1	Low-temperature magnetism of alabandite: crucial						
2	role of surface oxidation						
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25 Abstract

Manganese(II) monosulphide crystallizes into three different polymorphs (alpha-, beta-, and gamma-MnS). Out of these, alpha-MnS, also known as mineral alabandite, is considered the most stable and is widespread in terrestrial materials as well as in extraterrestrial objects such as meteorites.

30 In this study, the low-temperature antiferromagnetic state of alpha-MnS was investigated 31 using macroscopic magnetic measurements as induced and remanent field-cooled (FC) and 32 zero-field-cooled (ZFC) magnetizations and magnetic hysteresis. Both natural alabandite and 33 synthetic samples show (i) Néel temperatures in a narrow temperature range around 153 K 34 and (ii) a rapid increase of magnetization around 40 K. The anomalous magnetic behavior 35 taking place at about 40 K was previously ascribed to a magnetic transition from the high-36 temperature antiferromagnetic to low-temperature ferromagnetic state documented for non-37 stoichiometric alpha-MnS slightly enriched in manganese. However, our detailed microscopic 38 observations and in particular, oxidation experiments indicate that the anomalous magnetic 39 behavior around 40 K is caused by the presence of oxide layer of ferrimagnetic hausmannite 40 (Mn_3O_4) on the surface of alpha-MnS rather than being an intrinsic property of nearly 41 stoichiometric alpha-MnS.

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43 **1. Introduction**

Alabandite is a manganese sulfide with theoretical composition MnS crystallizing in the cubic
lattice of galena type (PbS). It occurs as an accessory mineral at many localities worldwide,
mainly in epithermal base-metal sulfide veins, in low-temperature manganese deposits
[*Doelter*, 1926; *Hewett and Rove*, 1930; *Anthony et al.*, 2012] and also in marine sediments
[*Lepland and Stevens*, 1998]. Locally, it is an important ore mineral of Mn. Its name is

derived from its supposed discovery locality at Alabanda, Turkey. The type locality of
alabandite is Sacarîmb, Romania [*Anthony et al.*, 2012].

51 Apart from terrestrial localities, alabandite is also relatively abundant in certain types of 52 meteorites, e.g., in E chondrites [Keil, 1968; Zhang et al., 1995; Zhang and Sears, 1996; 53 Brearley and Jones, 1998] and related achondritic aubrites [Keil and Fredriksson, 1967; 54 Ryder and Murali, 1987; Lin et al., 1989; Mittlefehldt et al., 1998]. It was also reported in 55 some ureilites [Fioretti and Molin, 1998] and winonaites [Mason and Jarosewich, 1967]. 56 Alabandite is paramagnetic at room temperatures and orders antiferromagnetically below its Néel temperature, $T_N \sim 148$ K found out by *Heikens et al.* [1977]. A bit higher $T_N (\sim 153$ K) 57 was later published by *Pearce et al.* [2006]. A structural transition occurs at $T \sim 130$ K which 58 59 is usually interpreted as an abrupt inversion of the rhombohedral distortion of the f.c.c. lattice 60 along [1 1 1] plane accompanied by a discontinuous change in the magnetic susceptibility

61 observed on alabandite single crystals [*Heikens et al.*, 1977].

62 The magnetic susceptibility and induced field-cooled and zero-field-cooled magnetization (in 63 10 mT of external magnetic field) of antiferromagnetic alabandite below its $T_{\rm N}$ are low, typically in the range of 10^{-7} m³/kg and 3-4 mAm²/kg, respectively. The substitution of Mn²⁺ 64 ions by Fe²⁺ has a pronounced effect on the Néel temperature which increases with increasing 65 iron content reaching ~185 K for the $Fe_xMn_{1-x}S$ system with x = 0.2 [Petrakovski et al., 66 67 2002]. Still, more iron-rich alabandite samples (x > 0.25) exhibit ferrimagnetic behavior 68 above room temperature with Curie temperatures $T_{\rm C}$ between 730 K (x = 0.27) and 860 K (x 69 = 0.38) [Loseva et al., 1998; Petrakovski et al., 2002]. However, the magnetization of this 70 ferrimagnetic-ordered alabandite is weak, close to that of paramagnetic MnS.

71 It was reported that iron-free MnS samples with a slight excess of Mn show antiferro- to 72 ferromagnetic transition at $T \sim 40$ K [*Petrakovski et al.*, 2001]. This transition manifests itself 73 in a sharp, two orders of magnitude, increase of induced magnetization on cooling. Such a 74 sharp change in magnetic properties can significantly increase magnetic response of 75 alabandite at low temperatures and can potentially contribute to low-temperature magnetic 76 properties of extraterrestrial bodies [Kohout et al., 2010]. Similar low-temperature magnetic 77 transition is observed in troilite (FeS) [Kohout et al., 1997; Cuda et al., 2011]. Moreover, 78 *Gattacceca et al.* [2011] recently reported that chromite with Curie temperature in 40–80 K 79 range exist in certain meteorites and may significantly modify their low-temperature magnetic 80 properties. Therefore, verification, interpretation and quantification of this magnetic 81 phenomenon in alabandite samples and its comparison to low-temperature magnetic 82 properties of troilite and chromite is required and is subject of this study.

83

84 **2. Materials and methods**

Basic characteristics of our samples are summarized in the Table 1. Natural polycrystalline
sample of alabandite (NA) comes from Broken Hill, N.S.W., Australia; sample Bm 1972,
294, kindly provided by Natural History Museum, London. Additionally, nearly
stoichiometric alpha-MnS was synthesized adopting two alternative procedures

SA1 sample was prepared using a slightly modified solvothermal process of *Biswas and Chaudhuri* [2007]. First, manganese acetate [(CH₃CO₂)Mn·4H₂O, purity >99.0%, Sigma Aldrich] and thiourea [CH₄N₂S, purity >99.0%, Sigma Aldrich] was mixed in molar ratio of 1:3 with water solvent, loaded into ace pressure tube (Sigma Aldrich) and placed into a furnace at 190°C for 17 hours. Then, the dried product was annealed in helium atmosphere at temperatures up to 450° C.

SA2 sample was synthesized by direct thermal fusion of sulfur (purity >98.0%, Sigma
Aldrich) and manganese (purity >99.0%, Sigma Aldrich) powders in stoichiometric molar
ratio. The precursors were annealed twice in a sealed quartz tube under vacuum for 12 hours
at 700°C including sample homogenization between two subsequent runs.

99 Measurements of the macroscopic magnetic response such as induced and remanent field-100 cooled (FC) and zero-field-cooled (ZFC) magnetizations and magnetic hysteresis 101 measurements were carried out at the Institute for Rock Magnetism, University of Minnesota 102 and at the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials, Palacky University 103 Olomouc, using MPMS5S and MPMS XL-7 (both Quantum Design) SQUID magnetometers. 104 Details of FC and ZFC measurement procedure are provided in auxiliary material.

105 X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) patterns of all samples were recorded with a PANalytical X'Pert

106 PRO MPD diffractometer (iron-filtered Co K_{α} radiation: $\lambda = 0.178901$ nm, 40 kV and 30 mA)

in the Bragg-Brentano geometry. Details of the XRD measurement procedure are provided inauxiliary material.

The bulk chemical composition of the SA2 sample was determined using quantitative X-ray wavelength dispersive spectral analysis on a MICROSPEC 3PC X-ray wavelength dispersive system (WDS) on a CamScan 3200 scanning electron microscope (SEM) at the Czech Geological Survey. The analyses were performed using an accelerating voltage of 20 kV, 25 nA beam current, 1 µm beam size and ZAF correction procedures. The counting times were 30 s for all analyzed elements. A combination of natural and synthetic standards was used for calibration.

SEM TESCAN VEGA 3XM at Institute of Geology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic has been used to document surface features of the natural alabandite (NA sample). To avoid potential deterioration of the sample, the specimen has not been coated and the SEM has been operated at low-vacuum mode. Energy dispersive x-ray (EDX) spectra of individual phases observed on the surface of the studied specimen have been acquired with a Bruker XFlash detector attached to the SEM. Subsequently, part of the sample has been polished and analyzed with an electron microprobe (EMPA) CAMECA SX-100 instrument at Institute of Geology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic to determine the stoichiometry of thesample interior.

125

126 **3. Results and discussion**

127 **3.1.** Characterization and low-temperature magnetic properties of alpha-MnS

128 XRD patterns of a natural alabandite (NA) and of two synthetic alpha-MnS (SA1 and SA2) 129 samples are depicted in Figure 1a, 1b, and 1c. They perfectly correspond to the cubic structure 130 of alpha-MnS (PDF No. 01-088-2223). In the NA sample, some amount of elemental sulfur 131 (16% by Rietveld refinement) and hausmannite (see below) has been found in addition to the 132 alabandite main phase. The presence of sulfur on NA sample surface was also confirmed by 133 SEM/EDX (Figure S1 of the auxiliary material). In contrast EMPA of NA sample interior did 134 not reveal any presence of sulfur or hausmannite. The SEM-WDS analysis of SA2 sample 135 show similar results. Based on information provided above, all three studied samples can be 136 considered as a representative of alabandite sample with only minor presence of other phases 137 limited to surface of the individual grains.

Temperature dependences of induced FC and ZFC magnetizations at 10 mT (Figure 2) as well as remanent FC and ZFC magnetizations (imprinted by 2.5 T at 5 K, Figure 3) yield Néel temperatures (T_N) for natural and synthetic samples in the narrow temperature range around 153 K as expected for alabandite [*Pearce et al.*, 2006]. Néel temperature manifests itself in peaks on the induced magnetization curves, and in merging of FC and ZFC remanent magnetization curves at T_N .

In all the alabandite samples, we further observe magnetic feature at ~40 K manifested by a rapid increase of magnetic response with decreasing temperature (Figure 2 and 3). The enhanced magnetic response is also seen in hysteresis properties at 5 K, namely, an S-shaped 147 hysteresis loop and a tendency to saturation in a high external magnetic field (Figure 4). Such 148 behavior is typical for ferro/ferrimagnetic materials rather than for an antiferromagnetic one. 149 The enhanced magnetic response below 40 K is similar to that reported for iron-free alpha-150 MnS samples slightly enriched in Mn with respect to stoichiometric alpha-MnS and 151 interpreted as antiferro- to ferromagnetic transition at 40 K upon cooling [Petrakovski et al. 152 2001]. However, in our case, both NA and SA2 samples are highly stoichiometric examples 153 of alabandite (Table 1). According to our measurements, the enhanced magnetic response at 154 40 K occurs in all studied samples and its amplitude does not correlate with Mn/S ratio. Thus, 155 the question arises whether such low-temperature behavior is limited to alabandite samples 156 slightly enriched in Mn as reported by *Petrakovski et al.* [2001], or it is a general phenomenon 157 occurring also in stoichiometric or Mn-depleted alabandite samples. Alternatively, a presence 158 of small amounts of another phases on alabandite grain surfaces identified above may be 159 responsible for the observed low-temperature magnetic behavior and will be evaluated in 160 following section.

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162 **3.2. Effects of surface oxidation on low-temperature magnetic properties of alpha-MnS**

In order to confirm or exclude the role of manganese oxides on magnetic response of alpha-MnS (sulfur should not significantly influence the low-temperature magnetic properties of alabandite), we artificially oxidized the SA1 sample by hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2). About 20 mg of SA1 material was briefly submerged in hydrogen peroxide and air-dried at room temperature for 20 hours (sample labeled as SA1_OX). Subsequently, XRD and magnetic measurements were carried out following the same procedures as for other samples (Figures 1d and 5).

Upon hydrogen peroxide treatment, surface of MnS was partially oxidized into manganeseoxide phases and thus the ratio of alabandite to manganese oxides in the SA1 OX sample

172 changed compared to original SA1 sample. Presence of Manganese oxide Mn₃O₄, known also 173 as mineral hausmannite, was confirmed by XRD analysis in the SA1 OX sample (Figure 1d). 174 Hausmannite has Curie temperature T_C ~41-43 K [Dwight and Menyuk, 1960; Robie and 175 *Hemingway*, 1985]. It is very close to the temperature where enhanced magnetic response of 176 alabandite is observed upon cooling, making hausmannite a meaningful candidate to explain 177 the observed low-temperature magnetic behavior of alabandite. Other phases identified in the 178 XRD pattern are bixbyite (alpha-Mn₂O₃, antiferromagnetic below 80 K [Robie and 179 *Hemingway*, 1985] or 90 K [*Mukherjee et al.*, 2006]) and sulfur (diamagnetic [O'Handley, 180 2000; Blundell, 2001]). These phases do not have any magnetic transitions around 40 K which 181 would be explained observed magnetic behavior at this temperature.

182 The oxidized SA1 OX sample shows a significant (by a factor of eight) increase in its 183 magnetic response below ~40 K compared to the unoxidized alpha-MnS sample (insets in 184 Figure 5). The dependence of magnitude of the 40 K magnetic response on the amount of 185 manganese oxides including hausmannite suggests that the low-temperature behavior 186 observed in studied alabandite samples is not an intrinsic property of alabandite itself, but 187 rather hausmannite governs the low-temperature magnetic response below 40 K. A similar 188 example was described for antiferromagnetic MnO nanoparticles with Mn₃O₄ surface layers 189 [Berkowitz et al., 2008].

The low-temperature saturation magnetization (M_S) of SA1_OX sample (i.e., after oxidation) amounts to ~7.3 Am²/kg at 5 K (Table 2) and it is consistent with a presence of ~19 wt.% of hausmannite (assuming the bulk value of M_S for pure Mn₃O₄ to be 38 Am²/kg [*Tebble and Craik*, 1969; *Vázquez-Olmos et al.*, 2005]). According to Rietveld refinement, the amount of hausmannite in this oxidized sample equals to 23 wt.%. A difference between the values determined from Rietveld refinement and magnetic measurements may reflect the fact that hausmannite forms thin surface layer on alabandite particles. The small size of oxide particles 197 could result in a reduced saturation magnetization of hausmannite with respect to the bulk 198 value due to finite size effect [*Batlle and Labarta*, 2002]. Moreover, the presence of thin 199 surface layer of manganese oxides was also confirmed through broad diffraction peaks of 190 hausmannite in the XRD pattern (Figure 1d). The limited periodicity of the phases forming 191 the surface oxide shell could also negatively influence the result of Rietveld refinement.

From the $M_{\rm S}$ values, we can also determine the hausmannite content in other samples. Approximately 2.3 wt.%, 0.1 wt.%, and 5 wt.% of hausmannite are required to produce the low-temperature magnetic response observed in SA1 (before oxidation), SA2, and natural alabandite (NA) samples, respectively. These values are close to, or below, the detection limit of XRD measurements and thus not observed in the XRD pattern of these samples except NA sample (~7 wt.% of Mn₃O₄ calculated from Rietveld refinement).

Furthermore, the profile of the temperature-dependent induced FC magnetization curve of samples NA, SA1 and especially SA1_OX displays a tendency to follow the Curie-Weiss law above 40 K. The hysteresis loops below 40 K show also shift along field (horizontal) axis towards negative values (compare Bc+ and Bc- in Table 2) which seems to be manifestation of exchange interactions between antiferromagnetic (alabandite) and ferrimagnetic (hausmannite) phases.

In the sample SA2 with extremely low (~0.1%) hausmannite content, the magnetic signal above 40 K does not have tendency to follow the Curie-Weiss law and the low-temperature behavior is dominated by stronger alabandite antiferromagnetic response. This confirms our hypothesis that the anomaly at 40 K does not correspond to a magnetic transition in alabandite and is consistent with ferri- to paramagnetic transition of Mn_3O_4 present in oxidized surface layer of alabandite grains.

220 Upon heating in the temperature range between $T_{\rm C}$ of hausmannite and $T_{\rm N}$ of alabandite, the 221 decreasing paramagnetic response of hausmannite overlaps with the slightly increasing

222 antiferromagnetic response of alabandite. A local minimum in the induced FC curve can be 223 observed in this temperature range and it is shifted to the higher temperatures with increasing 224 magnitude of hausmannite content (insets in Figure 2). In this case, it appears that there is a 225 direct correlation between the amount of hausmannite present in the sample and temperature 226 at which the minimum occurs. The estimated temperatures are 44 K, 89 K and 146 K for SA2, 227 SA1, and NA samples, respectively, and follow positive trend with increasing hausmannite 228 content. For sample SA1 OX, we do not observe the minimum in temperature range from 40 229 to 155 K because the paramagnetic response of hausmannite (and perhaps also of bixbyite) 230 dominates over the antiferromagnetic response of alpha-MnS.

Last but not least, the temperature dependence of induced ZFC measurements of NA, SA1, SA2 and SA1_OX samples exhibits a sharp peak below the Curie temperature ascribed to hausmannite, and then on subsequent heating drops down to very low values (Figures 2 and 5a). The observed peak can be interpreted as a Hopkinson peak observed just prior to a transition from magnetically ordered state to paramagnetic one [*Dunlop and Özdemir*, 1997] rather than as an effect accompanying a magnetic transition from ferromagnetic to antiferromagnetic state as suggested by *Petrakovski et al.* [2001].

The positive correlation between Mn enrichment and magnitude of the 40 K feature observed in synthetic alabandite by *Petrakovski et al.* [2001] can be explained as the extra Mn added did not enter alabandite structure and rather reacted with oxygen to produce manganese oxides including hausmannite. Thus higher addition of Mn resulted in higher production of hausmannite causing higher amplitude of the 40 K feature.

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244 **3.3.** Comparison to other low-temperature magnetic minerals

245 Similar low-temperature magnetic transition, as described above in alabandite – hausmannite

system, is observed at ~70 K in other sulfur monosulfide - troilite FeS [Kohout et al., 1997;

Cuda et al., 2011]. *Gattacceca et al.* [2011] recently reported that chromite with Curie temperature in 40–80 K range exists in certain meteorites and further suggest that chromite contamination within troilite samples may be responsible for the observed ~70 K feature in troilite. In this respect alabandite with hausmanite contamination is analogue to troilite with proposed chromite contamination. Thus, in following paragraph we briefly compare alabandite – hausmannite system to the troilite and chromite.

253 At the first look both systems show very similar behavior with sharp increase in both induced 254 and remanent magnetization and onset of ferromagnetic-like hysteresis below the transition 255 temperature. The difference between these two systems is in nature of the contaminant. 256 Hausmannite is of similar composition to alabandite (both manganese bearing phases) and is 257 localized to surface coatings of alabandite grains. Thus it can be easily overlooked in EMPA 258 analysis of polished grains. In contrast, chromite contamination is supposed to be present 259 within interior of troilite grains and thus should be more easily observable. The thorough 260 analytical data (EMPA and SEM-BSE (BackScattered Electrons) observation of polished 261 grain sections, AAS (Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy), XRD and Mössbauer spectroscopy 262 of bulk troilite samples in *Cuda et al.* [2011]) reveal chromium content one to three orders of 263 magnitude lower than predicted for chromite amount explaining the low-temperature 264 magnetic observations. Another difference can be observed on induced ZFC magnetization 265 curves. While in alabandite – hausmannite case the ZFC induced magnetization stays well 266 below FC showing pronounced Hopkinson peak just below $T_{\rm C}$ of hausmannite (Figure 2), the 267 ZFC curve of troilite do not show obvious presence of Hopkinson peak (Figure 3 in Kohout et 268 al. [1997]). Thus, the nature of the contaminant or mechanism of the low-temperature 269 transition in troilite is likely to be different than proposed chromite (or similar to alabandite – 270 hausmannite case).

272 4. Conclusions

273 Based on our detailed investigation, the low-temperature phenomenon at ~ 40 K, previously 274 observed in some synthetic alabandite samples and ascribed to nonstoichiometry of the latter, 275 is not the intrinsic property of alabandite. It appears to be a result of ferri- to paramagnetic 276 transition of hausmannite (Mn_3O_4) present in oxidized surface layer on crystals/grains of 277 alabandite. Presence of hausmannite even in amounts below 1 wt.% can have a detectable 278 effect on magnetic response of alabandite, which is otherwise a purely antiferromagnetic 279 material below its Néel temperature of ~153 K without any other low-temperature magnetic 280 transitions. This conclusion rules out pristine alabandite to significantly contribute to 281 remanent or induced magnetism of minor Solar System bodies. In contrary, no prove of 282 similar contamination has been found in troilite showing similar transition \sim 70 K.

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388 Figure captions

- **Figure 1** XRD patterns of the samples: (a) NA, (b) SA1, (c) SA2, and (d) SA1 OX. Result of
- 390 the Rietveld refinement of SA1 OX sample is: 24 wt.% of MnS, 23 wt.% of Mn₃O₄, 23 wt.%
- of Mn₂O₃, and 30 wt.% of sulfur. The respective PDF cards are: 1 01-088-2223 (MnS); 2 -
- 392 01-075-1560 (Mn₃O₄); 3 01-089-4836 (Mn₂O₃); 4 01-078-1888 (S).
- 393
- Figure 2 Induced-ZFC and FC magnetization curves in the external magnetic field of 10 mT
 for samples: (a) NA, (b) SA1 and (c) SA2.
- 396
- Figure 3 ZFC-FC curves of remanent magnetization imprinted by a field of 2.5 T for
 samples: (a) NA and (b) SA1.
- 399

400 Figure 4 Hysteresis loops of samples: (a) NA, (b) SA1 and (c) SA2, measured at 5 K (the401 high-field slope has been subtracted).

402

Figure 5 (a) Induced-ZFC and FC magnetization curves in the external magnetic field of 10 mT for SA1_OX sample. Induced-FC curves of the SA1 sample before and after oxidation are displayed for comparison in the inset. (b) ZFC-FC curves of remanent magnetization imprinted by a field of 2.5 T for the SA1_OX sample. Remanent-FC curves of the SA1 before and after oxidation are displayed for comparison in the inset. (d) Hysteresis loops of the SA1 sample before and after oxidation at 5 K after slope correction.

 Table 1 Alabandite samples.

Sample	Description of sample preparation	Stoichiometry of alabandite	Stoichiometry by means of
NA	natural alabandite	Mn _{1.007} S	EMPA on polished speciment
SA1	solvothermal process	n.d.	*
SA2	direct thermal synthesis from S and Mn powders	MnS _{0.998} S	SEM/ WDS on polished speciment
SA1_OX	oxidation product of sample SA1	n.d.	A

n.d. stands for not determined values.

u	at 5 K arter the high field slope has been subtracted.										
Ī	Sample	Т	$M_{\mathrm{S}+}$	M_{S-}	$B_{\rm C+}$	$B_{\rm C}$	$M_{ m R^+}$	M_{R}			
		(K)	(Am ² /kg)	(Am ² /kg)	(mT)	(mT)	(Am ² /kg)	(Am ² /kg)			
Ī	NA	5	1.910 ± 0.001	1.905 ± 0.001	424 ± 1	-608 ± 1	1.315 ± 0.001	-1.326 ± 0.001			
	SA1	5	0.882 ± 0.001	-0.874 ± 0.001	29 ± 1	-59 ± 1	0.344 ± 0.001	-0.225 ± 0.001			
	SA2	5	0.039 ± 0.001	-0.035 ± 0.001	4 ± 1	-24 ± 1	0.008 ± 0.001	-0.002 ± 0.001			
	SA1_OX	5	7.277 ± 0.001	7.235 ± 0.001	395 ± 1	-426 ± 1	4.564 ± 0.001	-4.376 ± 0.001			

Table 2 Parameters of the hysteresis loops of (i) the NA, (ii) SA1, (iii) SA2 and (iv) SA1_OX at 5 K after the high-field slope has been subtracted.

 M_{s+} is the positive saturation magnetization, M_{s-} is the negative saturation magnetization, B_{C+} is the positive coercivity, B_{C-} is the negative coercivity, M_{R+} is the positive remanent magnetization and M_{R-} is the negative remanent magnetization.









