

The Crystal Structures of WTe_2 and High-Temperature $MoTe_2$

BRUCE E. BROWN*

Research Division, Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company, Milwaukee 1, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

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The structures of WTe_2 and a high-temperature monoclinic polymorph of $MoTe_2$ have been solved by Patterson methods. Single crystals were grown by vapor transport methods. Cell dimensions, as measured on precession photographs, are for WTe_2 , $a=6.282 \text{ \AA}$, $b=3.496 \text{ \AA}$, $c=14.07_3 \text{ \AA}$. Similarly for $MoTe_2$, $a=6.33 \text{ \AA}$, $b=3.469 \text{ \AA}$, $c=13.86 \text{ \AA}$, $\beta=93^\circ 55'$. Intensities were measured for both crystals from zero- and first-level Weissenberg photographs. WTe_2 and $MoTe_2$ are given the space groups $Pnm2_1$ and $P2_1/m$, respectively. Minimum function maps prepared by a superposition method gave approximate trial structures for both compounds which were refined by least-squares methods to R values of 12.5% and 13.9% for WTe_2 and $MoTe_2$ respectively. Both compounds are layer structures with double sheets of tellurium atoms bound together by interleaving metal atoms. An off-center positioning of metal atoms in the tellurium octahedra buckles the tellurium sheets and allows metal atoms in adjacent octahedra to approach each other. Each metal atom, therefore, has eight neighbors, six tellurium atoms and two metal atoms, and a significant amount of metal-metal bonding is introduced.

Introduction

The structure of tungsten ditelluride was first thought to be of the $C7$ (MoS_2) type (Goldschmidt, 1919). Knop & Haraldsen (1956) showed that this was not the case, although they thought it probable that the structure was closely related to the $C7$ type. The present investigation shows WTe_2 to be a layer structure, as is the $C7$ type, but with a distorted octahedral coordination about the tungsten atom. Therefore, the compound is geometrically more closely related to the CdI_2 ($C6$) type.

Puotinen & Newnham (1961) reported the structure of $MoTe_2$ to be the $C7$ type. Work in this laboratory has shown that the $C7$ form of $MoTe_2$ is the stable form below *ca.* 900°C , but that a different polymorphic type forms above this temperature. The structural study reported here shows this high temperature type to be effectively isostructural with WTe_2 . Different symmetries in the two compounds arise largely from small differences in layer stacking.

Experimental

Excellent single crystals of tungsten and molybdenum tellurides were prepared by vapor transport methods (Nitsche, Bolsterli & Lichtensteiger, 1961) using bromine as the transporting agent for molybdenum and tungsten. The crystals adopt a rod or lath-shaped habit with the shortest crystallographic axis (b) parallel to the long dimension of the lath. Chemical analysis of the transported material gave for the tungsten compound, 39.2% tungsten and 57.7% tellurium by weight, and for the molybdenum compound 26.7% molyb-

denum and 72.2% tellurium by weight. These figures are equivalent to the formulas $W_{0.94}Te_2$ and $Mo_{0.985}Te_2$ respectively, where two tellurium atoms have been assumed for each formula.

The unit-cell dimensions as measured from precession photographs with $Mo K\alpha$ radiation are: for WTe_2 , $a=6.282$, $b=3.496$, $c=14.07_3 \text{ \AA}$; and for $MoTe_2$, $a=6.33$, $b=3.469$, $c=13.86 \text{ \AA}$, $\beta=93^\circ 55'$.

Measured densities for WTe_2 and $MoTe_2$ are 9.51 g.cm^{-3} and 7.5 g.cm^{-3} respectively. Both of these values indicate four MX_2 units per cell corresponding to the theoretical densities, 9.44 g.cm^{-3} and 7.67 g.cm^{-3} for WTe_2 and $MoTe_2$ respectively. The axial designation used for WTe_2 in this study is altered from that used by Knop & Haraldsen (1956), a and b being interchanged. This change allows orthorhombic WTe_2 and monoclinic $MoTe_2$ to be described by similar axes where $MoTe_2$ conforms to the customary (second) setting having the b axis as the unique axis.

For both compounds $0kl$ reflections are absent when $k+l$ is odd. The possible space groups for WTe_2 are then $Pnmm$ and $Pnm2_1$; for $MoTe_2$ however, these absences must be accidental, indicating a pseudo n -glide. Refinement of the structure indicated the correct space group to be $P2_1/m$. Zero- and upper-level Weissenberg photographs of both crystals were taken using the short (*ca.* 3.5 \AA) b axis as the rotation axis. In each case, the distribution of intensities was identical on all even layer photographs; the odd-layer photographs were similarly identical. Accordingly, all atoms must lie on mirror planes separated by $\frac{1}{2}$ in y . Intensities on the zero- and first-layer photographs were estimated visually by comparison with a standard intensity scale; they were corrected for Lorentz and polarization effects, absorption, spot extension on upper layers (Phillips, 1954) and α_1 - α_2 splitting (Brown, 1965). There were 220 $h0l$ and 212 $h1l$ observed WTe_2 reflections,

* Present address: Geology Department, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

only. In the sulfide and selenide layer structures of molybdenum and tungsten, the metal atoms are coordinated by anions located at the corners of trigonal prisms, but in these two structures the metal atoms are coordinated by anions at the corners of distorted octahedra. Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate the nature of this distortion. The metal atoms are not located in the centers of the octahedra, and the distortion of the octahedra buckles the tellurium atom layers. The off-center position of the metal atoms together with the buckling of the tellurium layers gives the structure a definite ribbon-like aspect and is presumably responsible for the rod- or lath-like appearance of the crystals instead of the platy habit usually associated with layer compounds. The stacking of one layer upon another is governed by the buckling of the layers so that adjacent layers are keyed together by an association of ripples and troughs. There may be other factors controlling stacking, however, for slight differences in the placement of one layer upon its neighbor are responsible for the difference in symmetry between $MoTe_2$ and WTe_2 (compare Figs. 1 and 2). This difference in stacking is not an apparent result of configuration differences in individual compound layers since the configuration of an individual WTe_2 layer is very nearly identical with an individual $MoTe_2$ layer.

Metal—metal bonding

The asymmetry of the metal positions changes the near-neighbor coordination of the metal atoms from six to eight because two metal-atom neighbors are at about the same distance as the six tellurium atoms. The metal—metal neighbors coordinate into linked zigzag

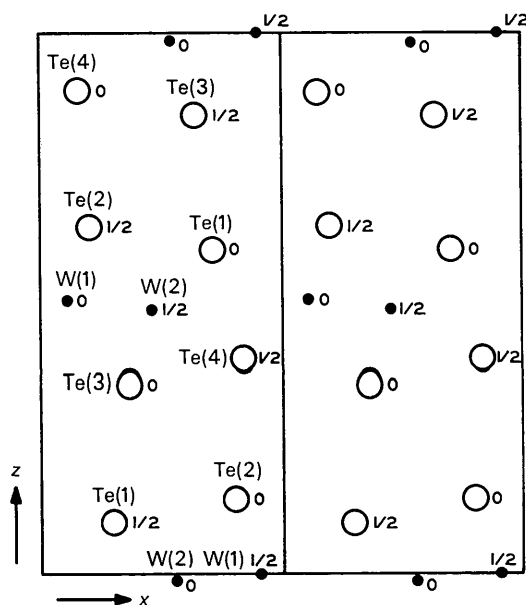


Fig. 1. A projection of the WTe_2 structure onto the (010) face. Large open circles: tellurium atoms; small filled circles: tungsten atoms. The designation 0 or $\frac{1}{2}$ refers to the y coordinate.

chains parallel to y (Fig. 3) and metal—metal bonding is probably present in a significant degree.

The phenomenon of metal—metal bonding, prominent in these two structures, is a common phenomenon among transition metal oxides in which the oxidation state of the metal is not at a maximum (Marinder & Magnéli, 1957, Marinder, Dorm & Seleborg, 1962). It has also been observed in Mo_2S_3 (Jellinek, 1961). These telluride structures are an example of the same phenomenon but are more closely related to the Mo_2S_3 structure than to any of the oxides.

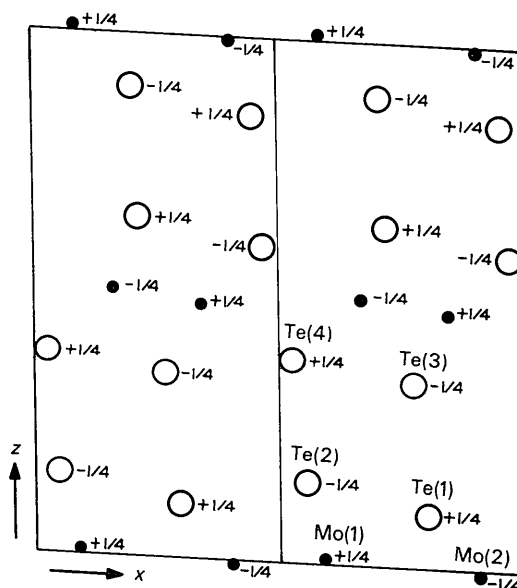


Fig. 2. A projection of the $MoTe_2$ structure onto the (010) face. Large open circles: tellurium atoms; small filled circles: molybdenum atoms. The designation $+\frac{1}{4}$ or $-\frac{1}{4}$ refers to the y coordinate.

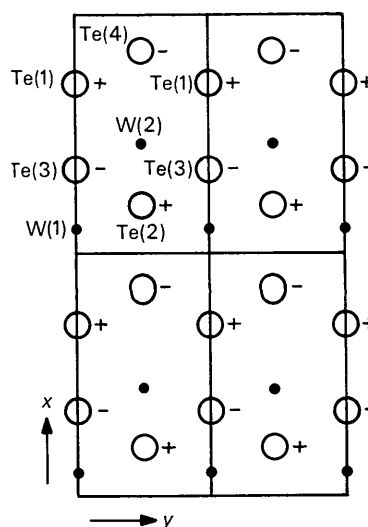


Fig. 3. Projection of a single WTe_2 compound layer onto the (001) face. The tungsten atoms (small filled circles) in the plane of the page. The tellurium atoms (large open circles) are above (+) or below (-) the plane of the page.

In MoTe_2 the Mo–Mo distance is 2.90 Å, which is 0.18 Å longer than in elementary molybdenum. In WTe_2 the W–W distance of 2.86 Å is 0.13 Å longer than in elementary tungsten. The shorter metal–metal distances in WTe_2 may tend to stabilize WTe_2 relative to MoTe_2 and may partially explain why a $C7$ form

Table 3. Bond distances for WTe_2 and MoTe_2 (Å)

Atom 1–atom 2		$d(\sigma_a)$		Atom 1–atom 2		$d(\sigma_a)$		
WTe_2								
M–M distances								
W(1)	W(2)	2.861(4)	Te(1)	Te(2)	3.679(8)			
M–X distances in octahedron 1								
W(1)	Te(1)	2.820(7)	Te(1)	Te(2)	3.613(8)			
W(1)	Te(2)(2)	2.708(5)	Te(3)	Te(4)	3.625(8)			
W(1)	Te(3)	2.713(8)	Te(3)	Te(4)	3.671(8)			
W(1)	Te(4)(2)	2.811(6)	Te(i)	Te(i)	3.496*			
M–X distances in octahedron 2								
W(2)	Te(1)(2)	2.814(6)	Te(1)	Te(3)	3.927(8)			
W(2)	Te(2)	2.720(7)	Te(2)	Te(4)	3.932(8)			
W(2)	Te(3)(2)	2.713(6)						
W(2)	Te(4)	2.813(7)						

* Equal to the b -axis length.

Table 3 (cont.)

MoTe_2					
M–M distances		X–X distances parallel to layering			
Mo(1)	Mo(1)	2.895(8)	Te(1)	Te(2)	3.652(5)
Mo(2)	Mo(2)	2.901(9)	Te(1)	Te(2)	3.671(5)
M–X distances in octahedron 1					
Mo(1)	Te(1)	2.816(7)	Te(3)	Te(4)	3.700(5)
Mo(1)	Te(2)(2)	2.701(6)	Te(3)	Te(4)	3.622(5)
Mo(1)	Te(1)	2.793(5)	Te(i)	Te(i)	3.469*
Mo(1)	Te(2)(2)	2.698(5)			
M–X distances in octahedron 2					
Mo(2)	Te(4)	2.811(7)	Te(2)	Te(4)	3.859(5)
Mo(2)	Te(3)(2)	2.699(5)	Te(3)	Te(1)	3.855(5)
Mo(2)	Te(3)	2.710(7)			
Mo(2)	Te(4)(2)	2.789(5)			

of WTe_2 has not been observed while a $C7$ form of MoTe_2 can be easily made.

It is also probable that the metal–metal bonding observed in the high-temperature form of MoTe_2 is responsible for its high electrical conductivity ($10^3 \text{ ohm}^{-1}\text{cm}^{-1}$) relative to the $C7$ -type MoTe_2 ($10^{-3} \text{ ohm}^{-1}\text{cm}^{-1}$). WTe_2 is likewise a good conductor.

Table 4. Bond angles ($^\circ$) for WTe_2 and MoTe_2

WTe_2		MoTe_2	
Angle (σ)		Angle (σ)	
X–M–X angles in octahedron 1			
Te(1)–W(1)–Te(2)	81.6(2)	Te(4)–Mo(2)–Te(3)	82.2(2)
Te(1)–W(1)–Te(4)	77.4(2)	Te(4)–Mo(2)–Te(4)	77.2(2)
Te(3)–W(1)–Te(2)	116.6(2)	Te(4)–Mo(2)–Te(4)	76.9(2)
Te(3)–W(1)–Te(4)	83.3(2)	Te(4)–Mo(2)–Te(3)	97.8(1)
Te(2)–W(1)–Te(4)	97.6(1)	Te(3)–Mo(2)–Te(4)	84.6(2)
Te(2)–W(1)–Te(2)	80.3(2)	Te(3)–Mo(2)–Te(3)	115.2(2)
Te(4)–W(1)–Te(4)	76.8(2)		
X–X–X angles parallel to layering			
Te(1)–Te(2)–Te(1)	56.7(1)	Te(2)–Te(4)–Te(2)	53.4(1)
Te(2)–Te(1)–Te(2)	118.9(2)	Te(3)–Te(1)–Te(3)	53.5(1)
Te(3)–Te(4)–Te(3)	57.6(1)	Te(4)–Te(4)–Te(4)	59.5(1)
M–M–M angles			
W(1)–W(2)–W(1)	75.2(1)		
X–M–X angles in octahedron 1			
Te(1)–Mo(1)–Te(2)	82.9(2)		
Te(2)–Mo(1)–Te(2)	80.0(2)		
Te(2)–Mo(1)–Te(1)	98.1(1)		
Te(2)–Mo(1)–Te(2)	115.2(2)		
Te(2)–Mo(1)–Te(1)	83.8(2)		
Te(1)–Mo(1)–Te(1)	77.0(2)		
X–X–X angles parallel to layering			
Te(1)–Te(2)–Te(1)	56.7(1)		
Te(1)–Te(2)–Te(1)	119.7(1)		
M–M–M angles			
Mo(1)–Mo(1)–Mo(1)	73.6(2)		
Mo(2)–Mo(2)–Mo(2)	73.5(3)		

Table 5. F_o and F_c for WTe₂

L	fo	fc	A	B	40 L										80 L										160 L										320 L										640 L										1280 L										2560 L															
					0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75

The structures of the ditellurides of niobium and tantalum which have been worked out as part of this project, have similar metal-metal chains parallel to the b axis except that the chains are made of three rows of metal atoms rather than two. Details of this work are presented in a companion paper (Brown, 1966).

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The Crystal Structure of the Strontium and Lead Tetraborates, $\text{SrO} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$ and $\text{PbO} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$

BY A. PERLOFF AND S. BLOCK

National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

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$\text{SrO} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$ and $\text{PbO} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$ are isostructural. These compounds crystallize in the orthorhombic system, $P2_1nm$, with two formula units in a cell of dimensions $a=4.237$, $b=4.431$, $c=10.706$ Å for $\text{SrO} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$, and $a=4.244$, $b=4.457$, $c=10.840$ Å for $\text{PbO} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$. A detailed structure analysis was carried out for the strontium compound only.

The structure was solved by conventional Patterson and electron-density syntheses utilizing the heavy atom to establish the initial phases. Least-squares refinement on three-dimensional data yielded a residual $R=7.1\%$.

The results reveal an unusual type of borate framework. All boron atoms are tetrahedrally coordinated. The unusual feature is the occurrence of an oxygen atom common to three tetrahedra.

Although the tetrahedra form a three-dimensional network by corner sharing, the borate network gives the appearance of a layer-like structure because there are comparatively few links in the c direction. The layers can be described in terms of chains (parallel to a) of six-membered rings having B-O edges in common. These chains are joined by non-ring oxygens to form layers parallel to the ab plane.

The Sr coordination is not clearly defined. There are nine nearest-neighbor oxygen atoms at distances ranging from 2.52 to 2.84 Å. There are six more oxygen atoms at 3.04 to 3.20 Å which could conceivably be considered as part of the Sr coordination sphere.

Introduction

In previous studies (Weir & Schroeder, 1964; Block, Perloff & Weir, 1964) on a series of $\text{M}^{\text{II}}\text{O} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$ compounds ($M=\text{Ca}$, Ba , Zn , Sr , Pb) it has been observed that the Sr and Pb borates are isostructural with each other, but apparently of a structure type completely different from the others. It was also noted that the Sr and Pb borates had an unusually dense structure compared with most known borates, which suggested the possibility of a new borate structure type. A single-crystal X-ray structure analysis was undertaken on $\text{SrO} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$ to investigate this possibility. Only the Sr compound is reported in detail, but the structure is valid for the Pb compound.

Cell and space group

The cell dimensions and diffraction aspect have been previously reported by Block, Perloff & Weir (1964) with axial designations interchanged from those used in this work. The present structure is based on the following orthorhombic cell data* for $\text{SrO} \cdot 2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$:

$$\begin{array}{ll} a = 4.237 \pm 0.004 \text{ \AA} & \text{Space group } P2_1nm \\ b = 4.431 \pm 0.004 & Z = 2 \\ c = 10.706 \pm 0.010 & \rho (\text{calc.}) = 4.01 \\ \text{Systematic extinctions: } h0l, h+l = 2n+1 \end{array}$$

* The uncertainties quoted on the cell dimensions are standard deviations based on least-squares refinement of powder pattern data.