

Supplementary Material

Structural Evolution and Magnetic Properties of Gd₂Hf₂O₇ Nanocrystals: Computational and Experimental Investigations

Madhab Pokhrel^{1*}, Nicholas Dimakis^{1*}, Chamath Dannangoda¹, Santosh K. Gupta²,
Karen S. Martirosyan¹, and Yuanbing Mao^{3*}

¹Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, 1201 W
University Drive, Edinburg, Texas 78539, USA

²Radiochemistry Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai-400085, India

³Department of Chemistry, Illinois Institute of Technology, 3105 South Dearborn Street, Chicago,
IL 60616, USA

Correspondence: madhab.pokhrel@utrgv.edu (M. P.); nicholas.dimakis@utrgv.edu (N. D.);
ymao17@iit.edu (Y. M.); Tel: +1-956-665-8761 (N. D.); 956-665-7360 (M. P.); Tel:+1-312-
567-3815 (Y. M.)

ESI-1: The SEM images of the as prepared $Gd_2Hf_2O_7$ (GHO) powder at 650 °C and samples calcinated to 1000 °C, 1250 °C and 1500 °C for 6 hrs. in air.

$Gd_2Hf_2O_7$ powder sample was prepared via the co-precipitation method, followed by a molten-salt method. The synthesis routes have been extensively reported previously[1]. The as-prepared GHO powder was calcined at 1000 °C, 1250 °C, and 1500 °C temperatures in air.

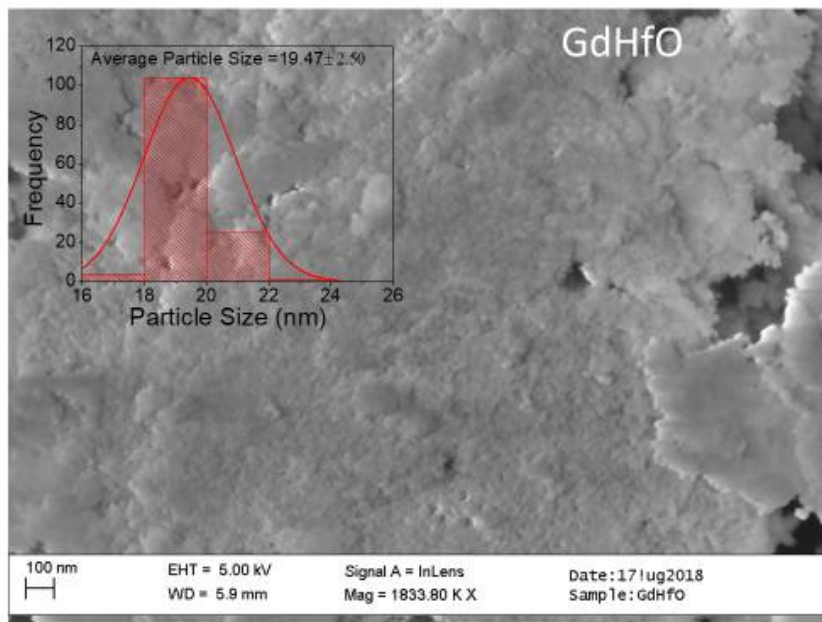


Fig. ESI-1a shows the SEM images of the as synthesized nanocrystals at 650 °C.

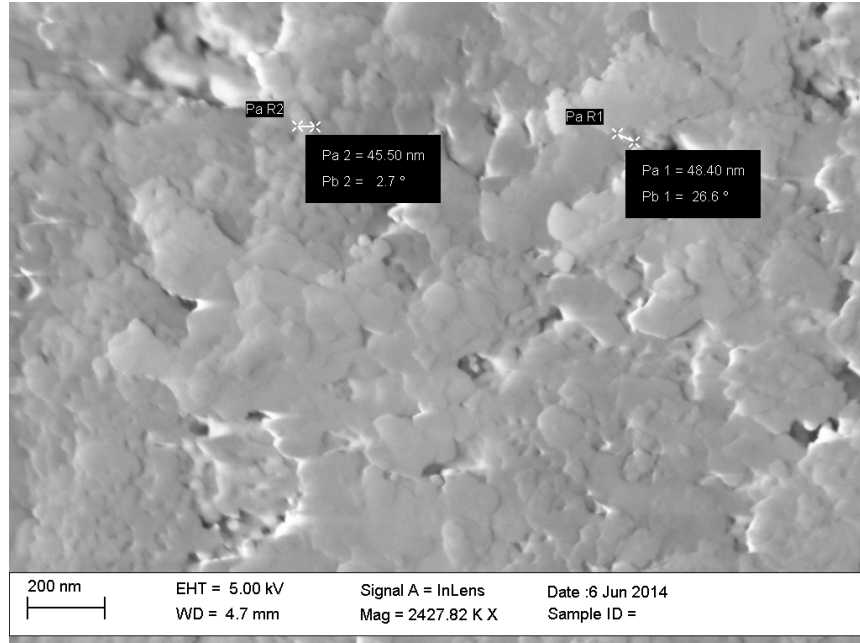


Fig. ESI-1b shows the SEM images of the as particles calcined to 1000 °C.

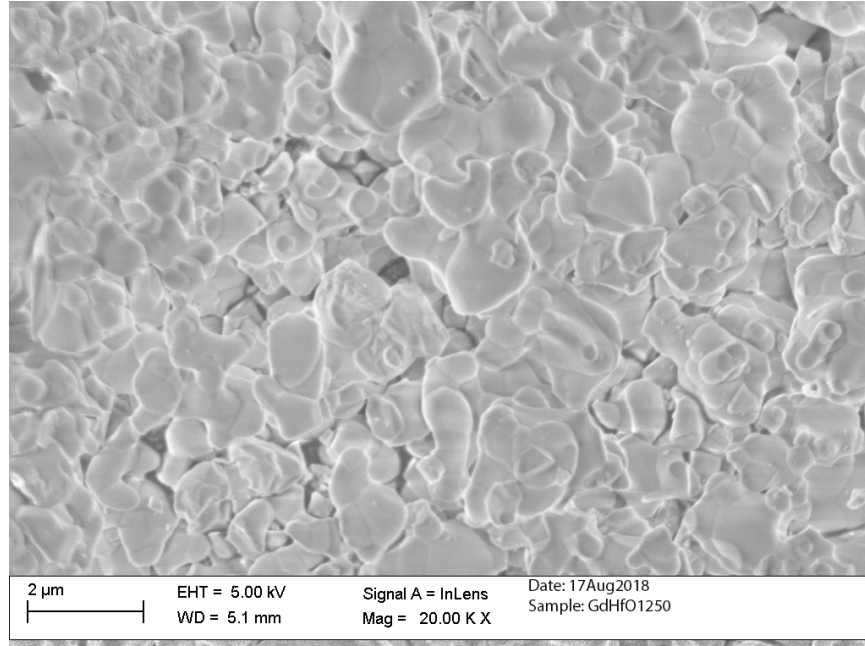


Fig. ESI-1c shows the SEM images of the as particles calcined to 1250 °C.

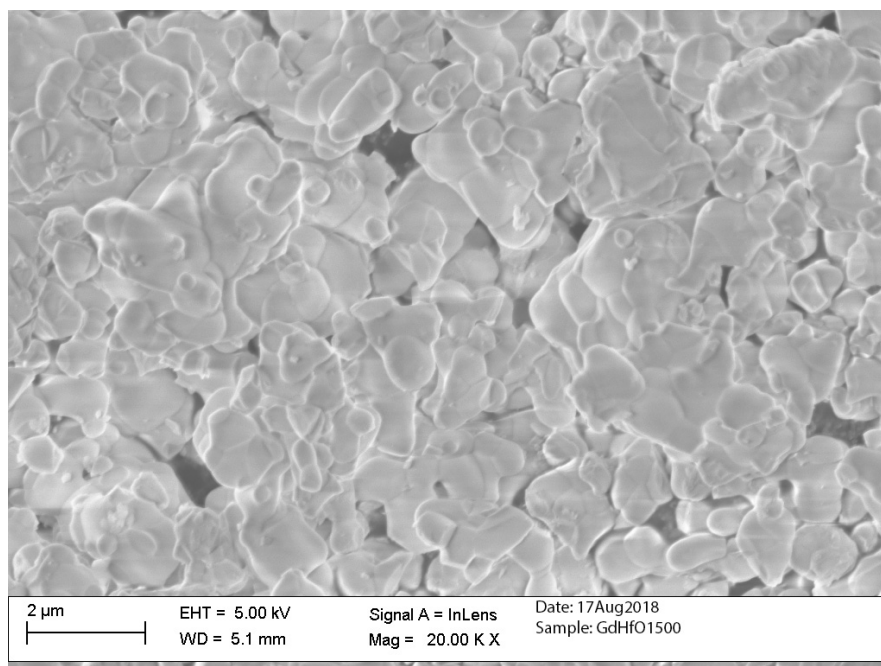


Fig. ESI-1d shows the SEM images of the as particles calcined to 1500 °C.

ESI-2: Sample Characterization

X-ray diffraction (XRD) was utilized to evaluate the crystalline phase of as synthesized and calcinated compounds under different temperatures. XRD patterns were collected using the Bruker D8 ADVANCE x-ray diffractometer with Cu $K\alpha_1$ radiation ($\lambda = 0.15406$ nm). Raman spectra were collected using the Bruker Senterra-system using a 785 nm helium-neon laser with a spatial resolution of 2 μm .

ESI-3. Calculation of lattice parameters and Scherrer evaluation of particle size for $\text{Gd}_2\text{Hf}_2\text{O}_7$ from XRD patterns

Profile fitting is a precise method to determine diffraction peak position, intensity, and full width half maximum (FWHM) for calculating lattice parameters and crystallite size. Cubic crystal lattice parameter are calculated using the equation:

$$a = d\sqrt{h^2 + k^2 + l^2}$$

where d can be calculated from the position of the peak and (hkl) correspond to the miller index. The Sherrer equation gives an estimate of the size of sub-micrometer particles. It can be calculated using the following equation:

$$\tau = \frac{K\lambda}{\beta \cos \theta}$$

where τ is the mean size of the crystalline domains, K is a shape factor (in this case given a value of 0.94), λ is the wavelength (1.5406 Å), β is the line broadening at the FWHM, and θ is the Bragg angle.

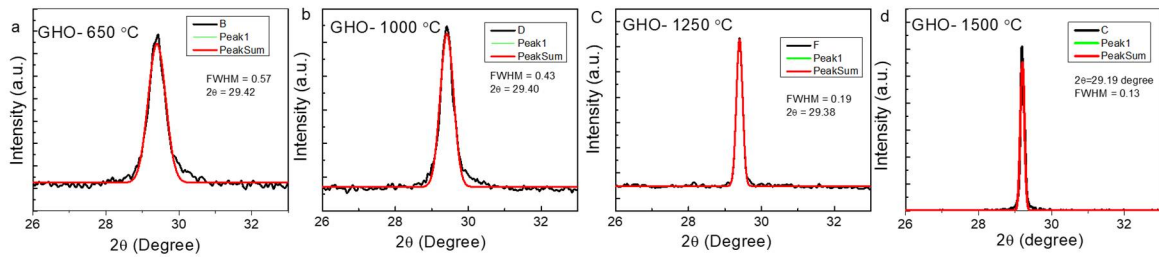


Figure S1. Gaussian fitting to (222) peak assuming that (a) $\text{Gd}_2\text{Hf}_2\text{O}_7$ -650 °C, (b) $\text{Gd}_2\text{Hf}_2\text{O}_7$ -1000 °C are crystallized in weakly ordered pyrochlore phase. In addition, assuming that (c) $\text{Gd}_2\text{Hf}_2\text{O}_7$ -1250 °C, (d) $\text{Gd}_2\text{Hf}_2\text{O}_7$ -1500 °C are crystallized in fully ordered pyrochlore phase, Gaussian fitting to (222) was evaluated. The values used for the calculation of lattice parameters and particle sizes for all samples have been listed in Table S1.

Table S1. The lattice parameters and Scherrer evaluation of the crystalline size of the $\text{Gd}_2\text{Hf}_2\text{O}_7$ Powder

$\text{Gd}_2\text{Hf}_2\text{O}_7$	2θ (degrees)	θ (radians)	Lattice con. a (Å)	FWHM (degrees)	FWHM β (radians) instrumental corrections	Particle size τ (nm)
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650	29.19	0.254	10.49	0.573	0.009	≈ 18 nm
1000	29.19	0.254	10.49	0.457	0.0079	≈ 42 nm
1250	29.18	0.255	10.50	0.195	0.0035	
1500	29.18	0.255	10.50	0.137	0.0024	

Scherrer evaluation of the crystalline size is reliable if the crystalline size is smaller than 100 nm, so we have limited our calculations for Gd₂Hf₂O₇-650 °C, and for Gd₂Hf₂O₇-1000 °C.

ESI-4. Raman Spectra: Fitted Raman spectra of the GHO nanocrystals annealed at 650 °C and 1500 °C for 6 hrs in a box furnace. Quantitative analysis of the full width at half maximum (FWHM) clearly shows difference between the Raman spectra at 650 °C and 1500 °C data. For as-synthesized GHO-650 °C powder, two distinct broad peaks centered at 305 cm⁻¹ with FWHM of 53 cm⁻¹ and 406 cm⁻¹ with FWHM of 163 cm⁻¹ were observed. But the fitted Raman modes for OP-GHO-1500 °C shows all the six peaks as expected for fully ordered pyrochlore GHO. The difference in FWHM especially for GHO-1500 sample corresponding to peaks at 305 (FWHM =47 cm⁻¹), 384 ((FWHM =43 cm⁻¹) compared to those of GHO-650 °C shows the clear difference between these two proposed phases. In particular, new peaks were observed on Raman spectra for GHO-1500 °C samples and existing peaks were sharpened and shifted in comparison to the GHO-650 °C.

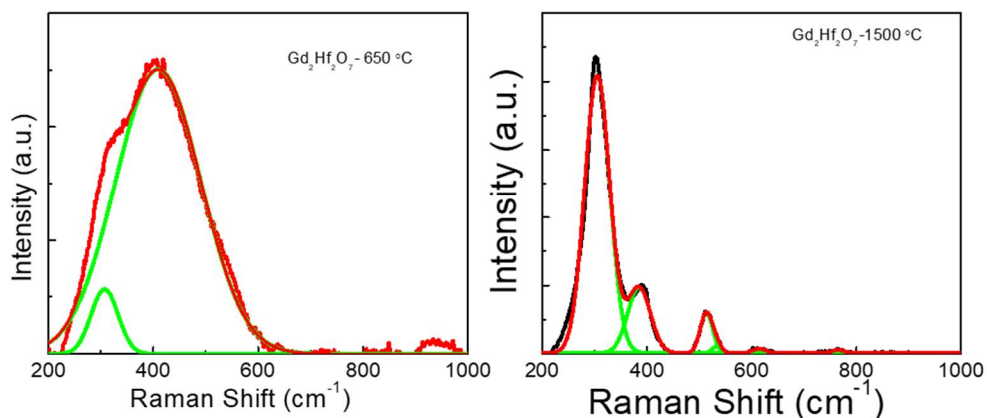


Figure S2. Gaussian fitted Raman spectra of the GHO nanocrystals annealed at 650 °C and 1500 °C for 6 hrs in a box furnace

ESI-5. CRYSTAL17 input files

a) *d12 input file for the OP-GHO with O_{8a} site being vacant.

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227 48

Table S2. Mulliken gross atom populations for OP-GHO. Values in parenthesis refer to the cation antisite. The valence populations of the Gd, Hf, and O isolated atoms are 36 *e*, 12 *e*, and 8 *e*, respectively.

Atom	OP-GHO	
	O _{8a} via ghost atoms	O _{8a} vacant
Hf	8.78 (8.86)	8.76 (8.76)
Gd	33.20 (33.34)	33.20 (33.25)
O _{48f}	9.76 (9.63)	9.71 (9.75)
O _{8b}	9.84 (9.54)	9.84 (9.51)
O _{8a}	-0.34 (0.30)	

References

[1] M. Pokhrel, S.K. Gupta, K. Wahid, Y.J.I.c. Mao, Pyrochlore Rare-Earth Hafnate RE₂Hf₂O₇ (RE= La and Pr) Nanoparticles Stabilized by Molten-Salt Synthesis at Low Temperature, 58 (2019) 1241-1251.