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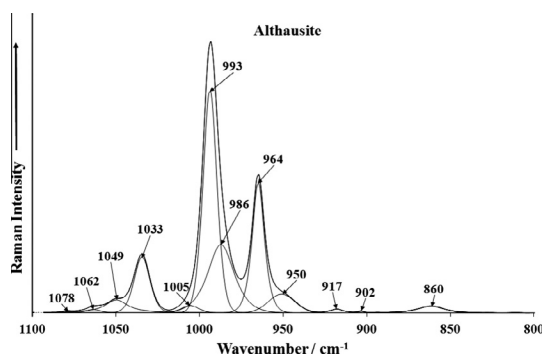
journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/saaVibrational spectroscopic characterization of the phosphate mineral althausite $\text{Mg}_2(\text{PO}_4)(\text{OH},\text{F},\text{O})$ – Implications for the molecular structureRay L. Frost^{a,*}, Andrés López^a, Yunfei Xi^a, Ricardo Scholz^b

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HIGHLIGHTS

- We have studied the mineral althausite $\text{Mg}_2(\text{PO}_4)(\text{OH},\text{F},\text{O})$.
- It occurs as a secondary product in granitic pegmatites.
- Raman and infrared bands are assigned to HOPO_3^{3-} and PO_4^{3-} units.
- No bands which are attributable to water were found.
- Vibrational spectroscopy enables aspects of the molecular structure of althausite.

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



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ABSTRACT

Natural single-crystal specimens of althausite from Brazil, with general formula $\text{Mg}_2(\text{PO}_4)(\text{OH},\text{F},\text{O})$ were investigated by Raman and infrared spectroscopy. The mineral occurs as a secondary product in granitic pegmatites. The Raman spectrum of althausite is characterized by bands at 1020, 1033 and 1044 cm^{-1} , assigned to ν_1 symmetric stretching modes of the HOPO_3^{3-} and PO_4^{3-} units. Raman bands at around 1067, 1083 and 1138 cm^{-1} are attributed to both the HOP and PO antisymmetric stretching vibrations. The set of Raman bands observed at 575, 589 and 606 cm^{-1} are assigned to the ν_4 out of plane bending modes of the PO_4 and H_2PO_4 units. Raman bands at 439, 461, 475 and 503 cm^{-1} are attributed to the ν_2 PO_4 and H_2PO_4 bending modes. Strong Raman bands observed at 312, 346 cm^{-1} with shoulder bands at 361, 381 and 398 cm^{-1} are assigned to MgO stretching vibrations. No bands which are attributable to water were found. Vibrational spectroscopy enables aspects of the molecular structure of althausite to be assessed.

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Introduction

Althausite $\text{Mg}_2(\text{PO}_4)(\text{OH},\text{F},\text{O})$ is a hydroxy phosphate of magnesium. The mineral is found in complex granitic pegmatites, formed by oxidation and hydration of primary minerals. The mineral originates from Minas Gerais [1], at the Sapucaia pegmatite mine, about 50 km east–southeast of Governador Valdares, and in good crystals from the Criminoso pegmatite mine, about 35 km north.

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The mineral varies in color from dark blue–green to black. The mineral is found at many sites worldwide [1–9] including at Olary, South Australia [9], and is found in magnetite–serpentine deposits. The name of the mineral honors Professor Egon Althaus (1933–), Karlsruhe University, Karlsruhe, Germany.

The mineral is orthorhombic [10], pseudotetragonal with point group: $2/m$. The cell data is Space Group: $P2_1/c$, with $a = 8.258$, $b = 6.054$, $c = 14.383$, $\beta = 120.150$ and $Z = 4$.

According to Roemming and Raade, magnesium atoms occur in both five- and sixfold coordination, and the coordination polyhedra are highly distorted [10]. The Mg octahedra form chains along D by

edge-sharing. Hydroxyl and fluorine occur in a largely ordered distribution among two different structural sites and occupy alternating positions along 'channels' parallel to D. The mineral is related to the mineral wagnerite Mg_2PO_4F [11–14]. Wagnerite may be considered the fluorine end-member and althausite, the hydroxyl end member. Another mineral, which is chemically closely related to althausite, is holtedahlite Mg_2PO_4OH [15]. Althausite has some formal structural features in common with the minerals libethenite–olivenerite–adamite–eveite–andalusite, in that they contain similar cation polyhedra with 5- and 6-coordination and the same kind of edge-sharing octahedral chains [12,16]. Complex phase relationships exist in the MgO – P_2O_5 – H_2O system [11].

Raman spectroscopy has proven most useful for the study of mineral structures. The objective of this research is to report the Raman and infrared spectra of althausite and to relate the spectra to the molecular structure of the mineral. This is the first report of a systematic study of the mineral althausite from Brazil.

Experimental

Samples description and preparation

The althausite sample studied in this work was collected from Minas Gerais [1], at the Sapucaia pegmatite mine, about 50 km east–southeast of Governador Valadares. The sample was incorporated to the collection of the Geology Department of the Federal University of Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, Brazil, with sample code SAC-024.

Scanning electron microscopy (SEM)

Experiments and analyses involving electron microscopy were performed in the Center of Microscopy of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil (<http://www.microscopia.ufmg.br>). Althausite crystal cleavage fragment was coated with a 5 nm layer of evaporated Au. Secondary Electron and Backscattering Electron images were obtained using a JEOL JSM-6360LV equipment.

Raman microprobe spectroscopy

Crystals of althausite were placed on a polished metal surface on the stage of an Olympus BHSM microscope, which is equipped with 10 \times , 20 \times , and 50 \times objectives. The microscope is part of a Renishaw 1000 Raman microscope system, which also includes a monochromator, a filter system and a CCD detector (1024 pixels). The Raman spectra were excited by a Spectra-Physics model 127 He–Ne laser producing highly polarized light at 633 nm and collected at a nominal resolution of 2 cm^{-1} and a precision of ± 1 cm^{-1} in the range between 200 and 4000 cm^{-1} . Repeated acquisitions on the crystals using the highest magnification (50 \times) were accumulated to improve the signal to noise ratio of the spectra. Raman spectra were calibrated using the 520.5 cm^{-1} line of a silicon wafer. The Raman spectrum of at least 10 crystals was collected to ensure the consistency of the spectra.

Infrared spectroscopy

Infrared spectra were obtained using a Nicolet Nexus 870 FTIR spectrometer with a smart endurance single bounce diamond ATR cell. Spectra over the 4000–525 cm^{-1} range were obtained by the co-addition of 128 scans with a resolution of 4 cm^{-1} and a mirror velocity of 0.6329 cm/s. Spectra were co-added to improve the signal to noise ratio.

Spectral manipulation such as baseline correction/adjustment and smoothing were performed using the Spectralcalc software package GRAMS (Galactic Industries Corporation, NH, USA). Band component analysis was undertaken using the Jandel 'Peakfit' software package that enabled the type of fitting function to be selected and allows specific parameters to be fixed or varied accordingly. Band fitting was done using a Lorentzian–Gaussian cross-product function with the minimum number of component bands used for the fitting process. The Gaussian–Lorentzian ratio was maintained at values greater than 0.7 and fitting was undertaken until reproducible results were obtained with squared correlations of r^2 greater than 0.995.

Results and discussion

Vibrational spectroscopy background

In aqueous systems, the Raman spectra of phosphate oxyanions show a symmetric stretching mode (ν_1) at 938 cm^{-1} , an antisymmetric stretching mode (ν_3) at 1017 cm^{-1} , a symmetric bending mode (ν_2) at 420 cm^{-1} and a ν_4 bending mode at 567 cm^{-1} [17–19]. Ross in Farmer listed some well-known minerals containing phosphate which were either hydrated or hydroxylated or both [20]. The vibrational spectrum of the dihydrogen phosphate anion has been reported by Farmer [20]. The PO_2 symmetric stretching mode occurs at 1072 cm^{-1} and the POH symmetric stretching mode at ~ 878 cm^{-1} . The POH antisymmetric stretching mode was found at 947 cm^{-1} and the $P(OH)_2$ bending mode at 380 cm^{-1} . The band at 1150 cm^{-1} was assigned to the PO_2 antisymmetric stretching mode. The position of these bands will shift according to the crystal structure of the mineral.

The vibrational spectra of phosphate minerals have been published by Farmer's treatise Chapter 17 [20]. Table 17.III in Ref. [20] reports the band positions of a wide range of phosphates and arsenates. The band positions for the monohydrogen phosphate anion of disodium hydrogen phosphate dihydrate is given as ν_1 at 820 and 866 cm^{-1} , ν_2 at around 460 cm^{-1} , ν_3 as 953, 993, 1055, 1070, 1120 and 1135 cm^{-1} , ν_4 at 520, 539, 558, 575 cm^{-1} . The POH unit has vibrations associated with the OH species. The stretching vibration of the POH units was tabulated as 2430 and 2870 cm^{-1} , and bending modes at 766 and 1256 cm^{-1} . Water stretching vibrations were found at 3050 and 3350 cm^{-1} . The position of the bands for the disodium hydrogen phosphate is very dependent on the waters of hydration. There have been several Raman spectroscopic studies of the monosodium dihydrogen phosphate chemicals [21–25].

Vibrational spectroscopy

The Raman spectrum of althausite over the 100 to 4000 cm^{-1} spectral range is illustrated in Fig. 1a. This figure shows the peak position and the relative intensities of the Raman bands. It is noted there are large parts of the spectrum where no intensity is observed and therefore, the spectrum is subdivided into sections based upon the types of vibration being studied. The infrared spectrum of althausite over the 500–4000 cm^{-1} spectral range is reported in Fig. 1b. This figure shows the position and relative intensities of the infrared bands. There are large parts of the infrared spectrum where little or no intensity is observed. Hence, the spectrum is subdivided into sections based on which bands are being studied.

The Raman spectrum of althausite over the 800 to 1200 cm^{-1} spectral range are reported in Fig. 2a. The Raman spectrum of althausite in this spectral region shows complexity with a series of overlapping bands. The chemistry of althausite is such that it

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