QUANTITATIVE PETROGRAPHY OF L CHONDRITES: 3D MORPHOLOGIC VARIATIONS WITH DEGREE OF EQUILIBRATION AND SHOCK LOADING.

J. M. Friedrich$^{1,2}$, M. L. Rivers$^3$, C. E. Nehru$^{2,4}$, D. S. Ebel$^2$.

$^1$Department of Chemistry, Fordham University, Bronx, NY, 10458. E-mail: friedrich@fordham.edu. $^2$Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY 10024. $^3$Consortium for Advanced Radiation Sources, The University of Chicago, Argonne, IL 60439. $^4$Department of Geology, Brooklyn College, CUNY, Brooklyn, NY 11210.

The petrographic study of two-dimensional (2D) thin sections of chondrites have given us extensive insights into the post-accretionary processes that changed chondritic materials due to heating, aqueous activity, and impact-related processes [1]. Although thin section derived (2D) information such as chemical makeup or exactly precise mineralogical composition can not be rigorously extended to three dimensional (3D) analytical methods, X-ray computed micro-tomography (XRCMT) does allow for an approximate 3D compositional examination of chondritic meteorites [2]. Combined with computer-aided 3D visualizations, XRCMT can be a useful technique for examining the physical metal dispersion in metamorphosed chondrites [3,4]. Here, we are examining and comparing the effect of thermal metamorphism and shock loading on the morphology and distribution of metal and sulfide in a large suite (n=47) of L chondrites.

We have analyzed our suite of unequilibrated and equilibrated L chondrites by XRCMT at resolutions of at least 17 $\mu$m/voxel at the GSECARS 13-BM beamline with the methods outlined in [2]. Sample sizes are between 1-3 cm$^3$. One of the challenges of using L chondrites as analogues for incipient planetary differentiation is quantifying the descriptive language used in petrographic studies: in this work, we augment typical XRCMT volumetric data analysis techniques [e.g. 3] with several in-house methods for the quantitative 3D structural analysis of chondrites. These quantitative descriptors were created to help us quantify the lumpiness of a component (metal and sulfide) or extent of a component’s resemblance to a vein-like structure [5]. The metrics we calculated include textural metrics for classification [6]; model-dependent structural parameters [7]; and algebraic topological descriptors for 3D structures [8].

To date, we have verified statistical differences between the textures of 29 equilibrated (n=18) and unequilibrated (n=11) L chondrites in our current suite. Our work will increase knowledge of metal/silicate distribution and segregation in primitive solar system bodies and identify the extent to which possible mechanisms are responsible for their current distribution.