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# Synthesis and luminescent properties of red-emitting phosphors: $ZnSiF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$ and $ZnGeF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$ doped with $Mn^{4+}$

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#### ABSTRACT

A simple method for the synthesis of red emitting  $Mn^{4+}$  activated phosphors is presented. The crystal structure of  $ZnGeF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$  was determined by single crystal X-ray diffraction and was isotopic with  $NiSnCl_6 \cdot 6H_2O$  (space group  $R\overline{3}$ ). Luminescent properties of  $ZnSiF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$  and  $ZnGeF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$  doped with manganese(IV) at different concentration levels were studied. The optimal  $Mn^{4+}$  concentration with respect to the emission intensity was found to be 5 mol% for  $ZnSiF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$  and 3 mol% for  $ZnGeF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$ .

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### 1. Introduction

Manganese at different oxidation states is an efficient activator ion for photo- and cathodoluminescence in many solid state compounds. However, in most of applied phosphors manganese is present in the oxidation states (II) or (IV), due to the high efficiency [1]. Manganese(IV) is used as an activator in a large number of luminescent materials, for example in (i) oxides:  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  [2], YAlO<sub>3</sub> [3], Gd<sub>3</sub>Ga<sub>5</sub>O<sub>12</sub> [4], MAl<sub>12</sub>O<sub>19</sub> (where M is Ca, Sr, or Ba) [5], LiGa<sub>5</sub>O<sub>8</sub> [6], Mg<sub>2</sub>TiO<sub>4</sub> [7], (ii) nitrides: GaN [8], or (iii) fluorides: Na<sub>2</sub>SiF<sub>6</sub> [9], K<sub>2</sub>GeF<sub>6</sub> [10]. If a trivalent ion such as aluminum(III) is substituted by manganese(IV), the additional charge is often compensated by co-doping with a divalent ion, e.g. Ca<sup>2+</sup> or Mg<sup>2+</sup> [11]. Most of the Mn<sup>4+</sup> phosphors are synthesized at a high temperature, which requires special equipment and thus causes rather high costs [9].

Novel synthesis methods as well as the study of the photoluminescence properties of hexafluoro complexes doped by manganese(IV) are in the focus of the interest of many research groups at academia and industry due to their potential application in solid state light sources [12]. Red emitting phosphors derived from alkaline hexafluorides, such as  $K_2SiF_6:Mn^{4+}$ , exhibit high

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PL quantum efficiency and a suitable color point for fluorescent light sources with a high color rendering for red colors [13]. The most common method to synthesize fluorides doped by  $Mn^{4+}$  is the direct method, i.e. the chemical etching of Si wafers or Ge shots in aqueous HF solution upon an addition of potassium permanganate [1,9,10,14]. Another method of synthesizing doped fluorides is based on the dissolution of an appropriate hexafluoride compound KMF<sub>6</sub> (M=Si, Ti, and Ge) with K<sub>2</sub>MnF<sub>6</sub> and its subsequent re-crystallization [15,16]. Hexafluorosilicates doped with Mn<sup>4+</sup> may be as well precipitated from a solution of e.g. hexafluorosilicic acid in HF and K<sub>2</sub>MnF<sub>6</sub> by the addition of the appropriate metal sources. K<sub>2</sub>MnF<sub>6</sub> used as a source of Mn<sup>4+</sup> is mostly synthesized through reduction of permanganate by the Bode's method [17] or with diethylether [18].

Beyond the already described hexafluorides, also hydrates of the hexafluorides can be doped by manganese(IV). Hexafluorides  $ZnSiF_6.6H_2O$  and  $ZnGeF_6.6H_2O$  belong to the group of compounds with the general formula  $M^{II}SiF_6.6H_2O$  (wherein e.g.  $M^{II}$  is Co, Ni, or Mn) and are isotopic to  $NiSnCl_6.6H_2O$  (space group  $R\overline{3}$ ) [19].

To our best knowledge, this work on the luminescent properties of hexafluoride-hexahydrates doped by different concentrations of manganese(IV) is reported for the first time. The crystal structure of  $ZnGeF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$  was investigated by single-crystal X-ray diffraction. The purity of all obtained materials was confirmed by powder X-ray diffraction and thermoluminescent properties were determined by photoluminescence spectroscopy.

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# 2. Experimental

 $\rm K_2MnF_6$  was synthesized according to the method described in the literature [18]. 2.5 g KHF\_2 (99.99%, Merck) was dissolved in HF (38%, Merck), after 20 min of mixing 2 g KMnO\_4 were added and the solution was cooled in an ice bath. After 10 min of stirring, 15 drops diethylether were added and the precipitate ( $\rm K_2MnF_6$ ) was filtered off and washed with glacial acetic acid and acetone. The obtained yellow powder was dried on air.

The synthesis of  $ZnSiF_6 \cdot 6H_2O:Mn^{4+}$  was carried out in a polyethylene beaker.  $H_2SiF_6$  (34%, Sigma-Aldrich) was dissolved in an aqueous HF solution together with varying concentrations of  $K_2MnF_6$  (5, 3 and 0.5 mol% of  $Mn^{4+}$ ). Then, to the above solutions  $ZnF_2$  (99%, Sigma-Aldrich), dissolved in HF, was added. The mixture was cooled until  $ZnSiF_6 \cdot 6H_2O:Mn^{4+}$  precipitated. The obtained powder was filtered off and dried on air.

 $ZnGeF_6^-$ ·  $6H_2O:Mn^{4+}$  was synthesized by the same procedure. The appropriate amount of  $GeO_2$  (99.99%, Fluka) was dissolved in aq. HF and  $K_2MnF_6$  (0.5, 3, or 5 mol% of  $Mn^{4+}$ ) was added. Next,  $ZnF_2$  dissolved in HF was added and the mixture was cooled down. The obtained precipitate was filtered off and dried on air. The single crystal of  $ZnGeF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$  was obtained by slow evaporation of the described mixture.

The powder diffraction patterns of all samples were recorded with a powder diffractometer (Stoe STADI-P, Ge monochromator) using CuK<sub> $\alpha$ 1</sub> radiation. Excitation and emission spectra were recorded on an Edinburgh Instruments FSL920 spectrometer equipped with a 450 W Xe arc lamp, mirror optics for powder samples and a cooled (-20 °C) single-photon counting photomultiplier from Hamamatsu (R2658P). The correction file for the emission spectra was obtained from a tungsten incandescent lamp certified by the NPL (National Physics Laboratory, UK). For thermal quenching measurements a cryostat "MicrostatN" from Oxford Instruments in the present spectrometer was employed. Liquid nitrogen was used for cooling.

# 3. Results and discussion

The XRD pattern of a typical sample and the corresponding calculated pattern of  $ZnSiF_6 \cdot 6H_2O$  are shown in Fig. 1. Fig. 2 displays the XRD pattern of  $ZnGeF_6 \cdot 6H_2O:Mn^{4+}(5\%)$ . All synthesized



**Fig. 1.** Experimental XRD pattern of  $ZnSiF_6 \cdot 6H_2O:Mn^{4+}(5\%)$  (a) and the corresponding pattern calculated from single crystal data [ICSD file no. 34757] (b).



**Fig. 2.** Experimental XRD pattern of obtained  $ZnGeF_6 \cdot 6H_2O:Mn^{4+}(5\%)$  (a) and the corresponding pattern calculated from single crystal data obtained by our group (b).

Table 1				
Crystal data a	and structure	refinement for	$GeF_6 \cdot Zn(OH_2)_6.$	

Empirical formula	H <sub>12</sub> F <sub>6</sub> GeO <sub>6</sub> Zn		
Formula weight Crystal system Space group Unit cell dimensions	360.06 g mol <sup>-1</sup> Trigonal $R\overline{3}$ (no. 148) a=b=948.7(3) pm c=982.1(3) pm	$\alpha = \beta = 90^{\circ}$ $\gamma = 120^{\circ}$	
Volume Z Temperature Density (calculated) Absorption coefficient F(0 0) Crystal shape Crystal size Theta range for data collection Index ranges Reflections collected	0.7655(4) nm <sup>3</sup> 3 220(2) K 2.343 g/cm <sup>3</sup> 5.389 mm <sup>-1</sup> 528 Colorless needle 0.44 $\times$ 0.14 $\times$ 0.14 mm <sup>3</sup> 3.23–25.93° $-11 \le h \le 11, -11 \le k \le 11$ 2669	, −12≤1≤12	
Independent reflections Data/parameters Goodness-of-fit on $F^2$ Final <i>R</i> indices [ $I > 2\sigma(I)$ ] <i>R</i> indices (all data) Largest diff. peak and hole	331 [ $K(\text{int})=0.0558$ ] 331/31 1.100 R1=0.0288, wR2=0.0662 R1=0.0318, wR2=0.0674 0.459 and $-0.500 \text{ e/Å}^3$		

substances were crystalline and of single-phase, which means additional phases could not be detected.

ZnSiF<sub>6</sub>· 6H<sub>2</sub>O and ZnGeF<sub>6</sub>· 6H<sub>2</sub>O have the same structure as NiSiF<sub>6</sub>· 6H<sub>2</sub>O [20]. ZnGeF<sub>6</sub>· 6H<sub>2</sub>O consists of octahedral [Zn(H<sub>2</sub>O)<sub>6</sub>]<sup>2+</sup> and [GeF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>2-</sup> units, which are interconnected by hydrogen bonds. The arrangement of the polyhedra is related to CsCl-type structure [21,22]. Crystallographic data for ZnGeF<sub>6</sub>· 6H<sub>2</sub>O are given in Table 1, the octahedral [Zn(H<sub>2</sub>O)<sub>6</sub>]<sup>2+</sup> and [GeF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>2-</sup> units are shown in Fig. 3. Atomic coordinates and equivalent isotropic displacement parameters for ZnGeF<sub>6</sub>· 6H<sub>2</sub>O are reported in Table 2. The positions of the H-atoms were found from a difference Fourier map and refined freely. The crystal structure of ZnGeF<sub>6</sub>· 6H<sub>2</sub>O was refined with the space group R3 (no. 148) and unit cell dimensions *a*=948.7(3), *c*=982.1(3) pm for *Z*=3. The Si or Ge ions have point symmetry of -3.

Due to presence of water molecules in the crystal structure, the compounds are not stable at higher temperatures. That means Download English Version:

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