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1 Temperature-dependent VNIR spectroscopy of hydrated 2 Mg-sulfates

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10

11 **Abstract**

12 We investigate two poly-hydrated magnesium sulfates, hexahydrate ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$) and epsomite
13 ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$), in the visible and infrared (VNIR) spectral range $0.5\div 4.0 \mu\text{m}$, as particulate for
14 three different grain size ranges: $20\text{-}50 \mu\text{m}$, $75\text{-}100 \mu\text{m}$ and $125\text{-}150 \mu\text{m}$. All samples were
15 measured in the 93 K to 298 K temperature range. The spectra of these hydrated salts are
16 characterized by strong OH absorption bands in the $1.0\text{-}1.5 \mu\text{m}$ region, and by H_2O absorption
17 bands near 2 and $3 \mu\text{m}$. Other weak features show up at low temperatures near $1.75 \mu\text{m}$ (in both
18 hexahydrate and epsomite) and $2.2 \mu\text{m}$ (only in hexahydrate). The spectral behavior of the
19 absorption bands of these two minerals has been analyzed as a function of both grain size and
20 temperature, deriving trends related to specific spectral parameters such as band center, band
21 depth, band area, and band width. Hydrated minerals, in particular mono- and poly-hydrated
22 sulfates, are present in planetary objects such as Mars and the icy Galilean satellites. Safe
23 detection of these minerals shall rely on detailed laboratory investigation of these materials in
24 different environmental conditions. Hence an accurate spectral analysis of such minerals as a
25 function of temperature is key to better understand and constrain future observations.

26

27 *Keywords.* Mars. Europe. Sulfates. VNIR spectroscopy. JUICE.

28

29 **1. Introduction**

30 Sulfate minerals in different states of hydration are present in the Solar System. Combined in situ
31 measurements, remote-sensing observations and laboratory investigations carried out in recent
32 years have allowed to detect hydrated sulfates on Mars (Brueckner 2004; Gendrin et al., 2005;

33 Chevrier and Mathè, 2006; Murchie et al., 2009; Ehlmann et al., 2014) and on icy satellites like
34 Europa and Ganymede (McCord et al., 1999; McCord et al., 2001; Dalton et al., 2005). Nathues et
35 al. (2015) suggested the presence of hydrated sulfates on the dwarf planet Ceres based on Dawn
36 observations.

37 Sulfates on Earth can originate from different geologic processes, such as: (i) precipitation due to
38 water evaporation in lakes or sabkhas environments, (ii) interaction rocks-acidic groundwater in
39 hydrothermal environments, and (iii) aqueous alteration of volcanic products (Warren, 2006,
40 2010). On the Earth, magnesium sulfate has three stable hydration states: kieserite ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$),
41 hexahydrate ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$) and epsomite ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$). It has been shown (Vaniman et al., 2004)
42 that kieserite is easily hydrated at high relative humidity conditions (>55% RH) and converted in
43 hexahydrate and epsomite, although the reverse transformation upon desiccation is unlikely.
44 Moreover hexahydrate and epsomite tend to transform to an amorphous phase when subject to
45 rapid dehydration and pressure reduction (Vaniman et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2006; Cloutis et al.,
46 2007), and tend to dehydrate when exposed to UV radiation (Cloutis et al., 2007).

47 *Mars.* According to Feldman et al. (2004), who studied the distribution of subsurface epithermal
48 neutrons, various hydrated states of magnesium salts could be present at equatorial latitudes on
49 Mars. Brueckner (2004) described layered outcrops in Meridiani Crater containing sulfate as
50 cementation agent. Based on OMEGA (Mars Express; Bibring et al., 2004) observations, Gendrin et
51 al. (2005) proposed magnesium mono-hydrated (kieserite) and poly-hydrated (epsomite) sulfates
52 to occur, together with calcium sulfates, in outcrops in several Martian layered terrains, located in
53 Valles Marineris, Margaritifer Sinus and Terra Meridiani (Chevrier and Mathè, 2006). However, the
54 same OMEGA data could be well fitted with iron poly-hydrated sulfates. Generally kieserite and
55 poly-hydrated sulfates occur as light deposits in these layered terrains. Kieserite and poly-
56 hydrated sulfate phases have also been suggested by the observations of CRISM (Mars
57 Reconnaissance Orbiter; Murchie et al., 2007) in Meridiani Planum and Valles Marineris layered
58 deposits (Murchie et al., 2009; Weitz et al., 2015) and in paleolakes (Wray et al., 2009). However it
59 is still poorly understood if hydrated phases are stable under all Martian conditions and during
60 daytime and seasonal cycles (Roach et al., 2009). Mars Science Laboratory instruments onboard
61 Curiosity rover have detected mainly hydrated calcium-sulfates at Yellowknife Bay (Rice et al.,
62 2013; Nachon et al., 2013).

63 *Icy Galilean satellites.* The presence of hydrated salts of magnesium on the surface of Europa has
64 been suggested on the basis of Galileo/NIMS spectra (McCord et al., 1998; McCord et al., 1999;
65 McCord et al., 2010). McCord et al. (1998) argued that the presence of hexahydrate and epsomite
66 on Europa (as well as of other sulfates) could be explained by hydrothermal activity related to the
67 subsurface ocean and consequent material upwelling. NIMS spectra of Europa's reddish plains are
68 thought to resemble those of hydrated magnesium sulfates with a high number of water
69 molecules (Dalton et al., 2005), although it has been pointed out that Europa's non-icy terrains are
70 likely composed of mixtures of different types of sulfates (McCord et al., 1999). Best fits for non-
71 icy terrains on Europa are indeed provided by mixtures of hexahydrate, bloedite ($\text{Na}_2\text{Mg}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot$
72 $4\text{H}_2\text{O}$), mirabilite ($\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4 \cdot 10\text{H}_2\text{O}$), and sulfuric acid hydrate ($\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$) (Dalton, 2007). Carlson

73 et al. (2009) alternatively suggested that the surface of Europa is mainly constituted by poly-
74 hydrated sulfuric acids, produced after irradiation of SO₂ in water ice.

75 *Meteorites.* Hydrated Mg-sulfates (epsomite) have also been identified in the matrices of
76 carbonaceous chondrites (Burgess et al., 1991) after stepped combustion experiments. Other
77 authors report various types of sulfates also in veins and grains in carbonaceous chondrites
78 (Fredriksson and Kerridge, 1988; Brearley and Jones, 1998). Hutchison (2006) reports the presence
79 of epsomite particularly in veins and matrices of CI carbonaceous chondrites, although some
80 authors (Gounelle and Zolensky, 2001) assess that some of the sulfates in CI1 chondrites could
81 have formed by terrestrial alteration.

82 *Laboratory investigations.* Laboratory studies have shown that the main diagnostic absorption
83 features in VNIR spectra of hydrated sulfates do not undergo dramatic changes in position when
84 exposed to simulated Martian conditions (Cloutis et al., 2007), while major changes in bands'
85 shapes and parameters occur at cryogenic temperatures (Dalton et al., 2005). Band parameters of
86 hexahydrite have been shown to slightly change depending on ambient conditions (UV radiation,
87 CO₂ atmosphere and pressure) (Craig et al., 2006). A lot of work has been done to better
88 understand the stability of hydrated Mg-sulfates in various physical conditions (Vaniman et al.,
89 2004; Wang et al., 2006; Cloutis et al., 2007), to study the cycles of hydration-dehydration
90 between the various phases MgSO₄·nH₂O (Chou and Seal II, 2007), and to characterize the VNIR
91 spectral behavior of large suites of sulfates with the goal of separating them (Crowley, 1991; Van
92 Keulen et al., 2000; Cloutis et al., 2006). Reflectance spectra of several hydrated sulfates in the
93 near infrared range have been studied at room and cryogenic temperatures (Dalton et al., 2005).
94 In particular hexahydrite and epsomite have been measured at 300K and 100÷120K in the spectral
95 range 0.3-2.5 μm by Dalton et al. (2005; 2012); hexahydrite spectra at 300K and 77K have been
96 measured by McCord et al. (1999) in the range 0.9÷2.5 μm. Dalton et al. (2011) investigated
97 hexahydrite spectra in the range 0.5-2.5 μm, in the temperature range 150-300K. Here we discuss
98 the spectral behavior, in the extended visible and infrared range (0.5-4.0 μm), of hexahydrite and
99 epsomite, considering a wide range of temperatures (93÷298K). Measurements have been
100 performed at 8÷10 temperature steps in the above range and with three different grain sizes, in
101 order to document the evolution of band parameters with temperature. From the summary
102 hitherto presented, the investigation of hydrate sulfates in a spectral range comparable to remote
103 sensing observation carried onboard ongoing and future interplanetary space missions is key to
104 enforce the interpretation of those data. The presence of hydrated minerals, in particular mono-
105 and poly-hydrated sulfates, in Solar System objects such as Mars and the icy Galilean satellites,
106 requires detailed laboratory investigation of these materials in different environmental conditions.
107 Hence a detailed spectral analysis of such minerals as a function of temperature is key to better
108 understand and constrain future observations

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2. Experiment and methods

2.1 Experimental setup

Measurements have been performed with the Spectro-Gonio-Radiometer facility (Brissaud et al, 2004) at the Institut de Planétologie et d'Astrophysique of Grenoble (IPAG). The instrument is a bidirectional VIS-NIR reflectance spectrometer; two detectors have been used to cover the 0.5-4.0 μm spectral range: a CCD in the 0.5-1.0 μm range and an IR detector in the 1.0-4.0 μm range. A monochromator was used as light dispersion element. Spectralon and Infragold (Labsphere ©) were used as commercial reference targets with an absolute calibration of the BRDF of Spectralon (Bonafant 2001). All spectra have been acquired with an illumination angle $i=20^\circ$ and an emission angle $e=20^\circ$. The spectral resolution used in this setup is: 5 nm for $\lambda=0.45-0.7 \mu\text{m}$, 12 nm for $\lambda=0.7-1.0 \mu\text{m}$, 24 nm for $\lambda=1.0-2.0 \mu\text{m}$ and 48 nm for $\lambda=2.0-4.5 \mu\text{m}$.

Measurements were carried out within the CARBONIR environmental chamber coupled with the spectro-gonio-radiometer (Grisolle 2013, Grisolle et al., 2014; Beck et al., 2015). This chamber is made of a large closed isothermal copper cell (diameter of 8 cm) inserted in a stainless steel chamber. The copper cell is cooled with a He-cryostat and optical access is permitted through sapphire windows. This setup enables measurement of reflectance spectra at temperatures down to 50 K. In order to ensure efficient thermal coupling of the sample, a few mbar (monitored during the experiment) of dry air were kept in the cell. The cell temperature is monitored during the experiment and the error on sample temperature is estimated to be of the order of 1 K.

2.2 Samples

Two sulfate samples have been analyzed. Hexahydrate ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$), which is hexa-hydrated magnesium sulfate, and epsomite ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$), which is epta-hydrated magnesium sulfate. Each sample has been grinded from coarser grains and dry-sieved by shaking in three different grain sizes: 20-50 μm , 75-100 μm and 125-150 μm . The grain sizes have been chosen in order to avoid overlapping between ranges, so as to minimize particles contamination among the dimensional classes.

2.3 Reflectance measurements

Spectra have been acquired for each grain size at different temperatures (Figs. 1,2,3). The whole temperature range covers 93 K \div 298 K. Measurements have been performed at steps of 10 \div 15K in the low temperature range, and at steps of 20 \div 25 K in the high temperature range, for a total of 8 \div 10 steps on average for each grain size. All samples have been analyzed starting at the lowest temperature ($T_0 = 93 \text{ K}$) and then acquiring subsequent spectra during the rise of T up to 298 K.

All the band parameters have been computed after removing the spectral continuum (Figs. 4a,b,c): for each band a straight line has been drawn between the band edges, by intersecting the

148 visually identified maxima of both band extremes, and then removed by dividing the spectrum by
149 this line. The band center is determined by applying a second-order polynomial fit around the
150 band minimum, and taking the resulting minimum of the fit as the band center value. The depth is
151 computed, following Clark and Roush (1984), as $D=(R_C-R_B)/R_C$, where R_B and R_C are the reflectance
152 of the band and the spectral continuum at the band center, respectively. The width has been
153 computed by intersecting the continuum-removed band with a horizontal line passing through half
154 depth. In the case of multi-peak bands (Fig. 4b), the continuum line for background removal is
155 drawn between the edges of the whole band, and each single peak is fitted with second-order
156 polynomials. The 3- μm feature, as schematized in Fig. 4c, is very asymmetric, and is indeed due to
157 the overlapping of two absorptions, a narrow one centered at 2.7 μm (O-H stretching) and a much
158 broader one centered near 3 μm (overtone of H-O-H bending occurring near 6 μm) [Clark et al.,
159 1990]. We decided to focus on the 3- μm absorption and modeled the minimum with a second-
160 order polynomial, because of high instrumental noise around 2.7 μm . It should be noted that, in
161 principle, the whole band could be fitted by the sum of two Gaussians, with higher spectral
162 resolution and higher signal-to-noise data.

163

164 **3. Results: spectral parameters analysis**

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166 **3.1 Spectral variability**

167 Measured spectra are shown in Fig. 1 (hexahydrate) and Fig. 2 (epsomite). The spectra of these
168 hydrated minerals are very similar in the overall profile, although several subtle differences arise
169 when looking at the absorption bands in detail. A test was performed by measuring a given sample
170 (hexahydrate, 125-150 μm) both during the temperature-increasing and the decreasing phase: no
171 major changes have been observed neither in the spectral profiles nor in the band positions (Fig.
172 3). Spectra of both hexahydrate and epsomite are characterized by several absorption bands in the
173 range 1.0-3.7 μm . The main features are centered at 1.0, 1.2, 1.35, 1.5, 1.9, 2.2, 2.5, 2.7 and 3.0
174 μm . Essentially all these features are due to transitions in O-H groups and in H₂O molecules. The
175 bands at 1.0, 1.2, 1.35, 1.5 are overtones and combinations of the stretching fundamental
176 transition in OH groups present in the crystal lattice, occurring near 2.75 μm (Hunt, 1977; Clark et
177 al., 1990; Dalton et al., 2005).

178 The features near 1.9 and 3.0 μm are due to O-H stretching and H-O-H bending vibrations in the
179 H₂O molecule. The fundamental modes of these transitions occur near 2.9, 3 and 6 μm , and
180 overtones and combinations are observable in the VNIR range near 0.94, 1.14, 1.38, 1.45 and 1.9
181 μm (Hunt, 1977; Clark et al., 1990). Association of SO₄²⁻ groups and H₂O molecules could be
182 responsible of the features appearing at 2.2 μm (in hexahydrate) and 2.5 μm (in both samples)
183 (Gendrin et al., 2005; Cloutis et al., 2006) rather than metal-OH bond vibrations (Hunt, 1977; Clark
184 et al., 1990; Clark, 1999). Bending and stretching vibrations in S-O groups could be observed here,
185 because overtones of fundamental vibration modes occurring in the 8-24 μm region are expected

186 in the 4-5 μm region and in the 2.1-2.7 μm region, which falls within our range of sensitivity
 187 (Cloutis et al., 2006).

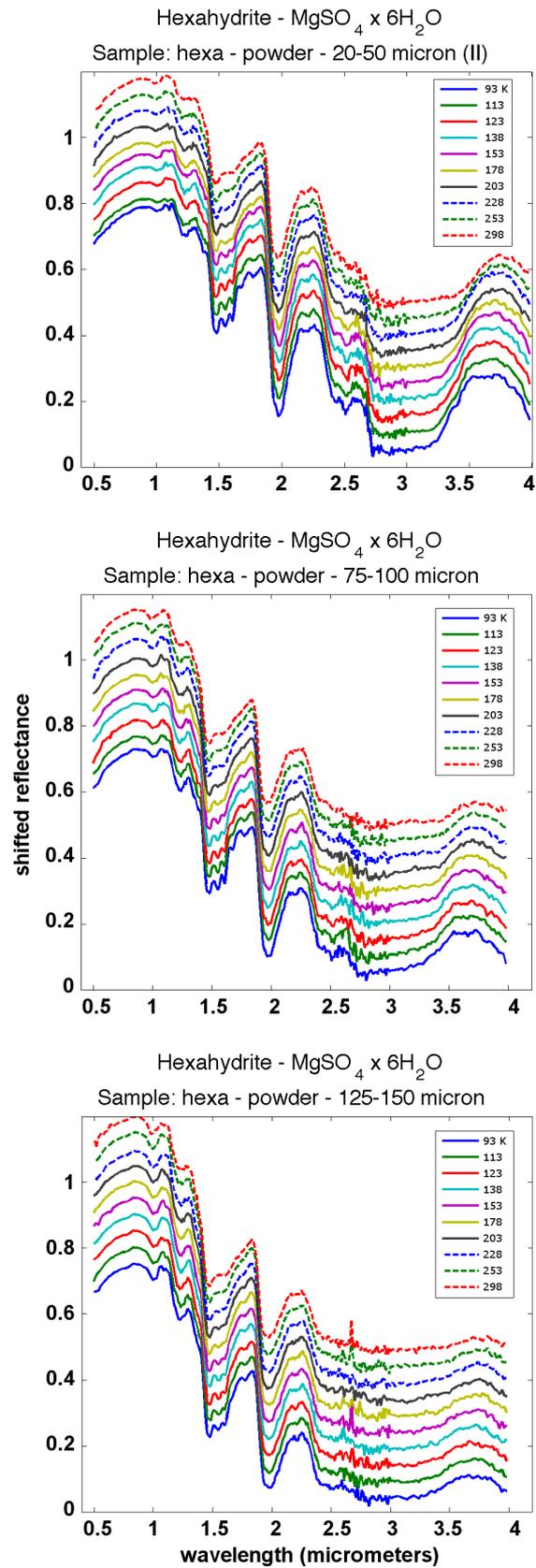
188 According to Cloutis et al. (2006), the absorption feature at 2.55 μm could be related to OH/H₂O
 189 content. The OH band in the 1.5- μm region is broad and has edges at 1.3 and 1.8 μm
 190 approximately. In the case of hexahydrate (6 · H₂O), the fine structure of the band is constituted by
 191 a triplet that becomes more and more defined as temperature decreases. The first two features of
 192 the triplet occur at 1.47 and 1.55 μm ; the third is weak (with a width of about 20 nm) and is visible
 193 only at very low temperatures, therefore it has not been considered here. At higher temperatures
 194 only the band centered at 1.47 μm is evident. In the case of epsomite (7 · H₂O), this band is
 195 constituted by a doublet; the two absorptions centered at 1.5 and 1.62 μm become more and more
 196 resolved as temperature drops down, and the feature at 1.62 μm tends to have a nearly flat base;
 197 a higher spectral resolution would be needed to properly discern the band structure. The water
 198 band at 3 micron is very broad and almost saturates the absorption; its wings extend up to 3.7 μm
 199 in the infrared region. The long-wavelength edge of the band tends to become unrecognizable
 200 especially for coarser grain sizes and at higher temperatures, as shown for example by the
 201 spectrum of hexahydrate 125-150 μm at 298 K (Fig. 1). In spectra of epsomite (Fig. 2) the long-
 202 wavelength edge of the 3-micron band completely disappears for grain sizes 75-100 and 125-150
 203 μm , at temperatures higher than 203 K.

204

<i>Hexahydrate</i>									
T (K)	<i>Absorption features (μm)</i>								
298	1.0	1.2	1.5						
93	1.0	1.2	1.35	1.47	1.55	1.61	1.68	1.77	
<i>Epsomite</i>									
T (K)	<i>Absorption features (μm)</i>								
298	1.0	1.2	1.5						
93	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.62	1.66	1.78		
<i>Hexahydrate</i>									
298	2.0				2.2	3.0			
93	1.94	1.98	2.01	2.06	2.12	2.2	2.5	2.7	3.0
<i>Epsomite</i>									
298	2.0				3.0				
93	1.95	2.0	2.06	2.5	2.7	3.0			

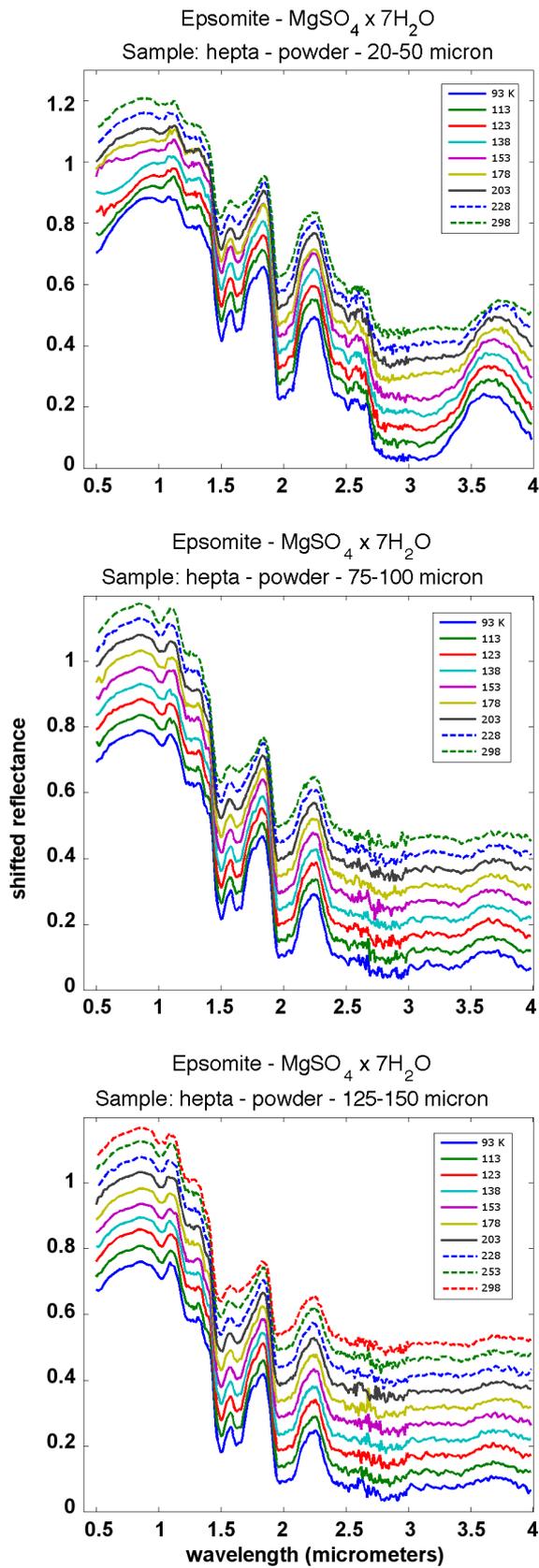
205

206 *Tab.1. Absorption features at room (298K) and cryogenic (93K) temperature.*



207

208 *Fig.1. Spectra of hexahydrate at different temperatures, in the range 93 ÷ 298K. Top: grain size 20-50 μm .*
209 *Center: grain size 75-100 μm . Bottom: grain size 125-150 μm . Above 93K spectra are up-shifted in*
210 *reflectance by 0.05 for clarity.*



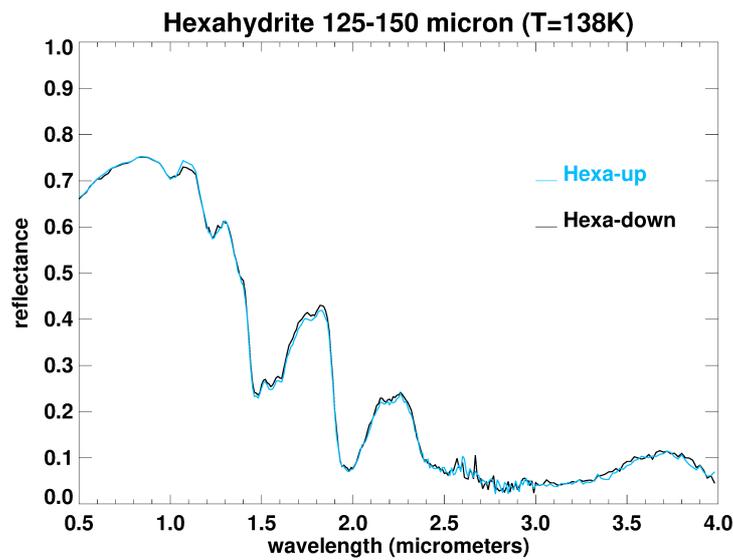
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212 *Fig.2. Spectra of epsomite at different temperatures, in the range 93 ÷ 298K. Top: grain size 20-50 μm.*

213 *Center: grain size 75-100 μm. Bottom: grain size 125-150 μm. Spectra above 93K are up-shifted in*

214 *reflectance of 0.05 for clarity.*

215



216

217 *Fig.3. Spectra of hexahydrite (125-150 μm) at $T=138\text{K}$. The cyan (“up”) spectrum has been acquired during*
218 *the temperature-increase phase of measurements; the black (“down”) spectrum has been acquired during*
219 *the temperature-decrease phase. The spectral profiles do not show variations.*

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222 3.2 Spectral parameters analysis

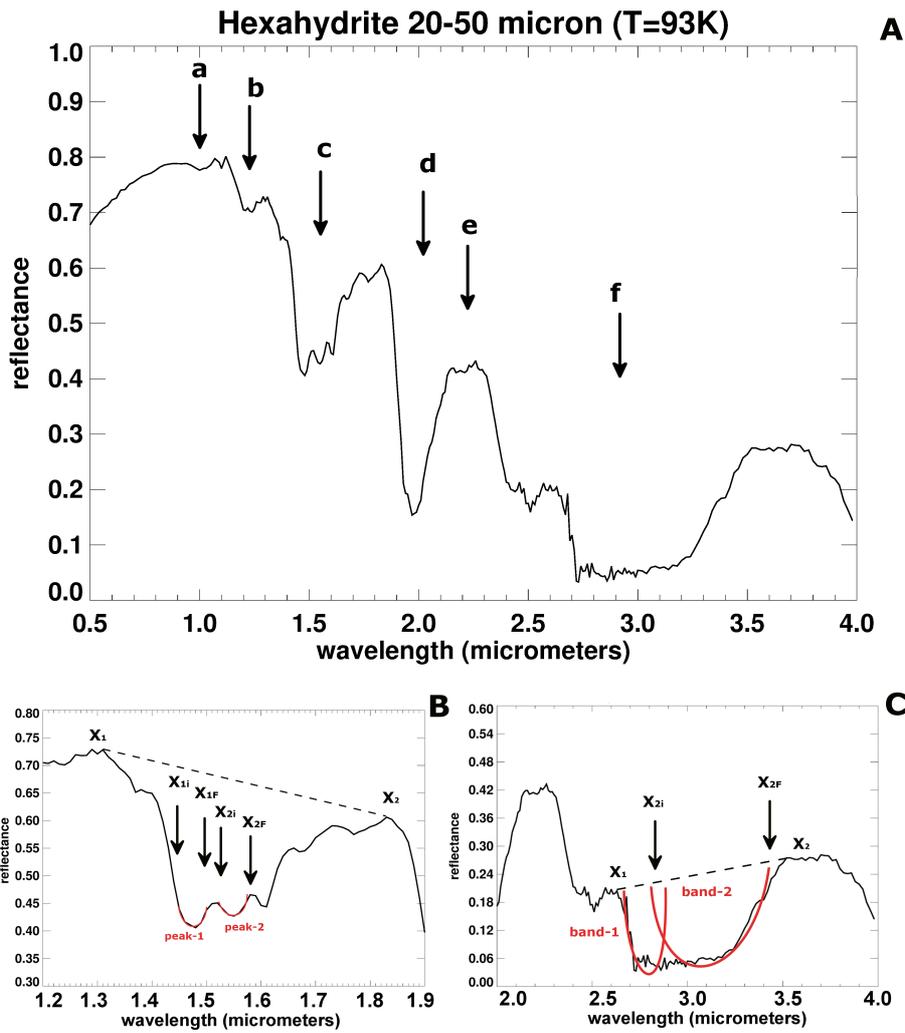
223 Different absorption bands have been analyzed for each spectrum of the two samples, in the
224 entire range of explored temperatures (Fig. 4a). Band parameters such as position, area, depth
225 and width have been determined (Fig. 4b,c). Thus for each sample and each grain size, the band
226 parameters have been studied as a function of temperature. Depending on the particular analyzed
227 absorption feature, for some values of temperature it was not possible to retrieve some of the
228 parameters. All parameters were computed after removal of the spectral continuum, as described
229 in Section 2.3.

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235 *Fig.4. A: absorption bands analyzed in the spectra of the two samples. Band a: 1 μ m. Band b: 1.2 μ m. Band*
 236 *c: 1.5 μ m. Band d: 2 μ m. Band e: 2.2 μ m. Band f: 3 μ m. B: method of band fitting for multi-peak bands. In*
 237 *the case of the broad 1.5- μ m feature, the continuum baseline has been drawn between the points X_1 , X_2 .*
 238 *After continuum removal by division, the two minima at 1.47 (peak-1) and 1.55 μ m (peak-2) have been*
 239 *fitted with 2nd order polynomials between two extremes X_{1i} - X_{1F} and X_{2i} - X_{2F} , respectively. Bands have been*
 240 *resampled with 10^3 points before polynomial fitting. The area is computed between X_1 - X_2 and so refers to*
 241 *the area of whole band. C: fitting of the 3- μ m band. The edges X_1 , X_2 for continuum removal have been put*
 242 *at 2.6 and 3.54 μ m, while the 2nd order polynomial has been computed, after a denser resampling, between*
 243 *X_{2i} , X_{2F} = 3, 3.42 μ m. Band edges X_1 , X_2 and X_{2i} , X_{2F} have been chosen appropriately for each analyzed band*
 244 *and each spectrum, and not kept constant for all dataset, in order to take into account variations from one*
 245 *spectrum to another (i.e. variations with temperature and grain size).*

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3.3 Hexahydrate

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1-micron band.

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This band is weak but well defined for each size and temperature (Fig. 1). The absorption's intensity, as well as depth, clearly changes with changing grain size (Figs. 1, 5), whereas for a given grain size there is no trend with temperature (Fig.5b). The position (center) of the absorption (Fig.5a) varies within a narrow range (0.99 to 1.01 μm) and shows a shift towards longer wavelengths with decreasing temperature. The band depth (Fig. 5b) shows a behavior compatible with the absorption area (Fig. 5c). The width of the absorption varies within 0.08 and 0.10 μm and no trend is observed as a function of size or temperature (Fig. 5d).

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1.2-micron band.

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The second absorption is located inside the shoulder of the strong 1.5 H_2O band. At our spectral resolution this feature is weak, asymmetric, with a less defined minimum for the 20-50 μm size fraction and at the highest temperature for the other sizes (Fig. 1). Moreover at low temperature we have indication of possible absorptions with finer structure, resolvable at higher spectral resolutions. The position of the absorption (Fig. 6a) varies within a narrow range (from 1.20 to 1.22 μm) with decreasing temperature. This shift is almost linear for the 75-100 μm size, whereas the other two sizes show a similar trend but only until $T=173\text{-}138\text{K}$, while at lower temperatures the position moves back towards 1.21 μm . This is probably related to the appearance of a new weak minimum within the 1.22-1.23 μm range, not well resolvable at the considered spectral resolution. The absorption depth slightly increases with the size and inversely with temperature (Fig. 6b). The band area also increases directly with the size, and inversely with temperature (Fig. 6c). The width (FWHM) is 0.10 μm and no trend is observed as a function of size or temperature (Fig. 6d).

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1.5-micron band.

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The OH absorption band at $\sim 1.5 \mu\text{m}$ is actually due to a combination of three weaker features centered at 1.47, 1.55, and 1.61 μm , respectively. This band appears as a triplet only at cryogenic temperatures, while it is a doublet at ambient temperature. Concerning the 1.47 μm feature, all four parameters have been computed for the three grain sizes; the trends are shown in Fig. 7. The band position (fig.7a) slightly shifts towards longer wavelengths as the temperature decreases. The depth increases substantially as the temperature decreases (fig.7b). The band area (fig.7c) tends to greater values towards lower temperatures. The band gets narrower (fig.7d).

287 Regarding the 1.55 μm band, all parameters were computed: position, depth, area and width (Fig.
288 8). The position of this feature (Fig. 8a) was computed for temperatures below 223 K, and no
289 significant trend is evident. The depth shows a strong dependence with temperature: again the
290 depth increases with decreasing temperature (Fig. 8b). Both area (Fig.8c) and width (Fig. 8d) show
291 an overall dependence with temperature, with a general increase towards lower T values,
292 although these two parameters are quite constant in the range $T=113\div 173\text{K}$. Band centers at 1.47
293 and 1.55 μm seem to be correlated. The 1.61- μm feature is very weak and only shows up at very
294 low temperatures, i.e. below 173 K. At higher temperatures, this feature and the central feature at
295 1.55 μm merge together. As temperature raises up to room values, the 1.55- μm band becomes
296 hardly recognizable and only the feature at 1.47 μm remains detectable (see Discussion in Section
297 4). Band parameters for the 1.61- μm feature have not been computed in this analysis.

298

299 *1.9-micron band.*

300 The band parameters computed for the water band at 1.9 μm are shown in Fig. 9. The band center
301 (fig.9a) shifts towards longer wavelengths from about 1.95 μm to 1.97 μm when cooling from
302 room temperature down to 93K. Both the band depth (Fig. 9b) and band area (Fig. 9c) show an
303 increase towards lower temperatures. No significant temperature dependence has been retrieved
304 for the band width (Fig. 9d).

305

306 *2.2-micron band.*

307 The trends are shown in Fig. 10. While the band center (Fig. 10a) does not show any particular
308 trend, band depth and band area display a correlation with changing temperature. Both depth
309 (Fig. 10b) and area (Fig. 10c) become greater as the temperature decreases. This weak band
310 becomes even more evident and recognizable at very low temperatures. Band width (fig.10d) gets
311 greater at low T at least for the grain sizes 20-50 and 75-100 μm .

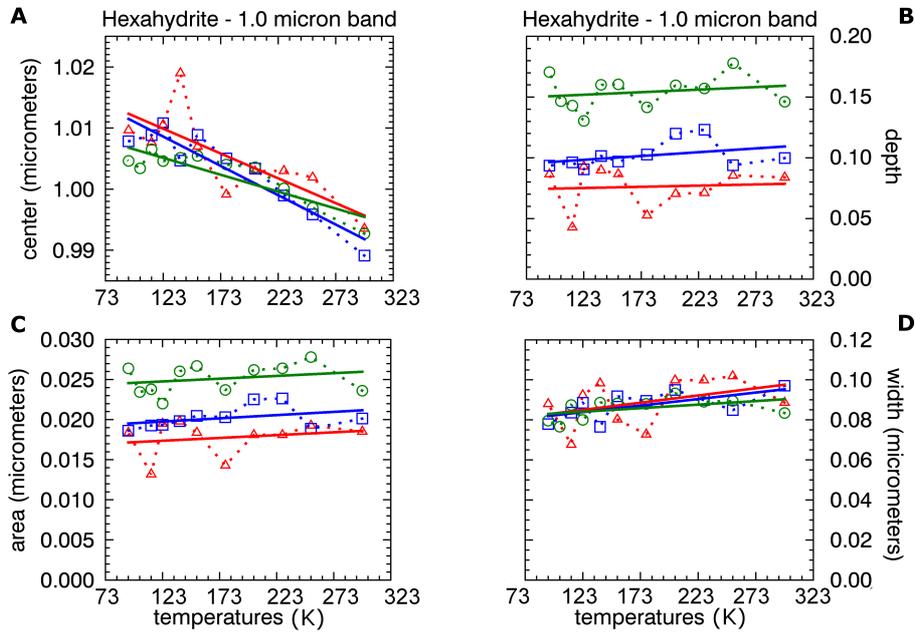
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313 *3-micron band.*

314 This band is related to a combination of transitions in OH^- and H_2O (Cloutis et al., 2006). Position,
315 depth and area show neat correlation with the temperature variation (Fig. 11): as the temperature
316 decreases, the band position (Fig. 11a) shifts towards shorter wavelengths in the range 3.0-3.1
317 μm , for the grain sizes 20-50 and 75-100 μm . Conversely, the band position of coarser grain size
318 (125-150 μm) does not show any obvious correlation with temperature. Its depth increases with
319 decreasing temperature (Fig. 11b); moreover the fine powder shows the largest values of band
320 depth, while the coarse powder shows the smallest values of depth; the medium powder showing
321 intermediate values. The water band area (Fig. 11c) tends to decrease as the temperature drops

322 down, for all the analyzed grain sizes. The band width (Fig. 11d) appears to get smaller as T
 323 decreases.

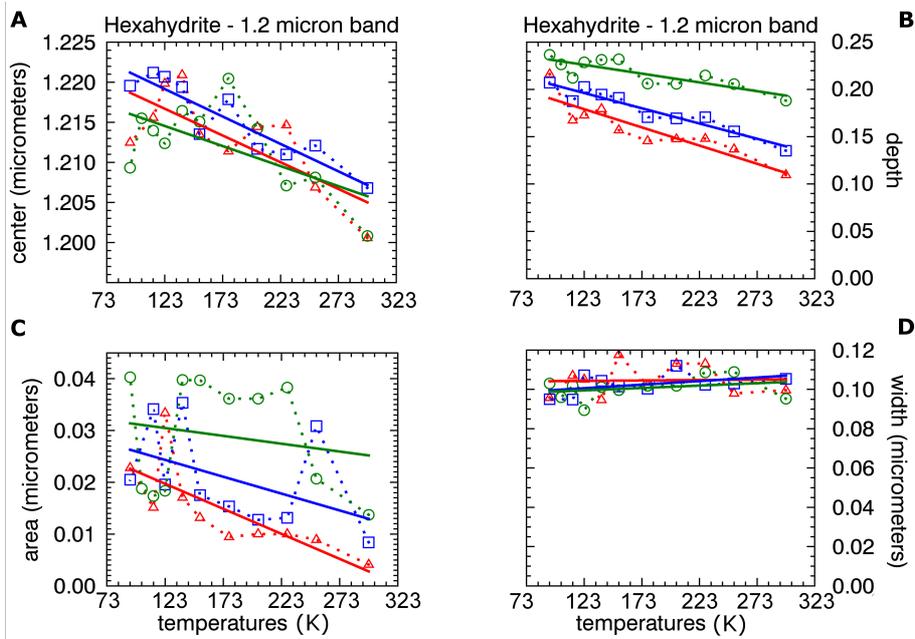
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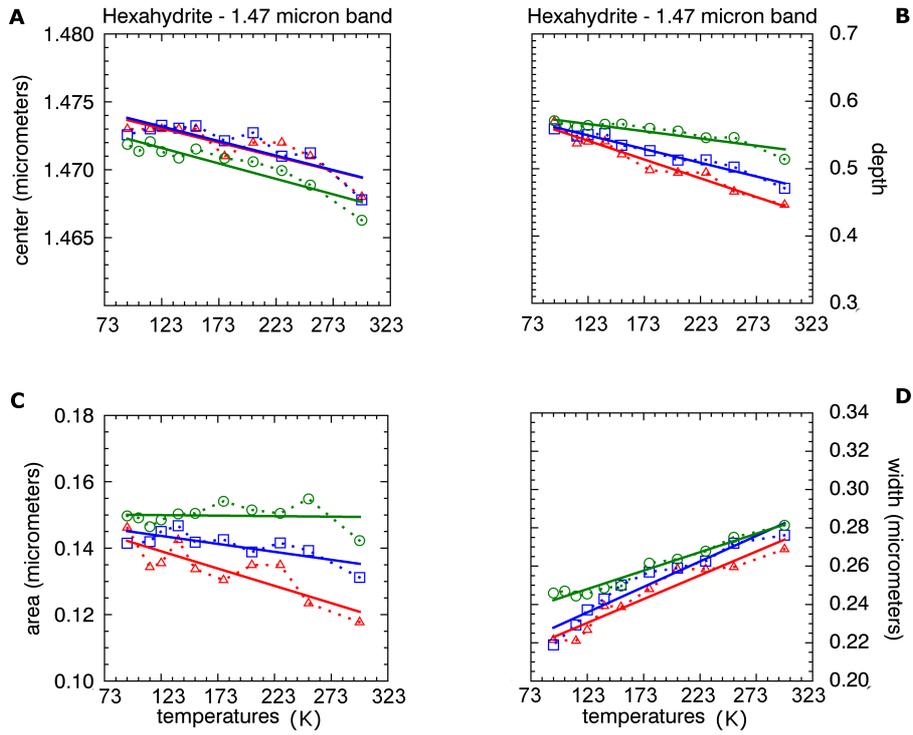
326 *Fig.5. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.0 μm, hexahydrate. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm.*
 327 *Blue squares: 75-100 μm. Green circles: 125-150 μm.*

328



329

330 *Fig.6. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.2 μm, hexahydrate. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm.*
 331 *Blue squares: 75-100 μm. Green circles: 125-150 μm.*

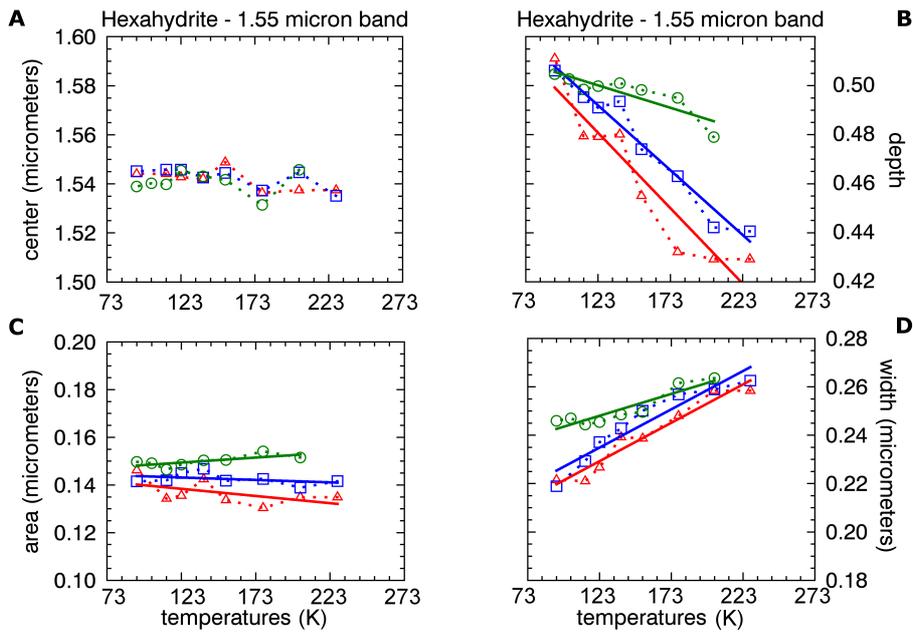


333

334

335 *Fig.7. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.47 μm, hexahydrate. Red triangles: grain size 20-50*
 336 *μm. Blue squares: 75-100 μm. Green circles: 125-150 μm.*

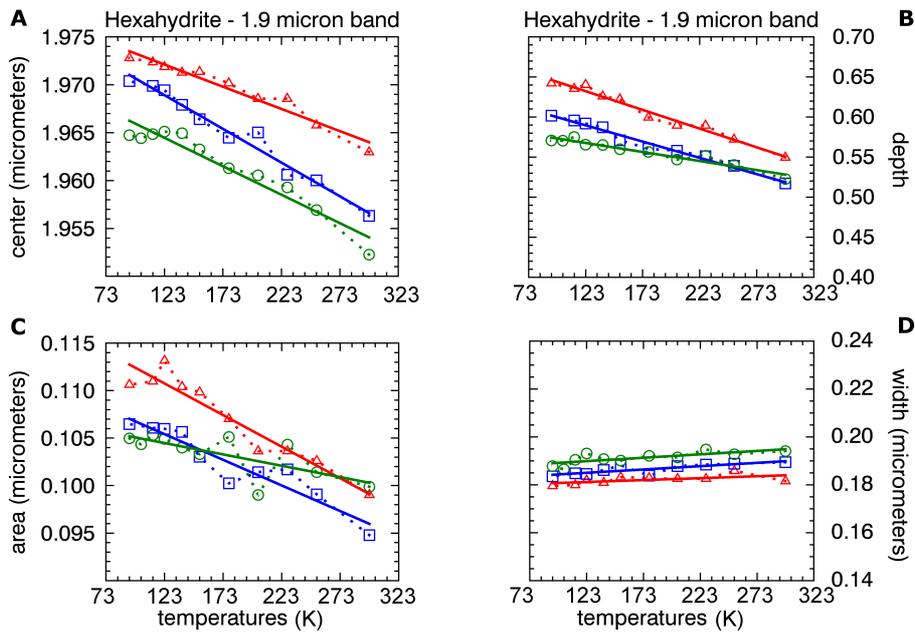
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338

339 *Fig.8. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.55 μm, hexahydrate. Red triangles: grain size 20-50*
 340 *μm. Blue squares: 75-100 μm. Green circles: 125-150 μm.*

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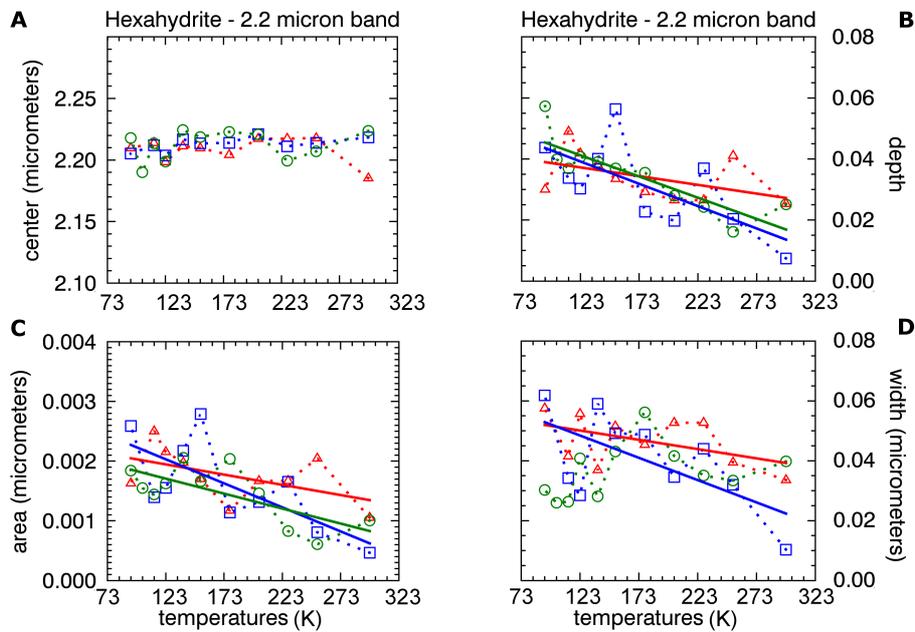


342

343 *Fig.9. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.9 μm , hexahydrate. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm .*
344 *Blue squares: 75-100 μm . Green circles: 125-150 μm .*

345

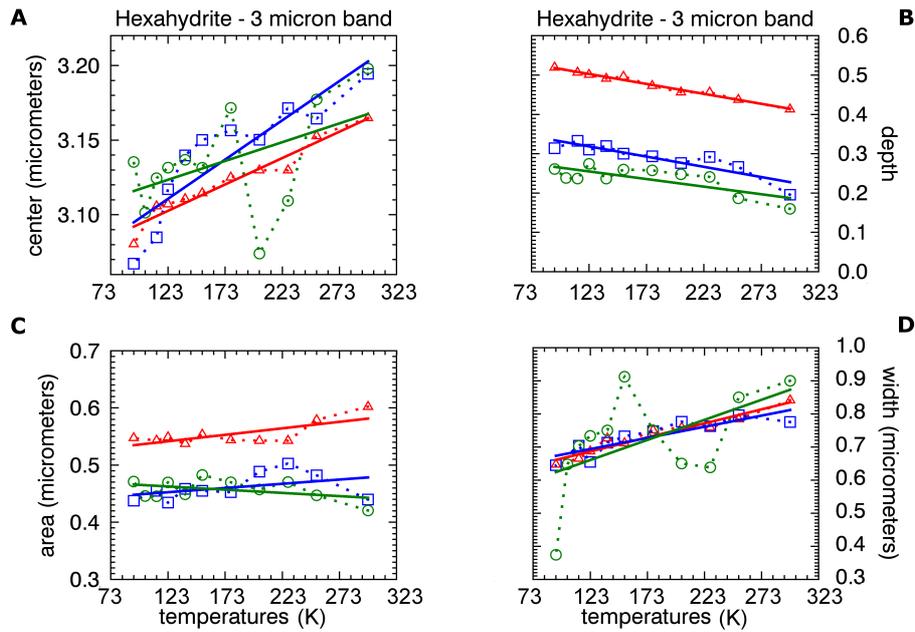
346



347

348 *Fig.10. Band parameters determined for the band at 2.2 μm , hexahydrate. Red triangles: grain size 20-50*
349 *μm . Blue squares: 75-100 μm . Green circles: 125-150 μm .*

350



351

352 Fig.11. Band parameters determined for the band at 3 μm, hexahydrate. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm.
 353 Blue squares: 75-100 μm. Green circles: 125-150 μm.

354

355 3.4 Epsomite

356 1-micron band.

357 Also for epsomite this band is weak, but well defined for each grain size and temperature (Fig. 2).
 358 The absorption's center (Fig.12a) varies within 1.00 and 1.03 μm, showing a shift with
 359 temperature. As well as for hexahydrate, the position moves to longer wavelengths with
 360 decreasing temperature. This trend is almost linear for 75-100 and 125-150 μm, whereas for the
 361 smallest size it shows a steep variation between 223 and 173K. The strong asymmetry seen for
 362 lower temperatures could suggest a possible shift towards longer wavelengths, if the absorption
 363 could be sampled at higher spectral resolution. The absorption intensity, as both depth and area,
 364 slightly varies within narrow ranges without defined trends with size and temperature (Fig.12b,c).
 365 The width (FWHM) of absorption is around 0.9 μm (Fig.12d).

366

367 1.2-micron band.

368 This absorption takes place inside the strong 1.5-μm H₂O absorption, and a defined band is
 369 actually observed only for the 120-150 μm size. Lower sizes show a bent, with the possible
 370 presence of relative minima, not resolved with our setup. For the 120-150 μm size the absorption
 371 is weak and asymmetric (Fig. 2). The position of the absorption (Fig. 13a) slightly varies from 1.21
 372 to 1.22 μm with decreasing temperature. A finer structure across the band minimum is outlined
 373 but not well resolvable. The absorption depth slightly increases with grain size and inversely with

374 temperature (Fig.13b), whereas the band area shifts around 0.02 (Fig. 13c). The band width is 0.10
375 μm (Fig.13d).

376

377 *1.5-micron band.*

378 Like hexahydrate, epsomite shows a prominent OH^- band centered near 1.5 μm , which in this case
379 is the combination of a doublet of absorptions, centered at about 1.5 and 1.62 μm . These two
380 signatures become more distinctly resolvable as the temperature decreases. The parameters
381 computed for the 1.5- μm feature are shown in Fig. 14. This band center (Fig. 14a) shifts towards
382 longer wavelengths in the range 1.48-1.50 μm as the temperature decreases. Band depth (Fig.
383 14b) and band area (Fig. 14c) show similar trends: both become larger as the temperature
384 decreases. The width becomes narrower towards lower values of temperature (Fig. 14d).

385 The parameters of the secondary feature at 1.62 μm are shown in Fig. 15. All the parameters are
386 characterized by monotonous trends, similar to those related to the 1.5- μm signature. The band
387 center (Fig. 15a) shifts towards longer wavelengths in the range 1.59-1.63 μm as the temperature
388 decreases down to 93 K. Again, band depth and band area (Fig. 15b,c) show an increase as the
389 temperature decreases. Similar to the 1.5- μm feature, the 1.62- μm feature is characterized by a
390 width that becomes narrower as the temperature decreases (Fig. 15d).

391

392 *1.9-micron band.*

393 The parameters relative to the H_2O absorption band are displayed in Fig. 16. They show an evident
394 correlation with temperature, except for the width. The band center (Fig. 16a) shifts towards
395 longer wavelengths in the range 1.96-1.98 μm as the temperature decreases. Band depth and area
396 (Fig. 16b,c) are both characterized by an increase towards lower values of temperature. The width
397 shows no trend (fig.16d).

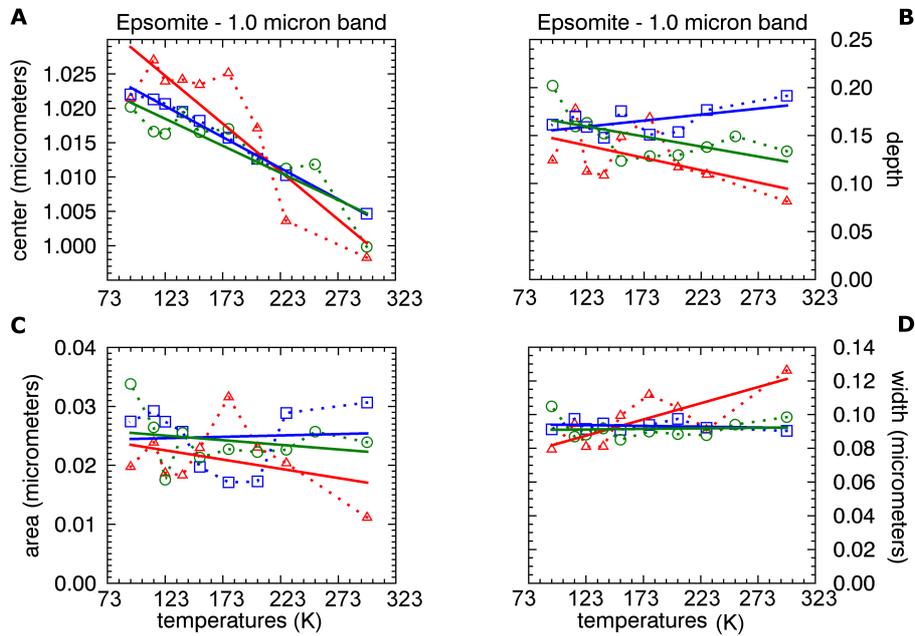
398

399 *3-micron band.*

400 The prominent water absorption feature centered at approximately 3 μm is difficult to analyze for
401 grain sizes 75-100 μm and 125-150 μm , because saturation affects the spectra above 2.3 μm . Thus
402 the 3- μm feature has been only analyzed for the grain size 20-50 μm (Fig. 17). The left and right
403 shoulders of the band have been chosen near 2.6 and 3.7 μm , respectively. With a shoulder taken
404 at 2.6 μm , a band centered near 2.5 μm shows up. But this is only evident for 20-50 μm grain size,
405 and it has not been considered here. As for the hexahydrate, the band position (Fig. 17a) shifts
406 towards shorter wavelengths as the temperature decreases, in the range 3.04-3.12 μm . The band
407 depth (Fig. 17b) is characterized by a strong increasing trend while the temperature drops down.

408 Both the band area (Fig. 17c) and the band width (Fig. 17d) are characterized by decreasing trends
 409 going towards lower values of temperature.

410

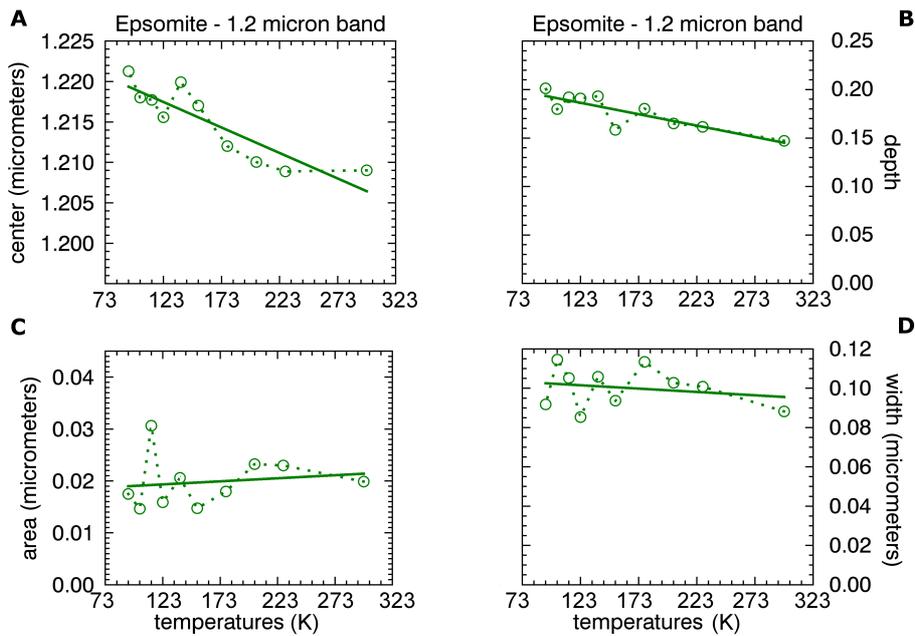


411

412 *Fig.12. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.0 μm , epsomite. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm .
 413 Blue squares: 75-100 μm . Green circles: 125-150 μm .*

414

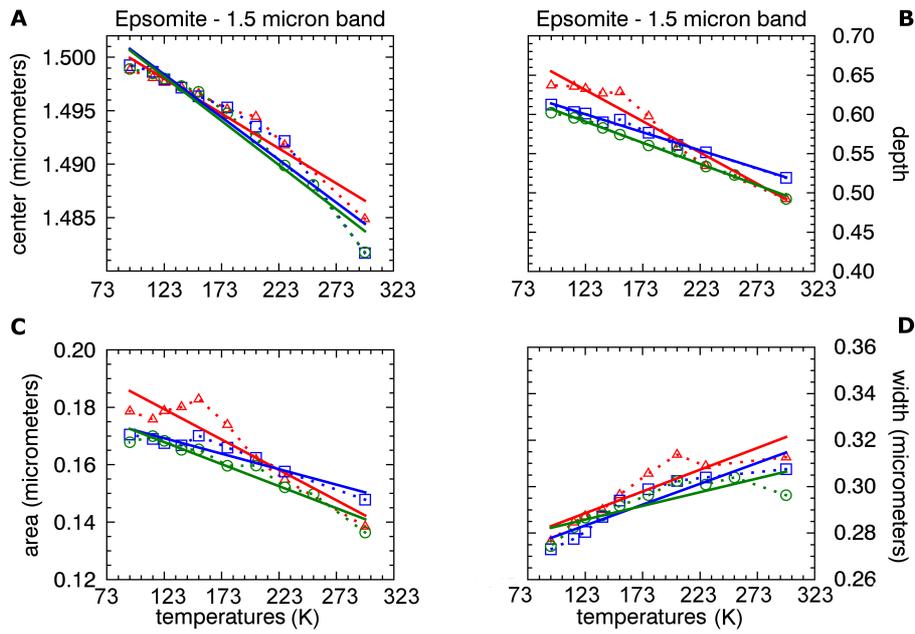
415



416

417 *Fig.13. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.2 μm , epsomite. Green circles: 125-150 μm .*

418



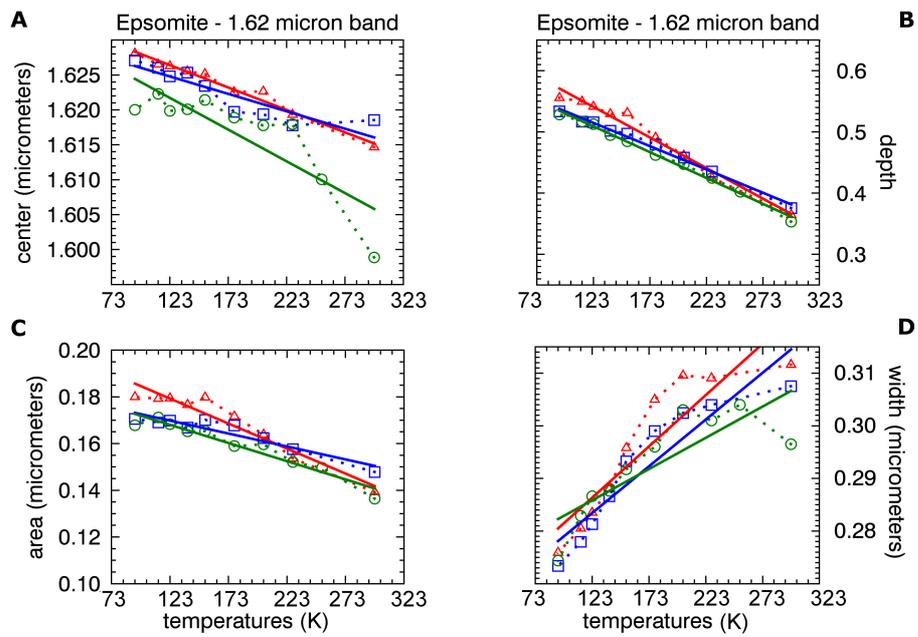
419

420 *Fig.14. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.5 μm, epsomite. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm.*
421 *Blue squares: 75-100 μm. Green circles: 125-150 μm.*

422

423

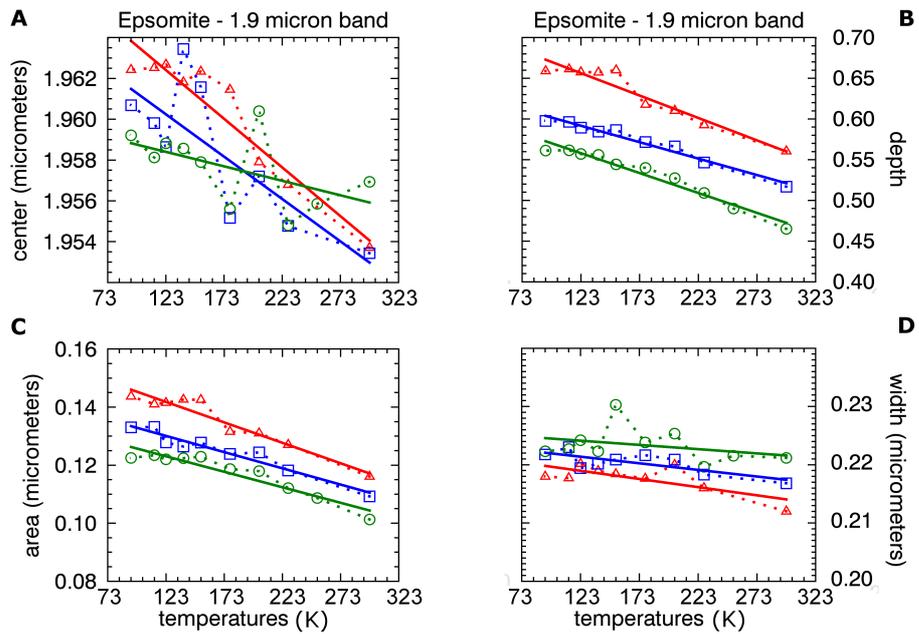
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425

426 *Fig.15. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.62 μm, epsomite. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm.*
427 *Blue squares: 75-100 μm. Green circles: 125-150 μm.*

428

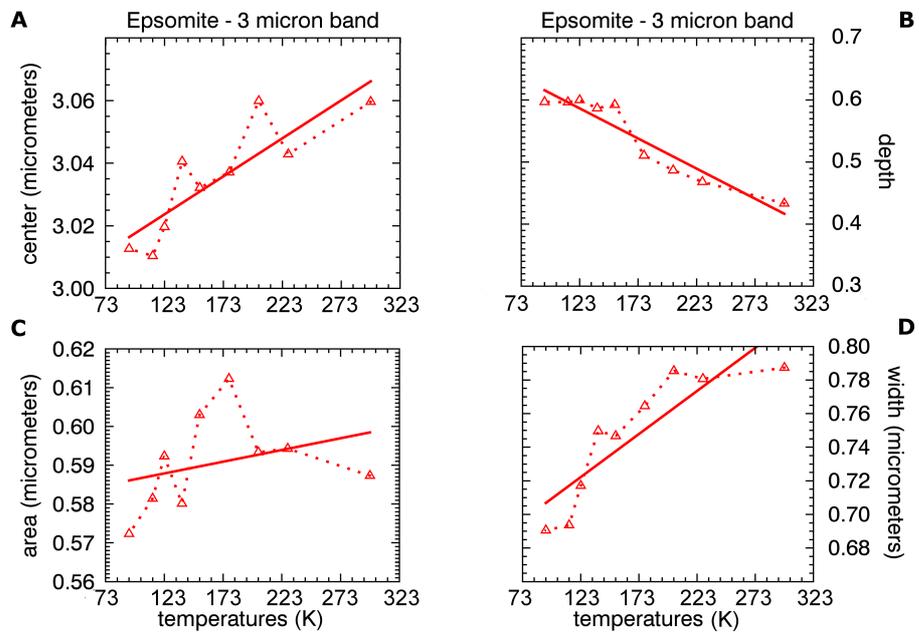


429

430 *Fig.16. Band parameters determined for the band at 1.9 μm , epsomite. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm .*
431 *Blue squares: 75-100 μm . Green circles: 125-150 μm .*

432

433



434

435 *Fig.17. Band parameters determined for the band at 3 μm , epsomite. Red triangles: grain size 20-50 μm .*

436

437 **4. Discussion**

438 Hexahydrate and epsomite spectra show overtone absorptions in similar spectral ranges but some
439 differences are visible. The most evident variation is in the H-O-H/O-H bands near 1.5 μm (Figs. 1,2
440 and Fig.18a), and the other two most different absorptions are those related to H₂O, in particular
441 the 1.9/2 μm feature (Fig. 19).

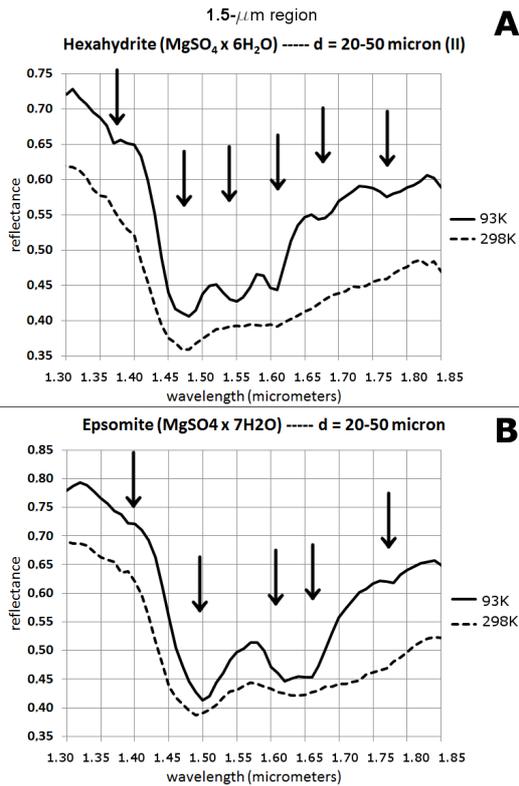
442

443 *Hexahydrate vs Epsomite at 1.5 μm*

444 Hexahydrate's 1.5- μm absorption shows a triplet/three minima profile, which becomes more and
445 more evident as the sample is cooled down to 93 K (Fig.18a), whereas epsomite's 1.5- μm
446 signature has a doublet/two minima shape (Fig. 18b) at all temperatures. At room temperature,
447 hexahydrate feature becomes a broad band with a single minimum centered at about 1.47 μm .

448 In the fine structure of the whole absorption band (between 1.32 and 1.83 μm) for spectra
449 acquired at low temperature for both samples, we can discern three additional weak features.
450 These can be recognized at the spectral resolution of about 24 nm in this range (see section 2.1).

451 McCord et al. (1999) pointed out that the fine structure of hexahydrate spectrum at 77 K consists
452 of six absorption features, as measured in laboratory at a spectral resolution of 10 nm. In their
453 study, McCord et al. (1999) suggested that the number of absorption transitions, in the H-O-H/O-H
454 feature fine structure at 1.5 μm , could be proportional to each site in the mineral crystal structure
455 occupied by a water molecule. However, Cloutis et al. (2006) reported the existence of two
456 minima centered at 1.44 and 1.46 μm within the fine structure of hexahydrate's 1.5- μm band as
457 measured at room temperature, stating that all these signatures are H₂O overtones/combinations.
458 They also interpret small minima in the fine structure of bands occurring in the 1.4-1.5- μm region
459 in other sulfates as related to OH⁻ or H₂O overtones and combinations (Cloutis et al., 2006). Dalton
460 et al. (2005) and Dalton and Pitman (2012) refer to the band in the 1.4-1.6- μm region of
461 hexahydrate/epsomite as related to O-H stretching overtones. The fine structure of these features,
462 as observed at cryogenic temperatures, could be related to OH⁻ groups occupying different
463 locations in the crystal lattice (Dalton et al., 2005, and references therein).



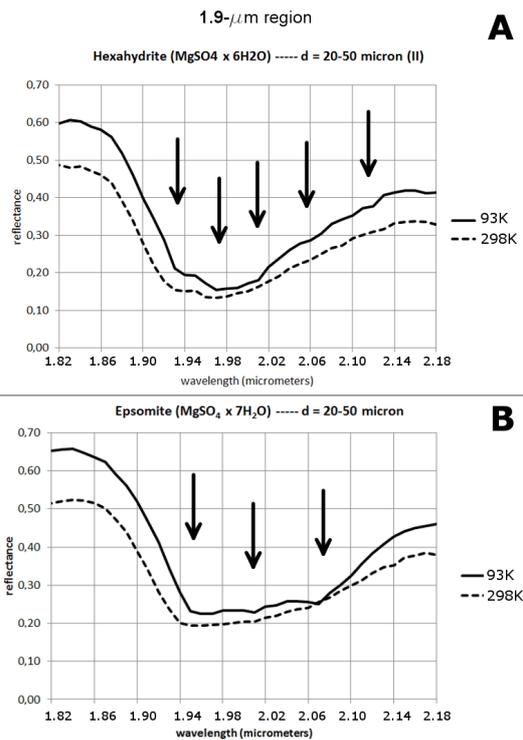
464

465 *Fig.18. OH absorption band at 1.5 μ m. A: hexahydrite. B: epsomite. For each sample, the line-curve is at*
 466 *93K, while the dashed curve is at room temperature (shifted for clarity).*

467

468 *Hexahydrite vs Epsomite at 2 μ m*

469 Prominent differences between hexahydrite and epsomite are those related to H_2O , in particular
 470 the 1.9/2 μ m feature (Fig. 19). This absorption shows a better defined V-shape with a clear
 471 minimum for all temperatures and all sizes in hexahydrite (Fig. 19a), whereas epsomite shows a
 472 less defined minimum (Fig. 19b). This absorption is probably characterized by several minima at
 473 low temperature, even though our spectral resolution did not allow us to unambiguously resolve
 474 them. The 3- μ m band is well defined for smaller sizes and lower temperatures, but it is still
 475 detectable also for the other sizes (75-100 μ m and 125-150 μ m) in hexahydrite spectra.
 476 Conversely, epsomite shows a saturated plateau at wavelength > 2.3 μ m for coarser grain sizes,
 477 because it contains more water (Figs. 1,2).



478

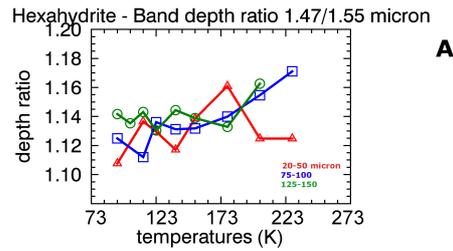
479 *Fig.19. H₂O absorption band at 1.9 μ m. A: hexahydrate. B: epsomite. For each sample, the line-curve is at*
 480 *93K, while the dashed curve is at room temperature (shifted for clarity).*

481

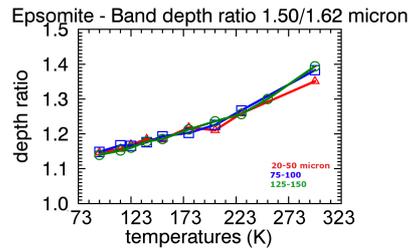
482

483 *Band ratio at 1.5 μ m*

484 We have investigated the relative strengths of individual minima constituting the hexahydrate
 485 triplet and the epsomite doublet. The ratio of 1.47 to 1.55 μ m band depths in hexahydrate has an
 486 evident increasing profile with increasing temperature (Fig. 20a): at cryogenic temperatures, the
 487 1.55 μ m band becomes clearer and more prominent, while at room temperature the 1.47 μ m
 488 band is dominant. Similarly, in Fig. 20b the depth ratio 1.50- μ m / 1.62- μ m is shown. A similar
 489 trend shows up for all of the three grain sizes, as already mentioned for the analogous band of
 490 hexahydrate. The depth ratio decreases in a monotonous manner as the temperature decreases: at
 491 high temperatures the 1.5- μ m feature is predominant, while at low temperatures the 1.62- μ m
 492 minimum becomes important and comparable with the former one. The increasing separation,
 493 narrowing and definition of these bands occurring towards cryogenic temperatures is attributed to
 494 a decreasing thermal agitation of the molecular species in the mineral structure; the distribution
 495 of intermolecular couplings narrows and discrete absorption bands arise from both decreasing
 496 width and increasing peak intensity of closely spaced bands (Dalton et al., 2005). At the same time
 497 as the number of water molecules in the structure increases, the absorption bands tend to be
 498 larger and broader, due to the increased range of transition energies and probabilities with
 499 enhanced number of molecular vibrations combinations (McCord et al., 1999; Dalton et al., 2005).



A



B

500

501 *Fig.20. A: depth ratio for the bands at 1.47 and 1.55 μm (hexahydrate). B: depth ratio for the bands at 1.50*
 502 *and 1.62 μm (epsomite).*

503

504 *Band position of water 3- μm band vs other features*

505 Concerning band positions, different behaviors are observed if we consider the water band at 3
 506 μm or the other features. Indeed, in both hexahydrate and epsomite, the 3- μm band position shifts
 507 towards shorter wavelengths as the temperature decreases to cryogenic values (Fig. 11 and 17).
 508 This is particularly observed for the grain sizes 20-50 μm (both samples) and 75-100 μm
 509 (hexahydrate). The band position for the 3- μm band was difficult to compute for the larger grain
 510 sizes because of the saturation of the band. In the case of epsomite, the higher number of water
 511 molecules causes the band saturation to occur also at intermediate grain size (75-100 μm).
 512 Although some authors report that the water band at 3 μm is insensitive to temperature
 513 variations (Jamieson et al., 2012), here we observe some correlation as mentioned above. On the
 514 other hand, when we look at all the other absorption features, we can see that band positions
 515 shift towards longer wavelengths. For hexahydrate, the 1.9- μm band position shows a systematic
 516 correlation with temperature, with the band center shifting towards longer wavelengths at
 517 cryogenic temperatures (hexahydrate, Fig. 9). For epsomite, the features at 1.5, 1.62 and 1.9 μm all
 518 show a correlation with T, again shifting towards longer wavelengths at cryogenic temperatures.
 519 We note that in water ice the corresponding absorption bands at 1.5, 1.65, and 1.99 μm also
 520 display strong spectral shifts in the same direction (Grundy and Schmitt 1998). The band area also
 521 shows different trends with decreasing temperature: it becomes larger for all absorption features
 522 in both materials, except the 3- μm band, for which a decrease at cryogenic temperatures is
 523 observed. The different behavior of the 3- μm band with respect to the other features described
 524 previously could be attributed to the fact that the H₂O-band tends to become deeper and
 525 narrower at low temperatures: the high wavelength edge shifts towards shorter wavelengths (Fig.
 526 1 and 2).

527 *Application to remote sensing*

528 In order to interpret remote-sensed data and to discriminate among different types of hydrated
529 sulfates, however, the 3- μm feature seems to be in any case poorly diagnostic, in particular due to
530 its high degree of saturation linked to the high water content of these minerals. It is discernible in
531 hexahydrite for the grain sizes 20-50 and 75-100 μm , while in epsomite it is only recognizable for
532 the smallest grain size. Moreover, it is hard to retrieve a precise band center, due to band
533 broadness or because it saturates and loses individuality. On the contrary, the features at 1.5 and
534 1.9 μm prove to be more diagnostic for mineral discrimination. At cryogenic temperatures,
535 hexahydrite and epsomite can be fundamentally discriminated by looking at: (i) the fine structure
536 of the 1.5- μm band, which is resolved into a triplet (hexahydrite) or into a doublet (epsomite) at
537 spectral resolution of about 20 nm, and (ii) the 1.9- μm band, which has a defined V-shape at low
538 temperatures (hexahydrite) or appears more flattened and composed by different minima
539 (epsomite). The JUICE/MAJIS spectrometer (Piccioni et al., 2014; Langevin et al., 2014) with its
540 high spectral sampling (3-7 nm in the 0.4-5.7- μm spectral range) will have great possibilities to
541 discriminate among the different mineralogical phases on the surface of the icy Galilean satellites.

542

543

544

545 **5. Conclusions**

546 We have performed spectroscopic analyses on two poly-hydrated magnesium sulfates,
547 hexahydrite and epsomite, in the visible and infrared range 0.5-4.0 μm ; our measurements have
548 been carried out at different temperatures, from room temperature (298 K) down to cryogenic
549 values (minimum value being ~ 93 K). The obtained spectra of these samples and the subsequent
550 derivation of band parameters has allowed us to investigate the fine structure of several
551 absorption features arising at cryogenic temperatures. The spectra of hydrated sulfates are
552 dominated by absorptions due to OH ions and H₂O molecules present in the mineral structure;
553 trends of band parameters vs. temperature have been derived, showing a general narrowing and
554 refining of bands, together with slight shifts of their positions.

555 Laboratory investigations of hydrated minerals, by means of visible and infrared spectroscopy, are
556 key to support the interpretation of remote sensing data returned by ongoing interplanetary
557 missions (e.g., NASA/Dawn) and future missions currently under implementation (e.g.,
558 ESA/ExoMars 2020, NASA/Europa Multiple Flyby Mission, ESA/JUICE). Detailed studies on the
559 spectral behavior of hydrated minerals (silicates, sulfates) at cryogenic temperatures have
560 implications in the correct interpretation of spectral data of Mars as well as of the icy Galilean
561 satellites. Laboratory characterization is helpful in the possible identification and discrimination of
562 this type of minerals, whose spectral features are considerably influenced by temperature
563 variations, on surfaces of rocky planetary bodies; the presence of hydrated sulfates has important

564 implications on the understanding of the geologic processes that occurred on such Solar System
565 bodies. The presence of mono- and poly-hydrated sulfates on other Solar System bodies would be
566 strictly related to geologic processes that have occurred in presence of liquid water, such as
567 evaporation from standing water-bodies (e.g. lakes), sedimentation, or weathering of primary
568 minerals, with potential subsequent astrobiological implications.

569

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571

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577

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