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# Luminescence from $BaF_2: Mn^{2+}$ samples: substitutional $Mn^{2+}$ ions are 'silent'

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**Abstract.** Through this work it is shown that the luminescence observed in  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  samples is related to the formation of  $BaMnF_4$  microcrystalline precipitates. This conclusion is supported by the experimental emission and excitation spectra as well as by the temperature dependence displayed by the emission intensity. Also the EPR spectrum of most doped samples clearly shows the presence of a signal (superimposed on that coming from isolated  $Mn^{2+}$  ions) whose temperature dependence is similar to that displayed by  $BaMnF_4$  crystals. The absence of luminescence associated with *isolated*  $Mn^{2+}$  ions in the  $BaF_2$  host lattice is discussed. It is pointed out that luminescence quenching is probably related to a multiphonon non-radiative process rather than to a  ${}^{4}T_1$  (G) excited state close to the bottom of the  $BaF_2$  conduction band.

Although luminescence quenching appears for a Dexter–Klick–Russell parameter  $\Lambda$  probably close to 0.1, this is qualitatively related to a high radiative lifetime ( $\tau_R \simeq 100$  ms). The analysis made also shows that firstly  $\Lambda$  increases by a factor of about 1.7 on going from  $Mn^{2+}$ -doped fluoroperovskites to  $Mn^{2+}$  in fluoride-type crystals, and secondly  $\Lambda$  increases on going from  $CaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  to  $SrF_2 : Mn^2$ . Both variations mainly reflect a parallel increase in the Stokes shift.

### 1. Introduction

By means of EPR performed at room temperature it is known that, in  $Mn^{2+}$ -doped MF<sub>2</sub> crystals (M=Ca, Cd, Sr or Ba), *substitutional* cubic centres are formed where Mn<sup>2+</sup> is surrounded by eight equivalent F<sup>-</sup> ions at a distance R [1, 2]. The analysis of the experimental isotropic superhyperfine constant  $A_s$  shows that the  $M^{2+} \rightarrow Mn^{2+}$  replacement gives rise to an inward relaxation which is maximum for the case of BaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> [3]. For this system R = 232 pm is smaller than  $R_0 = 268$  pm corresponding to the perfect lattice.

Recent EPR [4] and ENDOR [5] data on  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  have shown that the structure of the  $Mn^{2+}$  centre changes when the temperature *T* decreases below about 45 K. In this situation the new local structure displays a  $T_d$  symmetry, thus involving two inequivalent  $F^-$  ions and two different  $Mn^{2+}-F^-$  distances denoted as  $R_s$  and  $R_l$  corresponding to the short bond and the long bond, respectively. The values of  $R_s$  and  $R_l$  derived from the experimental isotropic superhyperfine tensor are found to be  $R_s = 224$  pm and  $R_l = 250$  pm [6].

As regards  $Mn^{2+}$ -doped fluorides the emission coming from the first excited state  ${}^{4}T_{1}$  (G) is usually detected, a fact which allows one to measure the excitation spectrum and thus to obtain also information on the metal–ligand distance *R* and local geometry [7].

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As good examples the cases of  $Mn^{2+}$ -doped fluoroperovskites [7,8] and  $CaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  and  $CdF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  can be quoted [9,3].

By virtue of these reasons a study of the luminescence of different samples of  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  at different temperatures has been undertaken. The main results of such an investigation are shown in this work. Because of some unexpected results, luminescence and EPR measurements on  $BaMnF_4$  together with additional X-band EPR measurements on  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  have also been carried out. Details of the experimental set-up have been given elsewhere [4, 8]. The results obtained through this work clearly show that the  $Mn^{2+}$  luminescence detected in  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  samples comes from the formation of  $BaMnF_4$  microcrystalline precipitates. The absence of luminescence due to isolated cubic  $MnF_8^{6-}$  complexes formed in  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  is discussed.



Figure 1. Emission and excitation spectrum found at T = 10 K in the BaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> samples analysed. For comparison the corresponding spectrum associated with BaMnF<sub>4</sub> are also shown.

## 2. Results and discussion

Figure 1 shows the only emission spectrum and associated excitation spectrum related to  $Mn^{2+}$  detected for all the  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  samples investigated.

The excitation spectrum is typical of an octahedral  $MnF_6^{4-}$  complex as is found for  $KZnF_3 : Mn^{2+}$  [7] or  $MnF_2$  [10] for instance. The fingerprint of  $Mn^{2+}$  in a sixfold (instead an eightfold) coordination appears in the separation  $\Delta_{31}$  between the energy of the sharp third excitation peak (associated with a  ${}^6A_{1g} \rightarrow {}^4A_{1g}$ ,  ${}^4E_g$  (D) transition) and that corresponding to the first peak assigned to the  ${}^6A_{1g} \rightarrow {}^4T_1$  (G) transition. For the present case,  $\Delta_{31}$  is equal to 6300 cm<sup>-1</sup> while, for  $Mn^{2+}$ -doped fluoroperovskites [7,8],  $\Delta_{31}$  goes from 5500 cm<sup>-1</sup> (for CsCaF<sub>3</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$ ) to 7000 cm<sup>-1</sup> (for KMgF<sub>3</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$ ). By contrast, for CaF<sub>2</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$  where the  $MnF_8^{6-}$  complex is formed,  $\Delta_{31}$  is only equal to 2400 cm<sup>-1</sup> [9] and is thus less than half the value measured for CsCaF<sub>3</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$ . As a first approximation,  $\Delta_{31}$  can be written as 10Dq - C [10]; the significant difference between the  $\Delta_{31}$ -values displayed by the  $MnF_6^{4-}$  and  $MnF_8^{6-}$  units has been explained on the following grounds.

(1) Experimental [7–9] and theoretical [11] data on systems containing  $MnF_6^{4-}$  and

 $MnF_8^{6-}$  complexes indicate that the Racah parameters *B* and *C* are nearly independent of the metal-ligand distance *R*.

(2) By contrast, 10Dq turns out to be strongly dependent upon *R*. For MnF<sub>6</sub><sup>4-</sup> it has been determined that, in the vicinity of  $\tilde{R} = 212$  pm 10Dq follows the law

$$10Dq = KR^{-n} \tag{1}$$

where n = 4.7 [7,8]. In the case of the MnF<sub>8</sub><sup>6-</sup> complex the exponent *n* would have a value almost coincident with that for MnF<sub>6</sub><sup>4-</sup> following the theoretical results in [12]. The microscopic origin of this dependence is explored in [13]. (3) On passing from octahedral MnF<sub>6</sub><sup>4-</sup> to cubic MnF<sub>8</sub><sup>6-</sup> complexes there is a significant

(3) On passing from octahedral  $MnF_6^{4-}$  to cubic  $MnF_8^{6-}$  complexes there is a significant increase in the  $Mn^{2+}-F^-$  distance [3] according to the Pauling rules. The true  $Mn^{2+}-F^$ distance for the whole series of  $Mn^{2+}$ -doped fluoroperovskites has been determined through the experimental isotropic superhyperfine constant [14] and the crystal-field spectrum [7, 8]. The average *R*-value is equal to 212 pm. By contrast the  $Mn^{2+}-F^-$  distance for  $Mn^{2+} : MF_2$ (M = Ca, Cd, Sr or Ba) lies between 226 and 232 pm from the analysis of the experimental superhyperfine constant  $A_s$  [3]. This conclusion is in agreement with recent EXAFS measurements [15] and theoretical calculations [16] on CaF<sub>2</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$ .

Trying to understand what species having  $MnF_6^{4-}$  units are responsible for the excitation spectrum depicted in figure 1, we have verified that the energy of each crystal-field peak is the same as that found in *absorption* spectrum of BaMnF<sub>4</sub> [17]. Moreover, to clarify this situation, we have recorded the emission and excitation spectrum of a small sample of BaMnF<sub>4</sub> at T = 10 K and the results are also collected in figure 1. A comparison of both spectra strongly supports the fact that microcrystalline precipitates of BaMnF<sub>4</sub> are formed in the BaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> samples.

This conclusion is not in contradiction with what is found on looking at other optical parameters. Figure 2 shows the temperature dependence displayed by the integrated emission intensity, together with the peak energy and band width of the emission band corresponding to the BaMnF<sub>4</sub> sample. The temperature dependence of the band width reflects well the magnetic phase transition at  $T_N = 28$  K undergone by BaMnF<sub>4</sub>. The behaviour exhibited by the emission intensity and the peak energy is comparable with that reported in [17] and is characteristic of a multitrap emission process. Luminescence produced on traps after excitation migration has been found for ionic compounds such as RbMnF<sub>3</sub>, MnF<sub>2</sub> [18] and RbMnCl<sub>3</sub> [19] where Mn<sup>2+</sup> is not an impurity but a component of the perfect lattice.

Also this kind of luminescence has been found for instance for RbCl :  $Mn^{2+}$  [20] or NaCl :  $Mn^{2+}$  [21] where microcrystalline precipitated phases are formed.

Figure 3 shows the temperature dependence displayed by the emission intensity (measured at  $\lambda = 600$  nm) for the BaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> samples. It exhibits a similar behaviour to that corresponding to BaMnF<sub>4</sub>. Also a red shift of the emission peak energy as the temperature is increased, similar to that reported in figure 2, has been observed.

To correlate the present luminescence results with previous EPR data on  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$ it was necessary, however, to discover some reasonable indication of the existence of  $BaMnF_4$  microcrystals in the EPR spectra. As shown in figure 4 this was achieved in most doped samples. In this figure are compared the EPR spectrum of  $BaMnF_4$  at different temperatures with the EPR spectrum corresponding to  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$ . The EPR spectrum of  $BaMNF_4$  at  $T > T_N$  is composed of *only one* Lorentzian band and is thus characteristic of pure insulator crystals but with a transition-metal cation involved in their composition. The effective exchange and magnetic dipole interactions between close  $Mn^{2+}$  ions are now more important than the hyperfine and superhyperfine interactions which can be observed



**Figure 2.** Temperature dependence of the integrated emission intensity of the  $BaMnF_4$  sample together with that displayed by the emission peak energy and band width.

in the case of *isolated*  $Mn^{2+}$  ions. The disappearance of the paramagnetic resonance signal for  $T = T_N$  reflects the advent of the antiferromagnetic phase transition. Below  $T_N$  an antiferromagnetic resonance can exist but at a different frequency because of an internal molecular field. The EPR spectrum of BaF<sub>2</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$  taken at 25 K clearly reveals the existence of isolated  $Mn^{2+}$  ions where the hyperfine and superhyperfine structures are clearly visible. From the previously made analysis of such a spectrum it was concluded [4] that *isolated*  $Mn^{2+}$  ions have a T<sub>d</sub> symmetry at T = 25 K. At T = 60 K the superhyperfine structure changes with respect to what is seen at T = 25 K, a fact connected to the cubic symmetry of isolated  $Mn^{2+}$  centres above T = 45 K. Moreover, in the EPR spectrum of BaF<sub>2</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$  at T = 60 K, *another* signal is also present, indicated by the broken curves. We have verified that this signal disappears at T = 30 K and in fact it is absent in the EPR spectrum measured at T = 25 K (figure 4). The EPR results in figure 4 thus support the fact that BaMnF<sub>4</sub> microcrystals are formed in the most highly doped BaF<sub>2</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$ samples although the concentration of isolated  $Mn^{2+}$  ions appears to be higher than that



Figure 3. Temperature dependence of the emission intensity (measured at  $\lambda = 600$  nm) displayed by BaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> samples.

corresponding to Mn<sup>2+</sup> ions forming BaMnF<sub>4</sub> precipitates.

The present EPR and optical results on  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  thus indicate that, although isolated  $Mn^{2+}$  ions are the dominant species, nevertheless the only luminescence detected comes from  $BaMnF_4$  precipitates. As the  ${}^{4}T_1(G) \rightarrow {}^{6}A_1$  emission maxima in  $CaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  and in  $CdF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  appear at around 500 nm, this region has been carefully explored but without success. It is worth noting that for  $SrF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  the luminescence associated with isolated  $Mn^{2+}$  ions has been found but at temperatures  $T \leq 190$  K [22].

Searching for an explanation for the absence of luminescence in the case of isolated  $Mn^{2+}$  ions in BaF<sub>2</sub>, we have firstly investigated the possibility that the first excited state  ${}^{4}T_{1}(G)$  lies in the conduction band or close to the bottom of the conduction band as happens for rare-earth ions (such as  $Tm^{2+}$ ,  $Eu^{2+}$  or  $Yb^{2+}$ ) in crystals with a fluorite structure [23, 24].

As a first approximation the energy to extract a d electron from a  $Mn^{2+}$  ion embedded in a lattice such as  $BaF_2$  can simply be written as

$$E_d = I(Mn^{2+}) - e\{V_M + V_{RL}\}$$
(2)

where  $I(Mn^{2+}) = 33.7 \text{ eV}$  is the first ionization potential of free  $Mn^{2+}$  and  $V_M$  is the Madelung potential at the cation site in the perfect lattice. For cases such as  $BaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  or  $CaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  where there is a lattice relaxation of the first neighbours around the impurity it is necessary to add the  $V_{RL}$  term which is given by

$$V_{RL} = 8e\{1/R - 1/R_0\}$$
(3)

in the case of eightfold coordination.

For CaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup>,  $eV_M = 19.0$  eV,  $eV_{RL} = 1.9$  eV and thus  $E_d = 11.9$  eV. As the bottom of the conduction bands of CaF<sub>2</sub> and BaF<sub>2</sub> appear to be about 1 eV below the zero level [25, 26] this simple reasoning demonstrates that the ground and first excited states of MnF<sub>8</sub><sup>6-</sup> in CaF<sub>2</sub> lie at an energy well below that associated with the bottom of the conduction band of CaF<sub>2</sub>. This idea is reinforced by recent XPS results [27] on CaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> showing that the binding energy corresponding to the ground state of MnF<sub>8</sub><sup>6-</sup> lies around 11 eV. For BaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> it is found that  $eV_M = 17.5$  eV and  $eV_{RL} = 6.9$  eV, indicating a much



Magnetic field (G)

**Figure 4.** (a) EPR spectrum of BaMnF<sub>4</sub> taken at different temperatures. (b) EPR spectrum associated with a BaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> sample recorded at T = 60 K and T = 25 K. ( $H \parallel \langle 100 \rangle$ ): --, guide to the eye.

stronger inward relaxation of ligands than for  $\text{CaF}_2 : \text{Mn}^{2+}$ . Therefore  $E_d$  would be equal to 9.4 eV and thus although smaller than for  $\text{CaF}_2 : \text{Mn}^{2+}$ , it favours the fact that both the ground and the first excited states of  $\text{MnF}_8^{6-}$  in  $\text{BaF}_2$  are well below the bottom of the host lattice conduction band [24]. The present situation would be different from that observed for divalent rare-earth cations in lattices such as  $\text{CaF}_2$ ,  $\text{SrF}_2$  or  $\text{SrCl}_2$ , where the first excited state can be in the conduction band. This is favoured by the low ionization potential displayed by ions such as  $\text{Tm}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Dy}^{2+}$  or  $\text{Eu}^{2+}$  with respect to  $I(\text{Mn}^{2+}) = 33.7 \text{ eV}$ . For instance  $I(\text{Tm}^{2+}) = 23.3 \text{ eV}$ . Taking into account these facts we have also explored whether the absence of luminescence for isolated  $\text{Mn}^{2+}$  can be explained through a normal non-radiative process involving multiphonon emission for the first excited state. The nonradiative emission probability is related to the Stokes shift  $E_s$  and to the gap  $E_g$  between

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the first excited and ground-state energy.  $E_s$  can be written as

$$E_s = 2\bar{S}\hbar\bar{\omega} \tag{4}$$

in terms of an average mode with frequency  $\bar{\omega}$  linearly coupled to the electronic excited state.  $\bar{S}$  denotes the corresponding Huang–Rhys factor. The gap  $E_g$  is also written as

$$E_g = \bar{p}\hbar\bar{\omega} \tag{5}$$

and thus  $\bar{p}$  is the number of phonons required to bridge the gap.

Dexter *et al* [28] pointed out that the occurrence of luminescence is governed by the  $\Lambda$  parameter defined by

$$\Lambda = \frac{1}{2} \frac{E_s}{E_g} = \frac{S}{\bar{p}} \tag{6}$$

in such a way that an increase in  $\Lambda$  favours the disappearance of the luminescence. Moreover in the case of F centres it was found [29] that luminescence exists when  $\Lambda < \Lambda_M$  where  $\Lambda_M = 0.25$ .

**Table 1.** The energies of the  ${}^{6}A_{1} \rightarrow {}^{4}T_{1}(G)$  excitation peak  $(E_{g})$ , the associated emission peak and the Stokes shift  $(E_{s})$  measured at room temperature for  $Mn^{2+}$  in some fluoroperovskites and in  $Mn^{2+}$ -doped MF<sub>2</sub> (M = Ca, Cd or Sr), together with the  $\Lambda$ -value (defined in (6)) corresponding to each system. The energy of the  ${}^{6}A_{1} \rightarrow {}^{4}T_{1}(G)$  excitation peak for SrF<sub>2</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$ (where R = 213 pm) has been derived from that corresponding to CaF<sub>2</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$  (where R = 226 pm) taking into account the dependence of 10Dq upon R (equation (1)) and assuming the same values of the Racah parameters.

		Energy $(cm^{-1})$			
Host lattice	References	$\overline{{}^{6}A_{1} \rightarrow {}^{4}T_{1}(G)}$ peak	Emission peak	Stokes shift	Λ
KMgF <sub>3</sub>	[7,8]	18 160	16955	1205	0.033
KZnF3	[7,8]	18 530	17 200	1330	0.036
CsCaF <sub>3</sub>	[7,8]	19880	18350	1530	0.038
CaF <sub>2</sub>	[9]	22 625	20 202	2432	0.055
CdF <sub>2</sub>	[9]	22 075	19493	2582	0.060
SrF <sub>2</sub>	[22]	23 000	20 000	3000	0.065

In table 1 are collected representative values of  $E_s$  and  $E_g$  for  $Mn^{2+}$ -doped fluoroperovskites as well as for  $Mn^{2+}$  in CaF<sub>2</sub> and SrF<sub>2</sub>. In the latter case, only the emission peak has been measured. The value of the  ${}^{6}A_{1} \rightarrow {}^{4}T_{1g}$  (G) absorption maxima has been calculated from 10Dq = 4250 cm<sup>-1</sup> found for CaF<sub>2</sub>, equation (1) and the distances R = 226 pm and R = 231 pm derived from the experimental isotropic superhyperfine constant  $A_s$  for CaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> and SrF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup>, respectively. It can be seen in table 1 that the  $\Lambda$ -values for Mn<sup>2+</sup> in fluoroperovskites are all close to 0.035. By contrast,  $\Lambda$  experiences a significant increase on passing from these cases to CaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> (where  $\Lambda = 0.055$ ). Also on going from CaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> to SrF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup>,  $\Lambda$  experiences approximately a 20% increase.

Therefore the  $\Lambda$ -values shown in table 1 suggest that firstly the system  $SrF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  is less favourable than  $CaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  for observing luminescence and secondly  $Mn^{2+}$  in fluoroperovskites are more suitable systems than  $Mn^{2+}$  in crystals with a fluorite structure, mainly because the latter systems involve a Stokes shift which is about 70% higher than that displayed by the former.

As regards  $CaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  the data collected in [9] indicate that luminescence strongly decreases when T > 550 K. For  $SrF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  the luminescence is only seen [22] for

temperatures T < 200 K. Although these experimental facts are in qualitative agreement with the preceding conclusions, the present analysis indicates that the quenching of luminescence for Mn<sup>2+</sup> in BaF<sub>2</sub> can be related to a  $\Lambda_M$ -value close to about 0.1. This value is certainly smaller than the value  $\Lambda_M = 0.25$  reached in the study of F centres [29].

Also in the recent study on  $CaF_2$ :  $Cu^+$  the  $Cu^+$  luminescence is well observed [30]. The experimental values  $E_g = 28\,000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $E_s = 8000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  lead to  $\Lambda = 0.14$ , thus implying that  $\Lambda_M > 0.14$  for this system. Very recent results on  $Cr^{4+}$  in several oxides [31] reveal that firstly luminescence is favoured upon decreasing  $\Lambda$  and secondly, among the systems analysed, the lowest value of the quantum efficiency  $\eta$  is reached for YSGG :  $Cr^{4+}$  where  $\eta = 9\%$  and  $\Lambda = 0.20$ .

Let us now try to explain the quenching of the luminescence in BaF<sub>2</sub> :  $Mn^{2+}$  despite the fact that  $\Lambda$  would be about 0.1. As is well known the total decay probability  $\tau^{-1}$  involves the radiative contribution  $\tau_R^{-1}$  as well as the non-radiative contribution  $\tau_{NR}^{-1}$ . Roughly speaking the quenching of luminescence starts when the two parameters  $\tau_R$  and  $\tau_{NR}$  become comparable [32]. A great difference appears, however, between  $Mn^{2+}$  for fluorites and systems with F centres, and  $Cr^{4+}$  as regards  $\tau_R$  in oxides. In fact, in these systems,  $\tau_R$  is of the order of some microseconds while for  $Mn^{2+}$  : CaF<sub>2</sub> it is about 100 ms [9].

If  $\tau_{NR}$  in BaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> is dominated by multiphonon processes, then  $\tau_{NR}$  depends on  $\Lambda$ . Thus  $\tau_{NR}$  can become comparable to  $\tau_R$  at  $\Lambda$ -values smaller than those reached in cases where  $\tau_R$  is of the order of 1  $\mu$ s.

In conclusion, at variance with what is found for  $CaF_2 : Mn^{2+}$  where  $\eta = 1$  at room temperature, we have discovered no luminescence arising from substitutional  $Mn^{2+}$ impurities in BaF<sub>2</sub> down to 10 K. By contrast, from the analysis of emission and excitation spectra, direct evidence of the existence of BaMnF<sub>4</sub> precipitates inside the samples analysed has been reached. The progressive quenching of the isolated  $Mn^{2+}$  luminescence through the series  $CaF_2 \rightarrow SrF_2 \rightarrow BaF_2$  of host lattices could partially be related to an increase in the Stokes shift  $E_s$ . As recently analysed for the symmetric mode [12] the Stokes shift depends on  $\omega^{-2}$ , and the angular frequency  $\omega$  decreases upon increasing the metal–ligand distance R. This feature probably explains the higher Stokes shift encountered in CaF<sub>2</sub> : Mn<sup>2+</sup> than in Mn<sup>2+</sup>-doped fluoroperovskites because R increases on passing from sixfold to eightfold coordination.

On the other hand the existence of the symmetry change undergone by the substitutional  $Mn^{2+}$  centre in BaF<sub>2</sub> [4] suggests the existence of a soft local mode which again tends to favour an increase in  $E_s$ .

Further work on this problem is planned for the near future.

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