



Journées Nationales de Thermoélectricité

25-27 Novembre 2025

Blois

Tuesday 25 th November – Training session		
13h30 – 14h00	Welcoming – Registration	
14h00 – 15h00	Fabien Giovannelli (Greman, Blois)	Laser Flash analysis principles
15h15 – 16h15	Anna-Katharina Ott (Greman, Blois)	Spectroscopy Raman I
16h30 – 17h30	Anna-Katharina Ott (Greman, Blois)	Spectroscopy Raman II



Wednesday 26th November – Scientific Sessions		
8h30 – 8h45	Welcoming	
8h45 – 9h00	Welcoming words – Organizing committee (F. Giovannelli), GDR Name director (K. Termentzidis) and GIS-TE director (C. Candolfi)	
9h00 – 9h40	Emmanuel Guilmeau (CRISMAT, Caen)	Insights into the crystal chemistry of thermoelectric sulfides
9h40 – 10h00	Sonia Sahir (CRISMAT, Caen)	Crystal Structures and Thermoelectric Properties in the Cu-Sn-S system
10h00 – 10h20	Swagata Patra (IJL, Nancy)	Development of Colusite Based Thermoelectric Devices
10h20 – 11h00	Coffee Break	
11h00 – 11h20	Minati Tiadi (CRISMAT, Caen)	Dramatic Lone Pair Effect in CuPbSbS_3 compared to CuPbBiS_3 : Correlation between Structure, Lattice Anharmonicity and Thermal Conductivity
11h20 – 11h40	Animesh Bui (CRISMAT, Caen)	Insight into Lone Pair-Induced Anharmonicity and Its Impact on Poor Thermal Transport of GeSnS_2 -A 2D Synthetic Analog of Teallite
11h40 – 12h00	Lucas Le Gars (CRISMAT, Caen)	Triangular Copper Driven Polytypism and Vibrational Properties in Layered Cu_2ZrS_3
12h00 – 14h00	Lunch	
14h00 – 14h20	Manojkumar Moorthy (ICMPE, Thiais)	Order-disorder transitions in the Fe_2VGa full Heusler alloy
14h20 – 14h40	Arthur Wieder (IJL, Nancy)	How to get the synthesis of Cu_2SnSe_3 right?
14h40 – 15h00	Charlotte Poterie (Pprime, Poitiers)	Engineering Electrical Transport by Implantation-Induced Defects in CrN Films Without Affecting Thermal Conductivity
15h00 – 15h20	Rachid Belhriti Nejjar (Gremat, Blois)	Is it possible to modulate the heat flow through a thermoelectric material or a Peltier module?
15h20 – 15h40	Coffee Break	



15h40 – 16h00	Loïc Sorel (ICMMO, Orsay)	Study of doping impact on Thermoelectric properties of High Entropy cobaltite perovskite ($\text{La}_{0.2}\text{Pr}_{0.2}\text{Nd}_{0.2}\text{Sm}_{0.2}\text{Eu}_{0.2}$) $_{1-x}\text{M}_x\text{CoO}_3$ (M = Sr,Ca)
16h00 – 16h20	Fabien Giovannelli (Greman, Blois)	Thermoelectric properties of La-doped SrTiO_3 and the A deficient $\text{La}_{2/3}\text{TiO}_3$ sintered by SPS
16h20 – 16h40	Vijaya Bhasker (Greman, Blois)	Thermoelectric and ferroelectric properties of $\text{Sr}_x\text{Ba}_{1-x}\text{Nb}_2\text{O}_6$ solid solution sintered by SPS

17h00 – 18h30	GIS-TE Scientific Committee meeting	
19h00 – 20h00	Reception at the City Hall of Blois	
20h00	Gala Dinner	

Thursday 27th November – Scientific Session		
8h45 – 9h00	Welcoming	
9h00 – 9h40	Olivier Bourgeois (Néel, Grenoble)	Thermoelectric nanostructured materials for energy harvesting at the nanoscale
9h40 – 10h00	Carmelo Prestipino (CRISMAT, Caen)	Process-controlled defect engineering and intrinsic low thermal conductivity in layered Cu_2ZrS_3
10h00 – 10h20	Romain Viennois (IJL, Nancy)	Discovery of new semiconducting Si-rich Na-Si phase obtained under high pressure and high temperature
10h20 – 10h40	Nathalie Vast (LSI, Palaiseau)	Observation of the interplay between electron-phonon and impurity scattering in the heat transport of heavily-doped silicon
10h40 – 11h00	Coffee Break	
11h00 – 11h45	GIS-TE Director – Organizing committee	Award ceremony – Closing speech

Insights into the crystal chemistry of thermoelectric sulfides

E. Guilmeau

1. CRISMAT, CNRS, Normandie Univ, ENSICAEN, Unicaen, 14000 Caen, France

email: emmanuel.guilmeau@ensicaen.fr

The search for optimized thermoelectric materials with intrinsically low thermal conductivity raises a particularly interesting conundrum, due to the delicate balance that must be achieved between charge and heat transport. To date, the best thermoelectric performances have been reported in heavy-metal selenides and tellurides. However, while these compounds exhibit excellent properties, they do not fall within the category of sustainable materials. This has driven considerable efforts within the thermoelectric community over the past decade to develop sulfide-based materials. With an overall abundance 4 to 5 orders of magnitude higher than that of Se or Te, sulfur represents a far more desirable and sustainable alternative.

The wide diversity of crystal structures found in sulfides, ranging from synthetic compounds to natural minerals, combined with their structural complexity and chemical flexibility, offers a remarkable playground for chemists and physicists to design materials with tailored electrical and thermal properties. Using both experimental and computational approaches, our recent investigations have provided new insights into the relationship between crystal structure and thermal transport in metal sulfides [1–5]. We particularly emphasize how lone-pair stereochemical activity, structural dimensionality, anisotropy, and cationic disorder govern their thermal and vibrational properties. These findings open new perspectives for the development of cost-effective and sustainable sulfide compounds for thermoelectric and thermal management applications.

References

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Crystal Structures and Thermoelectric Properties in the Cu-Sn-S system

S. Sonia^{1,*}, P. Carmelo¹, G. Emmanuel^{1,*}

1. CRISMAT, CNRS, Normandie Univ, ENSICAEN, UNICAEN, 14000 Caen, France

*Email: sonia.sahir@ensicaen.fr; emmanuel.guilmeau@ensicaen.fr

Abstract

Cu-Sn-S compounds, composed of earth-abundant and non-toxic elements, have emerged as a promising candidates due to their tunable electrical and thermal properties, making them ideal materials for thermoelectric applications. Varying the Cu/Sn ratio leads to a variety of crystal structures derived from the sphalerite-type structure, with different transport properties. [1]

In this work, we investigate the crystal chemistry and thermoelectric properties of Cu-Sn-S compounds, focusing on their structural evolution, defect chemistry, and electronic band structure modifications induced by Cu/Sn substitution. Additionally, we explore the effects of doping strategies to optimize the carrier concentration and to enhance thermoelectric performance. Using a combination of synthesis, structure analyses, and transport measurements, we analyze the interplay between crystal structures, structural disorder, electrical properties, and lattice thermal conductivity. Our findings especially highlight the fundamental role of Cu vacancies and Cu coordination for optimizing the power factor and reducing thermal conductivity. This study provides new insights into the design of high-performance thermoelectric materials in the Cu-Sn-S system and underscores the potential of heterovalent substitutions and doping in tailoring thermoelectric properties.

Development of Colusite Based Thermoelectric Devices

Swagata Patra^{1*}, Philippe Masschelein¹, Emmanuel Guilmeau², Gaëlle Riou²,
Soufiane El Oualid¹, Bertrand Lenoir¹, Christophe Candolfi¹.

1. Université de Lorraine, CNRS, Institut Jean Lamour, F-54000 Nancy, France.
2. CRISMAT, CNRS, Normandie Univ, ENSICAEN, UNICAEN, 14000 Caen, France.

email: swagata.patra@univ-lorraine.fr

The scarcity and toxicity of elements constituting thermoelectric (TE) devices have led to the development of innovative strategies to not only find novel materials with non-toxic and earth-abundant elements but also enhance their conversion efficiency. However, the performance of TE devices is significantly influenced by the nature and reactivity of the diffusion barrier used to mitigate harmful interdiffusion between TE material and electrodes¹. Colusite ($\text{Cu}_{26}\text{V}_2\text{Sn}_6\text{S}_{32}$) is a non-toxic, cheap sulphide-based TE material that could pave the way to the production of affordable devices performing at intermediate temperatures (below 400°C) for power generation applications². In this work, we will discuss the choice of diffusion barrier materials for colusite ($\text{Cu}_{26}\text{V}_2\text{Sn}_6\text{S}_{32}$) based on various physical properties such as the coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE). The microstructure and phase composition of the joint area with various selected diffusion barriers as well as electrical contact resistance measurements, were investigated in the as-fabricated state and after prolonged annealing. The results of this work will be further discussed in the context of literature data on colusites.

References

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Acknowledgments

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Dramatic Lone Pair Effect in CuPbSbS₃ compared to CuPbBiS₃ : Correlation between Structure, Lattice Anharmonicity and Thermal Conductivity

T. Minati,^{1,*} B. Animesh, L. Pierric, R. Bernard, P. Carmelo, Z. Bin, C. Christophe, U. Mohammad, S. Priyanshu, P. Koushik, M. Prithwija, S. Ajay, R. Adèle,⁷ G. Emmanuel,^{1,*}

¹Laboratoire CRISMAT, UMR 6508, CNRS, ENSICAEN, 6 Boulevard du Maréchal Juin, 14050 Caen Cedex 04, France

*Contact authors: minati.tiadi@ensicaen.fr; emmanuel.guilmeau@ensicaen.fr

Abstract: The comparison of the crystal structure of bournonite CuPbSbS₃ with that of aikinite CuPbBiS₃ shows that the former exhibits a larger unit cell volume ($V=552.58 \text{ \AA}^3$ for $Z=4$) than the second one ($V=534.42 \text{ \AA}^3$ for $Z=4$) despite the smaller size of Sb³⁺ compared to Bi³⁺. This behavior originates from the stronger lone pair effect of Sb³⁺ which induces a larger static distortion leading to a tetrahedral SbS₃L configuration while Bi³⁺ exhibits a less asymmetric distortion corresponding to the more compact pyramidal BiS₅ (or octahedral BiS₅L) configuration. These structural distinctions are further supported by our temperature-dependent Raman spectroscopy. Indeed, the vibrational signatures of the differing lattice dynamics. Anharmonicity coefficients extracted from Raman data show a greater anharmonicity for CuPbSbS₃ than that of CuPbBiS₃. Electron localization function analysis and crystal orbital Hamilton population further confirms the higher activity of the Sb³⁺ lone pair compared to Bi³⁺. Therefore, despite Sb being lighter than Bi, both compounds exhibit similar acoustic phonon cutoff frequencies. The appearance of a Boson-like broad hump at nearly the same temperature (11–12 K) region in both materials further confirms the presence of additional low-energy optical vibrations, occurring within a similar frequency range. As a result, both CuPbSbS₃ and CuPbBiS₃ exhibit partially suppressed Umklapp scattering and comparable low lattice thermal conductivity in the high-temperature regime, despite their compositional and structural differences.

Insight into Lone Pair-Induced Anharmonicity and Its Impact on Poor Thermal Transport of GeSnS₂—A 2D Synthetic Analog of Teallite

A. Bhui,¹ E. Guilmeau¹

1. CRISMAT, CNRS, Normandie Univ., ENSICAEN, UNICAEN, Caen 14000, France

email: animesh.bhui@ensicaen.fr

Full text of the abstract. GeSnS₂, a 2D synthetic analog of teallite, adopts a layered orthorhombic structure in which Ge and Sn atoms occupy the same crystallographic sites. The GeSnS₂ layers stack along the crystallographic a-axis and are composed of tetrahedrally coordinated, distorted Ge(Sn)S₃L (L: lone pair)-like layers. At elevated temperatures, GeSnS₂ undergoes a structural phase transition from the low-symmetry orthorhombic GeS-type to a higher-symmetry orthorhombic TII-type. The homogeneous distribution of Ge and Sn, along with the material's anisotropic nature, is elucidated through HAADF-STEM imaging, with its transport properties further confirming the anisotropy. This anisotropic structure is driven by the lone pair interactions between the (Ge/Sn)-S layers, a feature clearly observed through electron localization function (ELF) analysis. The enhanced anharmonicity resulting from these lone pair interactions contributes to a low thermal conductivity of ~0.8 W/m·K at 300 K and ~0.38 W/m·K at 773 K. While GeSnS₂ exhibits semiconductor-like electrical transport, the low charge carrier concentration leads to a low power factor and a modest thermoelectric figure of merit (zT). Ongoing efforts involving doping and alloying of GeSnS₂ aim to increase the carrier concentration, thereby improving its electrical transport properties and enhancing the zT.

Triangular Copper Driven Polytypism and Vibrational Properties in Layered Cu_2ZrS_3

Lucas Le Gars,^{1,*} Sakshi Verma,² Minati Tiadi,¹ Carmelo Prestipino,^{1,*} Animesh Das,² Bin Zhang,^{3,4} Olivier Perez,¹ Philippe Boullay,¹ Bernard Raveau,¹ Gaëlle Riou,¹ Adèle Renaud,⁵ Kanishka Biswas,² Umesh V. Waghmare,² Xiaoyuan Zhou,^{3,4} and Emmanuel Guilmeau^{1,*}

¹ CRISMAT, CNRS, Normandie Univ, ENSICAEN, Unicaen, 14000 Caen, France

² Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Jakkur, Bengaluru, Karnataka - India

³ College of Physics and Institute of Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies, Chongqing University, Chongqing 401331, China

⁴ Analytical and Testing Center of Chongqing University, Chongqing 401331, China

⁵ Univ. Rennes, CNRS, ISCR – UMR 6226, F-35000 Rennes, France

Email : lucas.le-gars@ensicaen.fr; carmelo.prestipino@ensicaen.fr; emmanuel.guilmeau@ensicaen.fr

Among the various possibilities offered by the periodic table, copper-rich sulfides represent a formidable source for the discovery of low-cost and environmentally friendly thermoelectric materials. Copper-rich sulfides constitute an important class where univalent copper is the dominant element, offering the possibility of creating hole carriers in the conductive "Cu-S" network for the generation of p-type thermoelectrics. In addition to high electrical conductivity, some of these phases can also generate low thermal conductivity in relation with structural defects, order/disorder and/or atomic vibration phenomena, leading to high thermoelectric performances [1]. In this context, low thermal conductivity has been recently reported in the new phase Cu_2ZrS_3 [2]. The structure is built of CdI_2 -type edge-sharing ZrS_6 octahedra layer alternating with corner-shared CuS_4 tetrahedra layer. A particularity of this structure is the presence of copper in triangular coordination inside the CdI_2 -type layers.

In the present work, based on single crystal X-ray diffraction, 3D electron diffraction, Rietveld *FAULTS* analyses and HR-TEM observations, we demonstrate that Cu_2ZrS_3 crystallizes in two new structural polytypes with different stacking schemes and structural defects, depending on the synthesis conditions. Those peculiar structural features in connection with materials processing, chemical bonds, and atomic vibration phenomena were carefully examined to establish rules and correlations between the crystal structures, nano-microstructures, electronic structures, vibrational and thermoelectric properties.

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Order-disorder transitions in the Fe₂VGa full Heusler alloy

M. Moorthy^{1*}, L. Laversenne,² and E. Alleno¹

1. Univ. Paris Est. Creteil, CNRS, ICMPE, UMR 7182, 2-8, rue H. Dunant, F-94320 THIAIS, France

2. Institut Laue-Langevin, 6 rue J. Horowitz, F-38042 Grenoble, France

email: manojkumar.moorthy@cnrs.fr

Understanding the structural ordering of Fe₂VGa as a function of temperature, a composition similar to the well-known Fe₂VAL thermoelectric Heusler compound, is important so as to increase its thermoelectric performance, as even minor changes to atomic ordering can significantly influence its electronic and transport properties.^{1,2} As it has been previously well-established that even cold work of the as-prepared samples can affect their structural integrity,³ this work holds value emplacing the importance of the L2₁ ordered structure in a thermoelectric prospect.

Firstly, a Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) investigation was performed to understand the structural transitions from room temperature (RT) until 1873 K, in accordance with our earlier work on Fe₂VAL.³ The DSC thermogram revealed a first transition occurring at 1228 K and a second transition at 1601 K. Following a laboratory X-ray diffraction (XRD) study that could not clearly detect the 111 and 200 superlattice reflections typical of the L2₁ ordering, high resolution synchrotron diffraction studies was carried out at RT for structural validation. The Rietveld refinement of the synchrotron data revealed the crystallization of Fe₂VGa in the fully ordered L2₁ structure, providing a base for a subsequent temperature dependent neutron diffraction from RT to 1303 K. Following the analysis by Rietveld refinements of the neutron data, upon heating, we were able to observe a transition from the ordered L2₁ to the fully disordered A₂ structure, between 1108 K and 1265 K, in agreement with the DSC thermogram. In addition, the neutron diffraction analysis provided a new insight slightly deviating from the expected second order transition. In the 1235-1265 K range, we were able to observe a coexistence between the partially disordered L2₁ and A₂ structural motifs, evidencing the partially first order character for this transition. Overall, this study emphasises the importance of the L2₁ structure and structural transitions in Fe₂VGa in a thermoelectric perspective.

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How to get the synthesis of Cu_2SnSe_3 right?

**A. Wieder^{1,*}, J. Tobola², P. Levinský³, E. Elkaim⁴, J. Ghanbaja¹, G. Steciuk¹, S. Migot¹,
P. Lemoine¹, G. Medjahdi¹, I. Terzi¹, B. Lenoir¹, S. El Oualid¹, C. Candolfi¹**

1. Université de Lorraine, CNRS, Institut Jean Lamour, F-54000 Nancy, France
2. AGH University of Krakow, Faculty of Physics and Applied Computer Science, Aleja Mickiewicza 30, 30-059 Krakow, Poland
3. FZU – Institute of Physics of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Cukrovarnická 10/112, 16200, Prague 6, Czech Republic
4. Synchrotron SOLEIL, L'Orme des Merisiers, Saint Aubin BP 48, 91192, Gif-sur-Yvette, France

* arthur.wieder@univ-lorraine.fr

Ternary Cu-based diamond-like *p*-type semiconductors such as Cu_2SnSe_3 are currently being investigated for their potential applications as thermoelectric materials. Several lattice symmetries are associated with this compound, including the ordered monoclinic and disordered cubic phases, providing a versatile platform for optimizing the transport properties.^[1-2] Thermodynamically, Cu_2SnSe_3 is expected to be fully ordered at absolute zero near equilibrium. With increasing temperature, ordering decreases until a transition temperature is reached, above which the structure becomes fully disordered. Fast water quenching from high temperatures can therefore freeze a metastable, non-equilibrium disorder into the structure. Subsequent annealing allows further tuning of structural disorder through cationic rearrangement, and is consequently expected to significantly influence the transport properties.^[3-4] In this work, we investigated the influence of synthesis conditions on the crystal structure, microstructure and thermoelectric properties of the compound. While synchrotron X-ray diffraction, precession-assisted electron diffraction tomography, and selected area electron diffraction highlight the influence of annealing temperature on structural disorder, low-temperature measurements further evidence the critical effect of such feature on the nature of the acceptor-like impurity electronic states that are intrinsically doping the compound. As a result, *ZT* values can be widely tuned by adjusting the annealing temperature, and hence, the structural disorder.

References

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Engineering Electrical Transport by Implantation-Induced Defects in CrN Films Without Affecting Thermal Conductivity

C. Poterie¹, H. Bouteiller^{1,2}, P. Eklund³, A. Le Febvrier³, T. Cabioc'h¹, J.-F. Barbot¹

1. PPRIME Institute, CNRS, Université de Poitiers–ENSMA, UPR 3346, SP2MI, TSA 41123, 86073 Poitiers Cedex 9, France

2. Materials Science and Technology Division, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, 37831 Oak Ridge, Tennessee, USA

3. Inorganic Chemistry, Department of Chemistry – Ångström, Uppsala University, Box 538, SE-751 21 Uppsala, Sweden

email: charlotte.poterie@univ-poitiers.fr

Ion implantation was found to be an effective process in ScN thin films for reducing its thermal conductivity while increasing the Seebeck coefficient [1,2], thus highlighting its promising potential for thermoelectric applications. However, the control of the electrical resistivity through defect engineering remains a key challenge [1,2,3].

In nitrides, CrN is also attractive for thermoelectricity due to its small band gap of 0.2 – 0.7 eV. Depending on the deposition conditions, CrN thin films exhibit a wide range of electrical properties. In our case, the films exhibit a structural transition from an orthorhombic structure below 280K to a cubic structure with a metallic behavior for both structures.

To better understand the correlation between defects engineering and electrical behavior, we have implanted argon ions with increasing doses. Implantation induced defects act as scattering centers thus increasing the resistivity. Upon increasing defects concentration, the conduction mode is modified to a semiconducting behavior with different sensitivities depending on the crystal structures. Interestingly, even though the evolving defect landscape is modifying the density of state, characterized through Seebeck measurements, the phonon scattering is not altered. This work has thus demonstrated that ion implantation can be used to precisely tune electrical properties without affecting the thermal conductivity underscoring its potential for transport properties decorrelation.

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Is it possible to modulate the heat flow through a thermoelectric material or a Peltier module ?

R. Belrhiti Nejjar, F. Giovannelli, E. Lemaire, G. F. Nataf, L. Haumesser.

GREMAN UMR7347, CNRS, University of Tours, INSA Centre Val de Loire, 37000 Tours, France.

rachid.belrhiti-nejjar@univ-tours.fr

Manipulating heat flow via thermoelectricity remains a challenge today. However, a number of theoretical and experimental studies offer new perspectives in this area. A theoretical study has shown that it is possible to control the heat flow in a thermoelectric branch by adjusting the effective thermal conductivity as a function of the load resistance [1]. In addition, an experimental study has shown that the temperature difference within a thermoelectric module can also be modulated as a function of the load resistance [2]. In this study, thermoelectric effects are exploited differently from their traditional uses: energy recovery (Seebeck effect) or cold production (Peltier effect). The aim of this work is to take advantage of thermoelectric effects to modulate the heat flow in stationary mode.

We started to modulate the heat flow with a material, bismuth tellurium, which has good thermoelectric properties and is used in Peltier modules as a leg. We characterised a series of ten samples from the same target using the Laser Flash technique, under two electrical conditions: open circuit and short circuit. In parallel, a theoretical model was developed. Theoretical and experimental results showed that the effective thermal conductivity of the material could not be varied due to the high contact resistances R_C , which is greater than the internal resistance of the material R_{in} . We therefore decided to abandon this approach in favour of systems whose internal electrical resistance is greater than that of the contact resistances. We therefore chose to use a Peltier module.

With a device consisting of two Peltier modules, where the first is used as a heat source and the second is studied as a function of load resistance, we were able to demonstrate that the temperature difference varies according to the electrical conditions. Theoretically, we assume that the heat flow imposed at the input remains constant whatever the electrical condition, but this assumption has not yet been validated experimentally. The main challenge therefore lies in verifying it experimentally, which requires a device specifically designed to ensure a constant incoming heat flow. The next step will be to build a demonstrator, both theoretical and experimental, optimized to control thermal behaviour through a thermoelectric module. The control parameters will first be static, then dynamic.

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Study of doping impact on Thermoelectric properties of High Entropy cobaltite perovskite ($\text{La}_{0.2}\text{Pr}_{0.2}\text{Nd}_{0.2}\text{Sm}_{0.2}\text{Eu}_{0.2}$) $_{1-x}\text{M}_x\text{CoO}_3$ (M = Sr,Ca)

Loïc Sorel, Adrien Moll, Nita Dragoe, David Bérardan

ICMMO (UMR CNRS 8182), University of Paris-Saclay, Orsay, 91405, France

email: loic.sorel@universite-paris-saclay.fr

Today conventional thermoelectric materials (for example Bi_2Te_3 or PbTe) are not appropriate for high temperature applications in air. In that prospect, oxides could be good candidates to engineer suitable materials for high temperatures applications.

Despite being stable in air at high temperatures, oxides show lower ZT_{max} values than intermetallic materials. Seebeck coefficient for some oxides can be around $300 \mu\text{V/K}$ at room temperature, which is a good basis. Electrical resistivity, in some cases, can be lowered up to around $10^{-2} \Omega\cdot\text{cm}$ at room temperature with doping, which may be sufficient for thermoelectric applications if the thermal conductivity is low enough. However, the main issue with oxides is their thermal conductivity, which is often quite high. Thus, one strategy to improve the conversion yield of oxides is to reduce thermal conductivity without modifying the other parameters. This could be done with high entropy oxides.

High entropy oxides are by definition, oxides where one cationic site is randomly occupied by at least five different cations. In these materials, the network is distorted with local mass variation. This induces a decrease of phonon free mean path in the material, which means a decrease of thermal conductivity. The interest of high entropy for engineering thermoelectric materials have been shown in a previous work by Kumar et al.¹ done at ICMMO, in the specific case of cobaltite perovskite, in which the authors showed that this strategy reduces thermal conductivity without significant impact on the other parameters, leading to an improvement of ZT_{max} .

In that context, following on from the work of Kumar et al.¹, a series of high-entropy cobaltite perovskite compounds with the general composition $(\text{La}_{0.2}\text{Pr}_{0.2}\text{Nd}_{0.2}\text{Sm}_{0.2}\text{Eu}_{0.2})_{1-x}\text{M}_x\text{CoO}_3$, where M = Sr or Ca and x = 0.03, 0.05 or 0.07, has been successfully synthesized using solid-state synthesis. Different sintering conditions were tested in order to obtain dense pellets without cracks. Various measurements show that the compound where M = Sr and x = 0.05 currently exhibits the best thermoelectric performance with a maximum power factor of $330 \mu\text{W/m}\cdot\text{K}^2$ at 410 K.

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Thermoelectric properties of La doped SrTiO₃ and the A deficient La_{2/3}TiO₃ sintered by SPS

F. Giovannelli,¹E. Bsaibess¹, C. Genevois², M. Pitcher², E. Veron², M. Allix², F. Delorme¹

1. GREMAN UMR7347, CNRS, University of Tours, INSA Centre Val de Loire, France

2. CEMHTI UPR 3079, CNRS – Université d'Orléans, France

email: fabien.giovannelli@univ-tours.fr

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Insulators are often doped in order to become semiconducting as La-substituted SrTiO₃. However the thermoelectric properties require long term annealing at 1400°C under Ar/H₂ after sintering. SPS sintering of this material directly achieves relative densities of 99% at 1200°C, with a power factor of 0.2 mW/m.K² at 50°C. Increasing the maximum temperature of the SPS thermal cycle to 1500°C increases the reduction of the material and the power factor is multiplied by 10 to reach 2 mW/m.K² at 50°C [1]. Unfortunately, this compound exhibit high thermal conductivity, around 6 W/m.K at 50°C. Two solutions have been explored in order decreasing the thermal conductivity. The first involves replacing Sr with Ba. The thermoelectric properties of (Sr_{1-x}Ba_x)_{0.95}La_{0.05}TiO₃ ceramics (x = 0, 0.1, 0.25, and 0.5) synthesized via solid-state reaction and densified using spark plasma sintering (SPS) at 1200 °C and 1500 °C have been investigated. The thermal conductivity is divide by half with 50% of Ba addition. Among the investigated compositions, the sample with x = 0.25 exhibited the best thermoelectric performance. ZT of 0.12 at 100°C, increasing steadily to 0.18 at 300°C, and maintain a relatively stable performance across the examined temperature range (50-700°C). The second approach is to introduce gaps in the structure with a deficient composition at site A. The same effect is observed for the fully lanthanum-substituted compound La_{0.66}TiO₃, which exhibits greatly reduced thermal conductivity due to vacancies on the A-site of the perovskite. Moreover the material quenched during SPS leads to domains ten nanometers in length due to a structural transition from cubic to tetragonal structure at high temperature.

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Thermoelectric and ferroelectric properties of $\text{Sr}_x\text{Ba}_{1-x}\text{Nb}_2\text{O}_6$ solid solution sintered by SPS

V. Bhasker, D. Brault, T. T. Chartier F. Giovannelli, G. F. Nataf

GREMAN UMR7347, CNRS, University of Tours, INSA Centre Val de Loire, 37000 Tours, France.

Vijaya.bhasker@univ-tours.fr

To reduce energy consumption, the recovery of waste energy in the form of heat via a thermoelectric module is an interesting solution. However, the materials used in current thermoelectric modules are expensive and not abundant in nature. These issues hinder the large-scale production of thermoelectric energy conversion devices. As an alternative, transition metal oxides have several advantages for thermoelectric applications, including their stability in air at high temperatures and the high abundance of their constituents. Since the discovery by Terasaki et al. [1] of a high-power factor in Na_xCoO_2 , an intensive search for new thermoelectric oxides is thus taking place and it has been found that oxides can have a power factor comparable to that of other classes of thermoelectric materials.

Oxides are investigated as promising thermoelectric materials made of cheap and abundant precursors [2]. Among them, ferroelectric strontium barium niobate ($\text{Sr}_x\text{Ba}_{1-x}\text{Nb}_2\text{O}_6$) obtained by conventional sintering and further annealed in reducing conditions shows good thermoelectric properties, despite inhomogeneities characterized by an anomalous grain growth that impacts electrical and thermal conductivity. Here, as an alternative, we synthesize dense and homogeneous polycrystals of $\text{Sr}_x\text{Ba}_{1-x}\text{Nb}_2\text{O}_6$ ($x=0.25, 0.50, 0.60$) in a single step, by taking advantage of the specificities of spark plasma sintering. The carbon molds of SPS require a reducing atmosphere that affects the material's functional properties. Indeed, ferroelectric materials sintered by SPS are in most of the case reduced. Thus, SPS is an interesting tool to get N-type thermoelectric oxide. The negative Seebeck coefficient observed throughout the investigated temperature range 300-1000 K confirms the n-type conductivity for all compositions, with its magnitude reaching a maximum of $-400 \mu\text{V/K}$ at 1050 K in $x=0.60$. The electrical conductivity shifts from a semiconducting to a metallic-like behavior at 600 K. Electrical conductivity increases by more than two times in all compositions when annealed under H_2/Ar , owing to the increased carrier density, compared to the SPS-reduced system. As a result, the power factor peaks at $\sim 300 \mu\text{W/m}\cdot\text{K}^2$ for $\text{Sr}_{0.60}\text{Ba}_{0.40}\text{Nb}_2\text{O}_6$, with a figure of merit reaching ~ 0.14 , comparable to state-of-the-art strontium barium niobate thermoelectric polycrystals.

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Thermoelectric nanostructured materials for energy harvesting at the nanoscale

N. Aubergier¹, N. Chessel², E. Desgué³, P. Legagneux³, D. Tainoff², O. Bourgeois¹

1. Institut NEEL, CNRS UGA, 25 avenue des Martyrs, 38042 Grenoble Cedex 9

2. MOIZ S/C CNRS 25 avenue des Martyrs, 38042 Grenoble Cedex 9

3. THALES R&T France 1, Avenue Augustin Fresnel, 91767 Palaiseau Cedex

email: olivier.bourgeois@neel.cnrs.fr

With the emergence of low-power communication protocols, there is a growing demand for autonomous micro-energy sources capable of delivering tens of microWatts. Additionally, as chip sizes continue to shrink dramatically, there is an increasing need to harvest this energy at very small scales, close to the heat source. Nanostructured thermoelectric materials are particularly promising in this regard. However, our characterization methods must be adapted to their tiny dimensions.

At Institut NEEL, we have developed expertise in fabricating suspended thermal sensors: membrane-based thermoelectric nano-TEGs. Our planar nano-TEGs consist of silicon nitride membranes equipped with p-n junctions. The proof of concept has been validated using n-type and p-type Bi_2Te_3 thin films ($ZT \approx 0.2$). MOIZ, a spin-off startup from Institut NEEL, is currently commercializing thermoelectric energy harvesters based on this technology. However, since these materials are toxic and ultimately limited in performance, we are seeking innovative materials and architectures to enhance performance and broaden the application scope of thermoelectric energy microharvesters without relying on bismuth telluride.

First, we will review research efforts over the past five years focused on the nanostructuring of materials—such as silicon and germanium nanowires, and GeMn thin films—as potential candidates for thermoelectric applications. We will then present the performance of large arrays of membranes, which form the planar nano-TEGs. Using an adapted Harman method, we can directly measure the ZT value of the entire device based on bismuth telluride.

Second, we will introduce a new measurement platform designed to characterize the thermoelectric properties of 2D materials, particularly those with high potential, such as topological transition-metal dichalcogenides (TMDs). A dedicated lab-on-chip system has been developed to measure the Seebeck coefficient, electrical conductivity (σ), and power factor in ultra-thin layers of SnSe_2 and PtSe_2 as test materials. Future prospects for measurements—using the Seebeck platform and Scanning Thermal Microscopy (SThM)—will also be discussed, including topological insulators like WSe_2 , along with new architectures to integrate them into functional devices.

Process-controlled defect engineering and intrinsic low thermal conductivity in layered Cu_2ZrS_3

Carmelo Prestipino^{1,*}, Lucas Le Gars¹, Sakshi Verma², Minati Tiadi¹, Animesh Das², Olivier Perez¹, Philippe Boullay¹, Bernard Raveau¹, Adèle Renaud³, Kanishka Biswas², Umesh Waghmare², and Emmanuel Guilmeau¹

¹ *Laboratoire CRISMAT, UMR 6508, Caen, France*

² *Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Jakkur, Bengaluru, Karnataka – India*

³ *Univ. Rennes, CNRS, ISCR – UMR 6226, F-35000 Rennes, France*

*Carmelo.Prestipino@ensicaen.fr

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Controlling lattice thermal conductivity (κ_L) is pivotal in designing materials for thermoelectric and thermal management applications. Sulfide-based compounds offer an eco-friendly, earth-abundant alternative to tellurides and selenides but generally suffer from high κ_L . Here, we investigate Cu_2ZrS_3 , a layered metal sulfide recently reported to exhibit intrinsically low κ_L ($\sim 0.35 \text{ W} \cdot \text{m}^{-1} \cdot \text{K}^{-1}$ at 683 K), attributed to its unique Cu-based trigonal coordination and strong lattice anharmonicity.^[1]

Through a combined approach of controlled synthesis, advanced diffraction techniques, and first-principles modeling, we uncover the existence of **two novel structural polytypes** of Cu_2ZrS_3 , resulting from different thermal histories. These polytypes display distinct stacking sequences (ABCB and ABC), variations in atomic displacement, and levels of structural disorder, all of which critically impact phonon transport. Notably, diffuse scattering and mixed-site occupancy indicate the presence of stacking faults that has been simulated and quantitatively evaluated.

Heat capacity measurements, Raman spectroscopy, and phonon calculations confirm the presence of **low-energy optical phonons associated with Cu**, facilitating strong optical-acoustic phonon interactions that intrinsically suppress κ_L . These findings establish a clear correlation between structural polytypism and thermal transport in Cu-rich sulfides, offering new pathways toward **sustainable, cost-effective materials with tailored thermal properties**.

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Discovery of new semiconducting Si-rich Na-Si phase obtained under high pressure and high temperature

L. Schütte¹, D. Ali¹, R. Ghannam¹, J. Rouquette¹, J. Haines¹, W. Crichton², M. Redington³, G. Frapper³, M. Beaudhuin¹, R. Viennois¹

1. ICGM, Univ Montpellier, CNRS, ENSCM, Montpellier, France
2. ESRF – The European Synchrotron, 71 Avenue des Martyrs, Grenoble, France
3. Applied Quantum Chemistry Group, E4 Team, IC2MP UMR 7285, Université de Poitiers–CNRS, 4, rue Michel Brunet TSA 51106, 86073 Poitiers Cedex 9, France

email: romain.viennois@umontpellier.fr

In a world of climate change and limited natural resources, the urgent need for sustainable energy technologies drives the search for novel functional materials composed of abundant, non-toxic, and low-cost elements. In this context, silicides based on sodium are emerging as promising candidates for energy storage and thermoelectric applications. While the Na-Si phase diagram has been relatively unexplored, recent advances in in-situ synchrotron techniques and high-pressure high-temperature (HP-HT) synthesis, the method of choice for obtaining metastable materials of high technological interest, such as diamond, have begun to reveal a richer phase space^{1,2,3}.

In this study, we report the discovery of a new quenchable Na₂Si₃ phase, formed under HP-HT conditions and identified using in-situ synchrotron X-ray diffraction at the ID06-LVP beamline (ESRF). DFT calculations confirmed its stability at room conditions and predicted a semiconducting nature. It exhibits a tetragonal structure with two-dimensional silicon frameworks intercalated with sodium atoms. These characteristics make it an interesting candidate for future energy-related applications such as thermoelectricity and Na-based batteries.

These findings highlight the importance of combining in-situ HP-HT experimentation with theoretical modelling to discover novel metastable materials with large potential for various applications.

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Observation of the Interplay between Electron-Phonon and Impurity Scattering in the Heat Transport of Heavily Doped Silicon

Raja Sen¹, Carlos Acosta², Alessandro Ciavatta³, Lorenzo Paulatto³, Philippe Dollfus⁴, Jérôme Saint-Martin^{1,4}, Nathalie Vast⁵, Jelena Sjakste⁵, and Pierre-Olivier Chapuis²

1. SATIE, ENS-Paris Saclay
2. CETHIL, INSA-Lyon
3. Sorbonne Université, Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, UMR CNRS 7590, Institut de Minéralogie, de Physique des Matériaux et de Cosmochimie, 4 place Jussieu, F-75005 Paris, France
4. C2N, Université Paris-Saclay
5. Laboratoire des Solides Irradiés, CEA-DRF-IRAMIS, École Polytechnique, CNRS UMR 7642, Institut Polytechnique de Paris, 91120 Palaiseau, France

email: nathalie.vast@polytechnique.edu

A detailed understanding of heat transport mechanisms in doped semiconductors is essential for optimizing their thermoelectric performance and improving heat management in micro- and nanoscale devices. While electron-phonon (el-ph) and electron-impurity interactions are well-studied in the context of electron transport in semiconductors [1,2], research on the impact of el-ph and phonon-impurity (ph-imp) interactions on phonon lifetimes and, consequently, on lattice thermal conductivity, remain rare. In this presentation, I will show our recent work, which explores the influence of el-ph and ph-imp scattering on the lattice thermal conductivity of heavily doped silicon [3], using density functional theory-based first-principles methods. Our findings show that at moderate carrier concentrations ($\sim 10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-3}$) and room temperature, phonon scattering by electrons is the main mechanism behind the reduction of thermal conductivity in doped silicon. However, at lower temperatures or higher doping levels ($\sim 10^{21} \text{ cm}^{-3}$), both el-ph and ph-imp scattering significantly contribute to reducing the lifetimes of low-frequency phonons, which leads to further decreases in the thermal conductivity of doped silicon. Our results show good agreement with experimental thermal conductivity data for silicon across the full range of doping levels and temperatures.

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