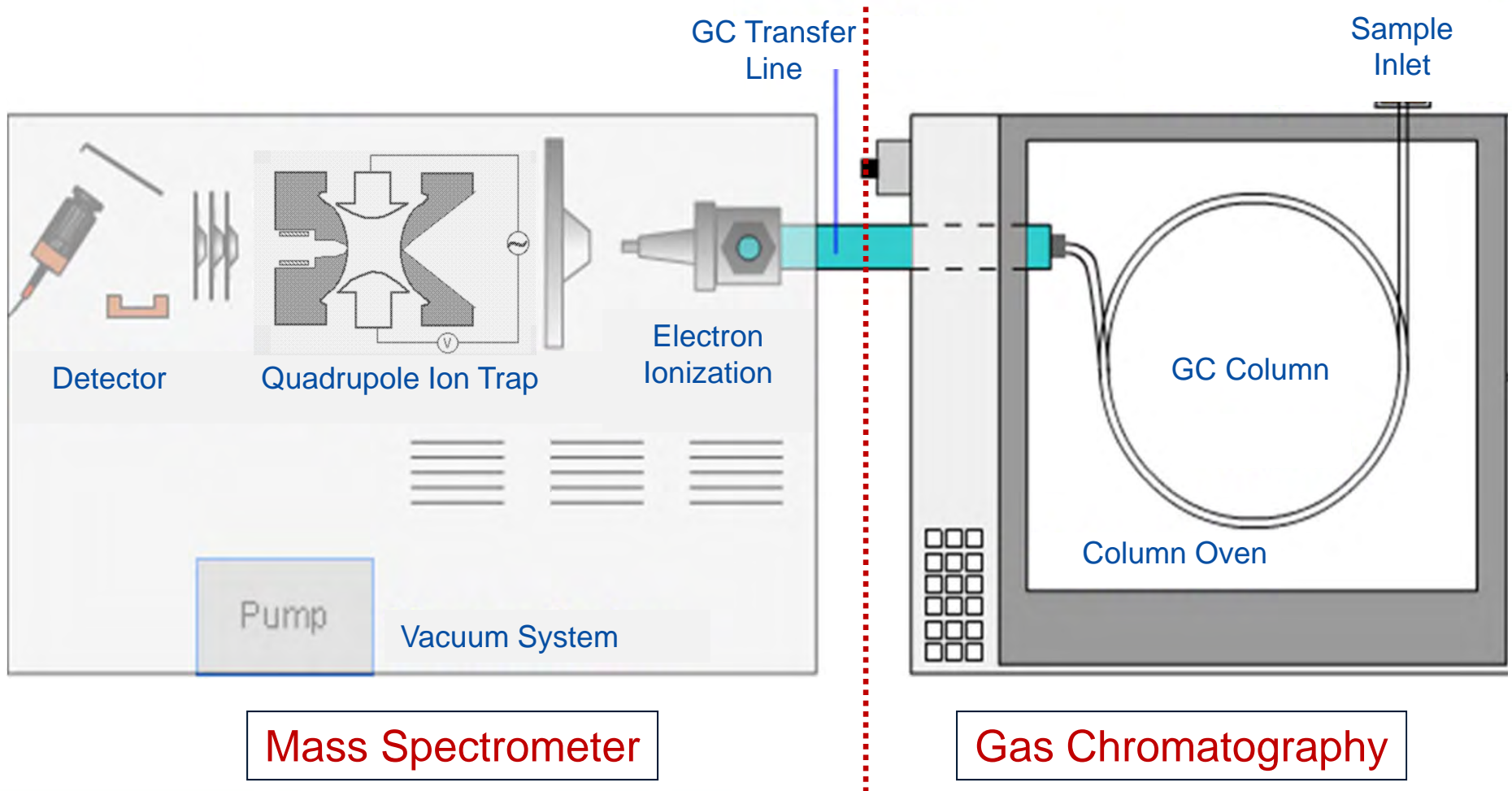


“Discrimination of bacteria using pyrolysis-gas chromatography-differential mobility spectrometry (Py-GC-DMS) and chemometrics”  
Goodacre *et al.*, Analyst 134 (2009), 557-563.

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# GC/MS

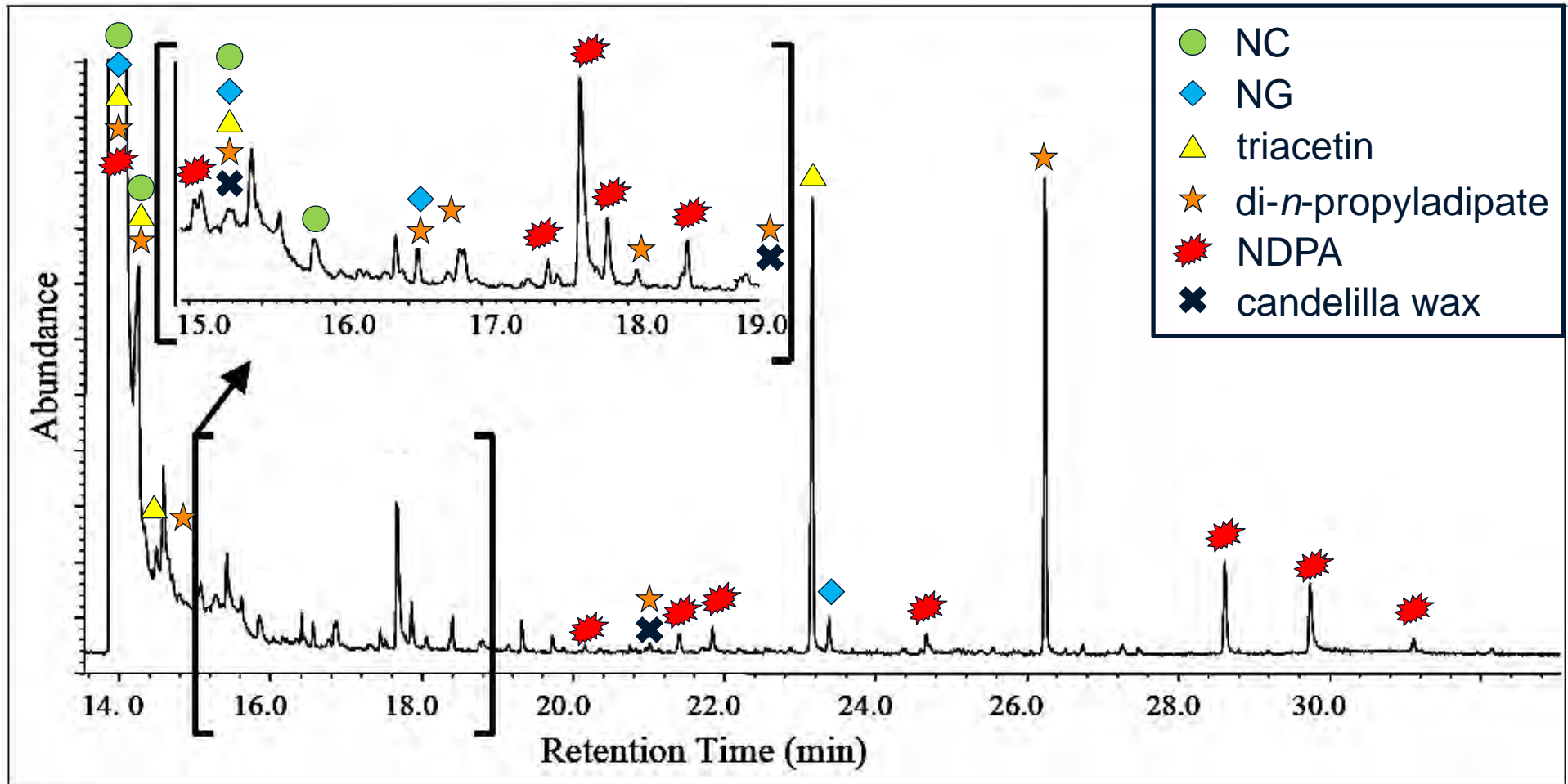
## Thermo Finnigan PolarisQ Ion Trap with Trace GC/MS<sup>n</sup> with a Zebron ZB-5MSi GC Column



[http://www.chromacademy.com/Electron\\_Ionization\\_for\\_GC-MS\\_Essential\\_Guide.html](http://www.chromacademy.com/Electron_Ionization_for_GC-MS_Essential_Guide.html)

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# Pyrolytic Chromatogram



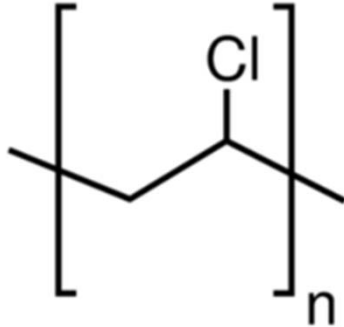
**High molecular weight pyrogram for the AA2 double-base propellant composition.**

“Use of Pyrolysis GC/MS for Predicting Emission Byproducts from the Incineration of Double-Base Propellant”

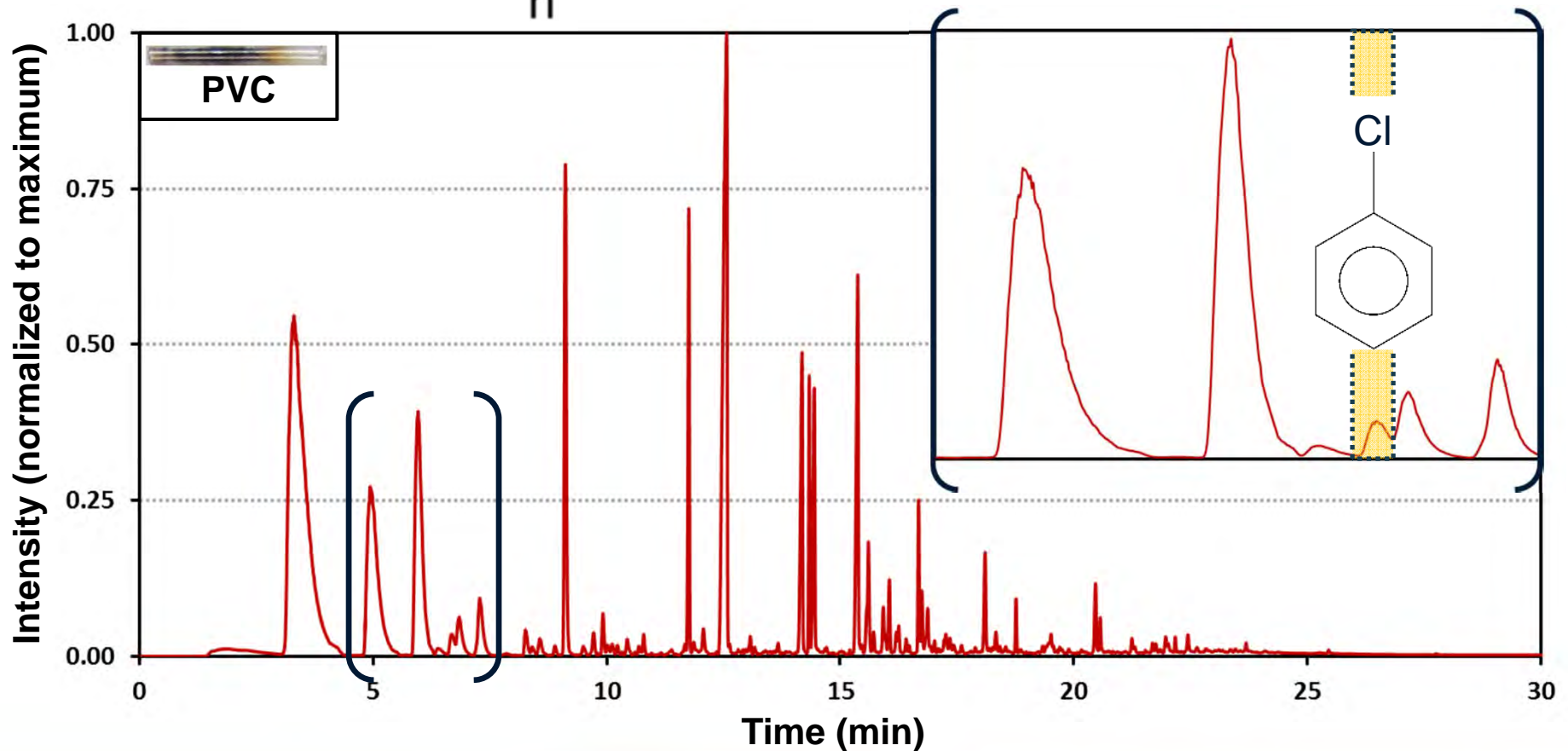
Cropek *et al.*, Environ. Sci. Technol. 36 (2002), 4346-4351.

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# Py/GC/MS: PVC

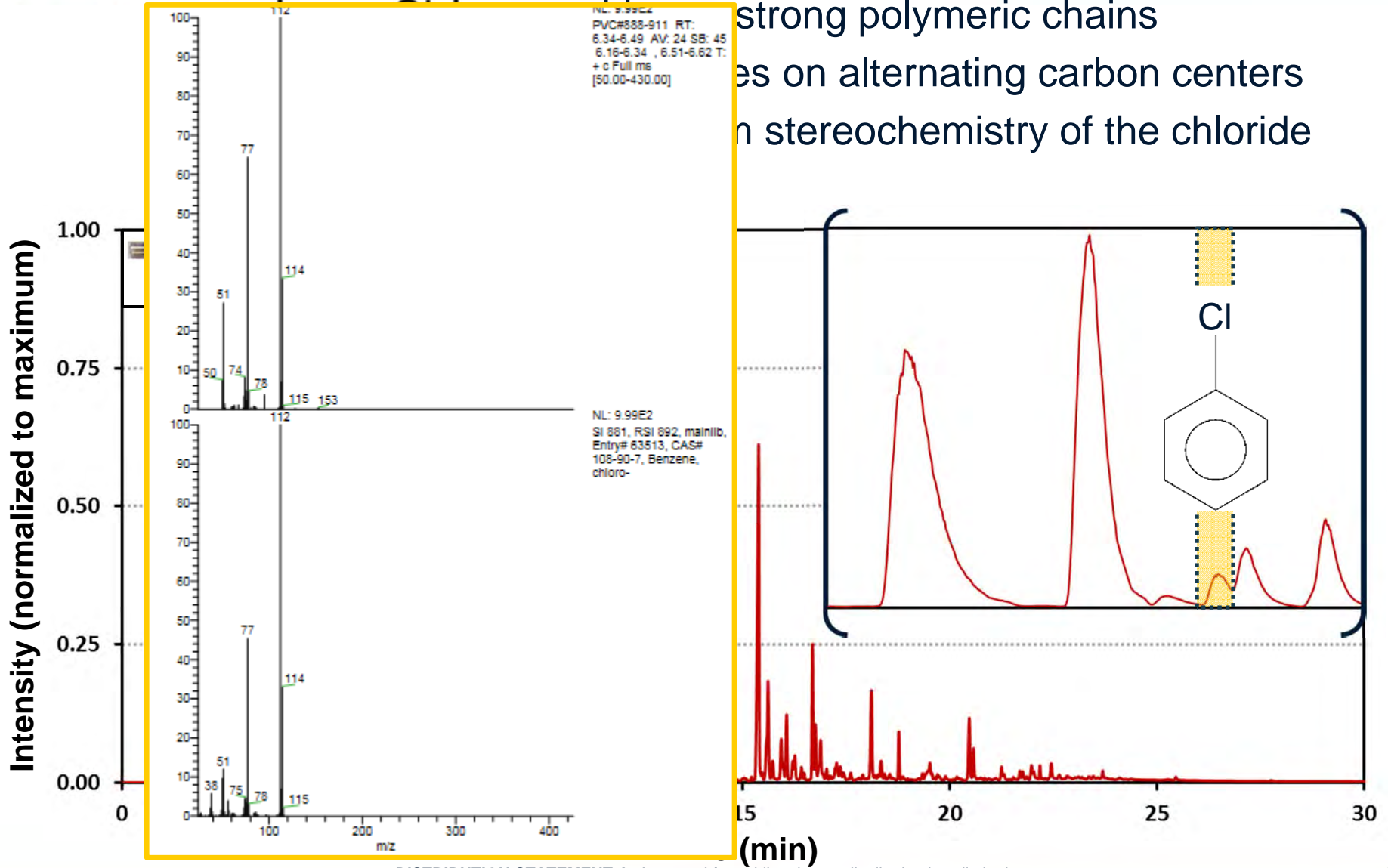


- Linear, strong polymeric chains
- Chlorines on alternating carbon centers
- Random stereochemistry of the chloride centers



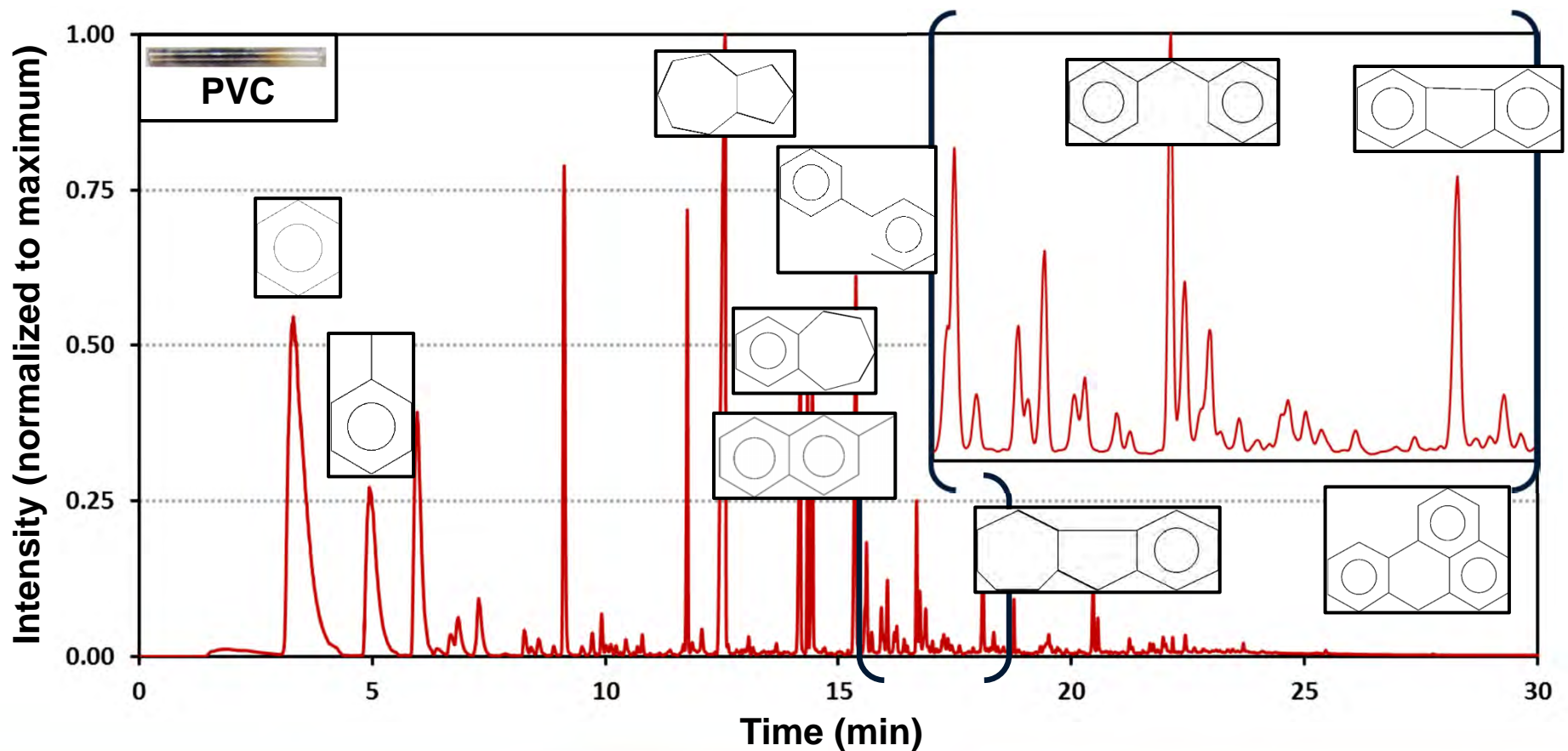
# Py/GC/MS: PVC

strong polymeric chains  
 breaks on alternating carbon centers  
 in stereochemistry of the chloride



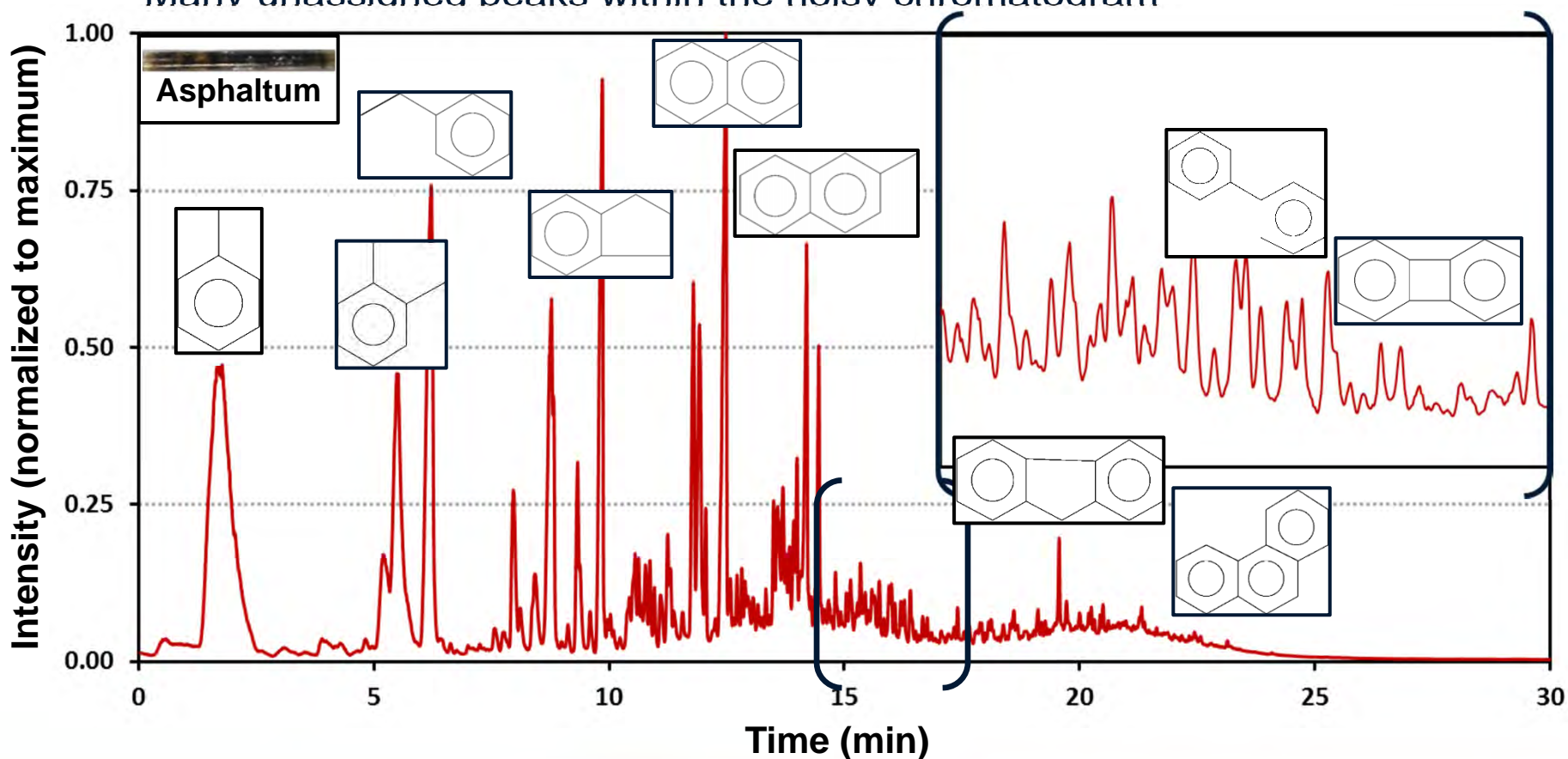
# Py/GC/MS: PVC

- Pyrolysis of PVC exclusively yield cyclic hydrocarbons
  - 24.3% benzyl derivatives and 75.6% polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH)
  - 1% of all identified species are chlorinated

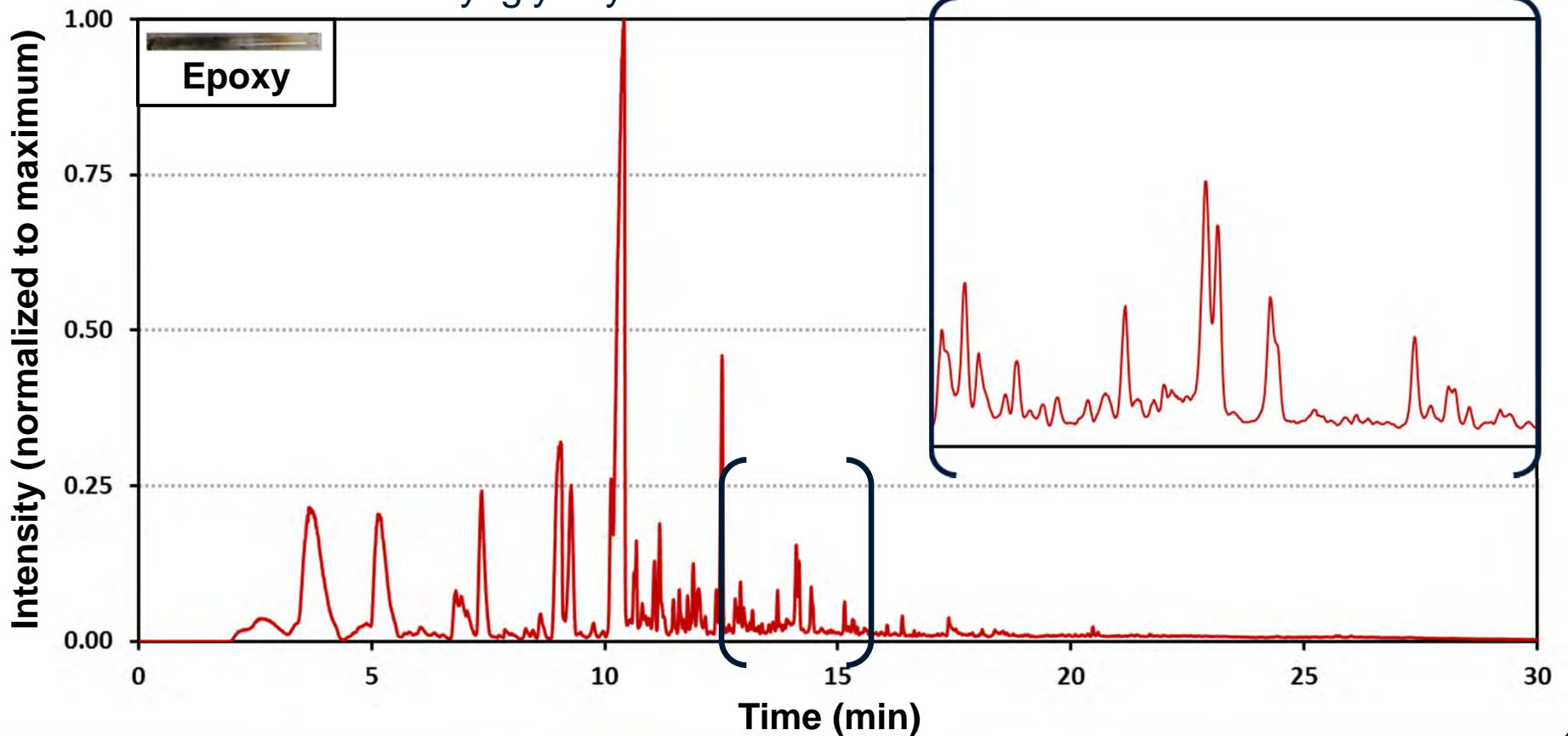
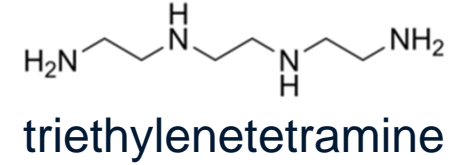
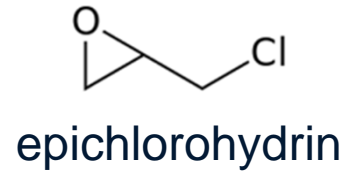
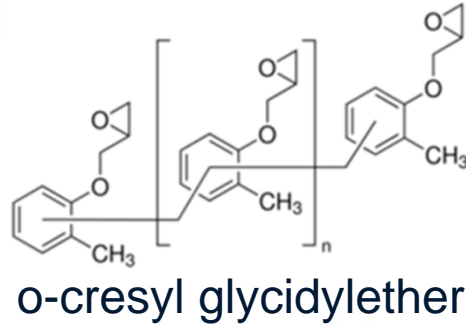
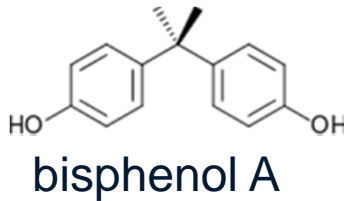


# Py/GC/MS: Asphaltum

- Pyrolysis of Asphaltum also exclusively yield cyclic hydrocarbons
  - Powdered bitumen-impregnated rock
  - Highly complex; difficult to obtain confident MS assignments
  - Many unassigned peaks within the noisy chromatogram

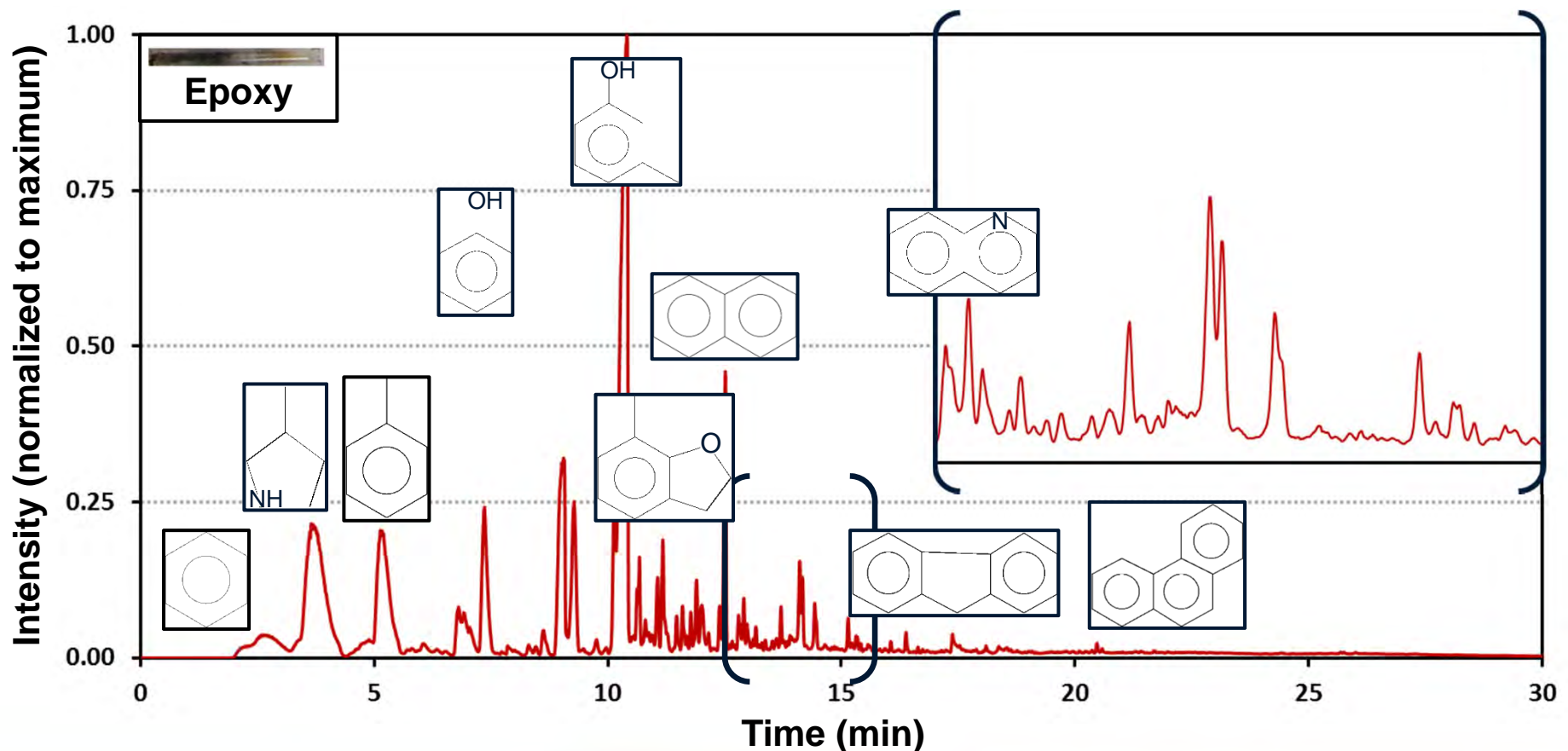


# Py/GC/MS: Epon/Versamid

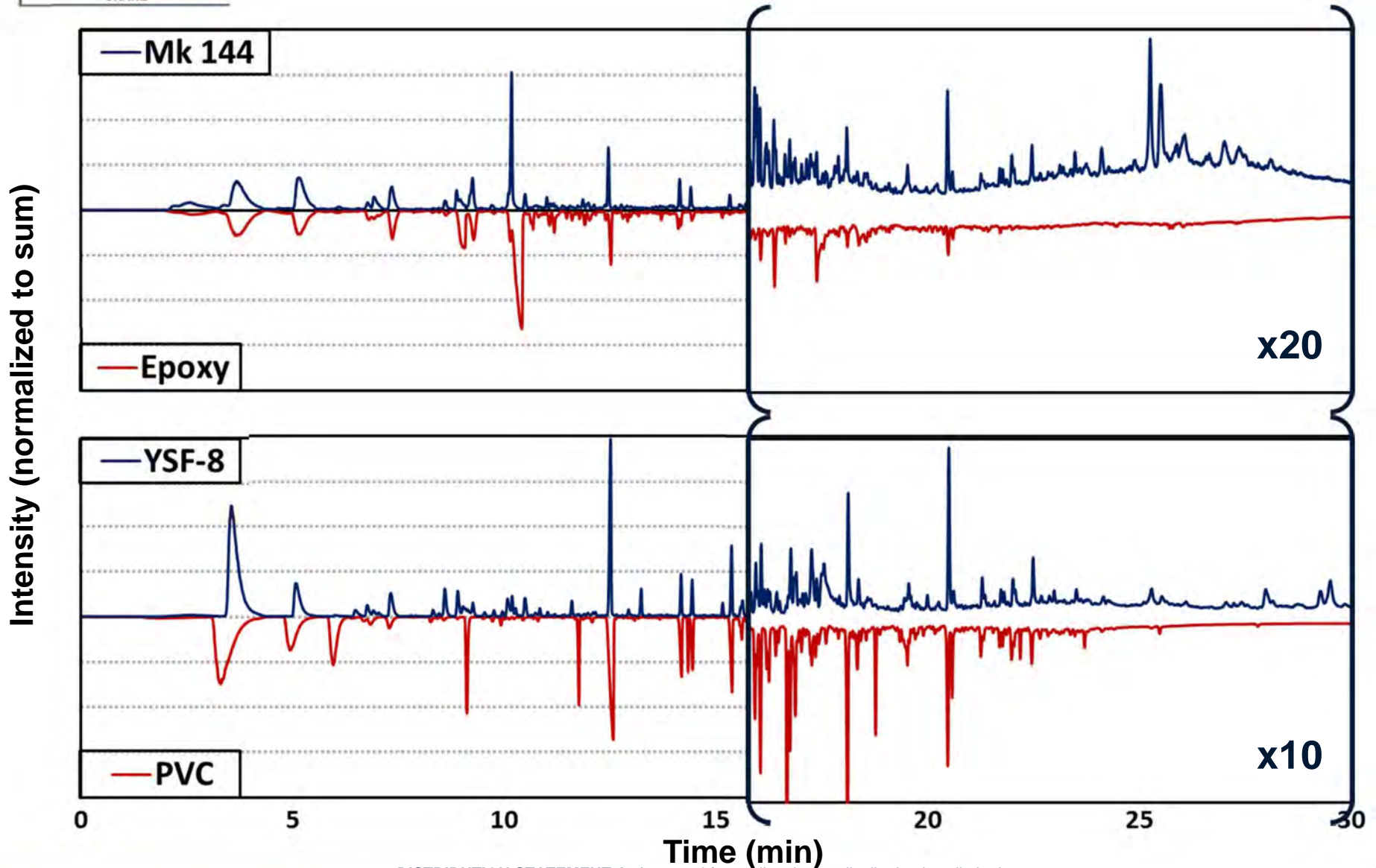


# Py/GC/MS: Epon/Versamid

- Pyrolysis of Epon/Versamid yields PAHs, phenols, pyridines, & pyrroles
  - 67.8% benzyl derivatives and 31.2% polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH)
  - 42.3% hydrocarbons, 53.5% phenols, 4.7% nitrogen-containing

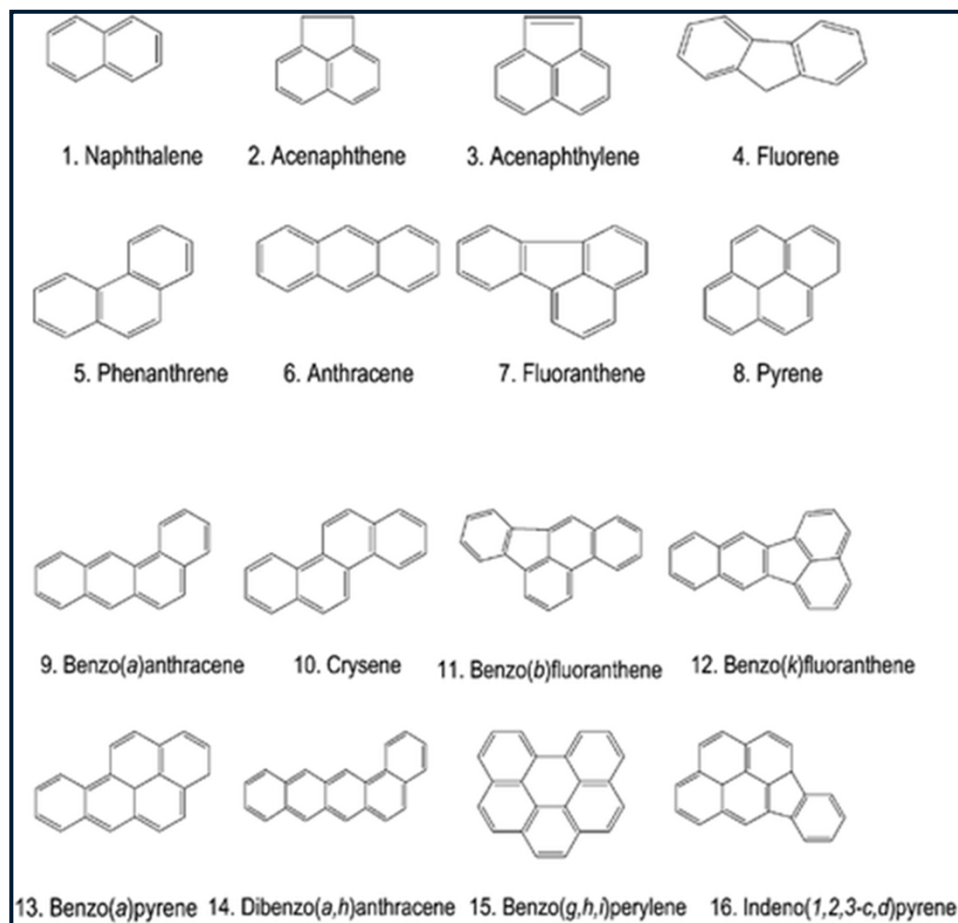


# Py/GC/MS: Pyro Compositions



# PAHs: Why the concern?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated 32 PAHs as Priority Pollutants



- Benzopyrene – first discovered chemical carcinogen
- Known for their carcinogenic, mutagenic, and tartogenic properties
- Targeted by the EPA for measurement within environmental samples

“Determination of EPA's priority pollutant polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in drinking waters by solid phase extraction-HPLC”

Bruzzoniti *et al.*, Anal. Methods 2 (2010), DOI: 10.1039/C9AN00145A. APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A. Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

# Future Directions

- aerobic vs anaerobic pyrolysis conditions
- effect of pyrolysis temperature on specific byproducts
- application toward other systems
  - dispersive dyes
  - alternative binders

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<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-2510036/Ash-Wednesday--Premier-League-launch-campaign-combat-use-flares-smoke-bombs.html>

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# Backup Slides

# Py/GC/MS: Pyro Compositions

- Pyrolysis of the PVC-containing composition produced ~2x the volatile organic molecules
  - high similarity in chromatographic elutions with relative intensity differences
  - polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)

