

## Electron-Density Distribution in Magnesite (MgCO<sub>3</sub>)

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### Abstract

The electron-density distribution in natural magnesite, MgCO<sub>3</sub>, has been determined from absolute X-ray diffraction data measured on single-crystal plates. Crystal data are  $M_r = 84.3$ ,  $R\bar{3}c$ ,  $a = 4.636$  (1),  $c = 15.026$  (2) Å,  $V = 279.6$  (1) Å<sup>3</sup>,  $Z = 6$ ,  $D_x = 3.0$  Mg m<sup>-3</sup>, experimental  $\mu(\text{Mo } K\alpha) = 0.564$  mm<sup>-1</sup>,  $\lambda(\text{Mo } K\alpha_1) = 0.7070$  Å,  $F(000) = 252$ . Conventional refinement to  $R = 0.025$  from 300 reflections up to  $(\sin\theta)/\lambda = 1.0$  Å<sup>-1</sup> was made. Anisotropic primary-extinction correction [Zachariassen (1967). *Acta Cryst.* **23**, 558–564] was applied. The deformation maps show maxima of  $0.50$  e Å<sup>-3</sup> in the C–O bond and in regions of the O-atom lone pairs, and no disorder is observed in the planar CO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup> anions. In the absolute-density maps,  $\rho$  has minima of  $2.55$  e Å<sup>-3</sup> at the midpoint of the C–O bond and of  $0.18$  e Å<sup>-3</sup> between the Mg and O atoms, which was interpreted as an ionic interaction between Mg<sup>2+</sup> and CO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup> ions. The spherical integration of  $\rho$  around the Mg atom gives  $10.10$  e; however, an overlap density  $\rho = 0.24$  e Å<sup>-3</sup> is found between the two O atoms forming the longest distance (3.020 Å) of the MgO<sub>6</sub> octahedron.

### Introduction

Electron-density studies have received much attention in the last years. Most of them have dealt with deformation-density maps obtained either from a combination of relative X-ray and neutron diffraction data, the so-called  $X-N$  maps, or from X-ray diffraction data only. In the latter case, positional and thermal parameters are obtained from the high-order reflections and the  $\Delta\rho$  maps are known as  $X-X$  maps. On the other hand, studies aimed at the determination of electron density on an absolute scale are scarce. Of them, those of Mg<sub>2</sub>Si (Panke & Wölfel, 1969), LiOH (Göttlicher & Kieselbach, 1976) and NaNO<sub>3</sub> (Göttlicher & Knöchel, 1980) are the most recently reported.

For calcite-like compounds, such as NaNO<sub>3</sub>, the space-group symmetry requires planar XO<sub>3</sub> groups although deviation from planarity was suggested. So the

IR spectrum of NaNO<sub>3</sub> could only be interpreted on the assumption of a pyramidal model for the NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> ion (Schäfer, Matosi & Aderhold, 1930) which was also proposed by Pauling (1931) on the basis of quantum-mechanical calculations. This was confirmed by electron-density maps (Göttlicher & Knöchel, 1980) which showed the nitrate anions as flat pyramids with a height of 0.1 Å and slightly rotated from their special position, but arranged statistically so that the space group  $R\bar{3}c$  holds for the whole crystal.

Distortions of the XO<sub>3</sub> groups also occur in many other compounds. Exhaustive studies have recently been reported for orthoborates (Zobetz, 1982) and for carbonates (Zemann, 1981).

Disorder of the CO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup> anion in calcite and magnesite was also suggested by several authors. So in a preliminary communication on the electron density of calcite (Peterson, Ross, Gibbs, Chiari, Gupta & Tossell, 1979), the rigid-body analysis of the CO<sub>3</sub> group was considered to be consistent with positional disorder which was interpreted as a screw motion parallel to  $c$ . Similar results were obtained for calcite in a high-temperature refinement of calcite and magnesite (Markgraf & Reder, 1985). However, the structure refinement of calcite, with data at 1073 K, could be made in the space group  $R\bar{3}c$  and the Fourier maps showed no extra peaks due to positional disorder of the O atoms. For magnesite, orientational disorder was also suggested (Burton & Kikuchi, 1984) to explain the poor fit between experimental and calculated phase diagrams, although neither disorder nor distortion have been discussed in two previous X-ray structure refinements (Oh, Morikawa, Iwai & Aoki, 1973; Effenberger, Mereiter & Zemann, 1981). Finally, in an electron-density study of dolomite, CaMg(CO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, based on X-ray and neutron data, the CO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup> anions appear pyramidally distorted with the C atom shifted by 0.018 (1) Å from the O<sub>3</sub> plane (Effenberger, Kirfel & Will, 1983).

A second interesting aspect refers to the nature of the Mg–O bond. In the work on dolomite cited above, positive regions in the difference Fourier syntheses were observed at the midpoints of the Ca–O and Mg–O lines, suggesting the covalency of both bonds. Similar conclusions were deduced for the Mg–O bond from a comparative study of electron-charge distribution in

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MO ( $M = \text{Mg, Ca, Sr, Ba}$ ) oxides (Vidal-Valat, Vidal & Kurki-Suonio, 1978). On the other hand, a fully ionic character has been assigned to MgO from LCAO calculations (Causa, Dovesi, Pisani & Roetti, 1986).

We have undertaken the present study on  $\text{MgCO}_3$  to determine the geometry and the bonds in the carbonate group and the type of bond between O and Mg atoms.

## Experimental

### (a) Crystal preparation and intensity measurements

Unit-cell parameters were obtained by least-squares refinement of the  $2\theta$  values determined on a powder sample, using  $\text{Co K}\alpha$  radiation. The values agree with those reported for synthetic magnesite (Oh, Morikawa, Iwai & Aoki, 1973).

Two bulky crystals of natural magnesite ( $\text{MgCO}_3$ ) were ground parallel to (100) and (110), respectively, resulting in two plates of approximate sections  $1.5 \times 1.0$  cm. These two plates were used to measure the intensities of 3680 reflections, most of them in the symmetrical transmission setting on an automated four-circle diffractometer. The remaining reflections were measured in asymmetrical transmission but always minimizing the angle between the incident beam and the normal to the crystal plane. Measurements were carried out up to  $(\sin\theta)/\lambda = 1.0 \text{ \AA}^{-1}$ , at plate thickness  $t = 1.89, 1.59, 0.98$  and  $0.44$  mm for the (100) plate and  $t = 1.55, 1.20, 0.91$  and  $0.32$  mm for the (110) plate, using LiF-monochromated and further-collimated ( $0.8 \times 0.8$  mm)  $\text{Mo K}\alpha_1$  radiation. The  $\omega$ -scan mode was used, with a scan width  $\omega = \theta \pm 2.5^\circ$ , at a speed of  $0.2^\circ \text{ min}^{-1}$ . Background was measured at both ends of the scan range over 10 min, the total measuring time per reflection being 45 min. The detector apertures were  $12 \times 12$  mm and the

crystal-to-detector distance was 172 mm (equivalent aperture of  $4^\circ \times 4^\circ$ ).

Direct-beam intensity measurements were made every 8 h using a glass filter with an attenuation factor of 70.5. This attenuation filter was also used to measure the strongest reflections whose maxima were out of the linear region of the scintillation counter.

The moduli  $|F_{hkl}|$  were calculated after correction for background, Lorentz and polarization factors and absorption effects as previously reported for NaCl (Göttlicher, 1968).

A secondary-extinction correction was applied to all reflections for which variation in the  $|F|$  values with thickness  $t$  was observed. Their absolute moduli were determined by plotting  $\ln|F|$  versus  $t$  and extrapolation to  $t=0$  (Fig. 1). For the weak reflections without secondary extinction this procedure was only an averaging of the structure factors. The accuracy of the results has been improved and double reflection has been detected and corrected.

Attempts were made to determine the absolute intensity for several strong reflections from powder samples but significant differences were observed between the intensities measured in transmission and reflection settings, indicating that, besides other factors, texture effects were present.

### (b) Primary-extinction correction

A first least-squares refinement was carried out with the high-order data [ $(\sin\theta)/\lambda > 0.7 \text{ \AA}^{-1}$ ] starting with the parameters reported by Oh, Morikawa, Iwai & Aoki (1973). This resulted in an unexpectedly poor fit ( $R = 0.046$ ) with significant  $\Delta F$  values for some strong high-order reflections. Further structure-factor calculations with the complete data set also showed  $\Delta F$ 's up to 30% for all strong extinction-corrected reflections. It was therefore assumed that primary extinction may be present, as occurred in the  $\text{Mg}_2\text{Si}$  crystals (Panke & Wölfel, 1969). A correction for this effect was tried applying the theory of Zachariasen (1967), in which the extinction factor, defined as  $y = P/P_{\text{kin}}$ , can be written as  $y = (1 + 2x)^{-1/2}$ , where  $x$  depends on the crystallite shapes.

In our case, two models were applied: that of spheres of radius  $r$  and that of plates of thickness  $D_0$  in the symmetrical Laue case (Zachariasen, 1967). For the former,  $x$  can be written as

$$x_R = 3 \left| \frac{e^2 F k \lambda r}{m c^2 V} \right|^2 / 2 \sin 2\theta \quad (1)$$

$$k^2 = 1/2(1 + \cos^2 2\theta)$$

and for the latter

$$x_T = \left| \frac{e^2 F k \lambda D_0}{m c^2 V} \right|^2 / 3 \cos^2 \theta. \quad (2)$$

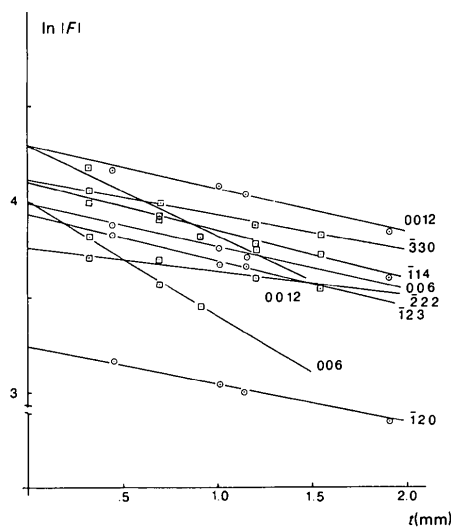


Fig. 1. Secondary-extinction correction for the strongest reflections.  $\circ$  (100) plate,  $\square$  (110) plate.

The spherical model was first applied. From the plot of  $I_o/I_c$  versus  $I_c$ , we obtained a value of  $r = 12.25 \mu\text{m}$  which with (1) gave the value of  $x$  from which the extinction factor  $y$  was calculated and used to correct all the intensities. The results are represented in Fig. 2 where it can be seen that the  $I_o/I_c$  values of the  $00l$  reflections do not fit the curve describing this model.

Moreover, the least-squares refinement and the subsequent valence Fourier maps, computed as explained later, were not satisfactory as indicated by some regions of negative electron density ( $\rho = -0.5 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  at 0.29, 0, 0;  $\rho = -0.33 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  at 0.30, 0.30, 0.25 and  $\rho = -0.25 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  at 0.20, 0.38, 0).

This led us to consider the anisotropy in the crystallite shape by applying the second extinction model to the  $00l$  reflections. A value of  $D_0 = 28 \mu\text{m}$  was obtained for the plate thickness.

So the final extinction parameter is given by the expression

$$y = (1 + 2x_R)^{-1/2} [g_r + \{1 - (lc^*)^2 \times [(h^2 + k^2 + hk)a^{*2} + l^2c^{*2}]^{-1}\} (1 - g_r)] + (1 + 2x_T)^{-1/2} \{ (1 - g_r)(lc^*)^2 \times [(h^2 + k^2 + hk)a^{*2} + l^2c^{*2}]^{-1} \}, \quad (3)$$

where  $x_T$  and  $x_R$  are defined in (1) and (2) and  $g_r$  is a factor which accounts for the ratio between the two models. For  $g_r = 1$ , only the spherical model is taken into account; for  $g_r = 0$ , the calculation is made on the basis of both models but with values which vary with reciprocal-space directions. So, for  $hk0$  reflections, the second term becomes zero and the extinction factor is that obtained for the spherical model; for  $00l$  reflections, however, the spherical term of (3) vanishes and only the symmetrical Laue case is taken into account. In all the calculations  $g_r$  was set to 0.

Fourier maps showed a significant negative region at 0.29, 0, 0 of  $-0.20 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$ . This value decreased to  $\rho = -0.15 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  by changing the sign of the weak

reflection 431 (final  $F_o = -2.17$ ). After further small corrections on ten strong reflections the final minimal  $\Delta\rho$  became  $-0.08 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$ .

A final correction for TDS was applied as described previously (Göttlicher & Knöchel, 1980). Its contribution to the intensities was calculated from the elastic constants reported by Humbert & Plique (1972). TDS contributions have been calculated for 100 reflections with different magnitudes and directions of the scattering vectors. The result was an isotropic increase of the  $dB$  values in the temperature factor between 0.0925 and 0.0935 according to the formula

$$|F_o|_{\text{corr}} = |F_o| \exp[-dB (\sin^2\theta)/\lambda^2].$$

Therefore all structure factors have been multiplied by  $\exp[-0.093 (\sin^2\theta)/\lambda^2]$ .

### Least-squares refinement and difference Fourier syntheses

With the structure factors corrected for the effects just described, a first anisotropic refinement (on  $F$ ) was carried out. All 300 reflections were considered observed and unit weight was assigned to every reflection. Atomic scattering factors for  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ , O and C were taken from *International Tables for X-ray Crystallography* (1974). After two cycles, with the scale factor fixed at 1.0, the refinement converged to  $R = \sum |F_o| - |F_c| / \sum |F_o| = 0.025$ , the fit was good to 0.5865 and the maximal correlation factor was  $-0.3845$  for variables 3 and 4 ( $\beta_{11}$  and  $\beta_{33}$  of the C atom). A further cycle was made in which the scale factor was allowed to vary and a value of 0.997 was obtained without any difference in the atomic parameters (Table 1\*). The  $\Delta F$  synthesis is represented in Fig. 3 which corresponds to sections  $xy\frac{1}{2}$  and  $x0z$ . Maximum shift/e.s.d. in last cycle = 0.03.

### Calculation of the absolute electron density

The method consists of separating the electron density into two parts

$$\rho = \rho_1 + \rho_2. \quad (4)$$

$\rho_1$  is the contribution of the core electrons for which a spherical distribution is assumed and which can be obtained by means of Fourier integrals calculated at the atomic positions and referred to the principal ellipsoid axes. The non-spherical part  $\rho_2$  is obtained by difference Fourier series. Consequently, the total density  $\rho$  is free of termination errors of the series.

\* A list of observed and calculated structure factors has been deposited with the British Library Document Supply Centre as Supplementary Publication No. SUP 44797 (2 pp.). Copies may be obtained through The Executive Secretary, International Union of Crystallography, 5 Abbey Square, Chester CH1 2HU, England.

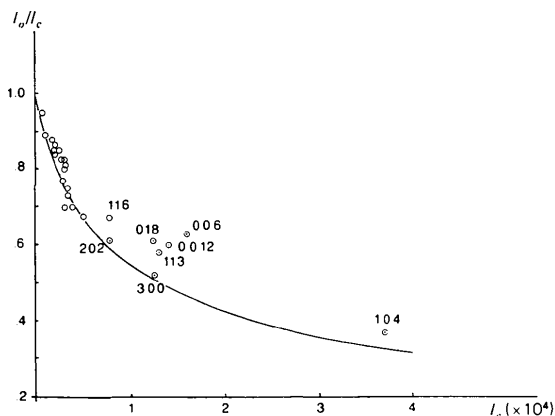


Fig. 2. Primary-extinction correction. The curve corresponds to the sphere model applied to the  $h00$  reflections.

Table 1. Atomic positional and thermal ( $\times 10^3$ ) parameters for  $\text{MgCO}_3$ 

The temperature factor has the expression  $T = \exp(-\beta_{11}h^2 + \beta_{22}k^2 + \dots + 2\beta_{13}hl + 2\beta_{23}kl)$  or  $T = \exp[-U_{11}(ha^*)^2 + U_{22}(kb^*)^2 + \dots + 2U_{13}hla^*c^* + \dots]$ . E.s.d.'s are given in parentheses.

	x	y	z	$\beta_{11}$	$\beta_{22}$	$\beta_{33}$	$\beta_{12}$	$\beta_{13}$	$\beta_{23}$
Mg	0	0	0	7.99(14)	7.99(14)	0.53(1)	4.00(7)	0	0
C	0	0	$\frac{1}{4}$	7.86(30)	7.86(30)	0.43(3)	3.93(15)	0	0
O	0.2775(1)	0	$\frac{1}{4}$	7.28(16)	10.02(25)	0.77(2)	5.01(12)	-0.16(3)	-0.32(6)

	$U_{11}$	$U_{22}$	$U_{33}$	$U_{12}$	$U_{13}$	$U_{23}$
Mg	6.52(11)	6.52(11)	6.06(11)	3.26(5)	0	0
C	6.42(24)	6.42(24)	4.91(34)	3.21(12)	0	0
O	5.94(12)	8.18(28)	8.80(23)	4.09(10)	-0.49(9)	-0.98(18)

Table 2. Parameters of the Gaussian functions fitted to the theoretical atomic scattering factors

	$A_j$ (e atom $^{-1}$ )	$a_j$ ( $\text{\AA}^2$ )	$A_j$ (e atom $^{-1}$ )	$a_j$ ( $\text{\AA}^2$ )
Mg	1.2197	0.1238	5.7982	2.5760
C	1.1293	0.2921	0.6625	1.1875
O	1.6659	0.2400	1.9946	5.0000

Table 3. Atomic parameters for  $\text{MgCO}_3$  after refinement with high-order data and Gaussian terms

	Population parameter	x			y			z		
Mg	0.1691 (19)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C	0.1713 (42)	0	0	0	0	$\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	0	0
O	0.5090 (59)	0.27708 (9)	0	0	0	$\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	0	0

	$\beta_{11}$	$\beta_{22}$	$\beta_{33}$	$\beta_{12}$	$\beta_{13}$	$\beta_{23}$
Mg	3.42(25)	3.42(25)	0.25(2)	1.71(12)	0	0
C	6.77(51)	6.77(51)	0.46(4)	3.38(26)	0	0
O	6.74(24)	9.24(27)	0.76(2)	4.62(13)	-0.18(1)	-0.36(2)

The calculation was made in the following steps:

(1) The atomic scattering factors at  $(\sin\theta)/\lambda > 0.7 \text{ \AA}^{-1}$  are approximated to Gaussian functions of the form

$$f_1 = \sum_j A_j \exp[-a_j(\sin^2\theta)/\lambda^2]. \quad (5)$$

In our case, approximation was achieved for  $j = 2$  and their values are listed in Table 2.

(2) These Gaussian coefficients and exponents are fitted to the experimental data, in the same range of  $\sin\theta$ , by means of a least-squares refinement in which the population parameters are allowed to vary together with the anisotropic thermal parameters. Thus, the new scattering factors can be expressed as

$$f_2 = \sum_j A'_j \exp\left(-\sum_i \sum_k \beta_{ik} h_i h_k\right). \quad (6)$$

Such a refinement for  $\text{MgCO}_3$  converged after two cycles up to  $R = 0.022$  and led to the parameters quoted in Table 3.

(3) With these parameters, structure factors were calculated for all data and a  $\Delta F$  synthesis was computed to obtain the non-spherical electron density  $\rho_2$ .

(4) Determination of the principal axes of the ellipsoids (Waser, 1955) and Fourier transform of the Gaussians to obtain  $\rho_1$  for each atom. The expression used is

$$\rho_1(x,y,z) = \sum_i A'_i (\pi^3/e_{i1}e_{i2}e_{i3})^{1/2} \times \exp\{-\pi^2(x^2/e_{i1} + y^2/e_{i2} + z^2/e_{i3})\}, \quad (7)$$

where  $e_{ij} = 1/4a_i + \lambda_j$  and  $x, y, z$  are the Cartesian coordinates with the origin at the nuclear position of each atom,  $\lambda_j$  being the square of the length of the principal axes of the thermal ellipsoids.

(5) Addition of  $\rho_1 + \rho_2$  leads to the absolute electron density  $\rho$ . Two sections of  $\rho$  are represented in Figs. 4 and 5.

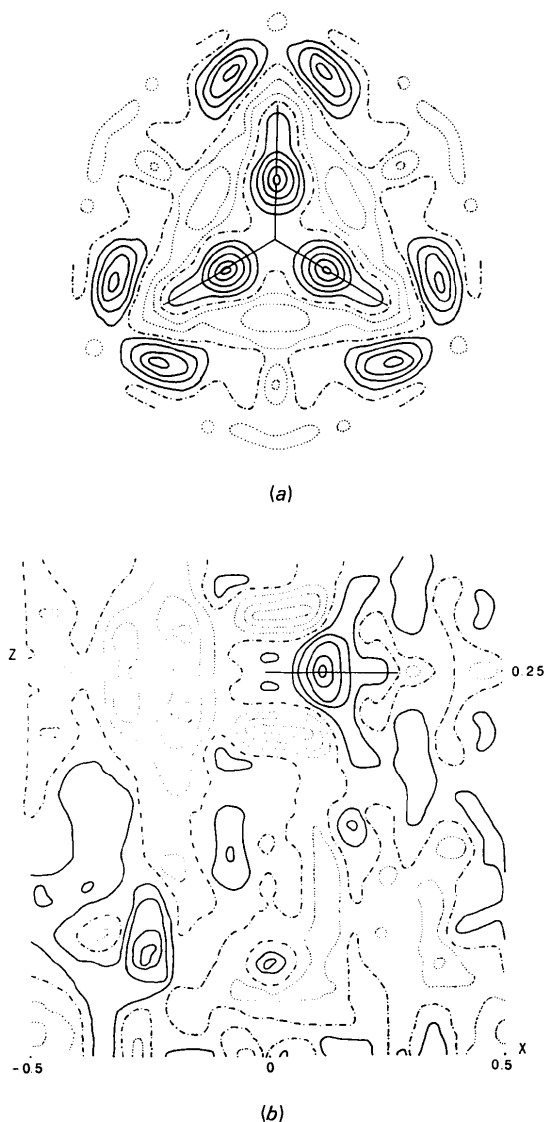


Fig. 3. Deformation density ( $\rho_0 - \rho_2$ ) in  $\text{MgCO}_3$ . (a) Section  $xy\frac{1}{2}$  showing the plane of the  $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$  anion. (b) Section  $x0z$  showing the residual charge at the C-O bond, perpendicular to the  $\text{CO}_3$  plane. Contours are drawn at intervals of  $0.1 \text{ e \AA}^{-3}$ . Zero lines are dot-dashed and dotted lines correspond to negative values.

### Discussion

From the deformation-density map (see Figs. 3a and 3b), neither deviation from planarity nor disorder were observed in the  $\text{CO}_3$  group. At the nuclear positions, values of  $\Delta\rho < 0.08 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  were found. A maximum of  $0.50 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  appears at the midpoint of the C—O bond and two other maxima of  $0.52 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$ , related by a twofold axis, are observed in the lone-pair region of the

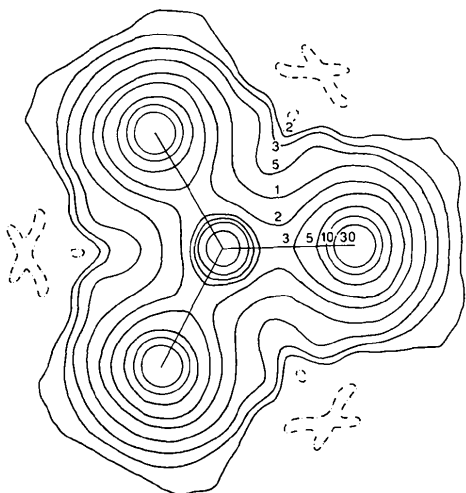


Fig. 4. Absolute electron density ( $\text{e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$ ) in  $\text{MgCO}_3$ . Section  $xy\frac{1}{2}$  corresponding to the  $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$  anion.

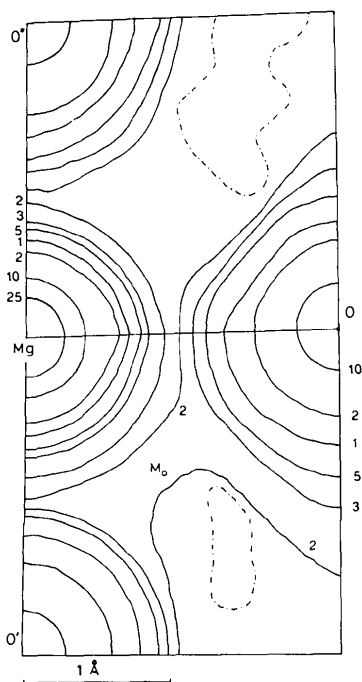


Fig. 5. Absolute electron density ( $\text{e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$ ) in  $\text{MgCO}_3$  of the equatorial plane of an  $\text{MgO}_6$  octahedron showing the electron bridge ( $M_O$ ) between two O atoms. Only one half has been represented, the other half being equivalent through a centre of symmetry at the Mg position.

O atom, forming with it an angle of  $101(1)^\circ$ . One of these maxima is centred at  $0.40, 0.09, 0.235$ , out of the  $\text{CO}_3$  plane and directed towards the Mg atom although shifted from the Mg—O bond line, the distance to the Mg and O atoms being  $1.90(5)$  and  $0.55(5) \text{ \AA}$ , respectively. Another symmetry-related lone-pair maximum can be observed in the lower left side of Fig. 3b, near the Mg atom at the origin. In the same figure, it can be also observed that the maximum at the C—O bond is elongated in the  $c$  direction as a consequence of the  $\pi$  bonding between the two atoms.

Similar results were reported for the  $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$  anion in dolomite,  $\text{CaMg}(\text{CO}_3)_2$  (Effenberger, Kirfel & Will, 1983); however, the maxima in the lone-pair region are more clearly defined in our study.

The important question of the nature of the Mg—O bond cannot be elucidated from the existence of these maxima but only with the absolute-electron-density maps represented in Figs. 4 and 5 which will be discussed below.

The absolute  $\rho$  values at the nuclear positions are  $101.6$ ,  $119.0$  and  $331.4 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  for C, O and Mg, respectively. These values are not significant and depend on the thermal vibrations. Along the C—O bond (see Fig. 4) there is a minimum of  $\rho = 2.55 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  at  $x = 0.11$  just between the  $3 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  curves. This value is somewhat lower than that of  $2.9 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  reported for the absolute electron density in the N—O bond (Göttlicher & Knöchel, 1980).

In contrast, in the difference-density map the residual value in  $\text{MgCO}_3$  ( $0.50 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$ ) is higher than in  $\text{NaNO}_3$  ( $0.3 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$ ). This depends on the contribution of the spherical parts at this point, which is larger for the N atom than for the C atom. Comparing the absolute electron density in Fig. 4 with the corresponding one of  $\text{NaNO}_3$  (Göttlicher & Knöchel, 1980), we find a lower density along the  $c$  axis and the  $xy$  diagonal for the C atom in the  $\text{CO}_3$  group. The integral  $4\pi \int r^2 \rho(r) dr$  with  $\rho(r)$  along the  $c$  axis gives  $5.4 \text{ e}$ . This value is nearly the same as we get for the C atom in diamond taking the electron density  $\rho(r)$  opposite the C—C bonds. In the  $\text{NO}_3$  ion the lone pairs in the  $z$  direction and the overlapping of the electron made the integration difficult. In the paper of Göttlicher & Knöchel (1980), a value of  $7.1 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  is given.

The environment of the Mg atom is drawn in Fig. 5 which corresponds to a section of the absolute densities through the equatorial plane of an  $\text{MgO}_6$  octahedron. Two important features are to be discussed. The first is that up to  $0.2 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  no overlap is observed between the electrons of the Mg and O atoms. The highest value of  $\rho$  between them is  $0.18 \text{ e } \text{\AA}^{-3}$  and it is far from being considered as a significant covalent interaction. In addition, the integral  $4\pi \int r^2 \rho(r) dr$  with  $\rho(r)$  along the  $c$  axis and along the diagonal of the upper square of Fig. 5 gives values of  $10.4(1)$  and  $9.8(1) \text{ e}$

respectively (mean value  $10.1 e$ ). The same value has been obtained for the Mg atom in  $MgF_2$  (Niederauer & Göttlicher, 1970), in contrast with the  $10.97(3) e$  assigned to the Mg atom in dolomite,  $CaMg(CO_3)_2$  (Effenberger, Kirfel & Will, 1983). We assume a quite ionic character to the Mg–O bond. The existence of a fully ionic bond in MgO has also been proposed from theoretical calculations (Causa, Dovesi, Pisani & Roetti, 1986).

The second feature refers to the electron bridge ( $M_O$ ) of  $\rho = 0.24 e \text{ \AA}^{-3}$  observed between O atoms (see lower part of Fig. 5) belonging to two different  $CO_3$  groups. This maximum is repeated six times by the  $\bar{3}$  site symmetry of the Mg atom, so forming a sectional ring cloud around it parallel to the  $xy$  plane. A similar electron bridge of  $0.18 e \text{ \AA}^{-3}$  was also observed between neighbouring  $F^-$  anions in  $MgF_2$  (Niederauer & Göttlicher, 1970). If we consider them as the result of a weak overlap of the lone pairs of the six O atoms surrounding the Mg atoms, we can explain (see Fig. 5) why they are located between O and O' and not between O and O''.

Opposite a CO bond, overlapping of the lone-pair clouds is not observed. On O'' the angle between the CO bond and the line from O'' to the region where overlapping is expected is about  $160^\circ$  while all the other corresponding angles are between  $85$  and  $125^\circ$ . The distance between O atoms with overlapping is a little larger ( $3.02 \text{ \AA}$  between O and O' and  $2.93 \text{ \AA}$  between O and O''). We assume that the contact of the lone-pair clouds leads to a repulsive force between the O atoms. In  $NaNO_3$ , with lower charge in the cation, the O–O distances are larger ( $3.4 \text{ \AA}$ ) and overlapping of the electron clouds is not observed.

It is desirable that further studies involving other experimental techniques confirm the existence of such O–O interactions.

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## Rietveld Profile Analysis of Calcined $AlPO_4$ -11 Using Pulsed Neutron Powder Diffraction

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#### Abstract

Aluminium phosphate,  $AlPO_4$ ,  $M_r = 121.95$ , orthorhombic,  $Icmm$  (disordered Al,P),  $Icm2$  (ordered Al,P),

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$a = 13.5333(8)$ ,  $b = 18.4845(10)$ ,  $c = 8.3703(4) \text{ \AA}$ ,  $V = 2094 \text{ \AA}^3$ ,  $Z = 20$ ,  $D_x = 1.93 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ ,  $T \approx 295 \text{ K}$ ,  $R_{wp} = 0.031$ ,  $R_F^2 = 0.109$  ( $Icmm$ ) and  $R_{wp} = 0.027$ ,  $R_F^2 = 0.058$  ( $Icm2$ ) for 1017 independent reflections. Sample calcined at 873 K and dehydrated at 573 K. Time-of-flight neutron powder diffraction data were