Raman Spectroscopy as Analytical Tool for Alkali Feldspars

Bendel, Verena¹ Böhm, Anna¹ Schmidt, Burkhard C.¹
¹Georg-August Universität Göttingen, GZG, Experimentelle und Angewandte Mineralogie

This contribution reports calibrations of Raman band positions for the determination of the Na/K ratio in ordered and disordered alkali feldspar solid solutions along the join KAlSi₃O₈ - NaAlSi₃O₈. Crystals along the ordered series microcline – albite and the disordered series sanidine - analbite were synthesised in steps of 10 mol% by ion exchange from natural albite (Iveland, Norway) or sanidine (Volkesfeld, Eifel, Germany) following the method of Kroll et al. (1986) and were analysed by X-ray diffraction and electron microprobe. Calibrations were made for the positions of several Raman bands in the wavenumber region 100 – 850 cm⁻¹.

The data show that for the disordered series sanidine – analbite a band between 120 - 142 cm⁻¹ yield the best results, enabling the determination of K/(Na+K) with an accuracy of better than ±0.04 for the synthetic series. The application of this calibration to natural samples was tested by analysing a series of alkali feldspars (K/(Na+K) = 0.28 – 0.86) from various volcanic rocks. These data suggest that the calibration can be used to estimate the K/(Na+K) ratio in natural disordered alkali feldspars with an accuracy of better than 0.1. The accuracy in K/(Na+K) can be further improved to ±0.03 (synthetic samples) and ±0.07 (natural samples) by using the Raman shift difference between the most intense Raman band at about 512 cm⁻¹ and the band at 120 to 142 cm⁻¹.

For the ordered series microcline – albite, a Raman band ranging between 748 and 764 cm⁻¹ seem to be most suited for a correlation with composition. The current data set allows an estimation of K/(Na+K) with an accuracy of about ±0.1 for the synthetic series. However, it must be noted that the available solid solution series was plagued by chemical inhomogeneity due to incomplete Na/K exchange during sample synthesis, thus leading to a large analytical error. Further work is in progress to prepare homogenous samples of the microcline – albite solid solution in order to improve the calibration.

References

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