Precise Heat Control:
What Every Scientist Needs to Know About Pyrolytic Techniques to Solve Real Problems

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The performance of a material is greatly influenced by its thermal and chemical properties. Analytical pyrolysis, when coupled to a GC-MS system, is a powerful technique that can unlock the thermal and chemical properties of almost any substance and provide vital information. At NASA, we depend on precise thermal analysis instrumentation for understanding aerospace travel. Our analytical techniques allow us to test materials in the laboratory prior to an actual field test; whether the field test is miles up in the sky or miles underground, the properties of any involved material must be fully studied and understood in the laboratory.

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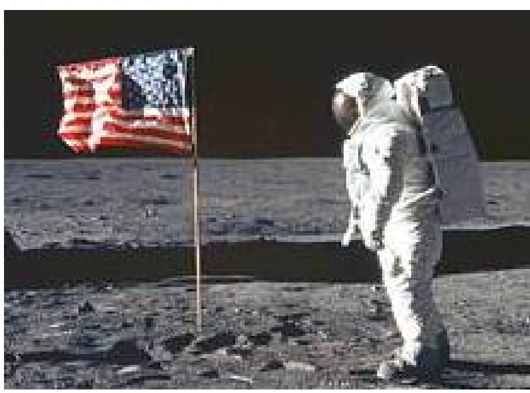


Controlling Heat in Aerospace

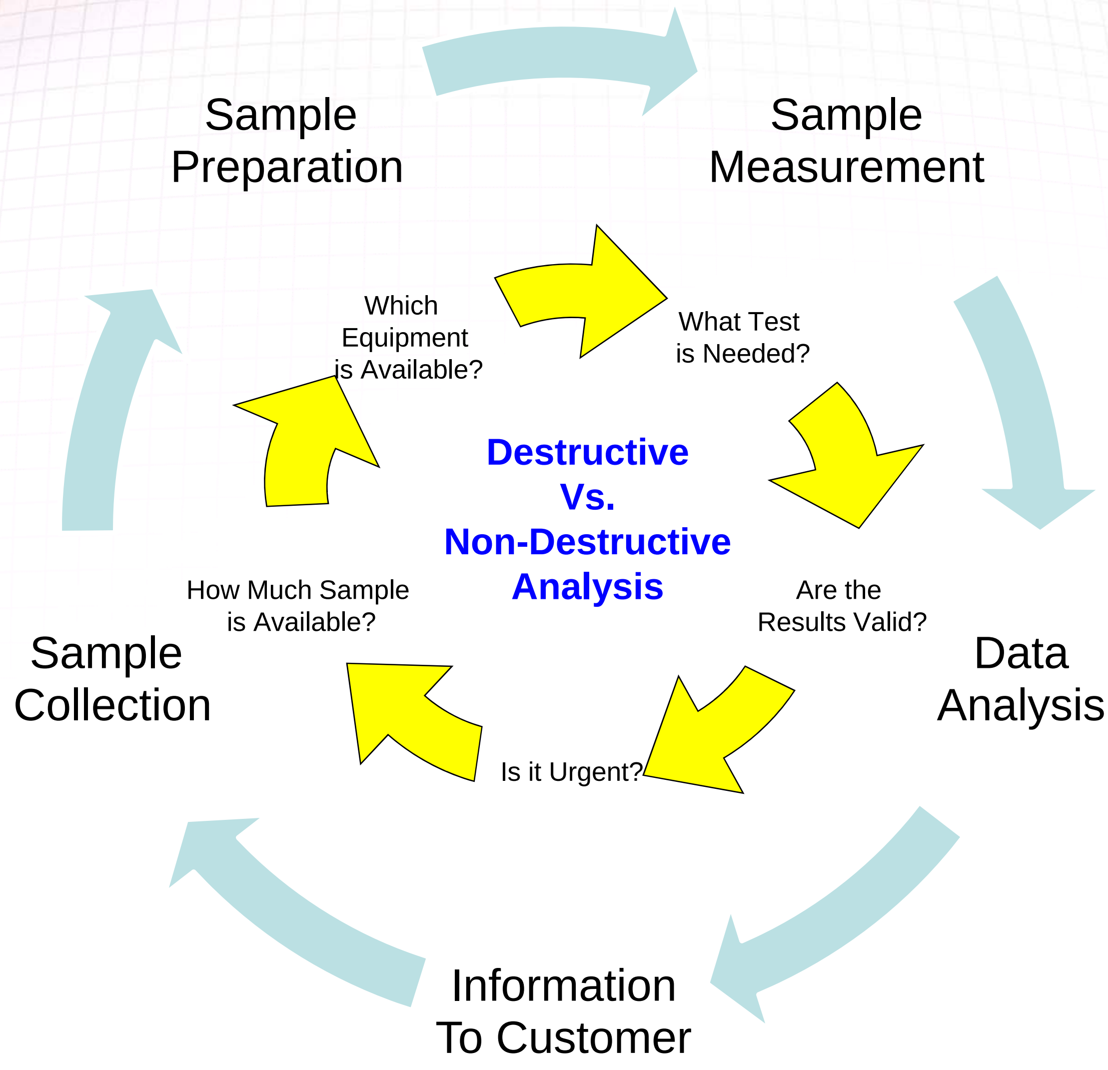
Picture of Space Shuttle During Atmospheric Re-entry taken from ISS

Analytical Chemistry Laboratory Equipment

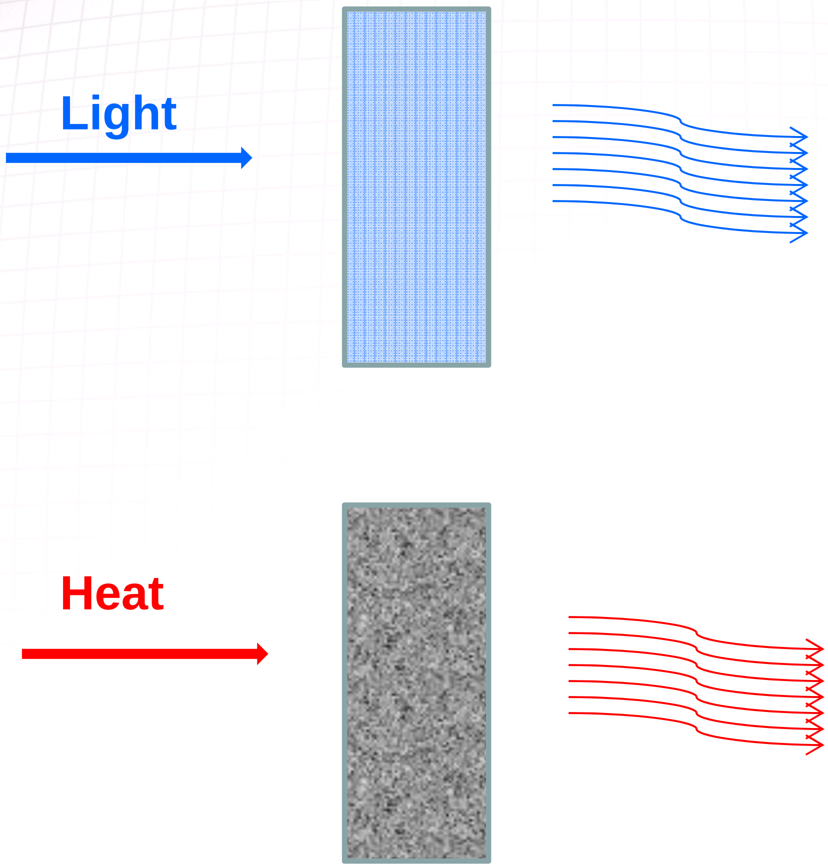
Key Laboratory Equipment

- Optical Instrumentation
  - UV-Vis, Fluorimeter, Solar Reflectance, Infrared Emittance, Raman
- Thermal Analysis Instrumentation
  - DSC, DMA, TGA, TMA, LFA, Rheometer
- Chemical Analysis Instrumentation
  - FT-IR, Ion trap GC-MS, Py-GC-MS, TGA-MS, TGA-IR

The Analytical Chemistry Cycle



Optical Vs. Thermal Techniques



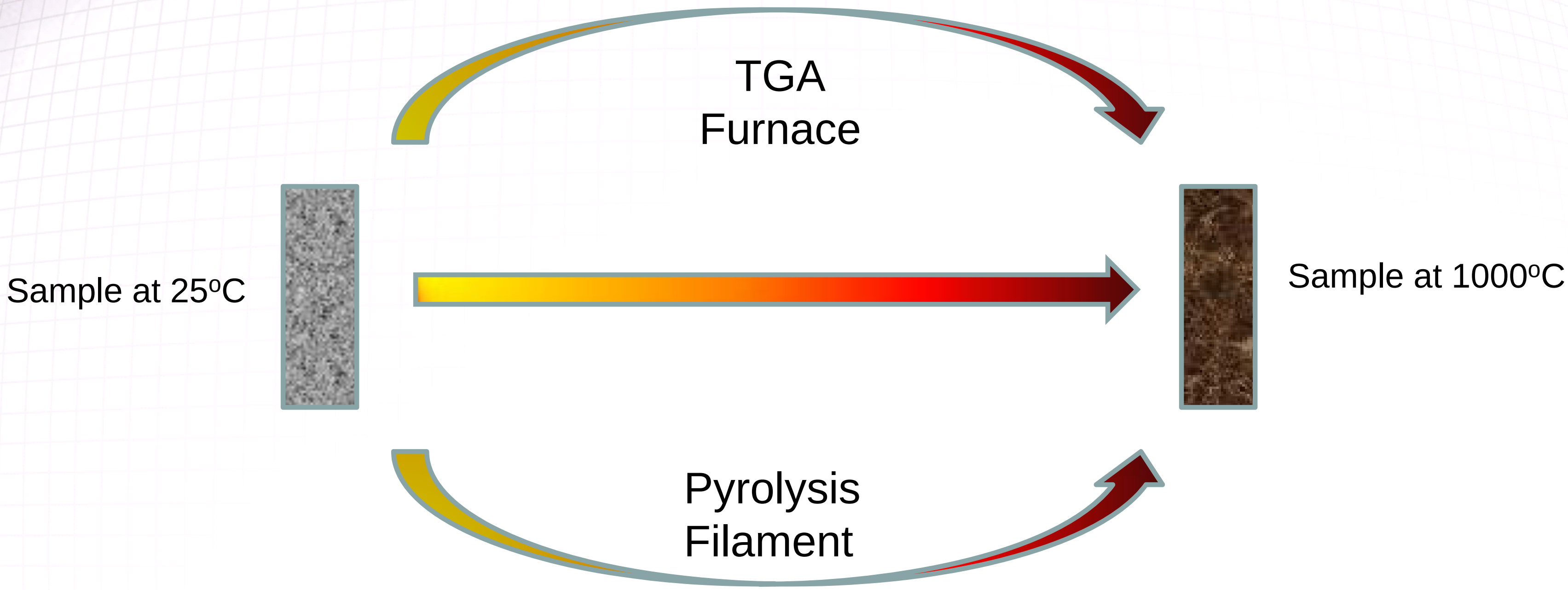
Reflectance
Emittance
Absorbance/Transmission
Fluorescence
UV-Vis Absorbance
FT-IR Analysis
Raman Analysis

Material Curing
Thermal Transition-Tg
Melting Point/ Boiling Point
Residual Solvent
Identification of additives
Material Decomposition
Elimination of labile functional groups
Identification of Material Components
Identification of Inorganic Components

Controlling Heat Exposure

Thermal Analysis

Slow: minutes to hours

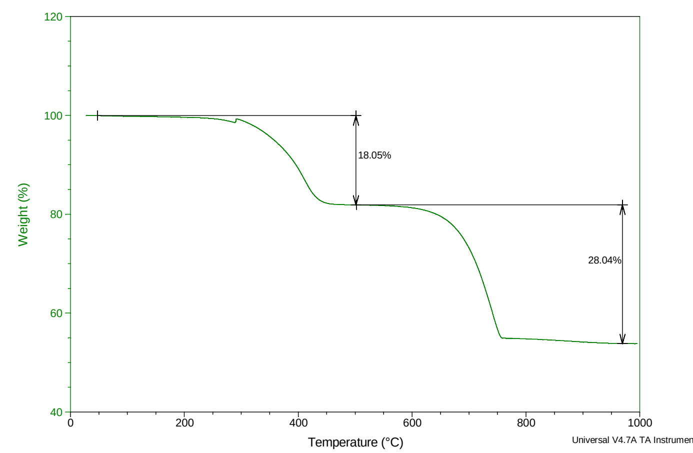


Fast: microseconds to seconds

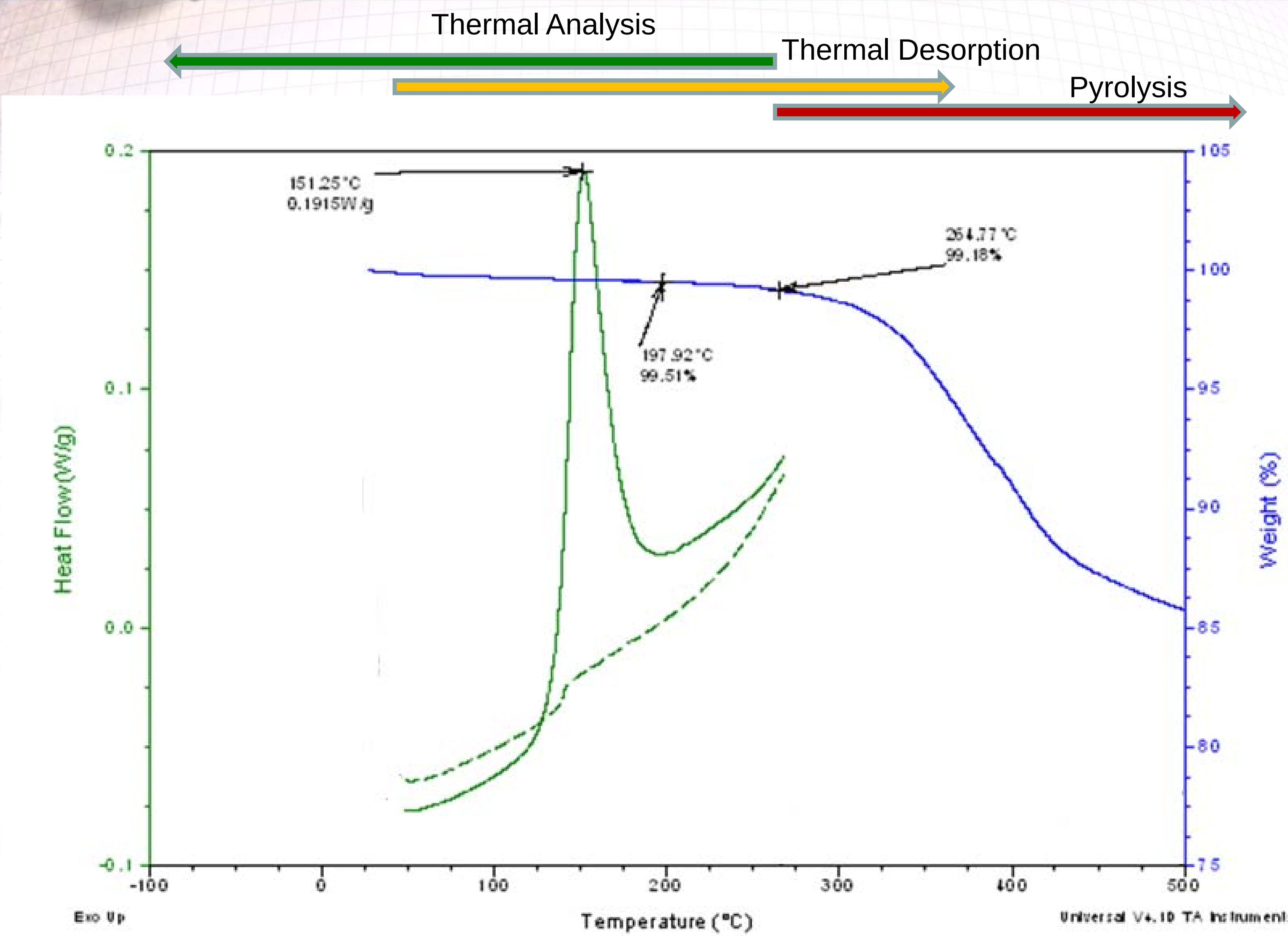
Thermochemical Analysis

Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA)

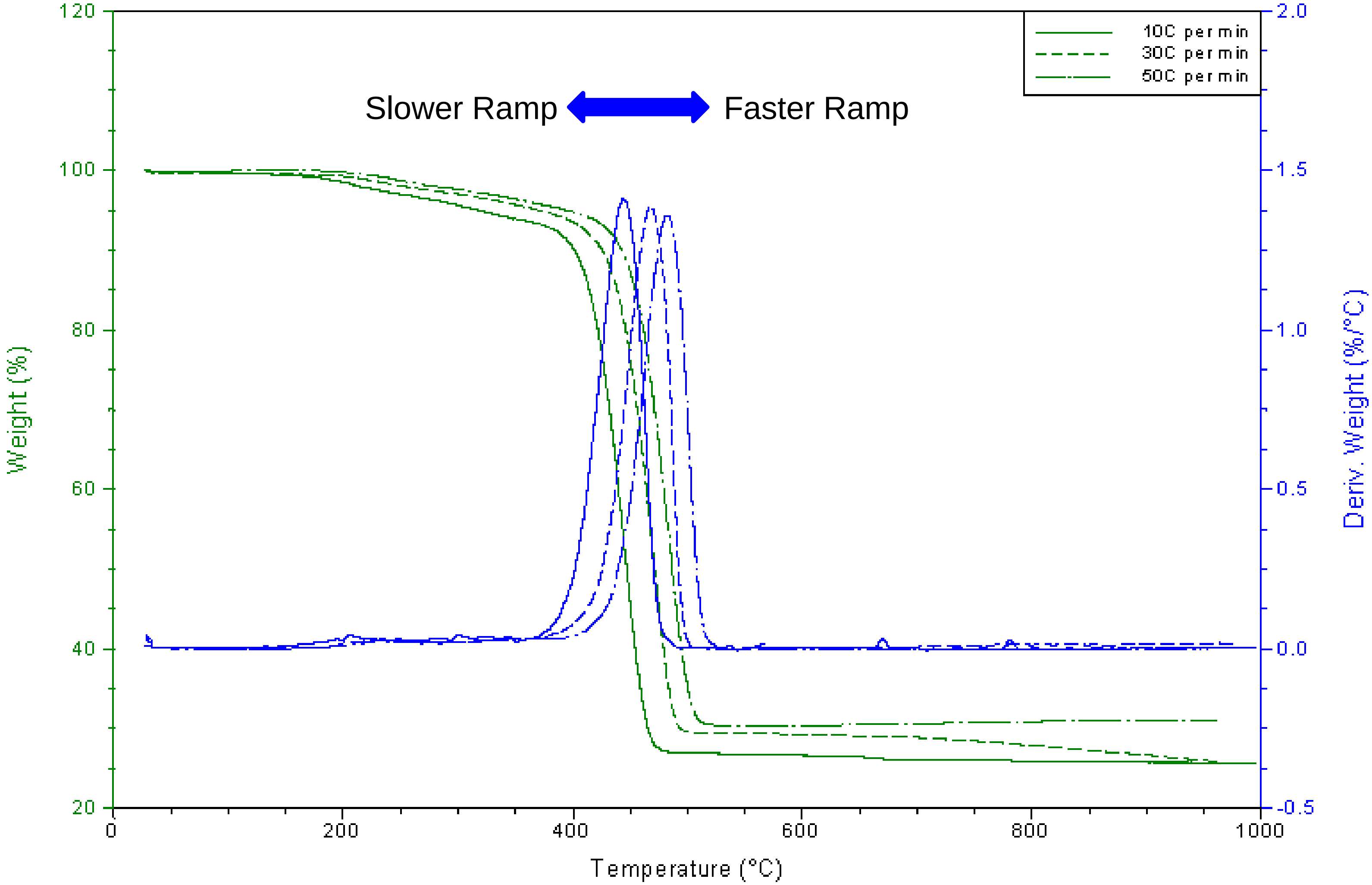
- A TGA instrument consists of an analytical balance and a furnace.
- A small sample of material is heated and its change in mass is measured as a function of temperature.
- Experiments can be conducted under inert or oxidizing atmospheres.
- Information gained from TGA includes:
  - Thermal stability for conducting additional thermal analysis
  - Identification of the number of components in the sample if the decomposition temperatures are different
  - Residual mass for assessing the extent of inorganic additives



Thermal Analysis of Composite



The Influence of Temperature Ramp Rates



Pyrolysis for GC-MS of Solids

- Sample size is relatively small:

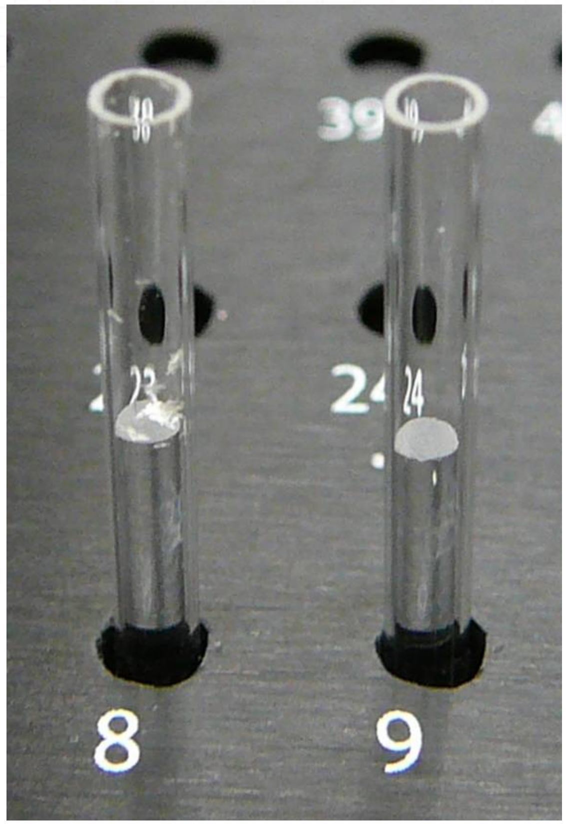
  50 to 200 μg is sufficient for solids
  50 to 200 nL is sufficient for liquids

- Sample preparation is easy: Place sample inside 1.5 inch quartz tube containing filler tube and plug with glass wool.

- Samples can be solids, gels, viscous liquids, greases, crystalline, emulsions, foams, fabrics

- Pyrolysis temperatures are almost instantaneous

- Sample components can be quantified with the use of software



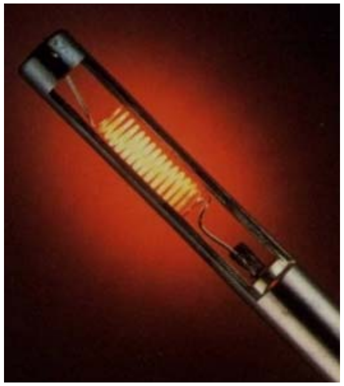
Pyrolysis is the thermal degradation of any substance through the fast application of heat.

Pyrolyzers: Filament Versus Furnace

CDS Platinum Filament

- Heating Rate: ~20,000ºC per sec
- Max Temperature: 1400ºC
- Cooling Rate: > 1000ºC per sec

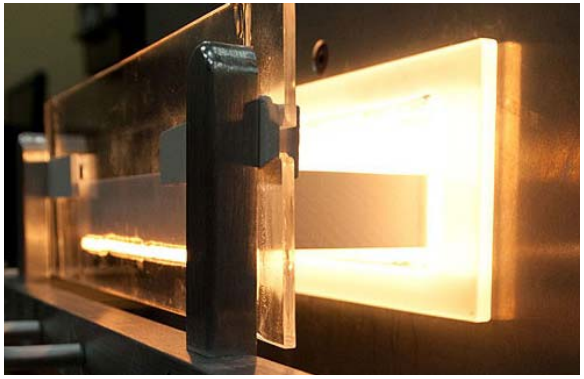
- Fast Heating, Fast Cooling



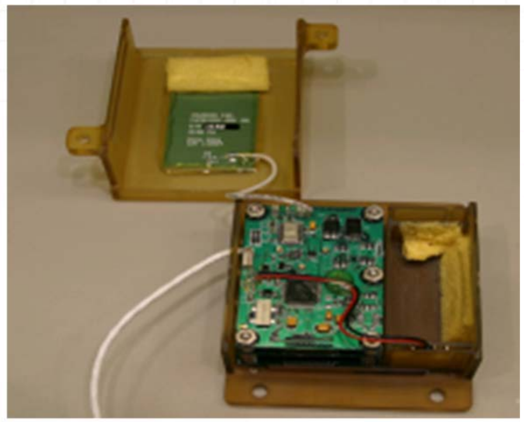
Microfurnace

- Heating Rate: ~50ºC per min
- Max Temperature: 800ºC
- Cooling Rate: 25ºC per min

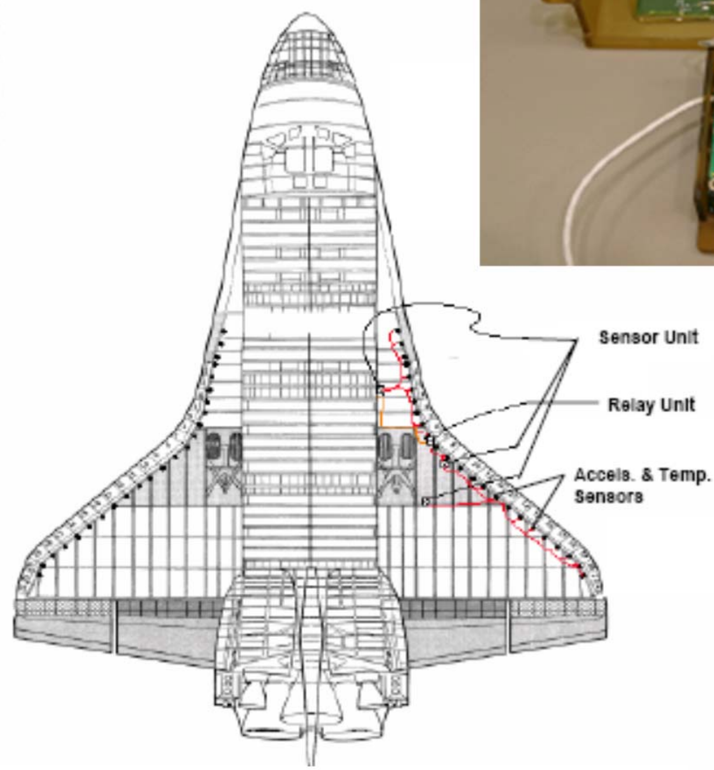
- Slow to Heat, Slow to Cool

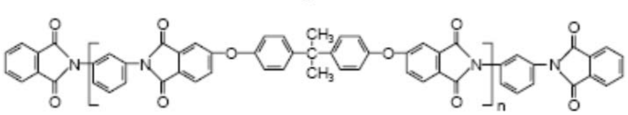


Flash Pyrolysis-GC-MS of Ultem 1000

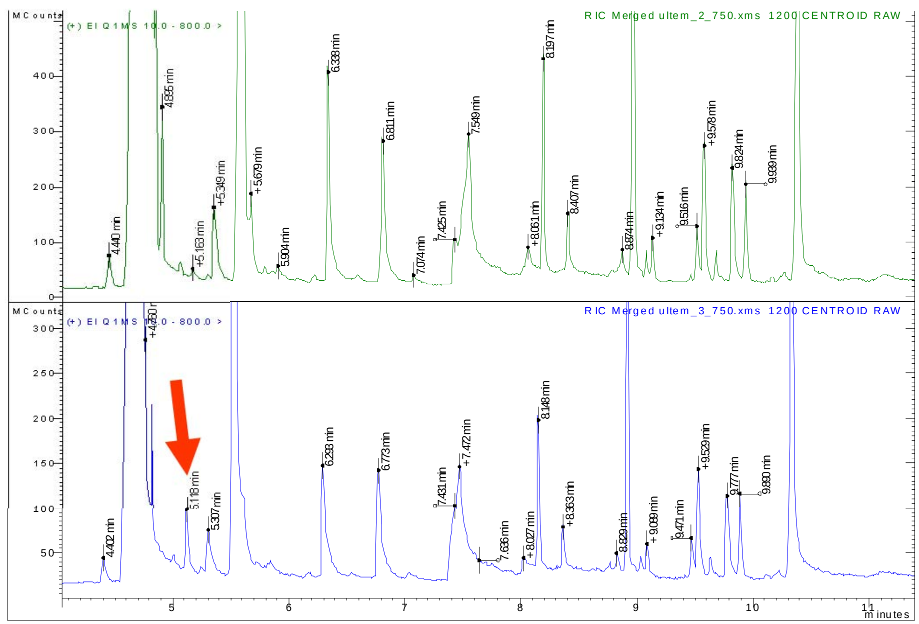


- Relay sensor boxes along the shuttle's wing leading edge were composed of Ultem 1000.
- One lot used to make these relay sensor boxes had failed
- Various manufacture lots of sensor boxes were analyzed by Py-GC-MS and an extra peak was noted in one of those lots. The extra peak was due to dichlorobenzene, a solvent used during manufacture of Ultem 1000.

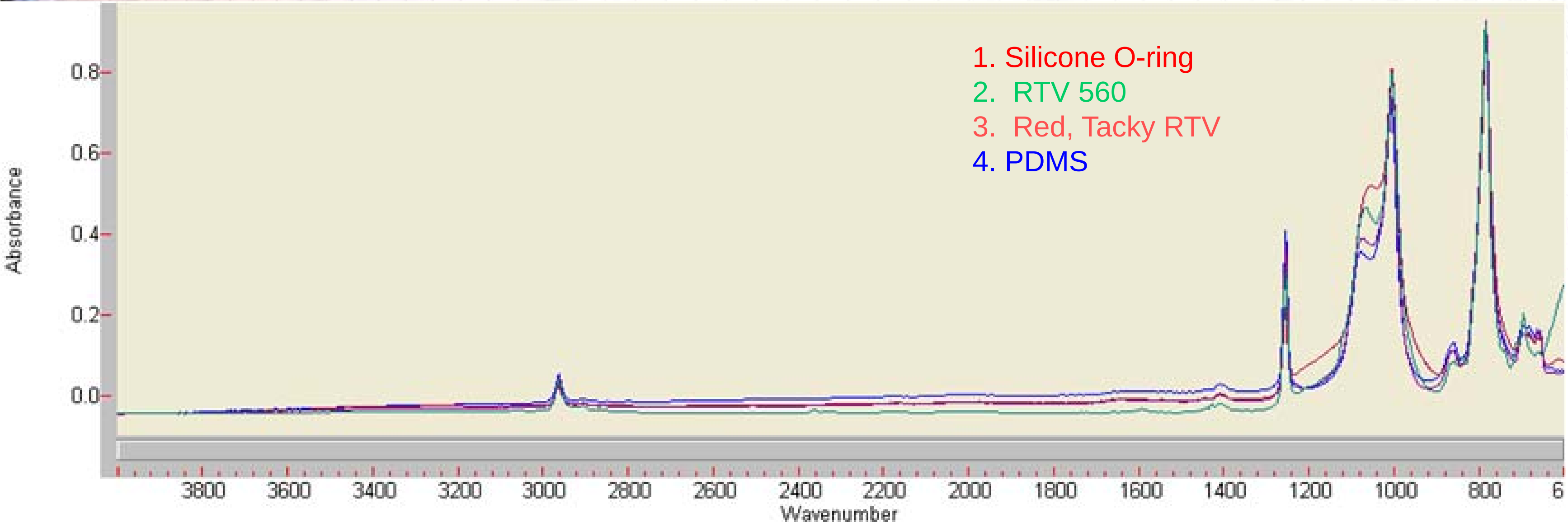




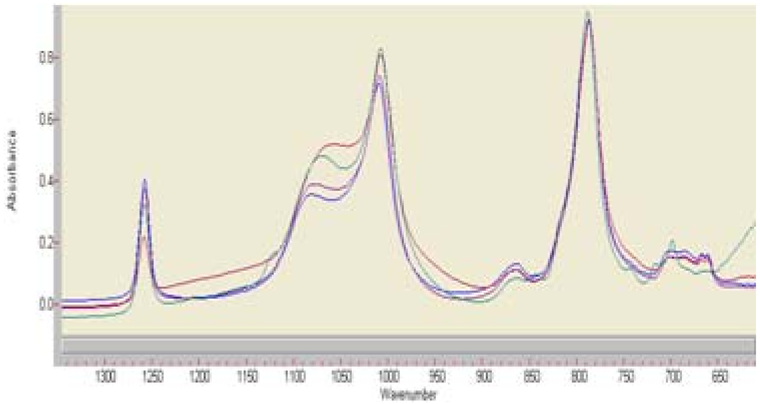
Ultem 1000®



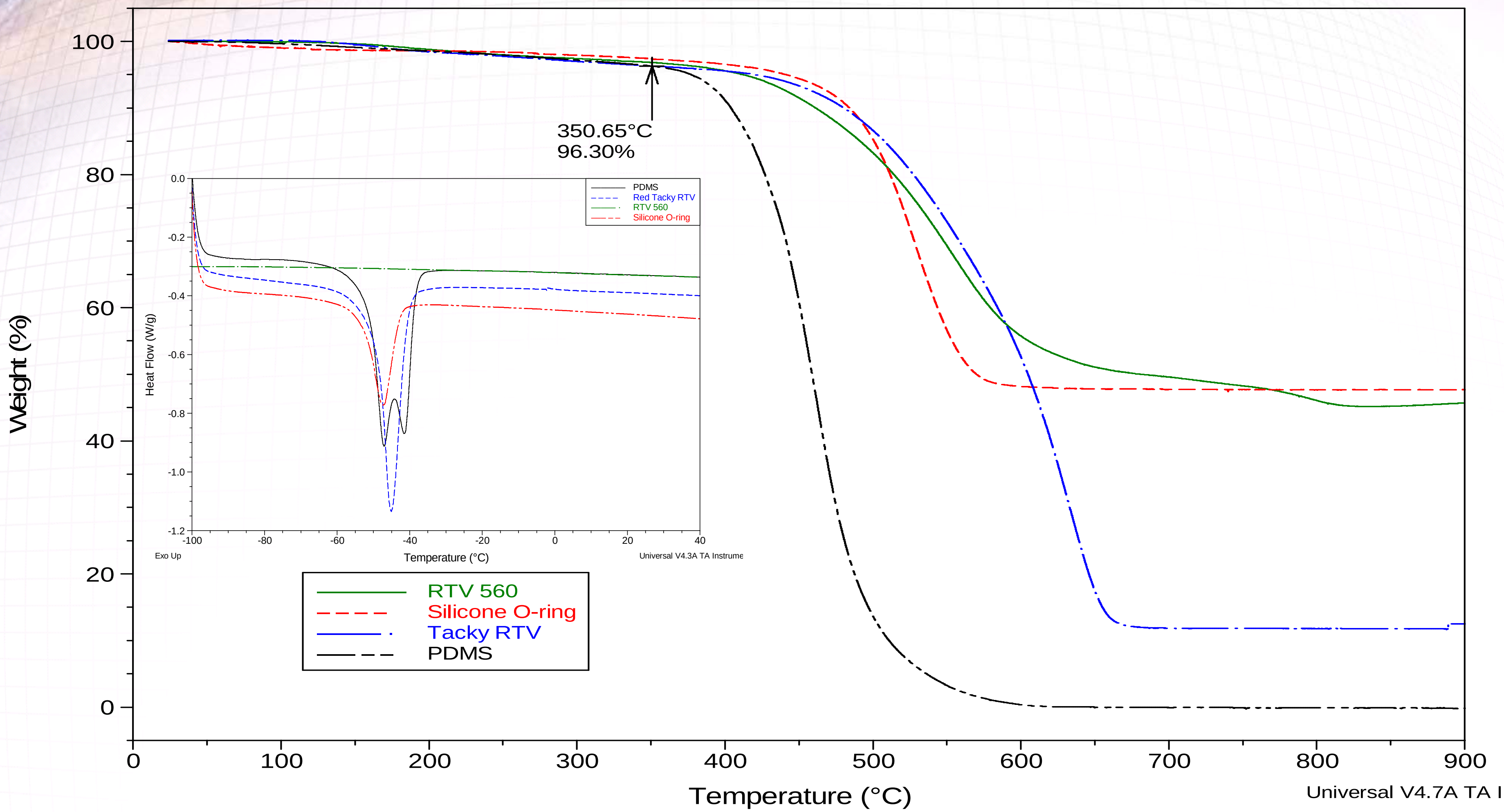
FT-IR Analysis of Silicone Materials



FT-IR is a non-destructive technique that is very diagnostic. However, if infrared light cannot penetrate the sample, any signal obtained through reflectance is only valid for the external surface of a sample.

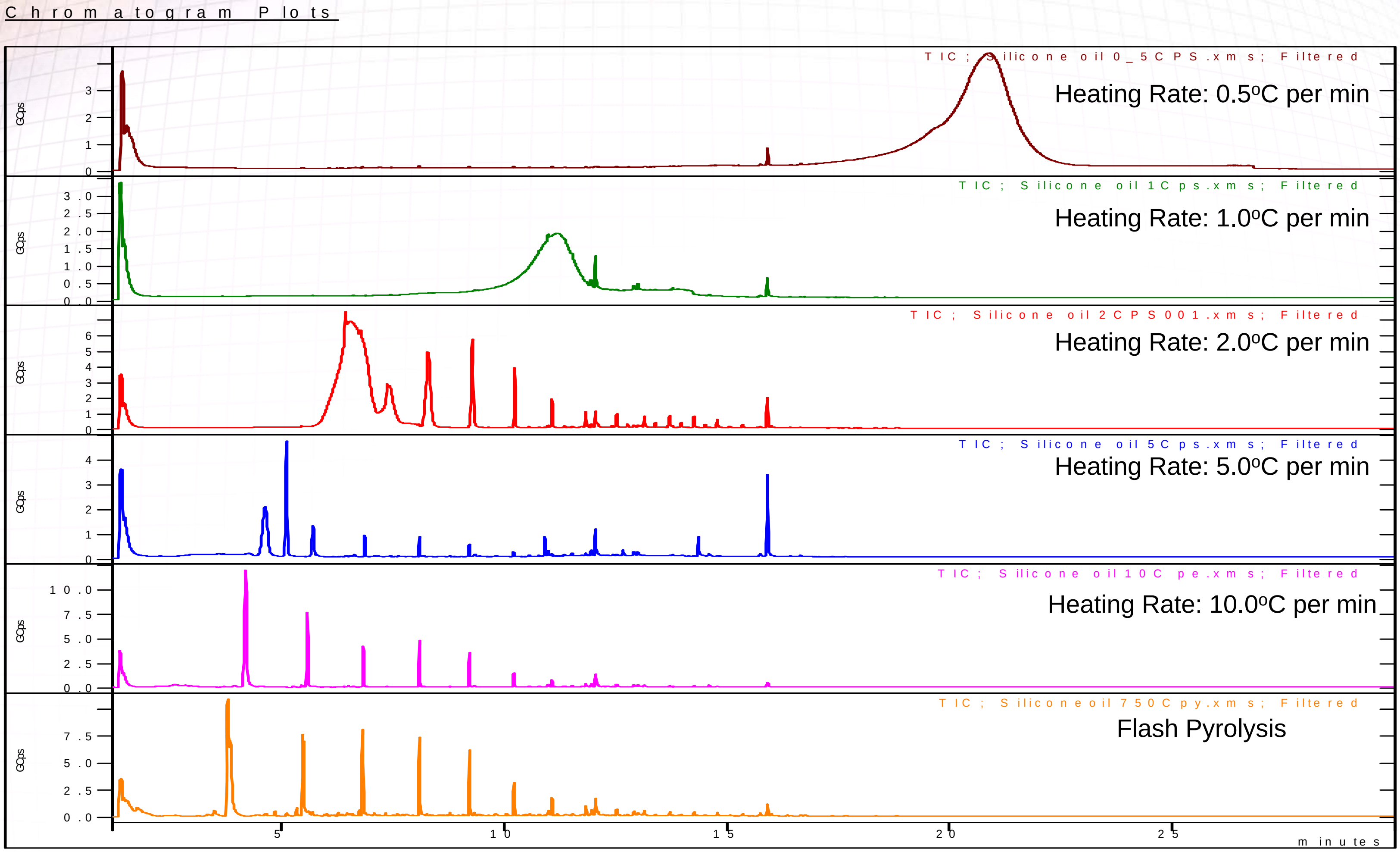


Thermal Analysis of Silicone Materials

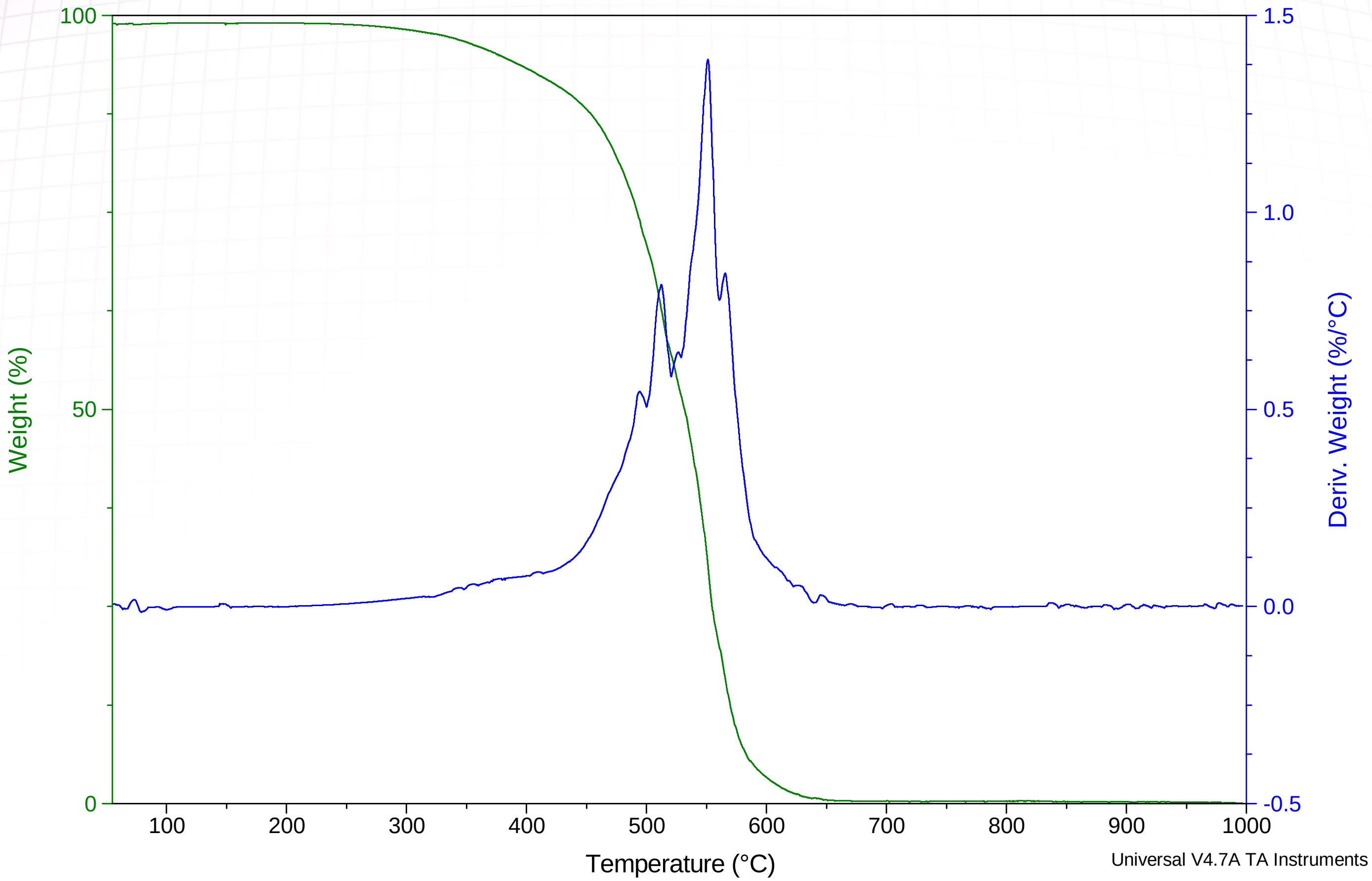


The Silicone samples that were nearly identical by FT-IR displayed very different properties by thermal analysis.

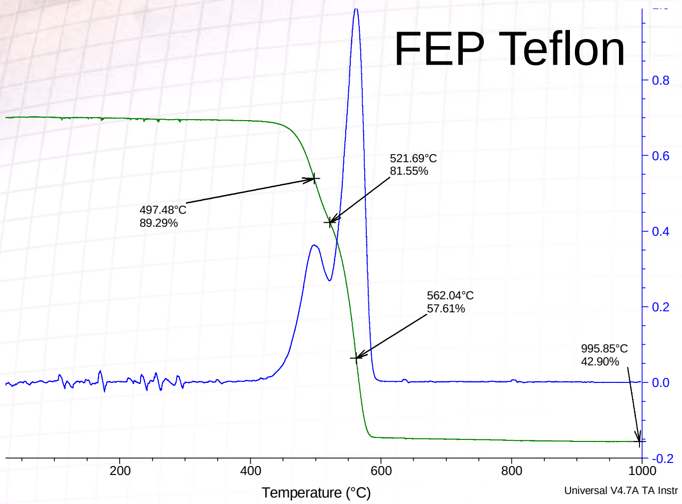
Pyrolysis of Silicone Oil at Different Temperatures

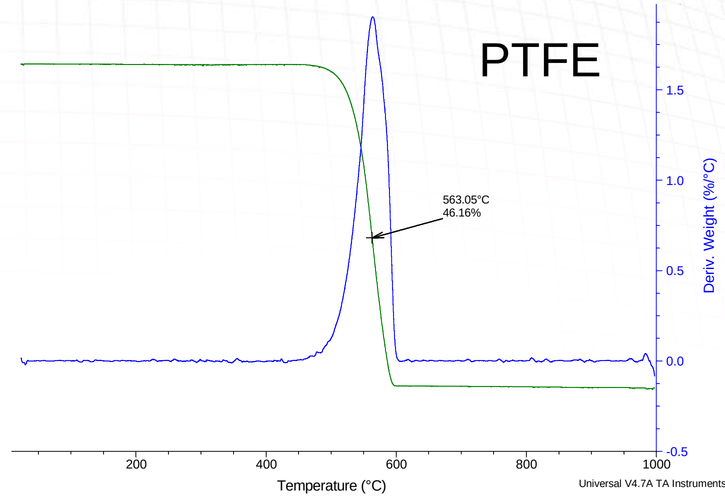


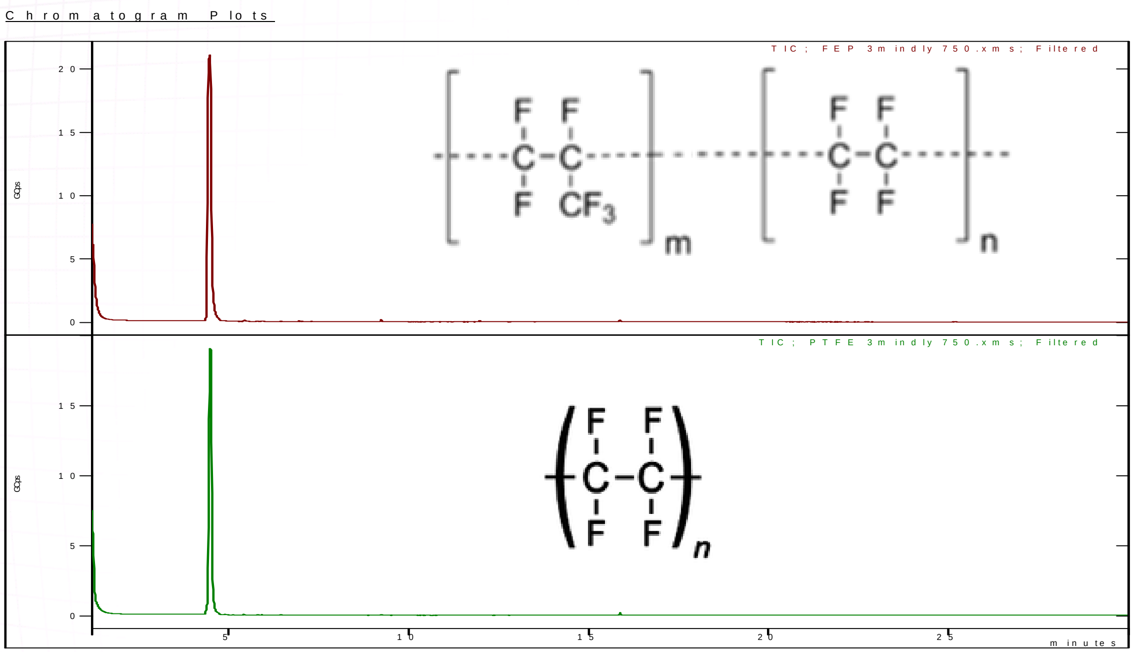
TGA Analysis of Silicone Oil

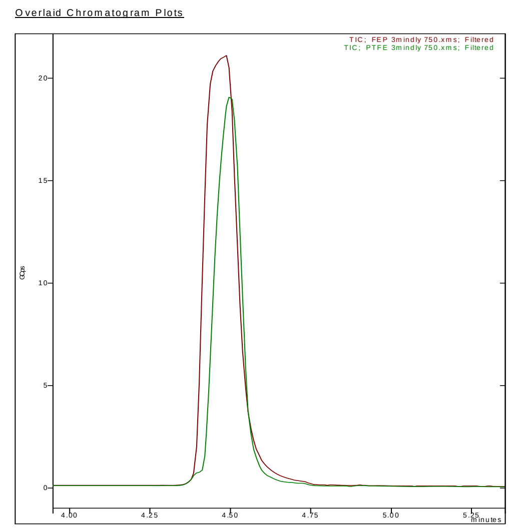


FEP Vs. PTFE Teflon

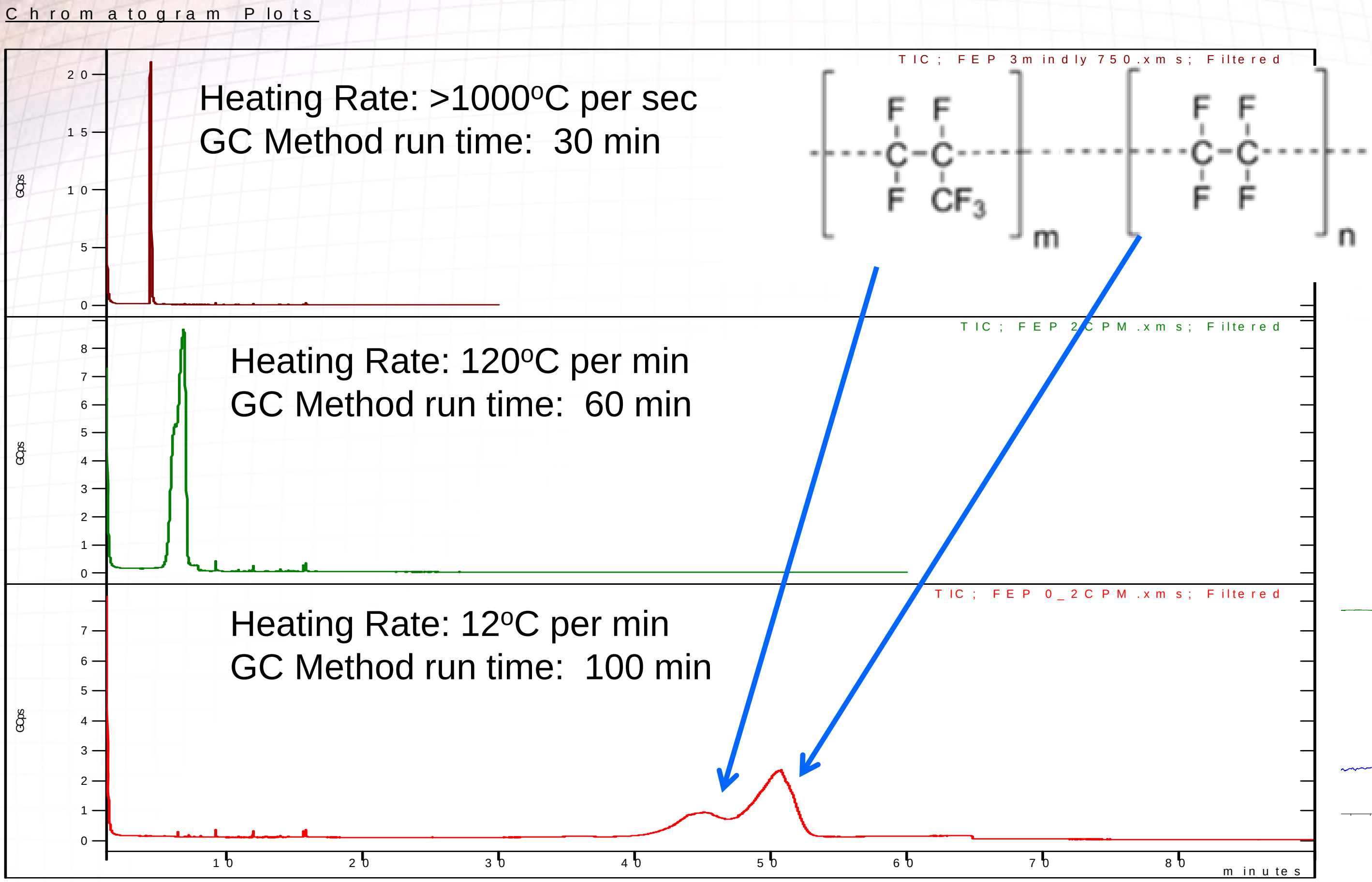




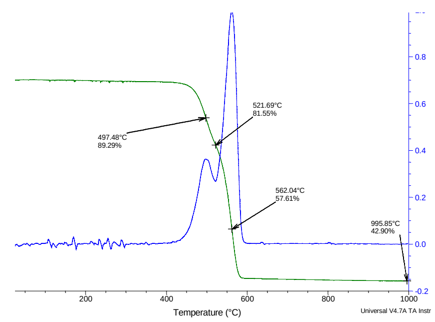




FEP Teflon Heated at Different Rates

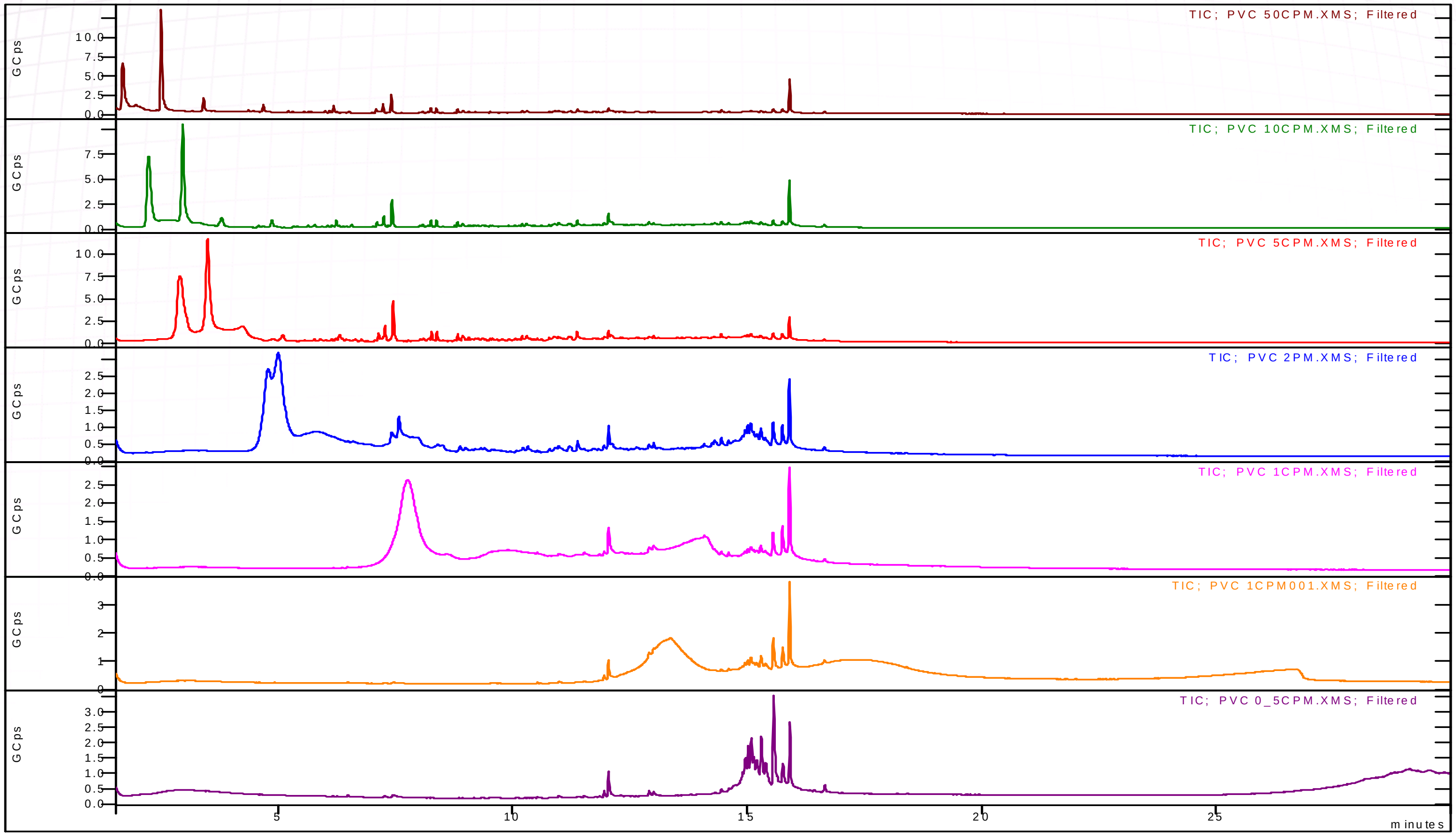


TGA

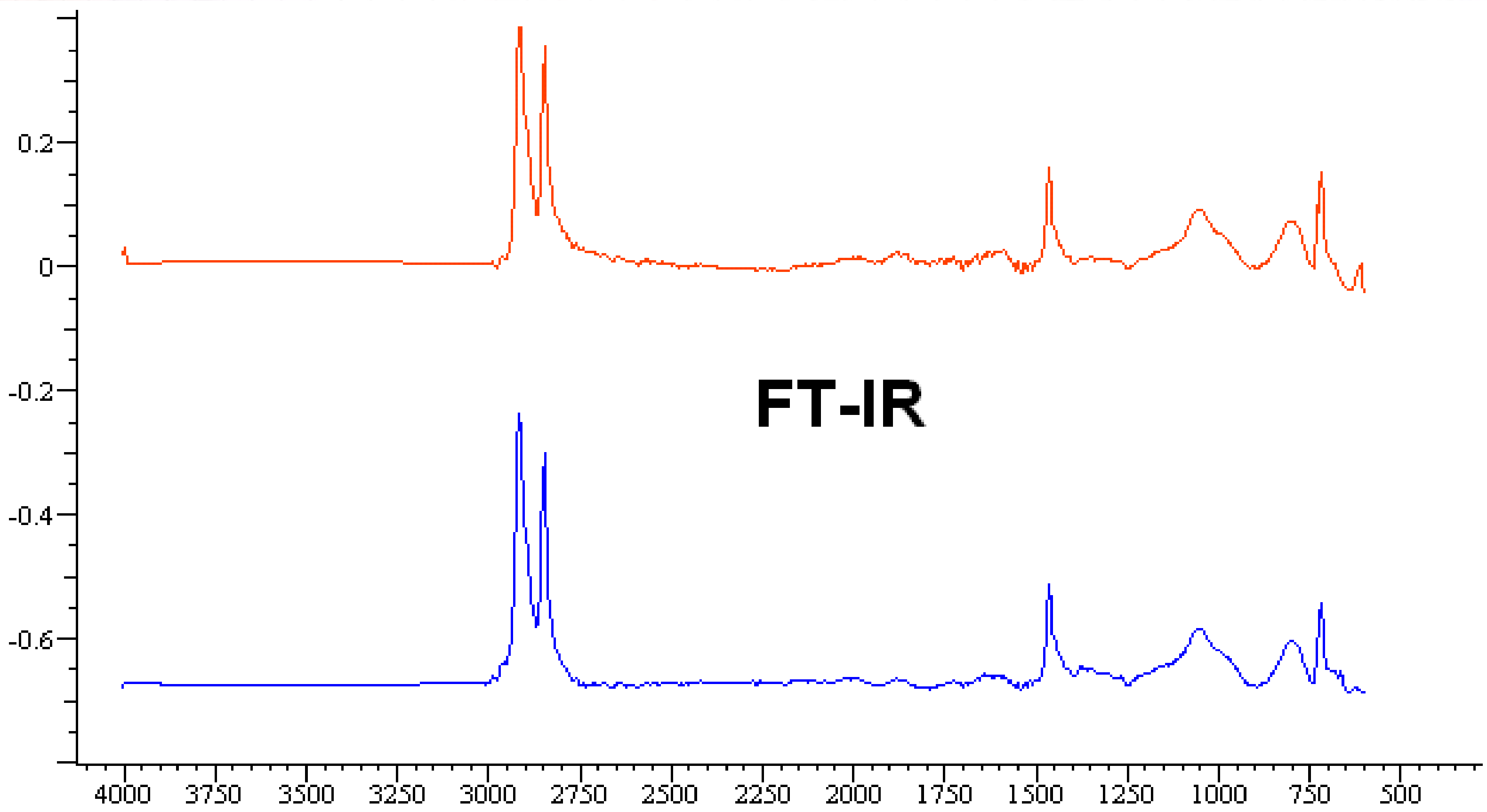


During pyrolysis, materials undergo thermal degradation via chemical pathways dictated by the thermal stability of the components. When pyrolysis is slowed to simulate TGA conditions, a thermal response pattern similar to what was observed with TGA first derivative plot is observed.

Chromatogram Plots



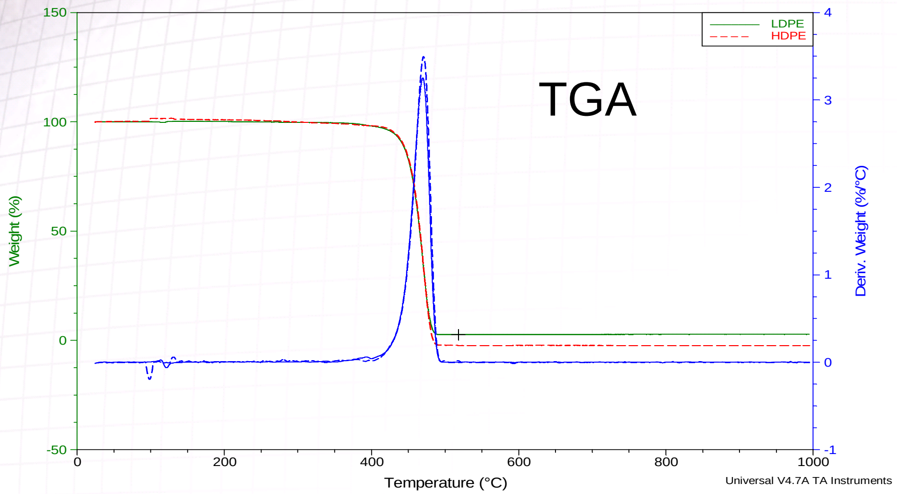
Spectral Analysis of HDPE and LDPE

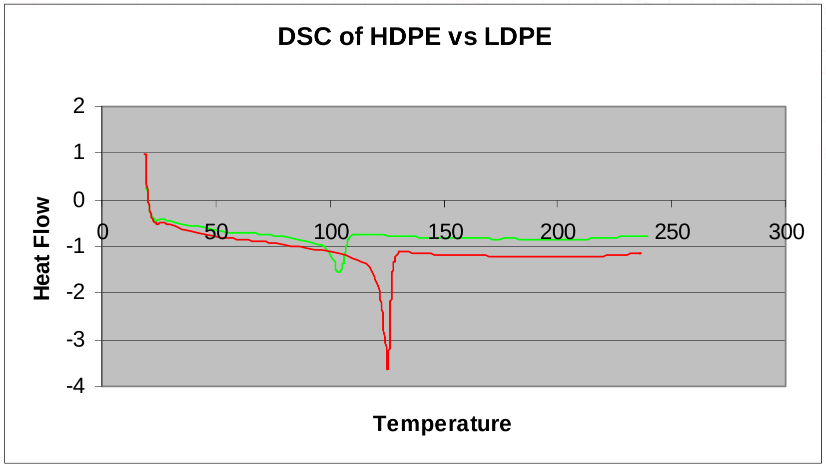


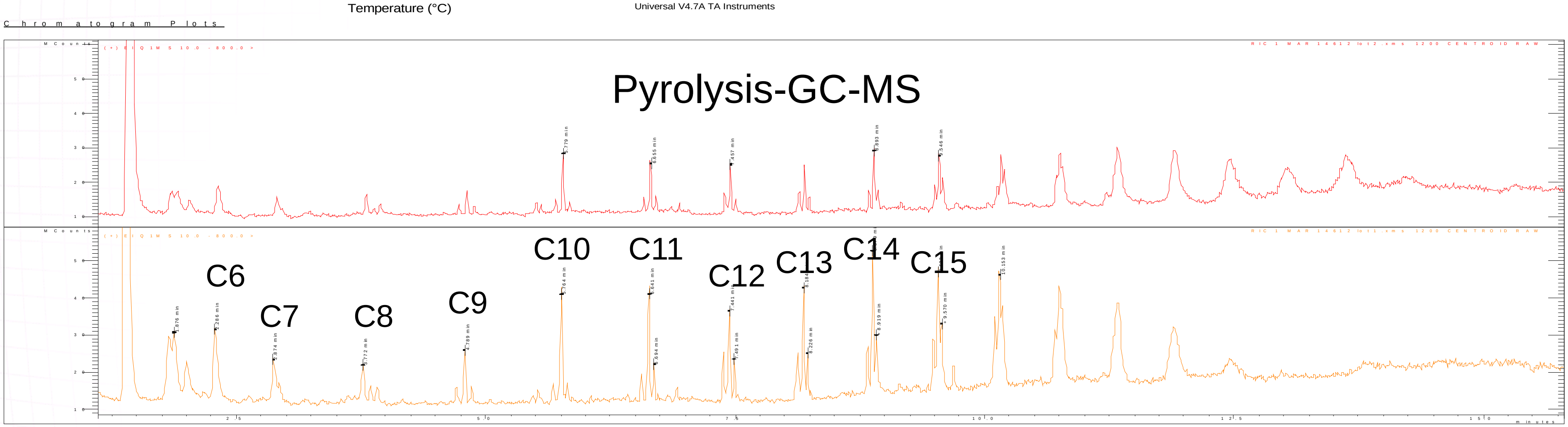
Many industrial laboratories have only one technique available for characterization of the manufactured product. In many situations, one type of analytical technique is not adequate for assessing the product.

Thermal Analysis of HDPE and LDPE

Polyethylene: -CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-

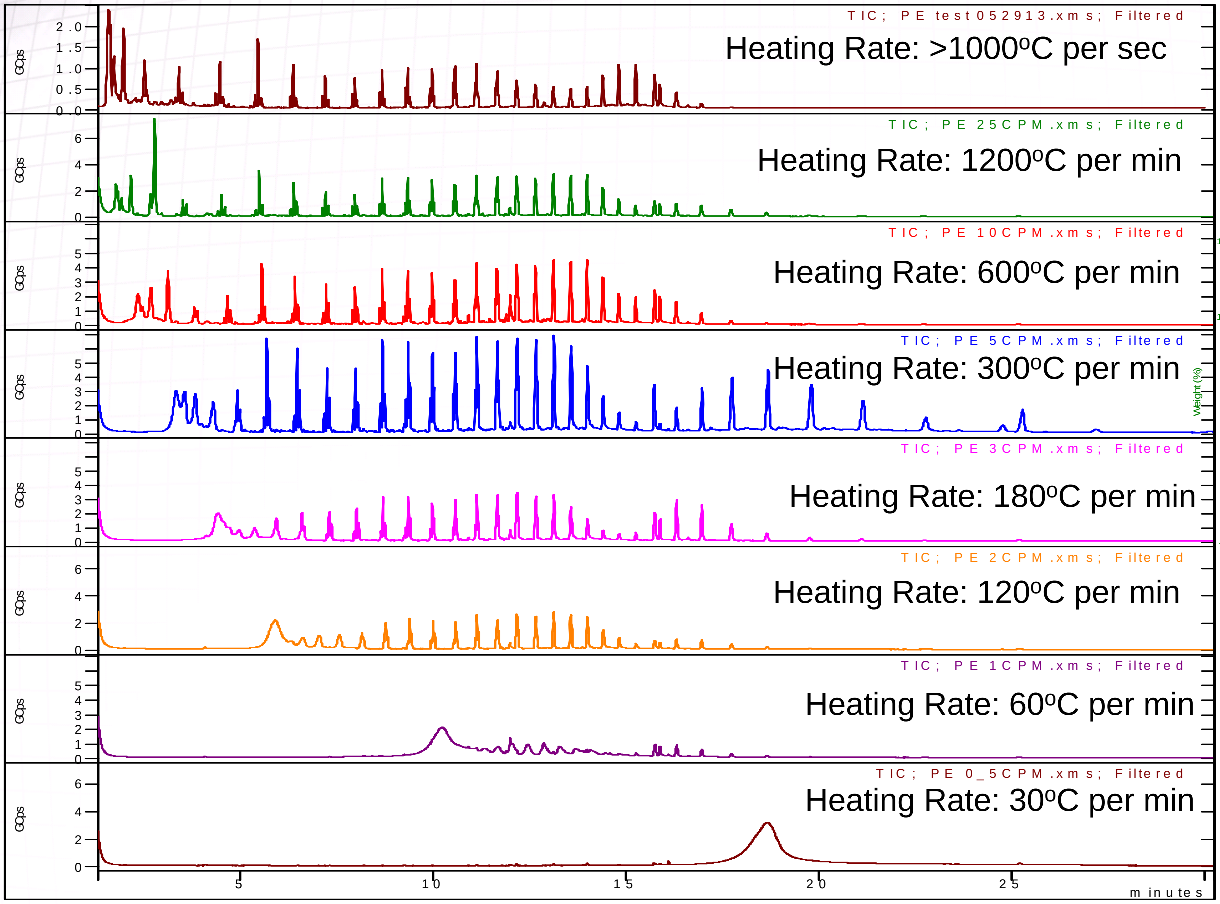




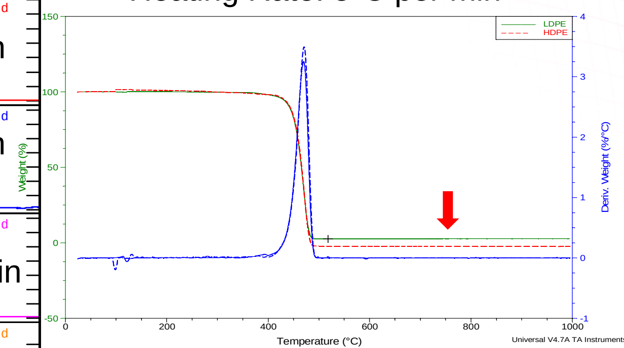


Temperature Ramp Pyrolysis

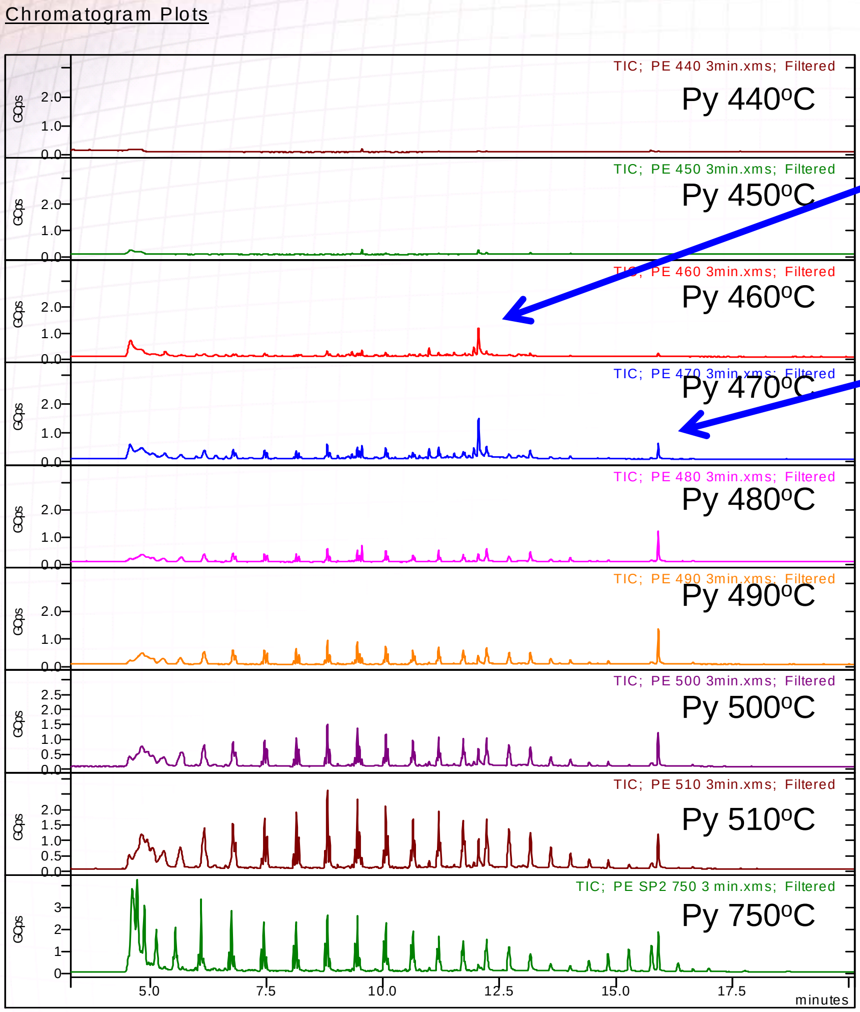
Heating PE in Pyrolysis chamber from 25ºC to 750ºC at different rates



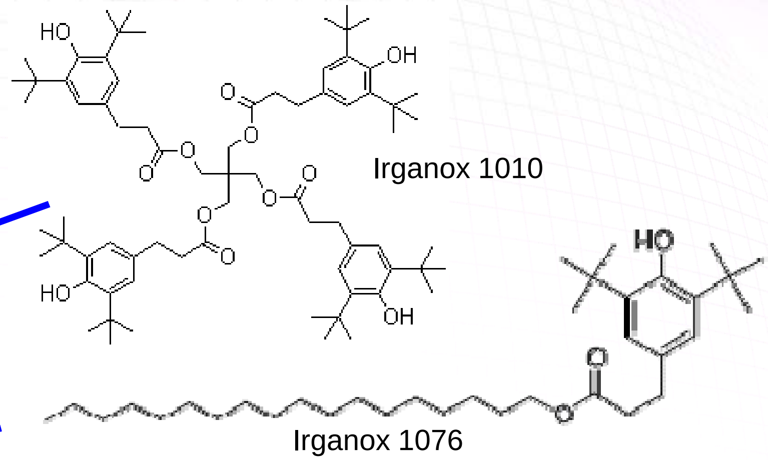
TGA
Heating Rate: 5ºC per min

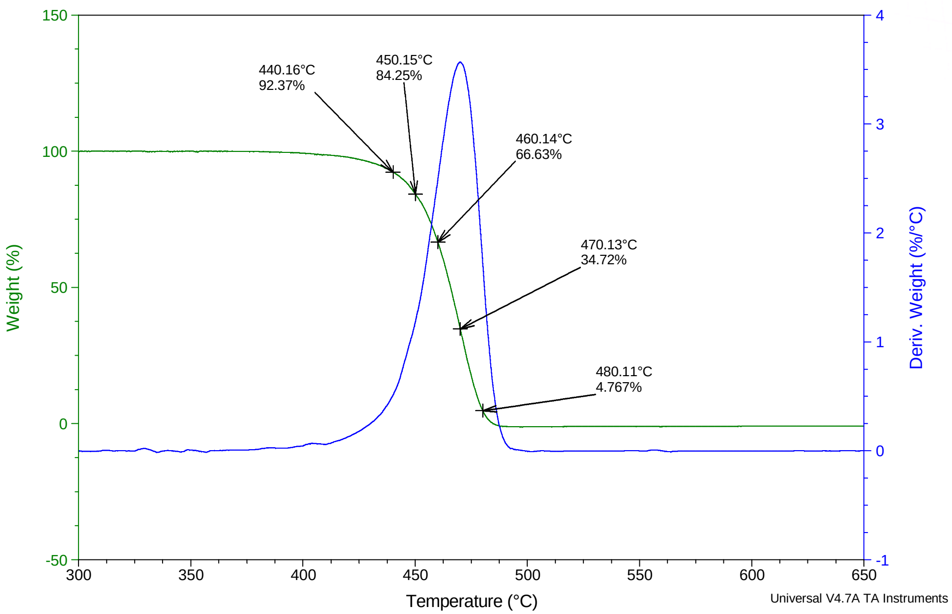


Correlating TGA and Pyrolysis Techniques



Pyrolysis at specified temperatures for 20 seconds

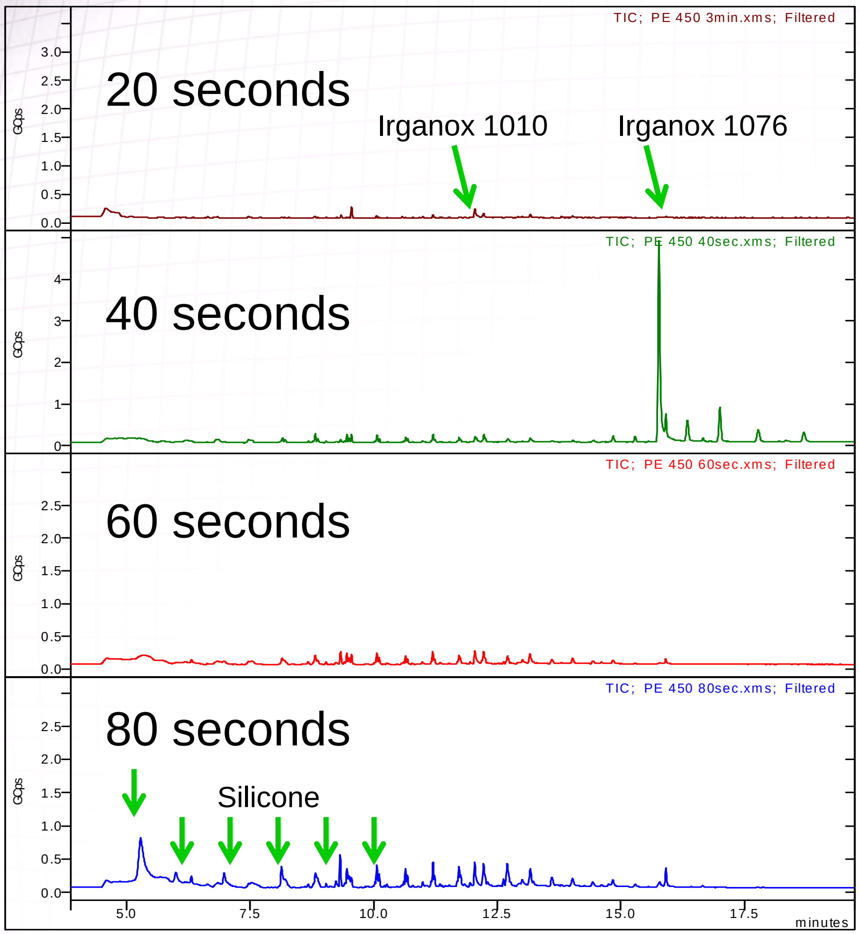


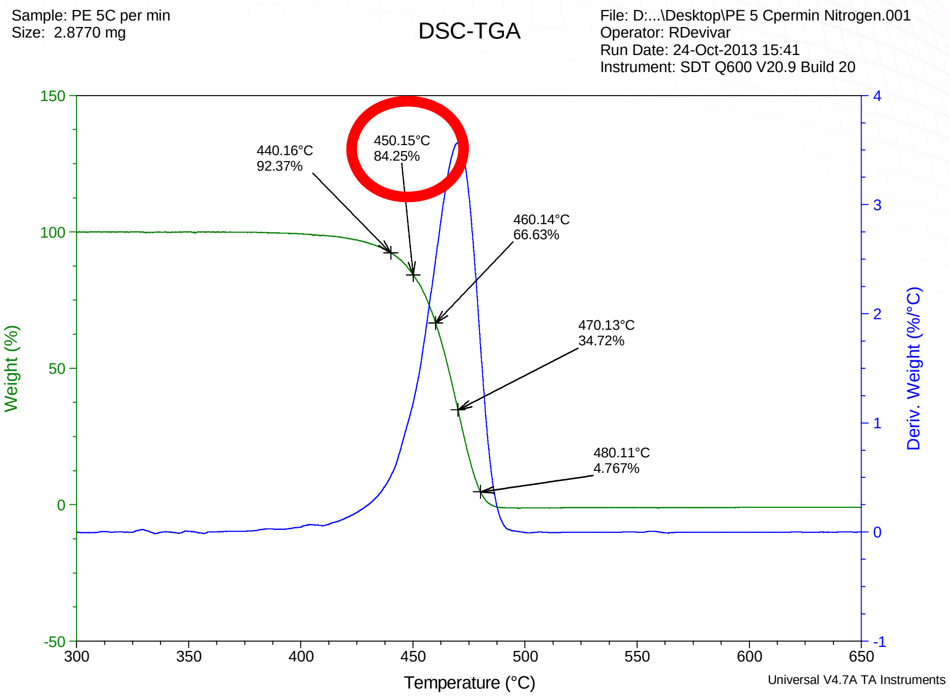


Thermal Analysis of PE

Pyrolysis at 450ºC For Specified Duration

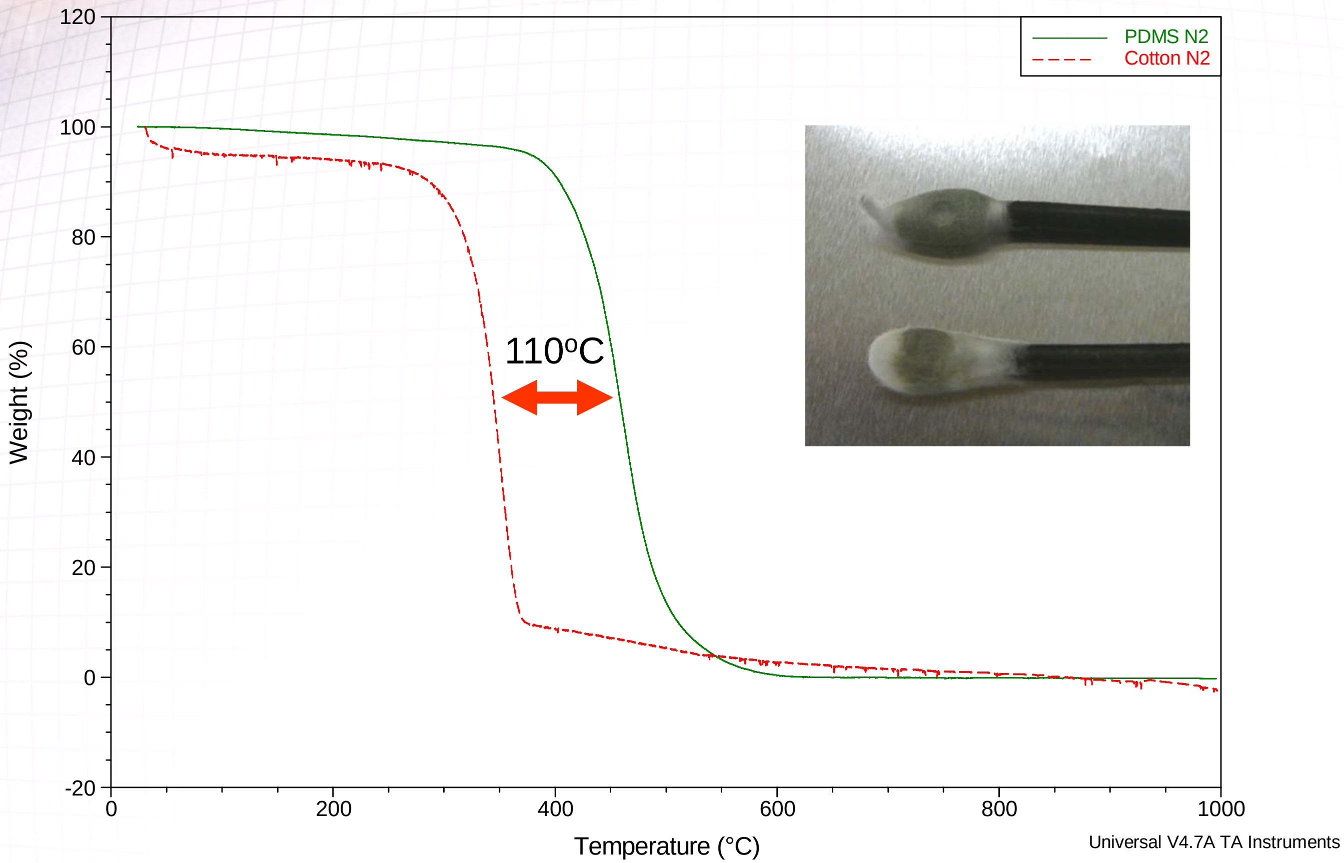
Chromatogram Plots





Modification of the thermal parameters at the onset of TGA degradation for PE can provide valuable information about the additives or contaminants.

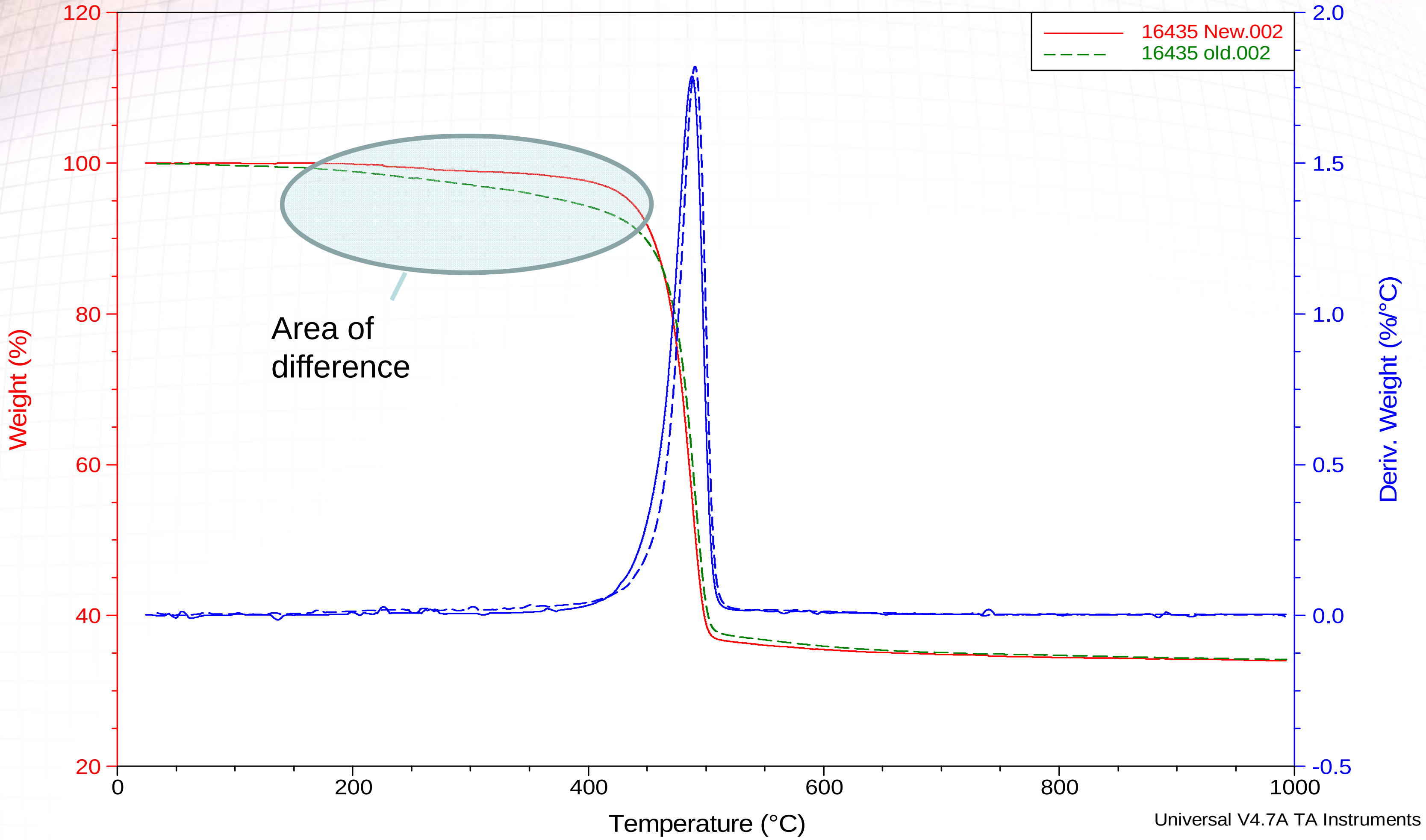
Cotton Vs. Silicone



The large difference in thermal stability between cotton and silicones can be used to easily characterize the silicone sample collected on a cotton swab.

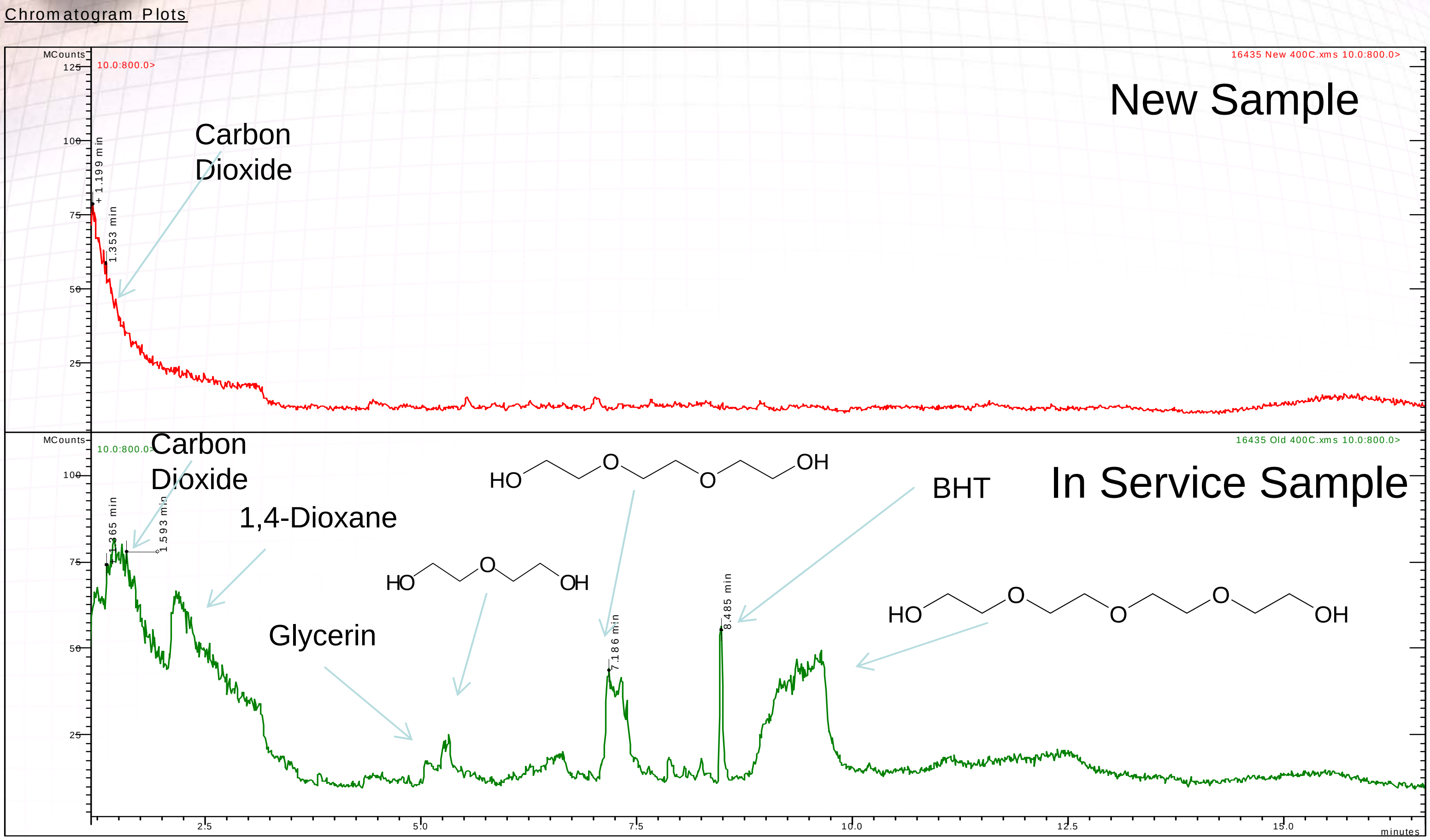
The cotton may be completely decomposed by application of heat without adversely affecting the silicone.

TGA Comparison of Gaskets



Under conditions of increasing temperature, the only difference between the two Viton Gaskets was found below 400ºC, where the old sample lost a larger percentage of its mass compared to the new sample.

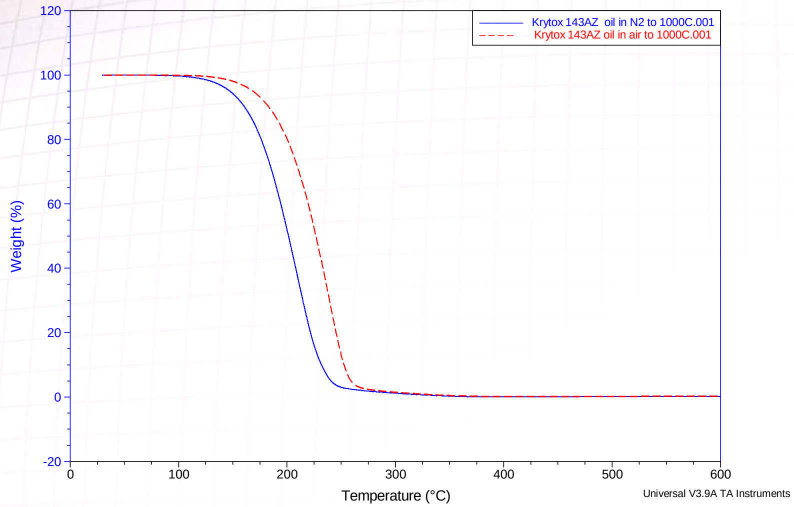
Thermal Extraction of Samples



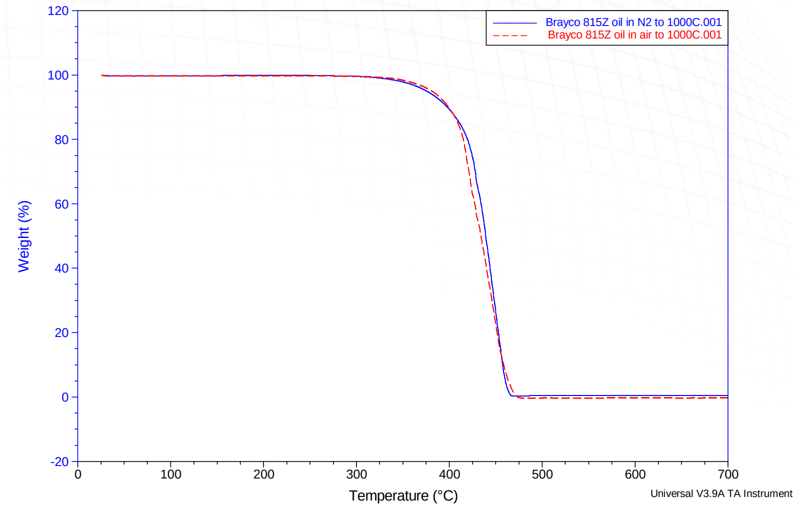
Thermal extraction of the two samples was performed to account for the difference observed in the TGA experiments at temperatures below 400ºC. Such an experiment indicated the Old sample contained various fragments that are attributed to polyethylene oxide. Other substances found included Glycerin and Butylated hydroxy toluene (BHT).

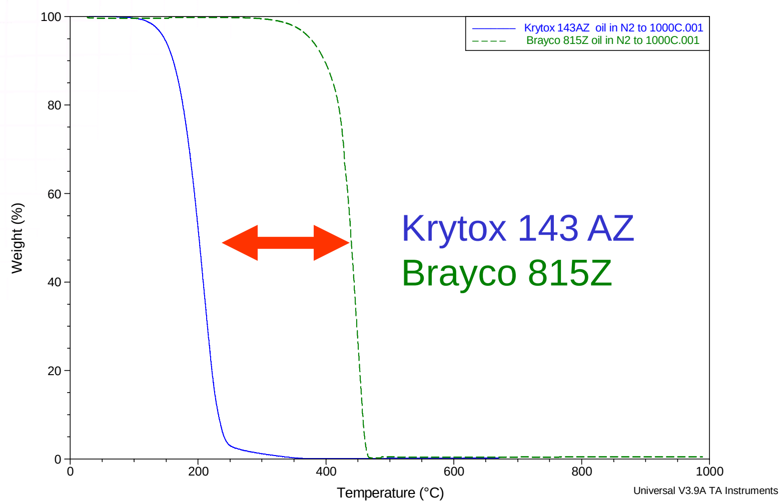
TGA Analysis of Fluorinated Materials

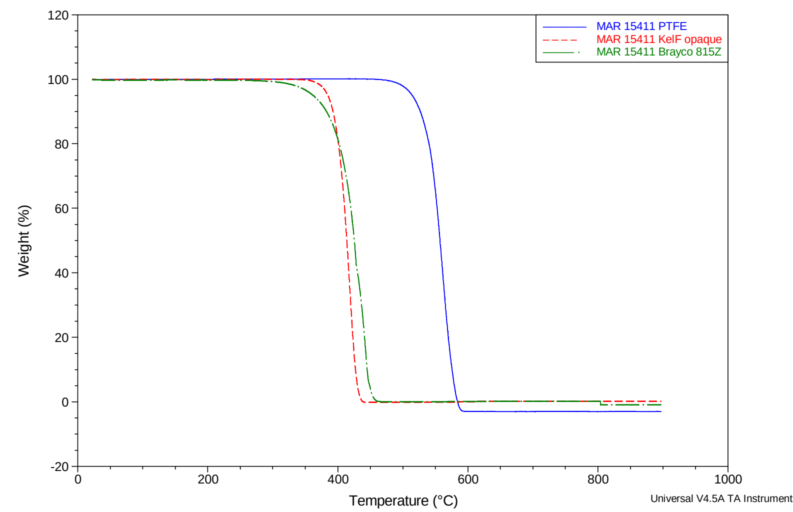
Krytox 143 AZ



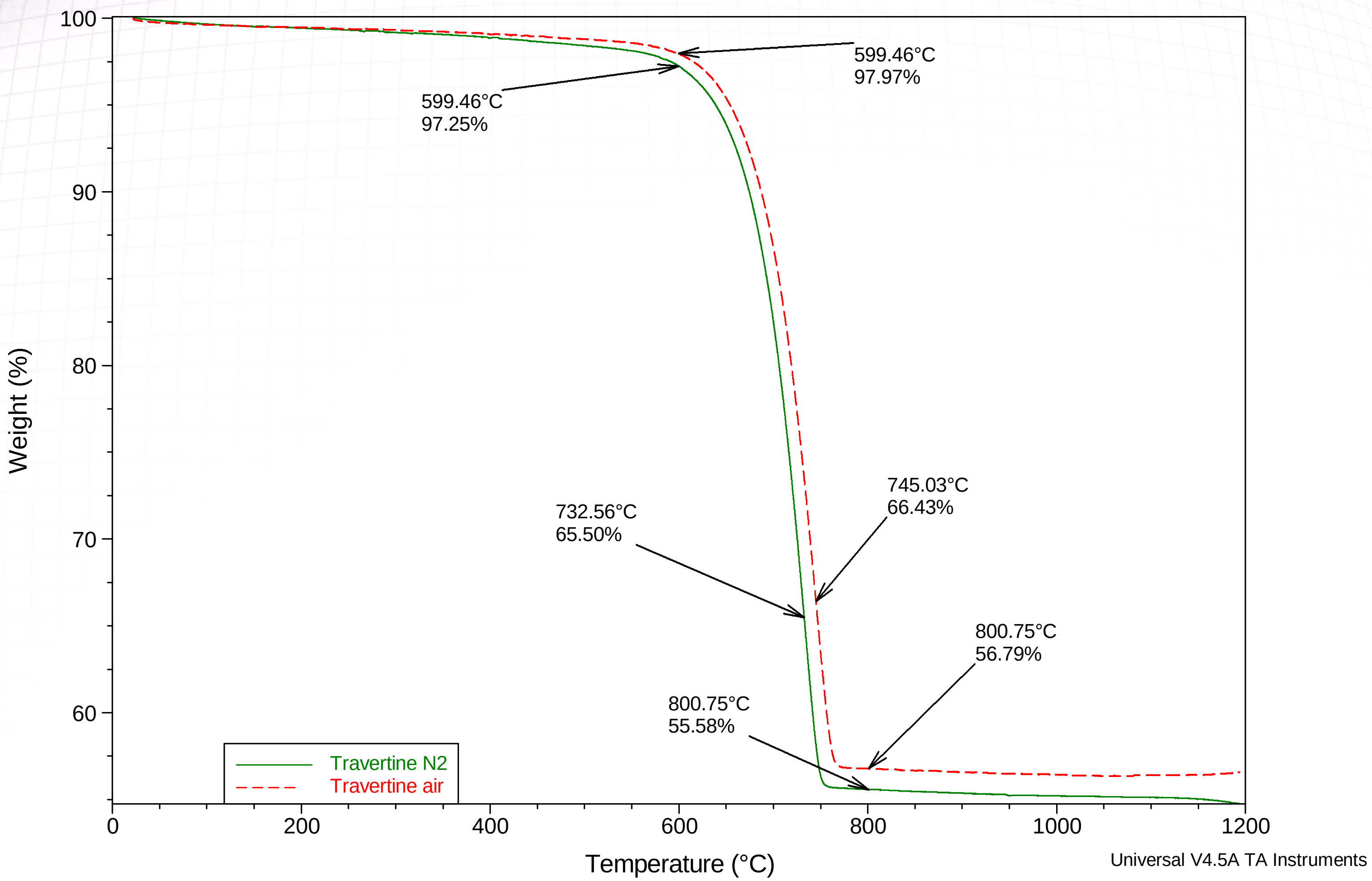
Brayco 815Z



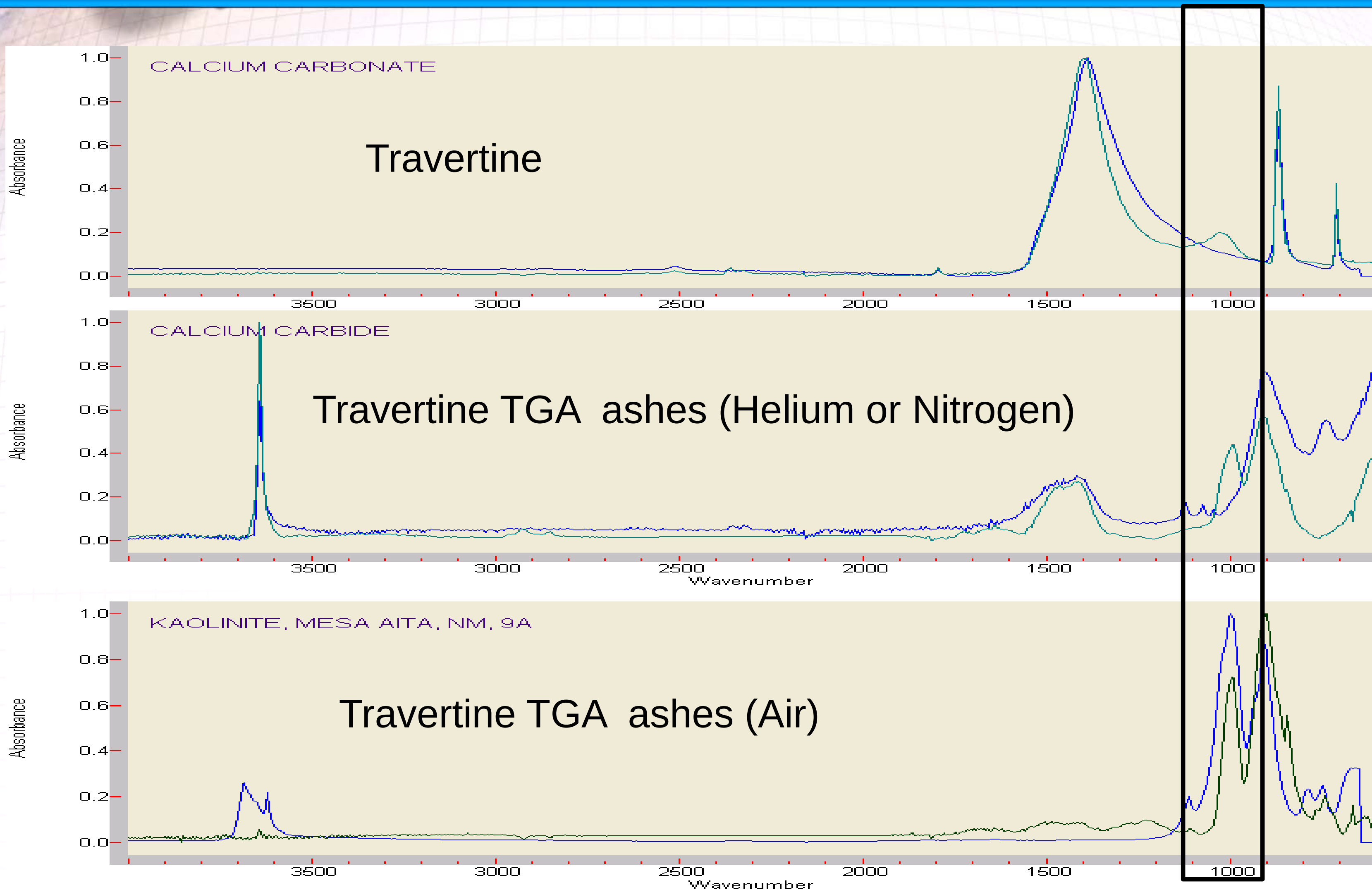




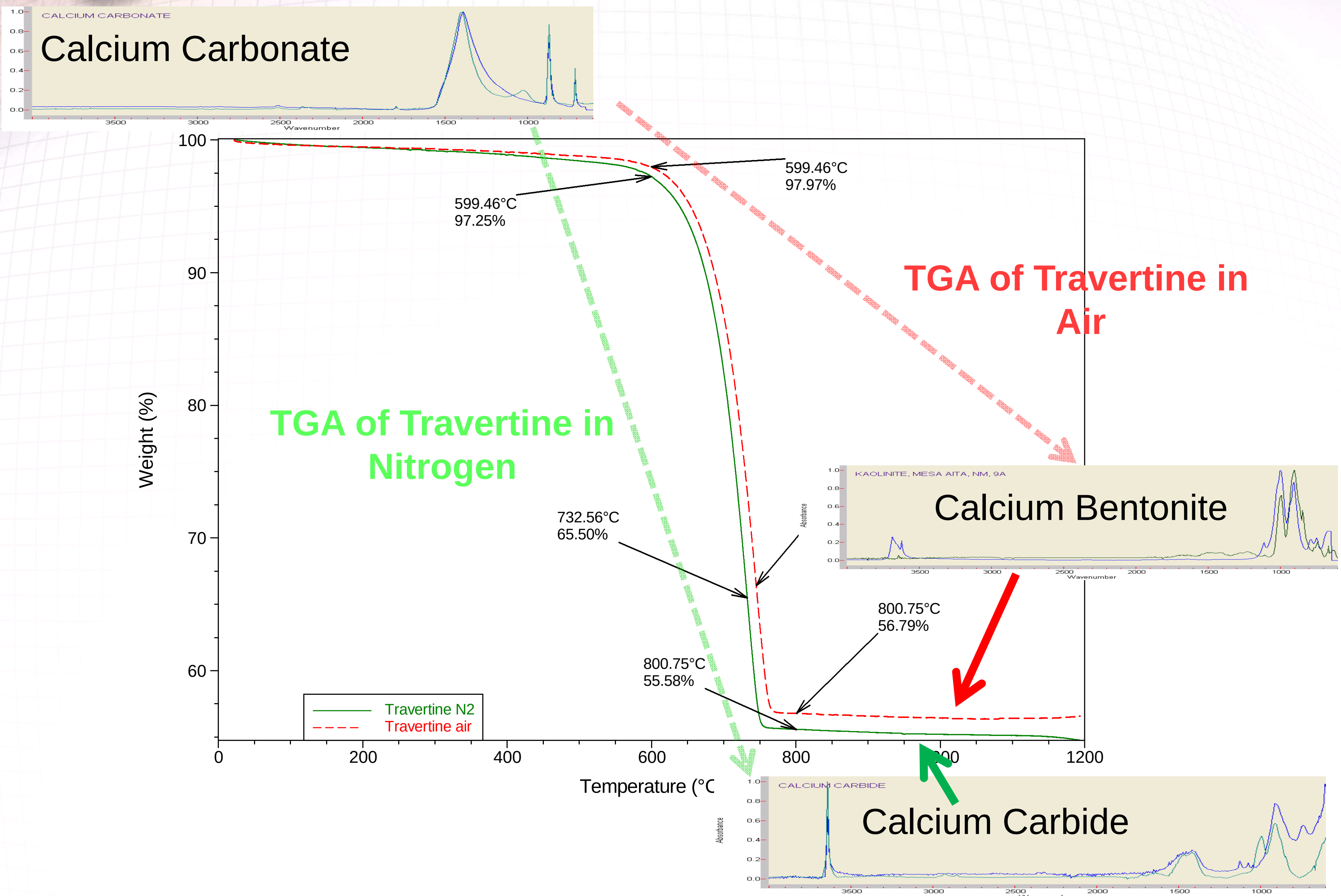
Thermal Response of Travertine in Different Atmospheres



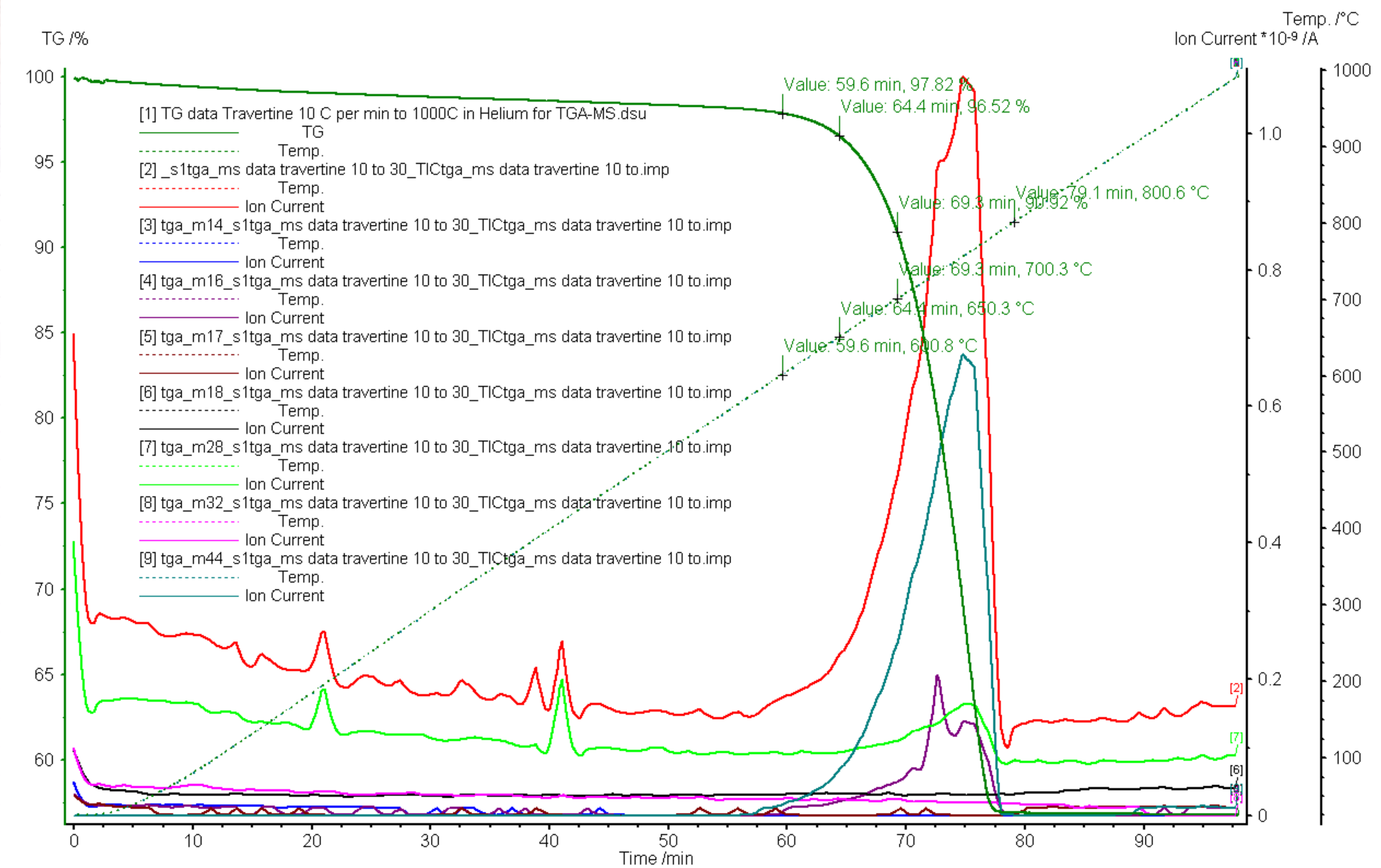
$CaCO_3$ ⟶ CaC_2 or Calcium Bentonite



The Role of Gaseous Atmosphere During Thermal Decomposition of Travertine

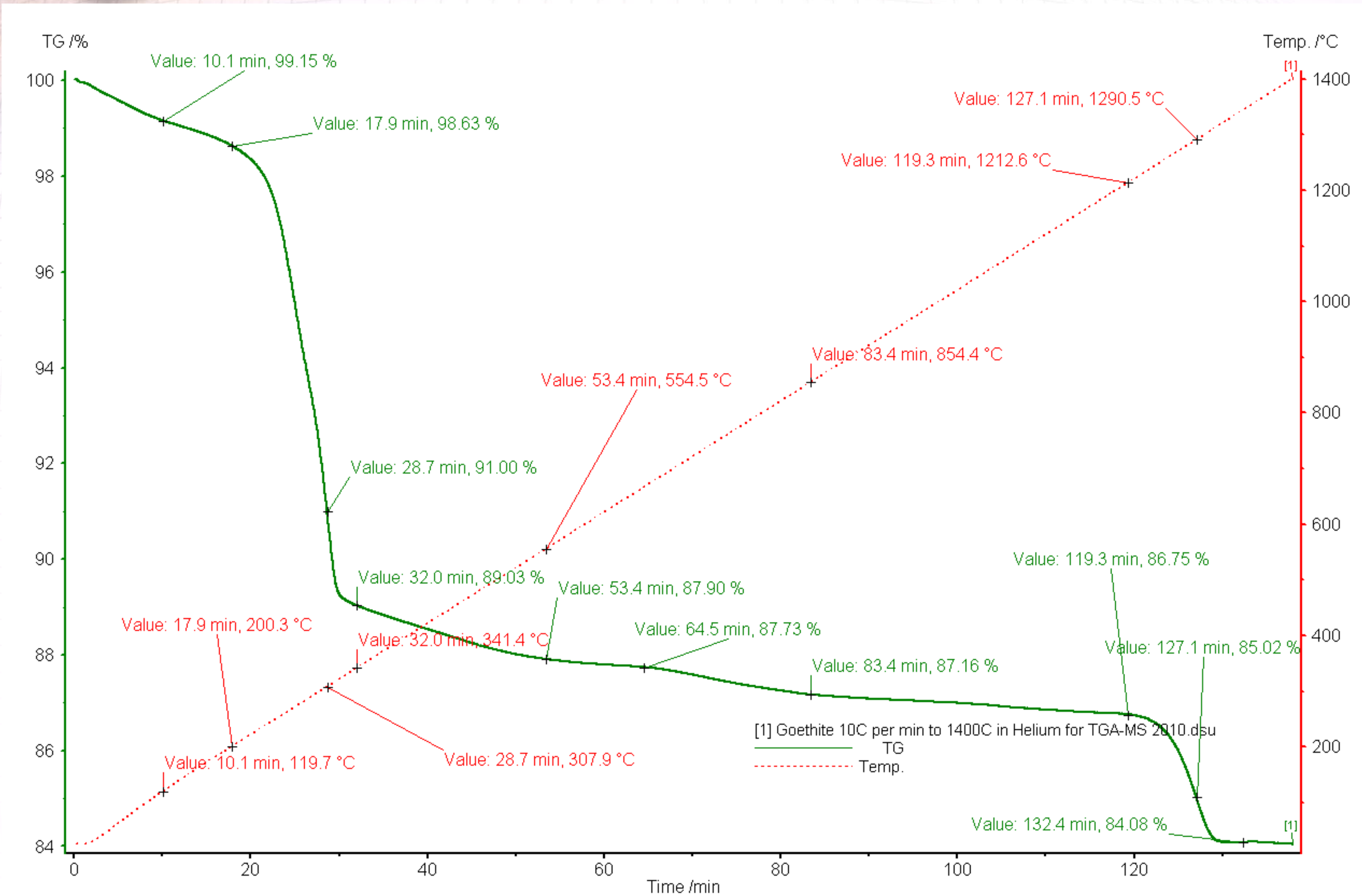


TGA-MS Analysis of Travertine

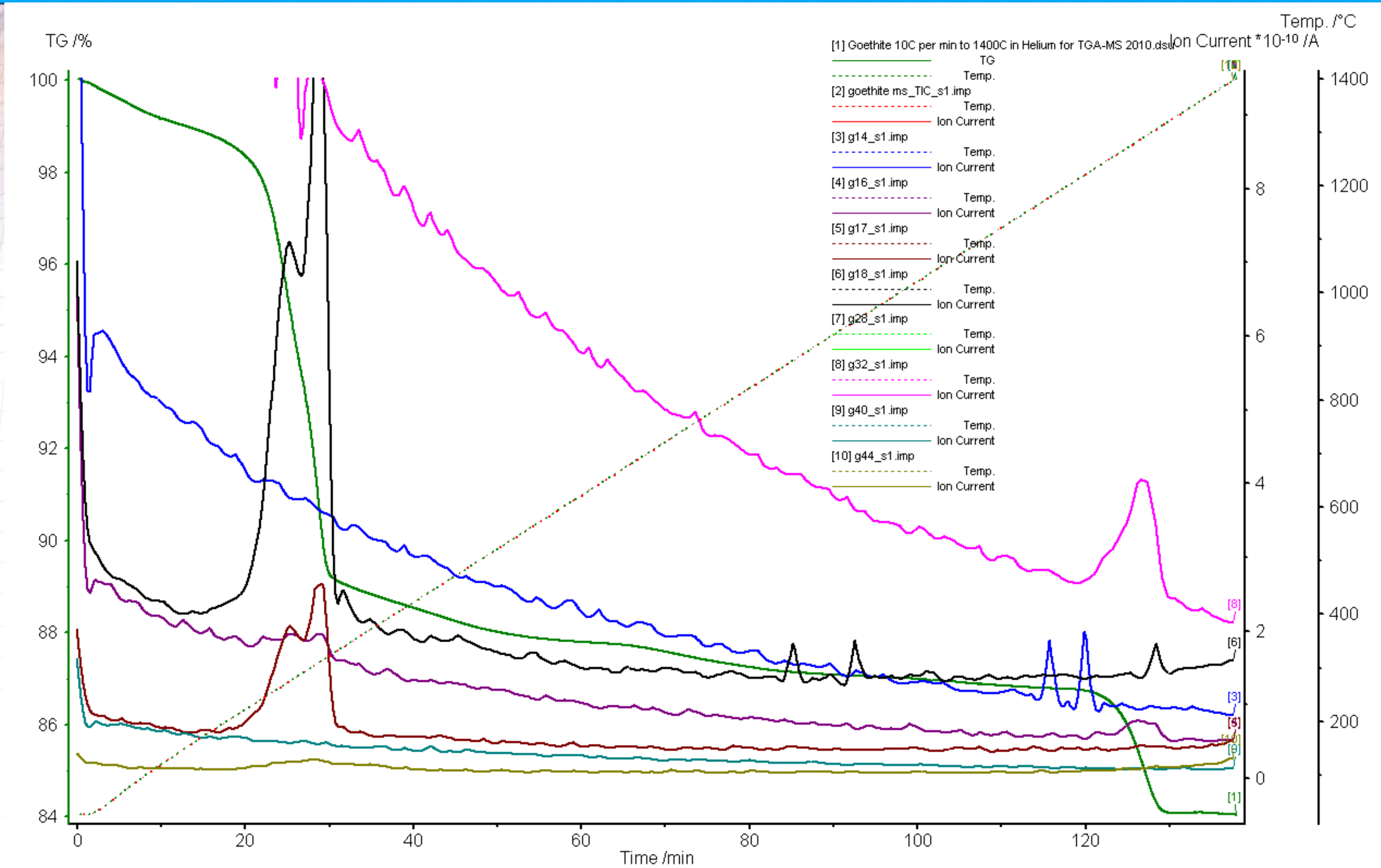


Substances being measured during mass loss near 700ºC include CO_2, CO, and O.

TGA Analysis of Geothite in Helium



Detected Mass Losses of Goethite



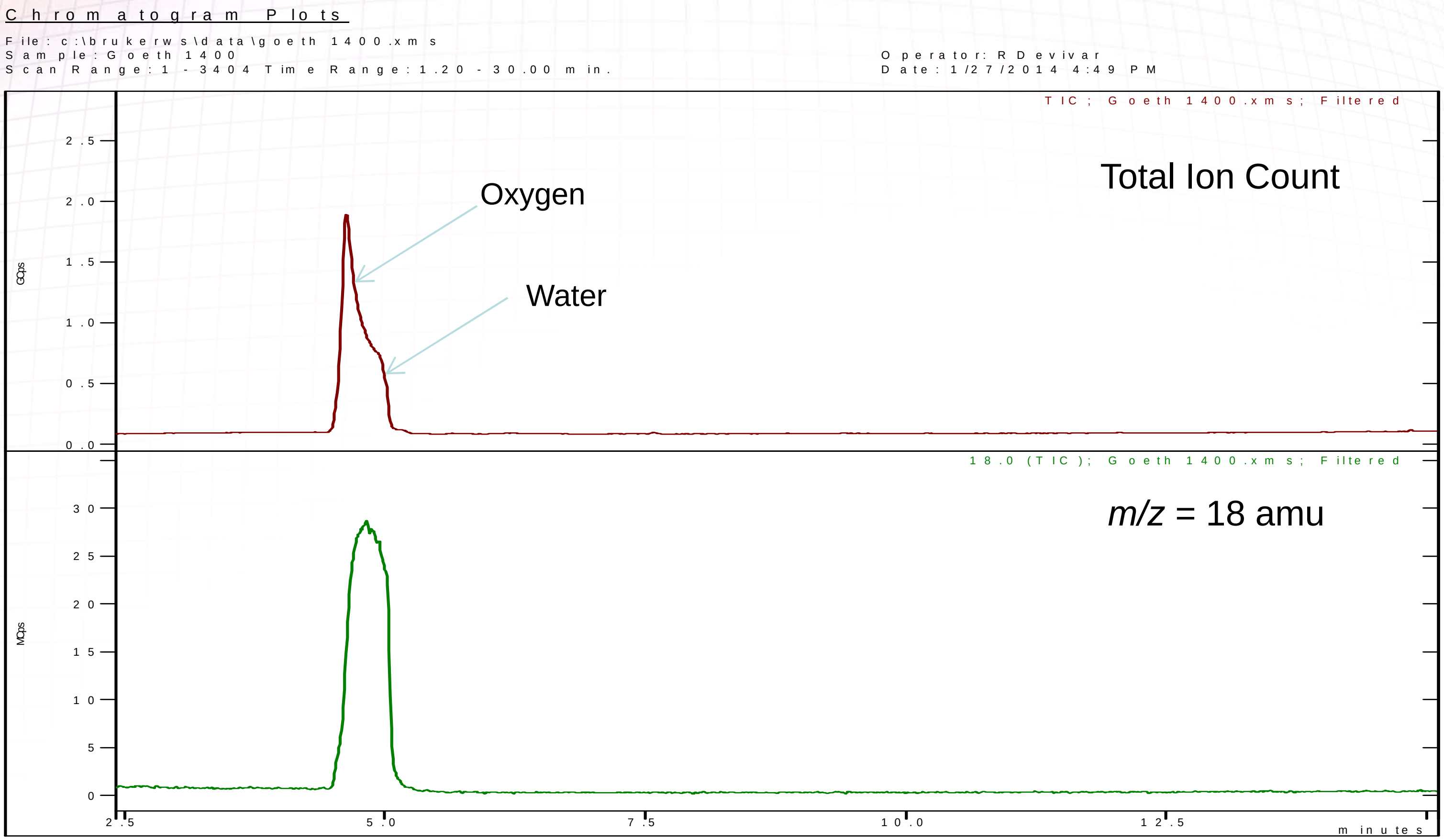
Goethite
α-FeO(OH)

At 120°C, Mass losses include: *m/z* 14 (CH_2), 16 (O), 32 (O_2)

At 308°C, Mass losses include: *m/z* 17 (OH), 18 (H_2O), 32 (O_2)

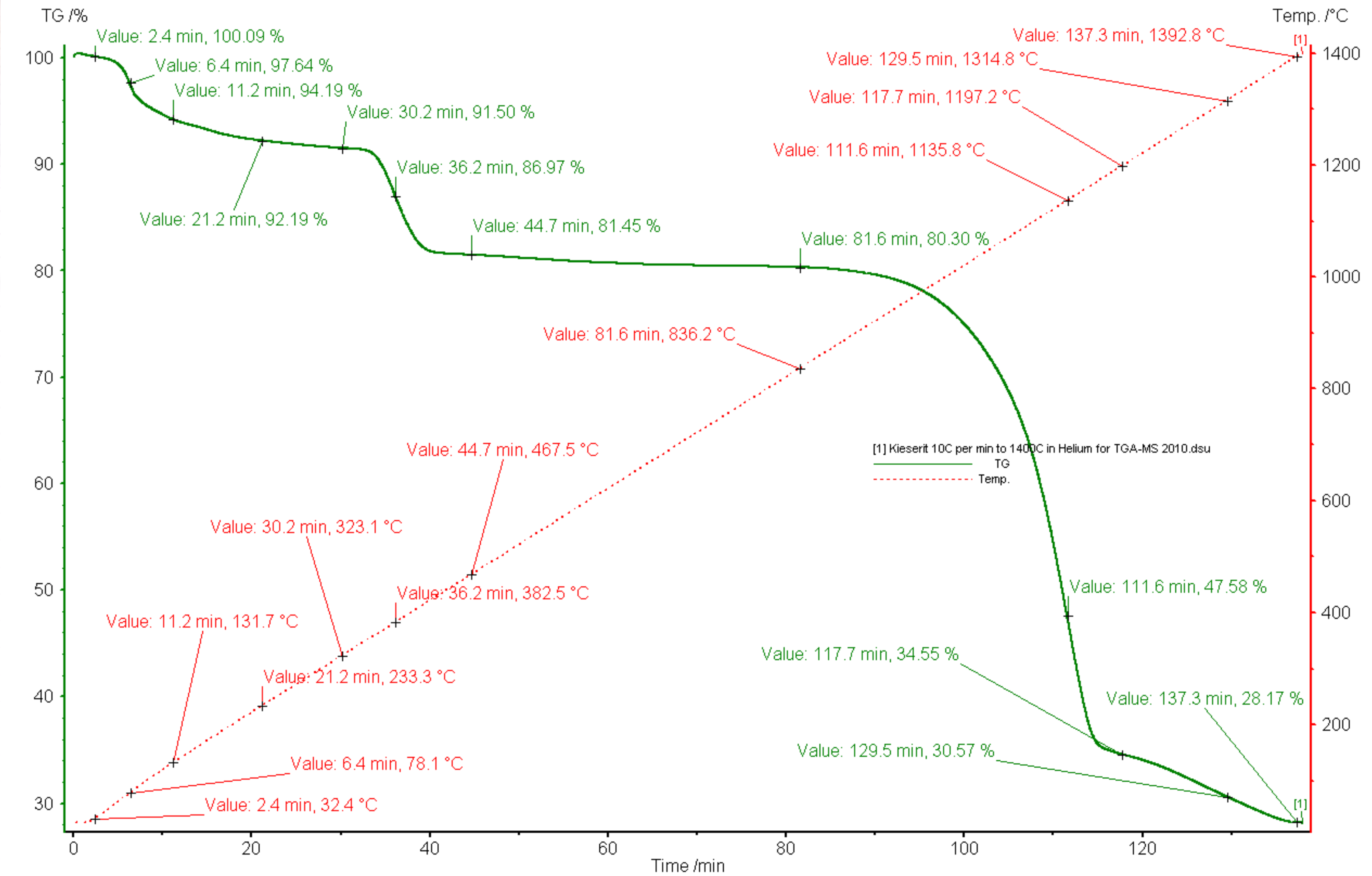
At 1290°C, Mass losses include: *m/z* 16 (O), 18 (H_2O), 32 (O_2)

Goethite Analysis by Py-GC-MS at 1400^{o}C

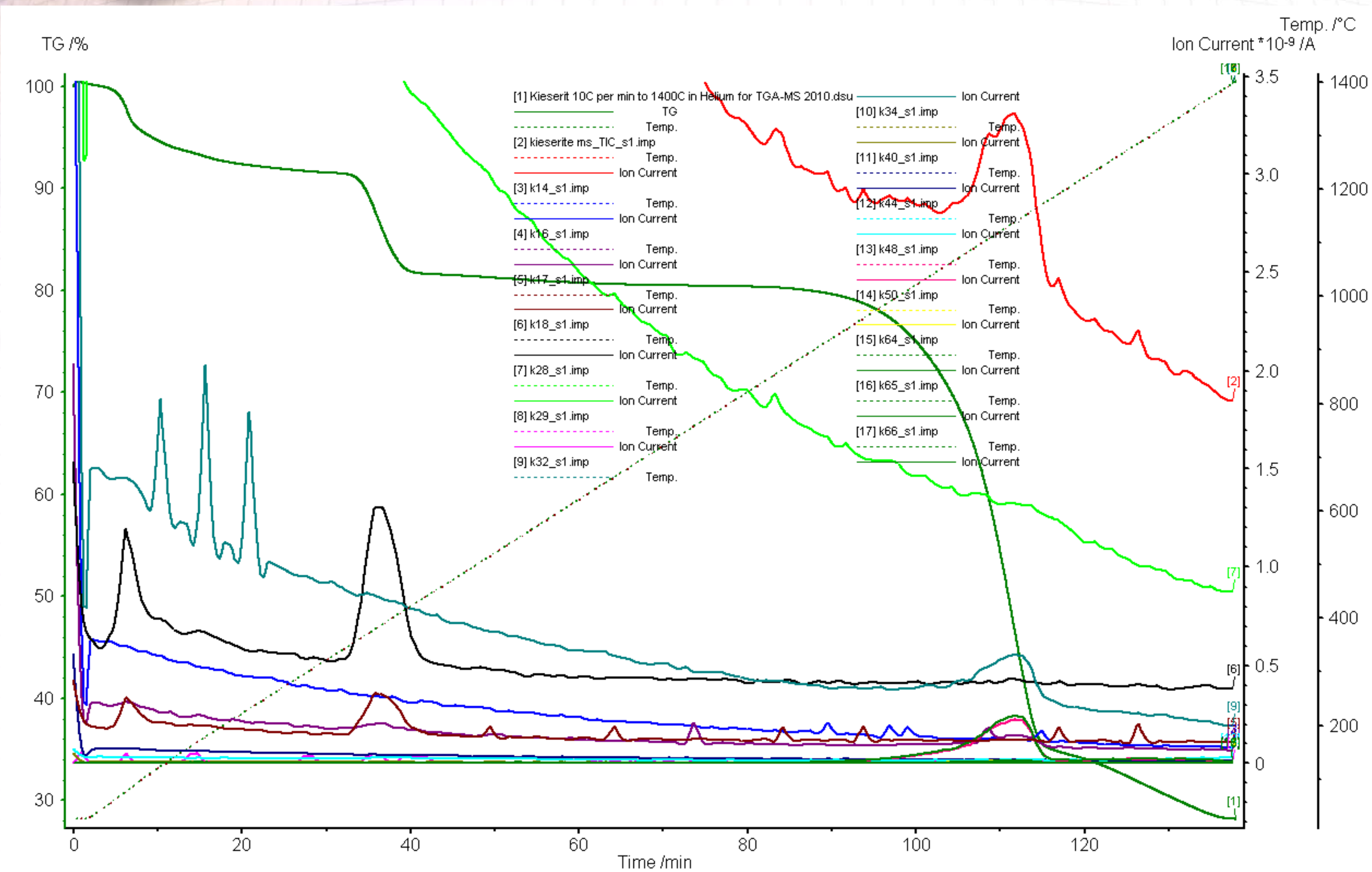


A sample of Goethite was first pyrolyzed at 750^{o}C to remove all but the pertinent species. The same sample was then pyrolyzed at 1400^{o}C

TGA Analysis of Kieserite



Detected Mass Losses of Kieserite



Kieserite
$MgSO_4{\cdot}H_2O$

At 78ºC, Mass losses include: *m/z* 17 (OH), 18 (H_2O), 28 (CO)

At 382ºC, Mass losses include: *m/z* 16 (O), 17 (OH), 18 (H_2O), 28 (CO)

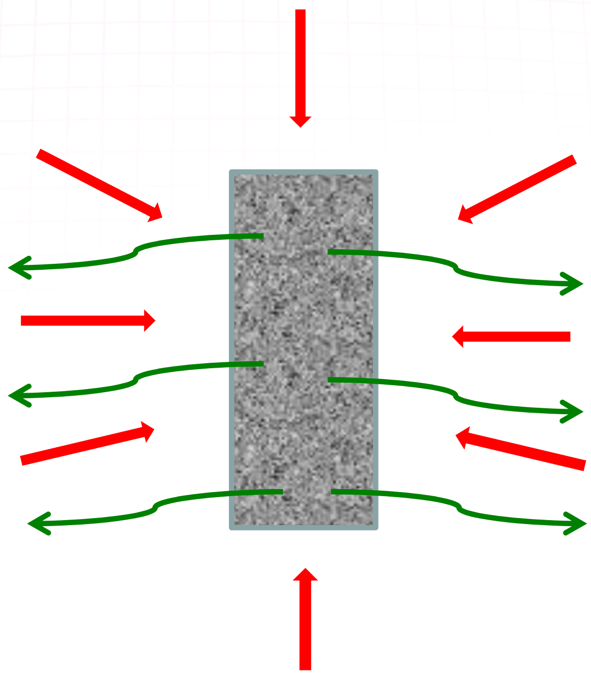
At 1136ºC, Mass losses include: *m/z* 16 (O), 28 (CO), 32 (O_2), 48 (SO), and 64 (SO_2)

At 1315ºC, Mass losses include: *m/z* 17 (OH), 48 (SO), and 64 (SO_2)

Applying Thermal Energy to Extract Chemical Information

Using Thermal Energy:

- How much Thermal Energy do we add
- How fast do we add the Thermal Energy
- How long do we maintain the Thermal Energy
- What atmosphere do we use
- How much sample do we use



Chemical Information

- Trapped solvent
- Organic additives
- Contaminants
- Labile Functional Groups
- Monomer identification
- Off-gassing information
- Inorganic additives

TGA **Pyrolysis-GC-MS** **TGA-MS-IR**